

CHURCH OF THE HIGHLANDS

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# Made for This Ministry

Full Transcript

Chris Hodges  
February 10, 2026

*Duration: 36:48*

## Welcome and Transition to Pastor Chris Hodges

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- 0:00 - Hey Church, I'm so glad you joined us today. What a powerful start to the year it's been. From Sunday services to 21 days of prayer to saturate with our high school and college students, God is moving. We are seeing prayers answered, lives changed, and people saying yes to Jesus. And I want you to know, I am personally so excited about the season we're in as a church and the season God is leading us into. We are approaching a major milestone here at Highlands. Next Sunday, February 1st, we celebrate 25 years of God's faithfulness. Our 25th anniversary as a church, and I can't wait to be in church together. We're gonna honor what God has done, and we're gonna look ahead with faith and expectation for all that he will do in the next 25 years.
- 0:46 And we're celebrating all weekend long, starting with our 25th anniversary dream team gala on Friday, January 30th. Highlands would not be who we are today without our dream team. Dream team, you carry the culture, you serve with joy, you live on mission every single week, and you bless all of us. This night is simply our way to honor you, and to say thank you. If you've ever served or are currently serving on the dream team, this night is for you, and we can't wait to see you there. Now, today we're hearing a message on purpose from our founding pastor, my pastor, PC. As we were planning and praying for the Sunday, there was no one better to speak on this topic of purpose.
- 1:26 His voice has shaped my life in so many of our lives in more ways than we can count. PC saw purpose in me, and he called it out long before I could see it in myself, and I know he has a powerful word from God that will speak directly to your life. So come on, Highlands, let's lean in, prepare our hearts to receive. Can you help me welcome to the platform, our founding pastor, PC? All right. Come on, give Jesus all the praise everybody.

## The Path of Life — Finding Your Assignment

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- 1:55 Come on, that's pretty good. Now give him what he really deserves, everybody. (congregation applauding) - That's awesome. So good to see all of you here today, what a joy it is to bring God's word to you today. And I wanna just start off by looking straight in the camera, say hello to all of our campuses that are joining us right now. Wanna give a special shout out to the Auburn campus, Pastor Mark's down there, God bless you guys. And of course, we are in all 28 of Alabama's Department of Corrections facilities right now, and God bless you, the men and women there, and of course, today with all the severe weather around, not only here in Alabama, Georgia, but literally around the nation, there's a boatload of people that are watching online right now.
- 2:35 So Grant Smith, come on, show some big time love. (congregation applauding) Come on, say a big hello to everybody. God bless you guys. And I wanna jump right into the material today that I'm very excited to share with you. We've been in a series that ends today called Seek First, and it basically begins with this promise that if you'll put God first in your life, it's gonna cause everything else in your life to find its proper place. And so this message is dedicated to anybody where your life feels like it's not in place. So

maybe you're miserable, maybe there's just a lot of heartache going on. Maybe you're just confused. I don't know what it is, but you're thinking, here's gotta be more to life than this.

3:18 This message could probably change everything if you lean into it today. Our theme verse, of course, not only for this series, but for the whole year is Seek First His Kingdom. His kingdom means, by the way, his kingship. Allow him to be the king of your life, which means you're gonna follow his will and his way. Seek first his kingdom or his way and his righteousness. And then I love this little phrase, all these things. I think sometimes we read this part of that verse. We think of all these things, or he's gonna give you things, like literal, tangible things. But I want you to hear it this way. He not only gives you those things, provision and blessing, but he also gives you things that you cannot see or touch or feel, but I'm talking about maybe your fulfillment, your peace, your joy.

4:08 Like if you really follow God the right way, it's gonna have this tangible evidence of true fulfillment in your life today. And today, Pastor Mark's asked me to speak on that and talk about your life's purpose. And I always like to start off with something a little funny. And so I had this little story that I've read a couple of two or three times over 25 years. I think the last time I read it was in 2021, so probably five years ago or more, but it's simply called life explained. And here's how it goes. Now, by the way, it's not theologically correct, it's just funny, okay, everybody? It is, all right, so you'll hear it on the first line.

4:43 On the first day, God created the dog. Well, that's not how it worked out. But anyway, on the first day, God created the dog. He said, sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes by or walks past the house. And for this, I'm gonna give you a lifespan of 20 years. And the dog said, that's way too long to be barking. I'll take a 10 year lifespan and I'll give you back the other 10 years and God agreed. On the second day, God created the monkey. And he said, look, I want you to entertain people and do monkey tricks and make people laugh. And for this, I'm gonna give you a 20 year lifespan.

5:14 And the monkey says, that's too long to be doing monkey tricks. I'm gonna do like the dog. I'll take 10 years and I'll give you back the other 10 years and God agreed. On the third day, God created the cow. And he said, you're gonna go into the field with the farmer all day long. You're gonna suffer under the sun. You're gonna have calves. You're gonna have milk to support the farmer's family. And for this, I'm gonna give you a lifespan of 60 years. And the cow said, way too long. That's too hard of a life to live for 60 years. Give me 20 years, I'll give you back 40 years. And then on the next day, God created the man.

5:46 And he said, eat, sleep, play, enjoy yourself. And for this, I'm gonna give you a lifespan of 20 years. And the man said, well, only 20 years. How about you give me my 20 years. The 40, the cow gave you back. The 10, the monkey gave you back. The 10, the dog gave you back. And let's make it 80 years and God agreed. And that is why for the first 20 years, we eat, sleep, play and enjoy ourselves. For the next 40 years, we slave under the sun to support our family. For the next 10 years, we do monkey tricks to entertain the grandchildren. And for the last 10 years, you sit on the front porch and bark at everybody, who goes by.

6:23 You have just had life explained to you. All right, now, you know it's not that. In fact, what I wanna do today is I wanna help you make life make sense. And what I'm gonna ask for is a little bold. I'm asking you to cooperate if you might. And that is, I want you guys to lean into this. In fact, I'm gonna even ask you to give me a blank page and let me just try. Let me give it my best shot to explain something to you

that probably more than half of you have either never heard about or you decided you're not going to do it. And I want you to give me one more shot, all right?

6:55

**Psalms 16:5-11**

*The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

7:27 I've never coveted somebody else's ministry or their preaching style. Lord, I'm so satisfied with what you gave me. You are my portion, you are my cup. And my lot, you have made my lot or my assignment or the piece of life that you gave me, you made it secure and now watch this, the boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. And the boundary lines doesn't mean you can't go across it. It's just saying God's given you and let me say it this way. Like for me, he's given me from 1963 to I hope for about another 30 more years. He's given me this section of life, but it's not all of life. There's a whole lot of time that happened before me, time will that happen after me, but God gave me this boundary line.

8:09 He's given me an assignment that included Alabama. That's what this is talking about. And for me, that boundary line or that assignment is good. By the way, whenever you find God's true assignment, you're not gonna say it's bad. When you find it yourself, you're gonna say, wow, this fell in a pleasant place. Surely I have a delightful inheritance and I won't that for you so badly. So he goes on to say, I'm gonna praise you. Of course you would. I praise you who counsels me. So in other words, even in my assignment, God speaks to me. He spoke to me this week about this message. He even at night, my heart instructs me. I keep my eyes always on the Lord and with him at my right hand, when I put God first place in my life, Matthew 633, I will not be shaken.

8:54 Meaning I'm still gonna have problems, but they don't shake me. And for a bunch of you guys, you're out of God's will. You're going to heaven, but you're not doing God's assignment for your life so that when something comes along in life, it shakes you, but there is a life you can have. Now listen to me that whenever you go through trouble, it doesn't shake you like everybody else because you know why you're on the planet. Are you listening to me, everybody? It's good preaching here today. You can say, amen? All right, I'll amen myself if you won't. All right. Therefore, this is what I want for you. My heart is glad. My tongue rejoices.

9:29 My body rests secured. In other words, I'm okay. I mean, even though I go through stuff just like anybody else, my body rests secure because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful ones see decay. And now it's getting ready to explain how you get all of that. You have made known to me key phrase the path of life. And what I'm trying to do, and I'm gonna try one more time today, I'm gonna let you know the path of life. Like if any of that sounds appealing to you. And if any of that is not something you currently have, I'm getting ready to show you the pathway to it.

10:05 The path of life. And you will fill me with joy in your presence. And that's how you know when you've gotten there with eternal pleasures at your right hand. Meaning that when I do it right, I'm not only full of joy, but it also has an eternal impact in the lives of other people. So for 25 years, I have basically said, and we have basically said that God has this pathway. I'm not gonna preach on it. I'm just gonna put it in front of you 'cause we have this on mugs, T-shirts, walls. When you come in here before worship starts, we call it the pre-roll. It's the video you're watching before worship begins. It says it on there.

## **The Growth Path: Know God, Find Freedom, Discover Purpose, Make a Difference**

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10:38 We have said it, said it, said it, said it, said it. And there's almost no other way to say it. It's just now for you to take the steps to do it, that you have to get close to God, not religion, relationship. You've gotta let him deal with your issues. We call it find freedom. And if you don't think you have any issues, well guess what, that's your issue. Anyway, you have it, all right? Then you can discover your purpose. So once you settle yesterday, you can see tomorrow so that you can get doing what your life is all about. And that is your portion, your assignment, your lot, your boundary lines that make a difference in the lives of others that also brings joy to you.

11:15 And I just say it in one single sentence, my assignment from Pastor Mark today is that God has a very unique and specific purpose for your life. It's unlike the person you're sitting next to right now. Like God has an assignment for you, a portion. There's something for you to have and some of you haven't discovered it. You just haven't discovered it. They say, studies say that more than 87% of Christians in America live and die and never discovered. And others of you, you have discovered it, you's not doing it, all right? So once again, I'm gonna make a case. I'm gonna do the very best I can. I have a goal today for every adult teenager that is not a part of doing something with your life, collectively in a family of people called The Body of Christ.

12:05 That if you're not a part of a dream team, you're not, I'm gonna try to paint such a compelling picture today that you would say at the end of this message, I cannot believe I've waited this long to do this. Now, some of you are gonna say, nice try, I'm not buying it. That's fine. If that's where you are after, just give me a shot. It's all I'm asking for. But if you do buy into this, I am guaranteeing something. And that is not only personal fulfillment. I'm talking about real joy. I'm not talking about your circumstances. I'm talking about real fulfillment in life. And not only that personal fulfillment, but a collective fulfillment that we together did something that moved the needle and made a difference in the world around us.

## **The Dream Team Origin Story**

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12:46 And everybody said, a good, all right. And if you're a visitor here today or you're here for the first time, you could not have picked a better Sunday South. Pastor Mark said, tell them the dream team story. So it was over 25 years ago now that my wife and I decided to move to Birmingham. We didn't know a single soul. Our church sent us out in October of 2000. Now, our house wouldn't sell in Baton Rouge. So I

would make trips between October and February 4th, 2001 was the launch of our church. That's why next Sunday is our 25th anniversary. So I would make trips, I would be with my family as much as I could.

13:23 And then on Wednesdays, I would drive to Birmingham and spend a few days, meet people. My office was the Starbucks. I was living a highly caffeinated life. Anyway, so I would just meet people, meet people and tell the story. I was trying to put together a band for worship. It was just grassroots trying to start a church. I put together a group of people that I called the launch team. It ended up being 34 people. And we met on Thursday nights before the church began at K.T. and Deborah Bowles home down in North Shelby County. And so we had these Thursday night meetings. And the meetings, basically, they were lots of fun because we were just 34 people with a blank page.

14:02 Getting the privilege of putting together a church like we wanted to. We could do it exactly what we wanted. So we talked about children's ministry. We talked about nurseries. We're in Mount Brook High School. We're going to put the nurseries. What are the hallways going to look like? How do we pass that information? It's worship, I mean, we had so much fun. The only problem was every time I said, hey, let's talk about, and I brought up a topic. Hey, let's work on this. They wouldn't give me any of their ideas, even though they had some. 'Cause they'd all been in churches where, and you just basically listen to the man of God. You know, you're just following, we're just servants to your vision.

14:36 And I said, no, no, no, I don't want to do it that way. I believe the best ideas of the church aren't going to come from me. They're going to come from all of us. And I still believe that, by the way, that the best ideas are in the people of the church, not just the pastor of the church. And they wouldn't do it. And I was getting pretty frustrated. So my little home base where I spent the night was at the Hampton Inn, I went to colonnade, here in Birmingham, and I was making another trip on the Thursday night to go to this launch team meeting. And I had, I'll never forget it. I remember it vividly in my car, I was listening to "Og News Day." That's like, yyy Hallelujah yyy yyy And I was worshiping yyy And I'm like, Lord, you gotta help me get these people to dream.

15:13 And when I said that in my prayer, my mind thought about the 1992 Olympic basketball team, where for the first time in Olympic history, they let professionals, not amateurs, but professionals play in the Olympics. And that's when Magic Johnson and Michael Jordan and Patrick Ewing and Charles Barkley all got on the same team and we slaughtered every other team. And they ended up calling that team the dream team. And I thought, that's, I'm going to change the name tonight from launch team to dream team. And so I shared that and it clicked. Everybody started dreaming, giving me their ideas. And sure enough, a few weeks later, we started a brand new church. 400 people showed up in the very first service and it was fantastic.

15:53 So after the first four Sundays, I wanted to reward their hard work because they're all volunteers. Man, I'm going to take you to eat a steak dinner. I'm going to pay for it. And one of the people on our team had a membership at the club, they call it here in Birmingham. I've never figured that out. It's not the club, it's the club.

16:12 It should be called the club, but it's called the club. And so anyway, we were at the club and it's just a bunch of blue hairs and then they had a good steak. All right, so we were at the club. And so anyway, we're having the steak dinner. It's fantastic, we celebrate it. And the next day, the phone rang, the church

phone, which was the cell phone on my hip. I wore it on my hip right there. Church of the Highlands, can I help you? And this lady said, hey, I've been coming for a month since the church began. And I heard there was a dinner last night and not everybody was invited. It was officially the first complaint of Church of the Highlands.

16:50 And I said, yes ma'am, I said, that was for the dream team who helped me start the church. She goes, well, how do you get on the dream team? That's not fair. And I stupidly said, you can't, we already started the church. And she goes, well, you've got to figure out a way to let other people on this team. And she hung up on me. And I thought, she's right. This doesn't have to be just for the launch team. And that's when I decided that every person who would serve at Church of the Highlands would be called the dream team. Today, there are more than 22,000 people in our church that serve every single Sunday on the dream team.

## Every Christian Is a Minister — The Priesthood of All Believers

17:25 And there are thousands of other churches using that phrase as well. But the problem is, it wasn't intended for 22,000. It was intended for every single person who's a member of Church of the Highlands. And obviously, not every single member of Church of the Highlands is on the dream team. And so I'm going to give a shot today for that to change. And so here's the question. They actually sat in my office and I prayed and prepared this message and I thought, why wouldn't they? And I have a few answers. They might not even be right. This is what I think. And that is that some of you just didn't know we had any needs because we make all this look pretty easy.

18:00 Like there's already people on stage playing guitars. I play guitar, but there's already a guitarist. And there's already somebody on the camera. And there's already somebody out there in the parking lot. There's always somebody holding a baby or a ministering to a child in children's church. Like it looks like you have everything already covered. And what you would not know is that we have 26 campuses and it's growing. And we have 75 plus services every Sunday. And there's a lot of different needs here. We just try not to make it look like we have some, but we actually do. There's some of you maybe that you tried it before and either you never liked it or you stopped liking it.

18:37 And that happens a lot as you grow in your face. So what you start with is not how you finish with it. And you're like, ah, that's just not my thing. And maybe it just didn't click with you the first time. In fact, I'll never forget this one story. In the beginning of the church, there's this lady. I mean, we're only a few months old. And we had this new couple. And I wanted to get to know everybody. So I worked the hallways a lot. And there was this couple. And the lady's name was Sherry. And I knew her husband. But every time I tried to approach her, she just went the other direction. And I thought it was coincidental.

19:06 Until one day, we locked eyes about 20 yards apart in the hallway. And I went like this. And she turned around and ran the other direction. And I chased her down. And I said, you're avoiding me. What in the world is going on? And she goes, OK, you got me. You got me. It's my turn to serve in the nursery, isn't it? You just what you're wanting from me. And I'm like, what? She goes, oh no, we've been in church our whole lives. And I just know that that's what comes next. And just because we have kids, I need to take

my turn there, she goes, but I don't want to. We just got to this church.

19:40 We need a break. We're kind of tired. And she says, peace out, even like kids. Like, listen to me, Sherry. I don't want you serving in our nursery, you know? Ever, by the way, if you don't like kids. And she goes, I don't understand. I said, we don't have that philosophy here. We don't have a serve just because you're here. We want you to find the thing that you actually get excited about doing. I'll never ask you to do something that you don't have a passion about. She goes, I've never heard that before. And I'm telling you some of you that any place we would want you to be a part of something that where you have a passion and a gifting and a desire to be a part of that.

20:14 Can I hear a really good amen everybody, right? It's true. But those are good reasons. This is probably the biggest reason. This is where I want to lean in just for a little bit. And that is, for a lot of you, just don't see yourself the way God does. And now I want to take a moment to try to correct some of people's bad theology and bad church history. Church history has not been nice to us in this area. Because in the Old Testament, not everybody served. Not everybody was the minister. Not everybody had a role in the body of Christ. There was a special group in the Old Testament called the priest. And the priest had a special connection with God and a special thing to do with God.

20:54 And everybody else was just the consumer of those people's ministry. But when Jesus came along in the New Testament, he changed all of that. He looked at ordinary people. His disciples were not seminary grads. His disciples were tax collectors, fishermen, regular everyday folks. And he looked at the entire crowd that followed him and said, all of you are supposed to be the salt of the earth. All of you are supposed to be the light of the world. In fact, he said to every one of them, let your light shine before others that they may see your good works, how you live your life. And now people glorify God in heaven. Meaning there is a lot of darkness on the earth.

21:37 Would you agree with that, everybody? And that the role of the church isn't for a few people to shine their light. What would it look like if everybody gave our specific piece of light to the darkness? I'm going to tell you this world would be a brighter place if we all did it. And so Jesus tried to encourage this. In fact, after he ascended into heaven after his resurrection, the church was born. You can read about it in Acts chapter 1 and chapter 2. It's called the day of Pentecost. And the very first sermon ever preached in the Christian church, the very first one, the apostle Peter quotes out of the Bible and says, there's something new on the scene.

22:16

**Acts 2:17-18**

*And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.*

22:52 And then right after the Bible, the whole church organized itself with two groups of people, and they even gave them a name-- clergy, laymen, two terms that are not in the Bible, old or New Testament. And there was a whole group of people who sat idly by by just only a few, let their light shine before people. In the 1500s, a guy named Martin Luther was part of what was called the Protestant Reformation. And one of the revelations that Martin Luther received was what was called the priesthood of all believers. In

other words, the priesthood wasn't for a few who went to college to study the Bible, or has pastor in front of their name, but that every single Christian was a priest.

23:36 And I'm here to tell you, if you're a follower of Jesus, you're a priest with a call of God on your life to do something special. And right after that revelation, guess what? It all went right back to two classes of Christian, the clergy, the laymen. And it's just messed up. And so from the beginning of this church, 25 years ago, I mean literally from the first Sunday, I kept preaching this message that God wants to use every single one of us, that the best ideas of this church wouldn't come from me, they're inside of you. And that collectively, if every one of us played the part, found our gift, found the thing that God has His hand on our life, and if all of us did it, we could make a difference in this world.

24:18 And we're close, but we're not still there. And today, I'm trying to get every single one of us apart of this. And so what do we have to believe to understand that? Let me tell you three things we've been saying since the beginning of that is, every Christian is a minister. If you're a Christian, you were called by God to be a minister. And I'm not talking about minister as in preacher, or minister as in vocational minister. I'm talking about you could minister on a camera. I'm gonna make sure the world sees this message. Some of you are minister by holding a baby and praying for that baby while parents can hear the gospel. And in church.

24:52

**1 Peter 2:9**

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

25:24

**Ephesians 2:10**

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

26:05 And so when the weather starts getting a little bad, inevitably they all look at me like, I ain't you gonna do stuff. I talk to the man upstairs, don't you? Don't you gonna do something? And always tell them, I'm in sales, not management. But anyway, right? I'm not responsible for that part. But they erroneously think, man, you have a special connection with God that I don't have. Look at me, it's not true. It's not true. That every one of you can be just as anointed, just as called, just as used and make just as much difference in the world. Do you believe that church? I said, do you believe that church? It's true, it's just true.

## Every Gift Is Unique and Every Person Has a 'Made for This' Moment

26:43 In fact, not only are you called, not only are you a minister, but every single gift is important and it's unique. And this is to dispel the thought that, well, no, no, there are special people who have special gifts and, man, you're calling, it's just bigger than mine because look what you do, you're on a stage. I am just a priest. I'm just a Christian doing what God's called me to do. It's not better than you. And the devil will

tell you, oh, you're just one in a million people. You're not one in a million, you're one of a kind. There's not this A-list, B-list type of Christian. No, no, no, God's called all of us to make a difference in this world.

27:21

**Romans 12:6**

*Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith.*

27:59

**1 Corinthians 12:27**

*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*

28:08 And it goes on to say this, it says, "Now all of you together are Christ's body, "and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it." Which means if you sit it out, we all suffer. And we're asking this to sit it in. Come be a part of this with us and watch what it does collectively, but also watch what it does individually just inside of you, which is my last point. And that is that every one of you has a place where you'll say, "I was made for this." It's my favorite moment of a dream-teamer. When they finally figure it out, they've taken the path of life, they've gone through a process, basically to discover it and develop it, and now they're doing it.

28:54 Look at me, and I can't wish for anything more for you. Oh, you're just saying, 'cause you're just your job's good, a bunch of people doing stuff, like no, we're actually fine. I'm saying this for you, 'cause there's nothing like it when you found it. Stepped into it. And now right now the devil will tell you, yeah, but he's not talking about you, 'cause we know what you're, we know you got a long way to go. You're not ready, we're all up. And look at me, and God is notorious for using completely imperfect people. In fact, watch this, some of your actual development that gets you further along won't even even happen until you step into this.

29:36 That's why he even chose these young disciples who had no seminary training. In fact, we're still working through some of their issues, and God worked through them as they were doing this. And then what the result is, and I want this for you so badly, you have no idea how much I want this for you. Where you can say, like David said, this is a great place to get through, this becomes your bull's eye right here. Where you say, God, you created me. You created my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother's womb. By the way, a great verse of why we're a pro-life, can I hear a good amen everybody, right? Then it goes on to say, I praise you, God, and that sounds almost arrogant unless you understand the context.

30:20

**Psalms 139:13-16**

*For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.*

30:58

**John 15:8-11**

*By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.*

- 31:35 I've told you this so that, like I want you to go bear fruit, I want you to be a Christian who does this so that, this is what's missing for a lot of you. You don't have any joy, and it certainly isn't complete, and could it be that when we put God first, even in the area of our purpose, everything else finds its proper place, and that's why next week, I'm encouraging you to get on the road track and start it. What do you have to lose? I tell you what you have to lose, joy, fulfillment, knowing my life's not perfect, but I'm using my life with the gift God's given me to make a difference in this world.
- 32:18 I'm inviting everyone of you to be on the dream team. So I want to close with an invitation, and I'm running out of time, so I won't read the whole thing, but basically, the gist of this scripture, Jesus always took the crowd and said, hey, get deeper, let's go to the disciple level. And when he did this, you can read the rest of it. He goes on and says, and if you'll do, it's going to feel like you're losing your life. Like, I don't have time to be a dream teamer, but it's actually going to save your life. You're going to find life, so you need to see that. And so basically, take them on a journey, and I want to give you the four phrases of this journey.
- 32:52 I actually picked this up from Rick Warren, kind of shaped it as my own, and it's like this. And that is some of you at the crowd level. And the crowd level, our message to you is just come see. I'm not asking to serve, give, some of you are like Sherry, you're tired, you don't want to do anything, fine. Don't kick the tires rest, but you can't stay there. And if you're are there, maybe you're not even sure. You're very welcomed here, but you can't stay there. We're inviting you to the congregation level, and by the way, that's two levels. We're inviting you to a family, the family of God, which means you need to get saved.
- 33:28 You need to truly give your life to Jesus, and then join the church family, the congregation. And that's what you can do next Sunday on the first step of our growth track. The first step is the membership class, where you can come into the family of God through salvation and through membership. But then there's another level. And some of you are there, but that's where you stopped, and I'm asking you to just keep the path of life. And that is the committed, and our message to you is, hey, come and grow. And we're inviting you to be in a small group. We're inviting you, those start next Sunday as well. And this is where you grow here.
- 34:05 People say, well, where's the deep stuff? Where's the discipleship? It's in groups. You want to get out of debt? You want to get a better marriage? You want to get free from an addiction? You want to learn the Bible? Groups, you get to pick the topic, but come and grow, come and grow. And it takes a commitment, 'cause it's not easy, but it'll change your life. And then finally, don't stop there either, but there's the core we call 'em the dream team. And here's our message to you, come and be who you are created to be. 'Cause God has a purpose for your life. And all God's people said are good. This powerful prayer is the Father.

- 34:44 I'm asking you to speak to people, show them where they are and help 'em take a step towards you. Give 'em the courage to do it so they can find the path of life. With heads bowed and eyes closed, the first and most important step is committing your life to Jesus. I'm not talking about being a cultural Christian. I'm not talking about just being a person of religion. I'm talking about a fully devoted follower of Jesus. Some of you have never made the decision. Others of you have and you've walked away. And you just know you're not fully committed to him and today's gonna be your day. For a bunch of you, you're gonna join hundreds of others out of the first few services who have made the decision, I'm taking this part of this year to say, I'm going all in with God.
- 35:33 Make up your mind, I'm not gonna have you stand up. I'm not gonna call you down to the front, but I do want you to actively move your faith and say, God, that's me. And I want you to see it. And if that's you, on the count of three, I want you to put your hand up as high as you can. Say, count me in and I'm gonna pray that prayer with you. If that's you, you're ready to give your life to Jesus. You're going all in with God today. Or you're coming back to your faith and giving God your best. One, two, three, put your hand up as high as you can. All over this room, all of our locations and campuses.
- 36:06 God bless you, God bless you, God bless you. Slip those hands down. Let me lead you through a prayer, just make it your own. Say, Jesus, forgive me for living my life my way. Today I surrender my life completely to you. I'm following you with all of my heart. So forgive me, change me and be the Lord of my life because I believe you truly are the Son of God who rose from the dead. And today I'm put my faith in you in your name I pray. Amen and amen. How about a hand plow for everybody who just made that decision. God bless you.