

# “8 Ways to Be Happy, According to Jesus” // Matthew 5:1–12 // *The Whole Story 33*

Can we celebrate together? Seeing people come to newfound faith in Christ is the heartbeat of this church, and our hope is to baptize 50,000 in our lifetime.

At all 28 of our services this weekend, across all 9 of our campuses in the Triangle, you are **going to have a chance to be baptized** if you never have—to actually come forward and be baptized on the spot. (Some of you will decide **your whole family** wants to get baptized at once.)

Baptism is *identification with Jesus*, **going public with your faith**.

- You are saying, “**I’ve made my decision**, and I’m ready to go all the way.”
- Many of you came in to today prepared for this—we’ve been talking about it for weeks now; **others of you will decide today**, on the spot, that it’s time.

You say, “Maybe it is **better to spend some time preparing**.” And sometimes that may be true, but listen—every single baptism we see in the NT—with no exceptions—is spontaneous, on the spot.

- So **you’re in good company** if you decide today.

Works Consulted:

John Mark Comer, “The God Who Comes Down the Ladder”

Andy Stanley, “What Makes You Happy? Plan for it.”

Tim Keller, “The Community of Jesus”

Craig Groeschel, “Bless This Home”

Rick Warren, “Habits of Happiness”

Peter Kreeft, “Beatitudes”

- For many of you, it’s time to quit putting it off, and time to take bold action.

Well, **because baptism is identification with Jesus**, I want to spend our time together talking about what many consider to be the core teaching of Jesus. It’s from the **Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5**, if you have your Bibles...

This is not a typical message I’d preach before an invitation to be baptized... but this passage **really captures what it means to be a disciple** of Jesus, and when you get baptized, this is what you are committing to.

**Jesus begins this a discussion with a question that all of us**, at some point, ask: How can I be happy?

How can I be happy? Let me ask you: Are you happy, right now? I talked to **one Christian girl**, very active in the church, I’d say pretty mature in her faith, who said, “I’m *not sure I’ve ever been totally happy*. It seems really close sometimes but it hangs out there like a carrot just beyond my grasp:

**Google auto-complete** verifies that this is a pressing question. (When I typed in...)

🔄 🏠 🔍 how can i be

🔍 how can i be – Google Search

- 🔍 how can i be **happy**
- 🔍 how can i be **sure**
- 🔍 how can i be **saved**
- 🔍 how can i become a **bawlaa lyrics**
- 🔍 how can i be **pretty**

- Full disclosure: I was actually looking up “how can I be pretty” when I discovered this.
- This is sermon research at its most sophisticated, ladies and gentlemen.
- I love google auto-complete. It’s like playing Family Feud every time I type in a sentence.

Now, I know at this point a bunch of y’all roll your eyes and say, “Uhh... the pastor asks, ‘Where do we get happiness?’ I wonder if he’s going to say Jesus.” It reminds me of the story I’ve told you about the SS teacher who wanted to use squirrels as an example of prepared workers. She starts the lesson by saying, “I’m going to describe something, and I want you to raise your hand when you know what it is.” All the kids lean forward... “I’m thinking of something that **lives in a tree... and eats nuts...**” No hands went up. “It is **gray** and has a **long bushy tail...**” The children looked around the room at each other, but no one raises a hand. Finally, one little boy shyly says, “It sure sounds like a squirrel, but I know the answer has to be Jesus.”

So, yes, I know you think I’m going to talk about Jesus, but **his answer to the question of happiness is a little more complex than that.**

**In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives 8 ways to be happy.**

- You see how Matthew 5 opens up with a string of, “Blessed are... *the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the peacemakers...*”
- Well, the **Greek word for blessed is “makarios”** which literally means “happy” (Makar is the Greek word for happy).
- Jews used the term to **describe a person in the state of salvation**, someone with the **blessing and favor of God** on their lives.
- These 8 things are descriptions of a saved person’s heart, a heart blessed by God, a heart filled by God. A happy heart.

Now, I warn you, what Jesus says is **upside down** from everything else that we hear. But, **even if you’re not a Christian**, I think you’ll have to admit that these things—even though counter-intuitive at first, make a lot of sense.

- Jesus was **nothing if not logical**, and he had a **profound understanding of the human spirit**,
- which is why **for centuries**, people who didn’t believe in him as Messiah, like Thomas Jefferson or Mahatma Ghandi or Oprah Winfrey have regarded him to be the greatest moral teacher of all time.

**5:1 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain,** (that’s actually an important detail that unlocks the meaning to the whole thing that we’ll come back to at the end) **and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup> And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:**

**<sup>3</sup> “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

- I’m going to spend **a little more time** on this one, because it is the key to understanding all the others. In fact, once you get this one, **all the others fall** right into place.
- **Write this down:** **Poverty of spirit means you embrace daily dependence on God for all that you need.** Poverty of spirit means that you don’t feel that you have sufficient resources in yourself to face life’s challenges.

- It has **less to do with being monetarily rich** or poor, *per se*, but whether you embrace daily dependence on God for all that you need.
- (In Greek, you see, there are two terms for poor.
  - The first refers to those who struggled financially, who had barely enough money to eat. What we call “**college students**” today.
  - The second was *ptóchos*, which was *onomatopoeia*: you know, *where the word sounds like what it indicates*. *Ptochos*. What does that sound like? Spit. (A great Greek word—I love that Jesus used it!) It meant the outcast of society. The despised.
- **These are the kinds of poor Jesus is talking about.** Those despised for how weak they are. These end up being the ones, he says, who inherit the kingdom itself.)

*(Now, because these 8 things comprise Jesus’ core teaching, he would illustrate almost every one of them at some point in his teaching with a story or a parable. Most of these stories will be familiar to you, but I’m going to review a few of them, as helpful, quickly.)*

*Parable: 2 men went into the Temple...*

- *Prayed to himself...* vs. beat his chest.
- **The tax collector, Jesus said, went home justified**, not the religious man, because the religious man walked in rich in his own righteousness, which was no righteousness at all, and walked out with only that righteousness.
  - The tax collector walked in poor in spirit, and left with the righteousness of God credited to his account.
- *God only fills empty hands: Which means that if you are convinced of your own righteousness, you will not receive the righteousness of God.*
  - But if **you feel like you are poor** in righteousness, you can receive his gift righteousness.

- You can apply this principle across the broad spectrum of the Christian life, also.
  - Those who feel capable as parents will not experience the power of God in their parenting.
    - *It’s not poor parenting that messes up your kids, but confidence in your good parenting...*
  - Those who feel capable in their ministries...
  - ...their relationships, their careers...
- It is when we depend on God, and not on ourselves, for provision, wisdom, power, and guidance that we access his power.
- **God only fills empty hands.**
  - *It’s why I hate it when worship leaders start off worship services by saying, “Well, how do you feel?”*
  - *How do I feel? I feel poor in the spirit, like a beggar, like someone to be spit on, so tell me about the gift riches of Christ, don’t ask me how I feel.*
- **God make us a people poor in ourselves and mighty in reliance on him!** Amen?

Now, again, let me comment a little more on this one because it is core to all the rest, and so pertinent to our society.

- Most of us have spent our whole lives trying to become **anything but poor in the spirit**. We want to be rich in the spirit, or at least middle class.
- We want to feel like we are **sufficient for the task**, like we **have it under control** and don’t need to be afraid going into the future.

But not only does this keep us cut off from God’s help, it also corrupts our spirit. (And this is where you start to see the **profound wisdom** of Jesus’ way)

- Like the man in this story, being rich in ourselves makes us proud and disdainful of others. This religious man despises others he sees as not as good, or capable, as he is:<sup>1</sup>
  - **He can't help it, because** when you are proud, your life becomes an endless cycle of comparison and competition. **C. S. Lewis talked about how the essence of pride is competition: To pride it does not matter that I am smart, only that I am smarter than you. It doesn't matter I'm good-looking, only that I'm better looking than you. For this reason, proud people, he says can never get along. People of other vices can get along (drunks like to drink together, immoral people like to brag to each other about their exploits), but proud people always hate each other. Because their pride is always in conflict with someone else's pride. (So, Lewis says, the quickest way to tell that you have pride is that some other person's pride bothers you.)**
- **Furthermore, when we become rich in ourselves, we become self-focused.** The reason this guy in Jesus' story prays to himself is that is all he thinks about.
  - I've been reading this book recently about parenting that talks about how we are raising the most **"me-focused" generation in history**, kids rich in the spirit, and you can see that in our habits on social media.
    - E.g. Our obsession with selfies. There are **one million selfies** are posted onto the internet in our country every day. Cameras used to be for taking pictures of others. Now we fill the world with pictures of us, doing that duck face thing, where

<sup>1</sup> One theologian pointed out that the opposite of each of these is the 7 deadly sins. Peter Kreeft, *Back to Virtue*, 80–93

<sup>2</sup> **One more, while I'm at it:** *The American Girl doll company has retired nearly all of their traditional historically themed dolls. We've moved away from dolls like Kirsten, whose pioneer story included cholera, rough living conditions, and*

we become the center of every story. BTW, 36% of those photos are enhanced.

- **Social media outlets like Twitter are not built on displaying your poverty of spirit**, but your richness of spirit. You post all the awesome things about your life so that other people will admire you and be jealous of you. You are not trying to show your desperation, but your surplus, even when you pretend to be humble about it. *"My teacher told me I was the best student she's ever had #humbledbythis"*<sup>2</sup>
- And **when we become proud and me-focused**, we start to look ridiculous to everybody.
  - This man was **praying to himself**. If other people in this story had heard this man talking to himself about how awesome he was, he would have been embarrassed, for sure.
    - Every once in a while something will happen that reveals how self-focused I am... *N&O* calling me.
  - That **all comes from thinking about yourself** too much.
- Maybe **the worst effect of being rich in yourself** is that you become ungrateful, because you are always focused on what you think you are entitled to and how others aren't giving it to you. You always feel like you deserve more, like you're being wronged.
  - And **that makes you unhappy**. Ungrateful people are always unhappy people.
  - But **when you realize that every breath** you take and every step you take is a gift of God, in grace, that makes you grateful, and you become happy. Grateful people are happy people.

*hardships, to Girl of Year dolls like McKenna, whose biggest challenge is... a gymnastics injury and self-doubt about her social standing. Or you can even buy the popular "look alike" dolls, a mini version of your daughter that she can weave her own story around.* Adapted (mostly a quotation) from Kristen Welch, *Raising Grateful Kids in an Entitled World*, 72

- We need to have the spirit of Gideon, who said, “I am the smallest man from the smallest tribe,” or David who said, “Who am I, God, that you should offer to build me a house and promise me all these things?” Or Isaiah, who said, Woe is me...<sup>3</sup>

Because then, not only will we have access to the gift power of God, we’ll be insanely happy!

Now we’ve got to move faster: **4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.**

Jesus doesn’t say why we are mourning, here.

- But mourning goes along with being poor in the spirit.
  - When you feel powerless, weak, and unrighteous you mourn... and God comforts you.
- But I also think, based Jesus’ future teaching, that mourning means a willingness to enter the pain of others and mourn with them.
- So write this down: **‘Mourning’ means being relationally connected to others.**
  - I think of **Jesus’ most famous parable, the Story of the Good Samaritan**. Two men pass by, and one stops to help.
    - He didn’t have to. He didn’t know this guy.
    - There were probably lots of excuses why he shouldn’t—he had other stuff to do. It was dangerous. Costly.
- As we get older—I’ve noticed this in myself, **the trajectory of our lives is to get more and more isolated**.
  - We **don’t want to connect** with our neighbors, we don’t want to **open our lives** to the needy, **being in a small group is a pain**, because we don’t feel like need other people.

- *The average **Triangle professional** thinks, Just give me my home, my beach house, my hobbies and my kids and grandkids and that’s all I need for a happy fulfilled life. Keep the rest of the world away!*
- Jesus is saying, “Actually, **you’ll never really be happy that way**, as your heart closes in on itself, getting darker and more self-focused, and you’ll never be blessed by God.
  - **You were designed to pour yourself to others.**
  - As Pastor **Jason** explained last week, to face outward, not inward.
- So blessed are those who open their hearts and their homes to take in the pain of others.
  - Blessed are the **foster parents—who take in kids** not because they have to but because they are **entering into the pain** of that child and weeping with them,
  - Blessed are those who are **involved in ministries to HOPUD**
  - Blessed are those who sponsor **Compassion children**.
  - Blessed are those who **chose to have kids** even though it messes up their own ambitions in life.
  - Blessed are you who **engage in overseas mission trips** not because they need to add excitement to their lives, but because they are voluntarily entering into the pain and suffering of someone else, and not letting selfishness or fear keep them on the sidelines.
  - **How about this one?** Blessed are you who **identify with a community** who is not your own... WHICH MEANS:
    - When you are **white**, listening to the pain our black brothers and sisters, and acknowledging the fear, struggles and sometimes unfairness they experience
    - When you are **black, empathizing with what it’s like to be a policeman** or in the family of a

<sup>3</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*

policeman who puts his life on the line every day to serve and faces backlash for injustices he had no personal part in.

Not only will you be happier in this life when you enter into the pain of others, you'll be eternally comforted for leveraging your time, talent and treasures for others.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

- **'Meekness' means taking 2<sup>nd</sup> place instead of the 1<sup>st</sup> place whenever you can.** *It means leveraging your power to serve others and not exalt yourself.*
  - I think of **Jesus washing the disciples' feet**... He deserved the spot of Lord and Master; he took the servant role.

But because he did this, Paul explains in Phil 2, *God exalted him and gave him the name above every name.*

- When you take the role of servant—the 2<sup>nd</sup> place—God exalts you.
- Here's how I understand it: **Parents: Imagine seeing your kid** split his lunch with a poor kid: gives ½ the sandwich, 3 of 5 Oreos... what do you feel? Frustrated or proud? If you're like me, you'll say, "You gave away 3; I'll give you 30 Oreos." This is what God does. He does in this life, and in eternity. It's like he can't help himself.
  - *You just can't out give him.*
  - *That's not to mention what he does in eternity!*
- **Let me ask you:** How would your life look different if you always put yourself in the 2<sup>nd</sup> place, and trusted God to take care of you?

<sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

- To hunger and thirst for righteousness means to crave fellowship with God above everything else.

- We're **all hungry**.
- **Solomon says** that God created us with eternity in our hearts, which means a hole the size of eternity.
- And **we all choose a way** to fill that hole. (Pascal)
  - Money/Relationships/Approval
- But we can't; it is in the shape of God
  - **A bucket that would hold all the water a family of 4 uses in a day would be the size of a pickup truck bed. Now imagine a bucket so big that all the water** in the Atlantic Ocean wouldn't even cover the surface area of the bottom. That bucket is your soul. Solomon says that God has put "eternity in our hearts" (Eccl 3:11), which means our hearts yearn for something only eternal love can fill.
- Money can't do it. It's that you need more money to be happy; money is not big enough.
  - Give yourself to money, and you become worried, selfish, dissatisfied people.<sup>4</sup>
- **Romantic love can't do it: love—**
  - Often told you that lonely, insecure...
  - If you say, "You complete me," it shouldn't be to Renee Zelwegger, but JC
  - Give yourself to that, and you'll become jealous, obsessive; terrified of being single or unhappy in your marriage.
- Those who **hunger for approval** never get it enough and they become proud, petty people obsessed with themselves all the time.
- **But when you give the passions of your heart to God**, not only are you **satisfied**, you become a **radiant, life-giving person!**

<sup>7</sup> "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

- The merciful are those who extend forgiveness (or generosity) to the same measure it's been extended to them.

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<sup>4</sup> Statistically, the richer you are, the less (percentage wise) you give away to charity.

- BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL FOR... What if God forgave your sins only according to the measure you forgive others? Your boss. Your husband. Your ex-spouse.
- *This verse used to confuse me because it sounded like if we failed to forgive someone, then Jesus would not forgive us. And that conflicted with other things the Bible said about being saved by grace through faith. But there was a parable of Jesus about this that unlocked the meaning for me:*
- **Illus. Man forgiven 10,000 talents** (parable)
- Those who know they have been forgiven show that by forgiving others, so you could say that whether you have really experienced mercy is demonstrated by how much you show mercy...

<sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

- **\*\*The pure in heart are those who keep their hearts free of the things that grieve God.**
- What grieves God?
  - Impurity: sin
- There are lots of reasons we might avoid sin. But the most powerful one is that we want to know God.
- *You can't pursue God and tolerate sin.*
- ***If you are one of the ones in here who have things you persist in even though you know they are wrong... and still know God, you need to get rid of that illusion.***

And see how it says only the pure in heart can see God? <sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.)

- Sin affects your ability to even perceive God, to hear his voice: Write this down: **Purity leads to clarity.**

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<sup>5</sup> Say you have a boss who is an immoral man, who likes to flirt with the girls in the office, and he is getting ready to hire an office administrator, and one is really qualified but not attractive; the other very attractive but not qualified, and everybody can see that... but he's so blinded by his lust that he can't. he thinks she's the better addite... Impurity clouded his vision and kept him from seeing what really

- The reason we often can't see God or know his will often has to do with how filled with sin our heart is.
  - A lot of times we complain about how confusing God is, or how hard it is to find his will, when the darkness is not in him; it's in our hearts.
- **Purity leads to clarity.** *The more your heart is free of idolatry and lust, the more you'll see what God sees, value what God values, and love what God loves. The purer your heart, the greater your grasp on the will of God.<sup>5</sup>*

<sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

- **\*\*A peacemaker is someone who prioritizes relationship above personal vindication.** When you have conflict, you almost always have 2 sides, who both feel that they are in the right. Neither can make peace, because he or she feels like his side is going to lose out and they will end wronged.
- A peacemaker is someone who says, **"I value the relationship more than I value being right.** So let me try and see it your way. I'll explain to you my view, but I am going to **try even harder to understand yours** than I am to make you understand mine. And where you don't see mine, I'll forgive you and be patient with you, because I value this relationship more than I value being vindicated as right."
- **We've seen this played out here in our church with some of the recent racial conflicts** between our communities of color and the police. Both sides of this discussion have insights they believe need to be heard, and do need to be heard. Both sides seem panicked that the other side is not hearing them.
  - **But then you have some, from both sides in our church,** who say, "I am not saying that the side I am typically

mattered. *What if that same principle is true in all of life?* God explained to Samuel, the prophet, that the reason he couldn't see that the little shepherd boy David was the right man to be king was because he was too impressed with good looks and physical strength, which meant nothing to God. So God said to him, "You look on the outward appearance, but I look on the heart."

associated with doesn't have a perspective that needs to be considered, but I also want to hear, and understand, where you are coming from. And I want to give you the benefit of the doubt and know you. And grieve like you grieve."

- Those are **peacemakers**. They are like Jesus:
  - **Jesus was *clearly* in the right**, and we were in the wrong. He didn't surrender his position.
  - But he **valued us, so he prioritized the relationship** even over vindication and went to a cross in shame to win us back.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

- **So much we could say about this one, but here's how I would summarize this one: Blessed are those who value being right with God above all things.**
- You see, at some point in life, we all suffer. We will **all die**.
  - *At least have the satisfaction that you are suffering for the right.*
  - To know that you have pleased God, done your duty, and have eternity to look forward to the reward for your labor.
- **Heb 12:2**, when Jesus went to the cross, he did so with **JOY!** Because of saving us. **I want to have a similar joy when I go to my grave.**

**TWO GENERAL THOUGHTS** I want to conclude with, and then I want to extend an opportunity for you to be baptized:

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<sup>6</sup> **Interesting thought:** In those days a peacemaker would have been someone who loved and cared for the Romans. Jews had another word for that: not peacemaker,

## 1. According to Jesus, happiness is not a set of circumstances but the fruit of a right relationship with God

- Most of us think that happiness is found in a set of circumstances: *if this and this happen, I'll be happy.*
- Our English word "happiness" comes from the word "happening." You are happy when what you want to happen happens, and when what you want to happen doesn't happen, you are not happy.
- According to Jesus, happiness is not rooted in a set of circumstances, but the result of being rightly related to God.
- So here's the **QUESTION** for you:
  - If life didn't change at all for you from this moment forward: your **situation** didn't improve; your **marital status** didn't change; your **career** didn't progress; your **body** didn't feel any better... *could you be happy with life?*
  - **None of the things that we think we need to be happy** in life happened to Jesus...
    - In many ways, **what happened to Jesus was like our worst fear**... was single his whole life; owned no home; abandoned by friends, misunderstood and maligned.
    - **And yet he had joy.**
- The happiness you are looking for is found in being rightly related to Jesus, secure in Jesus, living like Jesus.

## 2. According to Jesus, happiness is a response to the gospel

- One of the most important, but overlooked details, is **where Jesus taught these things from**.
  - The detail I pointed out in vs. 1 says that he had gone up to the mountain to give this teaching.

traitor. Same is true today. If you're going to be the peacemaker from a group, people from your group will call you a turncoat or disloyal or a traitor. But you'll be blessed by God.



- And the teaching he gave was the law, so **throughout the Sermon on the Mount**, he kept referring back to Moses' law: you have heard it said, but *I* say unto you. He's giving a new version of the law.
- **It's supposed to remind you of another great teacher** had done that. Moses at Mt. Sinai.
- Which leads me to the **most common way people misconstrue** these teachings.
  - **People look at these things like a list you work through** to earn God's favor and salvation. A set of things you must do in order to be blessed by God.
  - ...which is the **most common way people misunderstand the original 10 commandments**, too. Do these, and you shall live.
    - But in Exodus, Moses **gave the law after salvation**. God had already delivered the Israelites out of slavery from the Egyptians through the Red Sea. These 10 commandments were not ways they should live in order to be saved, but because they had been saved. Throughout the commandments God kept saying, "**I am the God who delivered you from Egypt...**" *therefore* you shall have no other gods; you shall not kill, steal, lie, etc."
  - In the same way, these 8 things are things that we do because we've been saved.

You could read them like this:

- Because Jesus has saved us, we can be poor in spirit because we know he promises to be our sufficiency in all things
- Because Jesus saved us, we can enter into other's pain and mourn because that's what he did for us.
- Because Jesus saved us, we can be meek and take the 2<sup>nd</sup> place because that's what Jesus did for us.

- Because Jesus saved us, we can hunger and thirst for righteousness because the God of righteousness has become our Savior
- Because Jesus saved us, we can't help but being merciful to others because that's how he was to us.
- Because Jesus saved us, we want to be pure in heart so we can know him more
- Because Jesus saved us, we can prioritize peace instead of vindication because that's what he did with us.
- Because Jesus saved us, we can endure persecution because Jesus' resurrection shows us it is worth it.

**Our lawgiver was not a taskmaster who simply gave the law and threatened punishments if we disobeyed.**

- Our lawgiver was a Savior, who not only issued the law but offered himself as a substitute sacrifice for those ways in which we had broken it.
- He didn't just ascend the mountain to give the law, he ascended the cross to die in our place for breaking it.

If you look at these 8 things, or the rest of the Sermon on the Mount, as a checklist you accomplish to earn heaven, it will lead you to **despair**. You can **never do them good enough** to earn favor! But that is not what they are is for.

- These 8 things are **not rungs in a ladder you climb to get to God**; they are a **grateful response to Jesus coming down that ladder** to save you, taking your place on the cross.
- Someone told C. S. Lewis: "*I don't like the Sermon on the Mount.*" Of course you don't. No one likes the sledgehammer that destroys their house. But they help you see the need for grace, and then, in response to his gracious act of saving me, these things come more naturally.

So, that leads us TWO QUESTION:

- **Have you received Jesus as your Savior?** It's where everything starts!
  - Substitution. A gift.
- **Have you embarked on the life of discipleship?** Because it is characterized by these 8 things. *Are you ready for these to form the shape of your life?*

If so, have you shown that through your first act of obedience, your first act of discipleship, baptism?

- *When we baptize you, we ask 2 questions:*
  - *Do you trust that Christ has done... received his gift?*
  - *Will you do whatever he tells you to do...?*

Some of you have been putting this off for WAY too long. You have come to faith in Christ—maybe it was a while ago, maybe it was recently. Maybe you need to do it today.

- But, **bottom line, you've never publicly declared** your faith in Jesus through baptism.

Don't delay. If you were to see Jesus today he might say, "I **thought you were serious** about following me!" And you would say, "But I was." And he might say, "Then why didn't you obey this?"

- *LISTEN: There is no excuse that justifies disobedience.*
- **In a minute, I'll extend an invitation for you to come forward.**
  - Now, let me be clear, **coming forward is not you committing to be baptized**. We're going to have a conversation with you—answer any questions. And if you decide it's not for you, or we think there are still some things that are unclear, we'll postpone it for a while until we can get those questions answered. **Every time we do this we have some people who wait** until a later week.
  - But you can **at least come forward** and have the conversation.
- We have all that you will need: Change of clothes

- Your people will wait, I promise. Never in all my years had someone say, "No, I won't wait." If so, bring them to me to talk.

In just a minute, I'm going to stand you up, and **here's how this will work**:

- **When we stand, you come, all campuses, all in one motion**. Don't delay.
- The **person beside you will step back**, and you'll step out into the aisle, and one of our **people will greet** you in the aisle and we'll go have the conversation.
- **Here's what is happening to some of you**: Your heart has started to beat about **40% faster**, and you are saying to yourself "**I think he's talking to me.**" **Yes, I am**. If that's you, and you're **NERVOUS**, ask your friend standing next to you to come with you. If you don't know them, ask them anyway, they'll probably say yes. **Seriously**. If the person next to you looks nervous, like they might be considering this, just **reach over and touch** their hand... that will be the signal that you'll go with.
- **JUST COME**. It's important. This will be a **defining moment** for many of you that will literally reshape the rest of your life, quite possibly your eternity.

Let's stand... and Summit, at all campuses let's **put our hands together in celebration** for the ones who will be making this decision today.

