

“Landmarks”
By Chris Ulrich
Sunday, February 22nd, 2015

It's good to see everybody this morning. I know it got cold again, but I guess we're used to it at this point. It's not really—compared to last year, it's been okay; I guess I'd have to say that. Rebecca is from Ghana, West Africa, so I agree with her; it is unacceptable.

It's been a great month; 'Victory That Lasts a Lifetime,' that's been our theme of the month. I have to say that, personally, I feel like it's something that's been transcendent; it's something that has really hit home, personally, and it's something that's ministered to me tremendously in the last few weeks. I know one thing that was asked: Can you imagine being so thankful to someone or for something that 69 years later you would show gratitude, that you'd show that kind of thanksgiving? It's a true story that Parrish had shared, the first week this month of a man that had been a concentration camp inmate, and he was liberated, and he had the opportunity to meet his liberator sixty-nine years later. You had some pictures, you had some commentary, you had some stories to back it up. It was something that, it really caught my attention. Sometimes I think about that kind of life and some of the sufferings that we do endure, but we also have victories. I know there's a song (Jesus, Lover of My Soul) that we did that talked about, "...though my world may fall..." and I'll still trust in God. There's a passage in Job that says, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him..." (Job 13:15) So we have to look at it like, I know that's not an easy pill to swallow, and that's not something that we look at it like, okay, if you don't know God today, or if you're just visiting for the first time today, maybe just kind of examining it, looking into the claims of Christ and maybe if this is something that you'd want to live, I would say, absolutely, no doubt about it. I would stand behind it, and it's something that, personally, I feel like God has blessed my life tremendously; I've seen the blessings that God has poured out on us, here in this ministry, and it's an undeniable thing. I appreciate that analogy that you used, Parrish, that, what kind of change has God brought to our lives? That could be a day, that could be a month, that could be a year, that could be several years, but using that analogy to still be thankful, to still have that gratitude to God, about the kind of change, about those victories that he has brought.

I know Jesse Rairdon brought the message last week, "The Battle Belongs to the Lord," and I would say that the point that he used about thanking and praising God (In other words, not forgetting the blessings), that really got my attention. Jesse, I'm actually going to steal that from you a little later, and incorporate that in this message, because it did minister to me a great deal. It's something that, we have to reflect back on that; we can't just always think about, "What battle am I facing right now, in this present moment," without reflecting back on, "What God has brought me through." God has brought us the victories, and, yeah, there's been hardships. I mean, looking again at that example of people who were in concentration camps, people that were in slavery, people that were in bondage, people that had hardships, that had tragedies that are just beyond belief. But we still have to look at it like, still trust in God.

I'm going to ask everybody now if they could bow their heads in a word of prayer. God, we just thank You this morning, God we thank You for the music. We thank You, God, for the testimonies, God. We thank You for pouring out Your blessings. We thank You for keeping us in our right mind, God. We thank You, God, for Your sobriety, God. We thank you for what You have in store for us. Not just what You brought us through, and not what You brought us from, but what You have promised for us, God. Your Word said that, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you..." (John 14:2) God, You shared that You go away to prepare a place for us, God. We look forward to that one day, but we have this life to live, God, and we want to continue to just trust in You, God. We don't

want to have another second without being able to rely on You, without being able to thank You, without being able to trust You, and listen to Your guidance, God, and just have that day-to-day walk with You, God. We just want to ask these things in Your name, Jesus. Amen. Thank you.

I'm going to read off a quick definition, and I don't usually like to start off a message by giving definitions of words, but I want to read a couple, here:

- An object or structure on land that is easy to see and recognize
- A building or place that is important in history
- A very important event or achievement

I'm actually going to use landmarks today as opposed to talking points, because I believe that when we talk about a victory that lasts a lifetime, we need landmarks. Yes, we need points, but I think landmarks are the kind of thing that we remember, that we focus on, that we know that there was a turn in the road, there was a place where God got our attention, absolutely, without a shadow of a doubt, and I know we've all had personal experiences. So my first landmark today is that we need to love the truth. That might sound pretty simple and the truth is it's not supposed to be complicated (Apostle Paul talked about that take heed that ye be not deceived from the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ [2 Corinthians 11:3]). And it's one of those things where the world tries to overcomplicate it, or make us think that we need to have this massive understanding, or know different languages, or, on the other end of the scale, they try to oversimplify it, and say, "Well, you've just got to believe." We do have to believe, that is true, but faith without works is dead (James 2:17). The Bible talks about the devils also believe, and tremble (James 2:19). We do have to have faith; we do have to have hope.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-11 *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that He might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: Even Him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:*

And, again, reiterating that Paul said that to not be removed from the simplicity or to be corrupted from the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ, because there is a lot of false doctrine. There are a lot of false prophets, corrupt lifestyles, temptations, and plenty more that can drive us away from living the kind of that God's going to be pleased with. There is a lot to be said for having a love for the Truth. I know that when we do seek, and we do find what we're looking for, the Bible describes it as a pearl of great value (Matthew 13:45-46). But I know that—I'm just going to share a little personal testimony about some of the things that I sought answers for, answers to life, whether it's through books, or whether it's through music, or whether it's through drugs, or whether it was through philosophy, or different friends or relationships; and all these things come along, but, when Jesus Christ manifests Himself—and He does manifest Himself, there's no ifs ands or buts about it; the Bible says that the Grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men (Titus 2:11). So, we can't make excuses for others, and others can't

make excuses for themselves. Ultimately, we're all going to stand before the judgment seat of God. I like that song that we did earlier, Andy, "...Our God is greater..." You know what? In a politically correct world, a religious environment, it would almost seem that people would think, "You're putting down other religions." No, that's not true, because the Bible says in Isaiah that the nations are less than a drop in the bucket (Isaiah 40:15-17), and when you look at the Truth of God, and know that it is Jesus Christ, that He is God manifest in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16), there is only one God, and it's Him, and there are no ifs, ands, or buts about it. Our God is greater; our God is awesome in power. Those are some landmarks along the way. We have to understand, okay, it's not about going out and trying to bash other religions... I know there's a lot, in the climate that we're in, in America today, or in the world. You know, Jihadist movement, or the Muslims are on the warpath... Okay, it's true. That is true. It's something that people try to tap-dance around, like the correct verbiage, or terminology, or, "We can't say this, we can't say that..." Well, you know what? Jesus said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me." (John 12:32) So, it's not about going out there and trying to start arguments, or trying to start fights—doctrinally or physically—or whatever the case might be, but understanding that we do stand in God's corner; if God be for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31) There is an absolute, no doubt about it.

And, you know, there's a lot to be said for enjoying the life of a Christian. I'm not saying it's all fun and games, or that it's an easy lifestyle, or trying to convince visitors of something that's not true. There's been plenty of Christian blood that's been shed, and persecutions, and injustices... Just open the Bible to page one, well, probably page two or three, but, one you get into it, you see Cain slew Abel. I mean, that's right off the bat. That's like, right out of the box, and you're thinking, "How could that have possibly been?" It's like, we hear people say, "Oh, well, if God really did exist, then how could all this injustice happen? How could all these sorrows and...?" It's not God that's causing it! It's people that devise in their own mentality, that are driven by the power of Satan. The Bible talks about the Prince of the Power of the Air (Ephesians 2:2); that's the driving force behind it. The bible says that we wrestle not against principalities and powers and evil and darkness in high places (Ephesians 6:12), so evil exists. Getting back to that point, it's not like we're trying to gloss over, or make it seem like it's all a garden of roses, or all springtime and rainbows and all that stuff. But it's not as though it's nothing but challenges either. That's one thing to be said, it's like enjoying the joy in God. Joy is a real emotion or awareness or inward feeling or whatever way you want to put it. It's a word, but it's an absolute, real awareness; it's a real feeling; it's a real indwelling, and God gives it. There's no doubt about it that God gives it, and I don't want to give credit, and I know we don't want to give credit anywhere else because of that. Because God's shown us that, and it's something that is long-lasting. It is part of a victory that lasts a lifetime.

My second landmark today is that we need to have a plan to stay, and abide in the calling wherein we've been called. I want to read a verse, and I want to make some commentary on this, because this sometimes gets twisted around a little bit, I think.

1 Corinthians 7:20 *Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.*

We've heard it; we've run into it, and I'm sure Satan's given us justification or we can twist it this way, that way, or the other way or rationalize, or try to make it seem like we can excuse ourselves, or exempt ourselves out of everything that God's trying to call us and ask us to do. He said, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light," (Matthew 11:30) so, it's not like we're trying to make it more difficult than it actually is. Or, people think, "Oh, I don't need to stay here; I can go do whatever," or live whatever, or whatever the case may be. I'm not trying to step on anybody's toes, but the truth is, we have to live a Christian life if we're going to please God. That's a life-long lifestyle. But, again, Satan's going to throw in there, "This is what you've got to give up." I mean, that's like the first, "You've got to give this up. You can't do this; you can't live that..." Well, okay, there's sure a lot more things to gain than to give up,

though. I mean, when you think about it, it's like the tremendous blessings that God gives along the path of life that so far and away outweigh the things which we supposedly can't do. The truth is, if somebody has it absolutely set in their mind to do whatever it is that might be, they could do it, but they're going to pay whatever the price is if God says, "Don't do this." If God says, "Don't eat of that tree which is in the midst of the garden," (Genesis 2:16-17) and I know that's another early example, Biblically, of something that God said, "Don't do! Don't do! We've got millions of trees," or whatever, "but don't eat of that one. Just that one, right there." "Okay." And so they do it. It's like, when you think about that, it's like, the one thing, out of the millions of other options, "Okay, we can eat the grass," well, not the grass, but the fruits... "You can do whatever, just don't do this one thing." So they do it. So, that's how we got to this point. A lot of us know that, that is a fact, but, if you don't, that's very early Genesis as well.

Getting back to bidding in the calling; I'm not here to get in an argument, make a judgment call, condemn anybody, or anything like that. But, I want to read one more verse, because this ties in with the first verse in Corinthians. It's not a long passage. These are the words of Christ, if you've got the Bible with the red printing and you can see that. These are Christ's words:

John 15:4-6 *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

Now, I didn't count how many times it says 'abide' in there, but, maybe eight? These three passages, abide, abide, abide, abide, abide, abide... That would honestly have to be the theme. But, again, that second landmark: We have to have a plan to stay in God. Again, what does that mean? That means abide in the calling wherein ye are called, and abide in Jesus Christ. This isn't like trying to put somebody in a box, or make it so that it's like, "Your only options in this life are just this and nothing else." Because, in God, God's going to develop our personality, our character, to give us wisdom to understand that there's many options in life, but, one of them—certainly the most important one—is to abide in the calling where God has called us, which is the truth of God. So if I'm not going to stick around, then what do I think I want to do instead? There's a passage where Jesus was talking to the disciples, and it says He gave a hard saying. I'm pretty sure it's in John, but it doesn't really get into, you know, other than to eat My body and drink of My blood—that's a spiritual thing, because He's not physically talking about eating His body or drinking of His blood; and we are going to have communion this morning in remembrance of the body that was broken and the blood that was shed—but it's talking about you're going to have to partake in the sufferings of Jesus Christ. It doesn't mean that it's going to be nothing but blood, sweat, toil, and tears, but there are going to be some hardships along the way. But you are going to have something to show for it. But, as far as, Jesus asked Peter, "Will you go away also?" because it preceded that with, "Many of His disciples walked with Him no more." He looked at Peter, and He said, "Will ye go away also?" and Peter said, "Where would I go? You have the words of eternal life." (John 6:47-68) Once we grasp that mentality and understanding that Jesus Christ has the words of eternal life. This is where I got saved; this is where I heard the truth. Brother Jeff, you and I were talking about that last night. It's like, "This is it. I'm here for the long haul." I know the expression, "Come Hell or high water." You know, it's one of those things, Rob, we've talked about it in the last year, about, you know, when things were kind of rough; when there were things and persecutions happening in the ministry that were maybe not the most pleasant, the hope was always, "It's going to get better. It's ultimately going to get better. It has to." And it has! I mean, it really has. It's not a glamorous place; it's not like living in the lap of luxury here, that's for sure. But, the truth is, God will save our souls, if we abide in the calling, if we abide in the ship

(Acts 27:31). We talk about that word, 'abide.' It's not a gimmick, it's not a get rich quick scheme, there's no short cuts; it's just good, wholesome, sound doctrine, and it's designed to last a lifetime.

The third landmark today is that we can't live in regret for choosing to live this kind of life. That might not seem very disconcerting or troubling until we start thinking about the things that are passing us by. We think about, "Oh, I could have had this, and I chose not to, or God said, 'Don't go that way.'" It's hard. Again, I'm not trying to go back and forth and say, "Oh, well, you've got to deal with this hardship, it's great, and it's tough, and it's, you know, fear, and great joy," because it's not about mixed signals, either. It's about realizing, you know what? we sang that song—how does that go, Malcolm? "...though my world may fall..." Thank you. I mean, you're going to have times like that where it's like it does seem disastrous, or it does seem like the bottom's going to fall out. Now I want to ask something here, because I know that we've got some people, here, and, Sonia, I know when you and Abby first came from Puerto Rico, you were young ladies, didn't speak the language... How many came here, to this country, and did not speak the language at all? There's a few of us here—I'm not one, I'm not saying that like I'm part of that. Okay. I'd like to ask you, Sonia, could you share, just a few moments, what kind of challenges that might have been, but realizing, you know what, in the long run, you knew that there were blessings to be had? If you could come up and just share for a moment. I know I'm asking kind of spontaneously, but I'd like to ask if you could just share.

Sonia: Sure. It was very challenging. The English that was taught in Puerto Rico was, "Hi, my name is..." That was the most that we knew. So, the challenge was, it was scary. I was probably nine or ten years old. I remember coming home, crying, just crying, telling my mom, "I don't want to be here. I don't understand what they're saying." So, I can understand frustration as I see kids, and even adults, working in the medical field and helping them through that. It's anxiety; it's just fear of just not understanding. As young ladies, we pressed through it, and I understand that it's much easier when you're younger to grasp that much easier, but, yes, challenges were real. Fear, anxiety were some of them. But God blessed us through it and has brought us this far.

Thank you. I appreciate that. I know that's kind of spontaneous, but I think that, that's something that I've thought about. I was raised in the United States, and, yet, that is a challenge that I see a lot of people are faced with, and I think sometimes making the analogy to Christianity, early on maybe you feel like quitting. Maybe you feel like, "This isn't for me; I don't know if I can handle this. I don't know if I can keep living this life." But it's worth it. It's worth sticking around. It's worth enduring. Believe me, it's going to get better. And, you know what? we don't know how it's going to look at the very end. I'm not going to sit here and mask it over and say, "There won't be persecutions. There won't be people that were killed for the name of Jesus." That's, I believe, going to happen. That's the reality that we have to accept, but also look at it like I don't know what the future holds in store, but I know that Jesus Christ does hold our future, and we have to look at it from that standpoint. And, as far as those regrets, that being the third point, that you miss out on some things, and you feel like, "Well, okay, it's never going to come back." We can't live there, even though Satan's going to tell us, "You missed out on this. You didn't get the college degree. You didn't get this job. You're not living where you wanted to live. You didn't have this relationship." And just on and on, and it's the kind of thing where we have to come to grips with it. It's the kind of thing where you have to look at it like, "Okay, I can't go back in time."

A lot of us have heard that old song, "Regrets, I've had a few, but then again too few to mention." For those of you, that's a Frank Sinatra song. My dad's a big Frank Sinatra fan, going way back. Well, I'd have to say that Frank had it half right, because the name of that song was 'My Way.' The truth is, we don't want to live in regret, but we're doing it God's Way. This is not about doing it my way; it is about doing it God's way. We have to believe that God is able to keep that which is committed unto His hand,

and that's the other part of not living in regret, is that, I'm going to trust in God that he's got the best for us, and it may not always look like an easy path, and I'd have to say, this is the kind of thing where personal—I mean, everybody has to come to their own realization that it is a great life, but it can't be the kind of thing where it's foisted upon somebody else like—you have to think that it's the best life for you, because, if you don't, quite frankly, it's not going to do any good to try to force it upon anybody. It has to come personally, and it has to be the kind of thing where we're looking at it like, "You know, God has blessed me. One time, twice, three, a thousand, ten-thousand, a hundred-thousand... Just an infinite number of times."

2 Timothy 1:7-13 *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*

The fourth and final landmark is about understanding why God brings us victory. There's a verse in Romans 8 which I've mentioned before, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" In many ways that sums up God's perspective on those who love Him and keep His commandments. That doesn't mean we won't have struggles, we already touched on that, or heartache, or satisfaction, or tragedy, but also joy, and victory and triumph. We are going to run the gamut of emotions and probably even then some, because then it's going to seem like you're going to have things where it's like you just can't believe that you're even coming to that realization. I came to one—I'm going to just share another brief one, that, before coming to the knowledge of the truth, because there's so much false doctrine, and there's so much nonsense, and so many different—I'll just call it deviant life-styles—and just flat-out sin that is in the world, that is real, and I just didn't know where to find the Truth. I remember opening up a phone book, and I'm sure some of you have been there, too, and didn't know who to ask. You sort of attach yourself to people that you think might—might—have the answer. But I have to say that it was like, I felt strangled; I mean literally, like I couldn't even breathe—not like hyperventilating—but it was just like, "I just can't find it," and you get frustrated and you get angry and it's like you search and search, but, when I came out, and when I got baptized in Jesus' name, was born again, there's no doubt about it. You know I talked earlier about philosophy, books, or relationships or drugs or booze, whatever. There's all these different things, and then Jesus Christ. He stands there as a friend; He stands there and He knocks. And it's like, all these other philosophy, music, books, you throw them all behind you, "That's not it, that's not it, that's not it..." and then you get to Christ, and it's like, the truth is, most people say, "Nope, that's not it either. I'm just going to keep..." either looking, or just living the same kind of life, or whatever. But, when the seeking stops, that's basically the life you're going to live: going around in circles. I saw that in different people, like friends of my parents. It was like—and I respected them—but it was like, okay, it was more about, I don't want to just keep going around in circles, and just keep seeking, without saying, "This is the answer." Jesus Christ is the answer, and that's without a shadow of a doubt. God does want to give us a victorious life.

Luke 12:27-32 *Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day*

in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

It is God's pleasure to give us the kingdom. That is a difference-maker. Jesse preached last month; you'd actually shared six points and I have to admit that when I first heard that, I thought to myself, "That's a lot of points," trying to keep up. But, as I was preparing this, there are six points that I'm going to share, but I'm going to share them in a quick fashion, because, what you shared, Jesse, about those six points, it really is the kind of thing—I'm not saying it's a magic number; it isn't. It happened to be something that you used, and it transitioned into this message, because we've already covered the landmarks. Those four landmarks are the ones, and I'm not saying those are the only ones that you're going to have, that you're going to use in life. This is more of a personal realization, when that Spirit of God came to me in such a personal way, and because there was so many different philosophies and it's like your mind gets clogged up with all these different beliefs to where you don't even know what to believe anymore, because it seems like nothing is solid. But, I'll tell you one thing, and I can remember those things like it was yesterday, and I wasn't raised religious; I've shared that before; but the thing that God spoke to me—and I'm talking about instantly:

- God is real
- The devil is real
- Heaven is real
- Hell is real
- There's such a thing as sin
- You have a soul

It was like, "Whoa!" I mean, that just answered years of searching within, as fast as God can answer. I'm not talking about anything that is so profound *to anybody else*. It's not here to try to like, say, "Oh, that's a great story! Oh, that knocks it out of the park." That's not even my point.

We're going to get into—I'm actually going to ask for a little participation, now. I'd like to hear some people share; I'd like to hear some personal landmarks. Be respectful of people's time; I mean, we're obviously not going to be here all day. I think I'd like to hear, as we wind down this theme for the month, to hear some personal testimonies; what are some personal landmarks that you take personally. Something that you take personally. I just shared my six. I'm not saying that you need to remember them, or even write them down; I know I went through them quick, but those are the kind of things that were landmarks, that kept me in the faith for twenty-seven years. I'm not saying that there haven't been bumps in the road, but, my God, there has been blessing after blessing after blessing that are just miraculous and only God-given; only God-given. It wasn't like somebody said, "Oh, yeah, we'll give you a favor." It has nothing to do with that; it has to do with God giving us that victory that is for a lifetime. And, it's something that, having that plan... So, I'd like to ask, if people would like to stand, or just raise their hand. Rob?

Rob: A landmark for me is realizing that there is, really, no other option. We only have, you know, one way. Life never really ends, you shed this flesh, and you go on to somewhere, so, you've got a choice of eternal paradise, or eternal suffering, and there is no other option. If you fall, and you fall real bad, your only option is to get back up and keep on trudging forward. There's no other way. Some people say, "No, you've gone too far, you've messed up, you can't..." but the reality is, there's isn't another option for you, you've still got to try, you've still got to do it.

Mike: That there is a God, and He is One.

Pat: Just knowing that we're in one mind and one accord. Gloria and I were saying a lot of the things that you said.

Greg: I mentioned last week about being in chains, literally for fourteen years. My landmark is that my chains are off.

Rebecca: My landmark is let go and let God.

Andy: I was still in high school, and I remember the day that I had gone through a lot of things, and things in my mind, all the things that we did as teenagers, having fun didn't work, and I realized that that's not what life is about. It isn't something that any man or person gave me, but God showed me that there was more to life than what I was doing, and it wasn't anything I could do myself.

Parrish: He saved my soul.

Ken: I was homeless for eight years, doing alcohol and drugs, and I finally asked Jesus for a change in my life. My landmark is that, even though you do wrong, He still answers you and He shows you the way, because, come this October 27th, I'll have twenty years of being clean and sober.

Alvin: My landmark would be something like the grace of God and the Gospel. I really made a lot of bad choices, and decisions; placed myself in bad situations. But, it was then, it was the hand of God, just like in Romans, where it says when sin abounds, grace so much more super-abounds. And, I think it's in Romans again, it says it's the goodness of God that brings you to repentance. Because, you know, if it was just something that was forced upon me, I don't think I'd be in it for the long haul. I mean, it's the love of Christ that constrains me. That's what constrains me. That's a superior motive than just being fearful of wrath and judgment. You know? It's just coming to know God's character, that He's a loving Father, which I never really had. The Word of God says when your father or mother forsakes you, then I will take you up. So that's mine.

Matthew: A landmark for me, something that I've always known for myself, is that, even if no one dies and goes to Heaven and comes back and tells us how great it is. Even if we never see Heaven, living the Christian life has enough benefit now to say it's worth it now, even if we don't see what happens after we die, and know it's true and all of that.

Sonia: Mine would have to be, with all the storms and challenges that I face, among all the victories is that God has given to me to never look back and to have a made up mind, and not make this world my home.

Chris S: Yeah, mine is, there's an elder in the faith, Jim Ottoson, most of us know him, one night, he and I went out to eat, and he said, "Chris, never give up," and that's always stuck with me. I learned never get too high when things are going good, and never get too low... Stay steadfast. Get 'r done.

Mike K: My landmark, for me, are these spiritual convictions I keep going through, from my lack of obedience to the Spirit of God, but the Scripture that revelates to my heart, that I need to submit myself to the elders, and I want to get counselling, just so I can get more.

And you know what? You show a lot of respect; I will say that, Mike. I thank God, and, in the famous words of Jim Bailey, it's good to have you out today.

Ed K: Mine is when he took drugs out of my life. Not only without any withdrawals or anything, but He took the desire to even have it any more.

This is healthy, I appreciate every... I want to read a passage; it's just a one-liner, we'll say it like that.

Proverbs 22:28 *Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.*

I know we had a share time and many were able to, but in case you didn't, or it hasn't been something that's really hit home, let it hit home. Let it be something where a landmark does mean something personally to you, because this is not about what it is for me, or for any one individual, but God customizes His relationship with us. He knows what our likes and dislikes are, and what our abilities and inabilities are, or our willingness, or our boldness, or our lack of boldness, or faults, failures, and on and on. God still loves us, and that one thing: God loved us before we first loved Him (1 John 4:19). And, again, Jesse Rairdon, I appreciate your last point last week about remembering the innumerable blessings God has given us. I'm closing now, as the ushers start to come for communion. Rejoicing in those blessings that God gives us, it's going to wake us up with a smile even when we don't feel like it. It will help us to be a little kinder even when we don't feel like it. I might ask, Jeff, I don't know about—could you do, 'Let Me Be a Little Kinder?' That's another spontaneous thing here. I actually know we had a handout sheet that, I think, last time you were here, and I still have the handout sheet. I don't keep all the handout sheets, but, if you can? Before they start communion, it's those things that are going to be the meat for the journey, and the journey is long. I mean, it sometime seems that it's longer than we have the strength or power to be able to handle it, but it's going to help us one day to hear the words that everyone is going to want to hear (Christian and non-Christian), "Well done, thy good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord." That's a victory that is not just for a lifetime but for eternity, and that's what we have to keep in mind.

I thank you for your time. God bless.

Let Me Be A Little Kinder

Verse 1

Let me be a little kinder.
Let me be a little blinder
To faults of those around me;
Let me praise a little more.
Let me be a little meeker
To a brother that is weaker;
Think a little more of others,
And a little less of me.

Verse 2

Let me be a little braver
When temptation bids me waiver.
Let me strive a little harder
To be all that I should be.
Let me be a little meeker
To a brother that is weaker;
Think a little more of others,
And a little less of me.

Verse 3

Let me be, when I am weary,
Just a little bit more cheery.
Let me serve a little better
Those that I am striving for.
Let me be a little meeker
To a brother that is weaker;
Think a little more of others
And a little less of me.

