

If you have your Bibles, let's go to Matthew 25. I know that's not the book of Luke, but you and I both know we're never getting out of Luke. As we've read through Luke, up until this point and through the rest of this book, Jesus is very actively doing miracles around a subset of the people. And what I mean by that is the majority of Christ's miracles are around the poor and the needy and the afflicted. So if you start paying attention to the miracles of Christ in the Scriptures, what you're going to notice is the majority of those miracles take place in that genre of people. It's a very rare thing for Christ to do those miraculous acts around the wealthy and knowledgeable. In fact, you'll even see some places where it says He didn't do any miracles there because the men and women lacked faith, because they weren't in need, because they weren't desperate for it. So if you'll follow that and then go into the book of Acts, you see that this pattern continues. Where there is someone afflicted with a disease, the apostles do the miraculous and heal them. Where there are poor people, the miraculous occurs. Where there are desperate people, the miraculous occurs. And this is a very, very common occurrence in both the gospels and the book of Acts. And I could run through a bunch of those, specifically in the book of Luke, from the feeding of the five thousand to Jairus' daughter to the woman who had a spirit of affliction. Demon possession, never being able to walk, a withered hand, these are all instances of Jesus showing up and He either feeds the hungry or heals the afflicted. Now when talking about this aspect of Jesus' ministry on into the book of Acts, there are three major popular views of what's occurring in that. Very quickly, I want to run through the three views, tell you where we land and then get into some practical things.

Now, the first view of the miraculous life of Jesus, that aspect of His life, on into the apostles and the miracles in the rest of the New Testament is that you and I in Christ now have those powers. We have the power of miraculous healing and the casting out of demons. And mature Christianity is one where you and I, filled with the Holy Spirit, are able to do these same works. And it's mainly in the hyper-Charismatic movement that would say and teach that all of us, once we're mature, will walk in this kind of power. And so if we believe, if we have faith and if we have been filled with the Holy Spirit, then we can walk up to a lame man and say, "By the power of Jesus Christ, get up and walk" and have that guy pop up and walk. And this is one view. And they will say, "Look at what Jesus says. Jesus even says, 'I must leave and send the Spirit so that you can do even greater things than you've seen me do.'" Now, there are some problems with this view, namely the Bible itself. And although I am a strong believer in the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit and am in no stretch of the imagination a cessationist (I believe they're here, all of them and they will continue to be until the return of Christ), there are some problems with saying that all of us, when mature, will be able to do these things. The Scriptures clearly say that not all men have all gifts and that some were given the gift of healing and some weren't, that some were given the gift of prophecy and some weren't. And on and on we go. Which means that some people will have this gift where when they pray, things happen. Have you ever been around that guy? Where you pray and everybody's really motivated but nothing happens, but when he prays stuff happens? That's an odd guy, but it happens. That would be the first problem. The second problem with this view outside of the Bible is that when all is said and done when you elevate the miraculous outside of the One who gives those miracles, you get off, and that becomes catastrophic. Let me be honest here. Miracles in the Bible have not sustained anyone's faith. In Exodus you have men and women coming out of Egypt, God parts the Red Sea, kills Pharaoh's army after He gives plague after plague after plague after plague, they cross the Red Sea, Moses goes up on the mountain, within a matter of weeks they've taken the gold out of their ears, melted it down, made a cow and started worshipping the cow. Here's another great one. Have you ever wondered, reading through the gospels, how Jesus comes into town on Monday and with palm branches they say, "Hosanna, Hosanna, save us, Hosanna," and then on Friday scream out "Crucify Him...Kill Him...Crucify Him?" If you'll go back and read that passage, Luke 19, you'll find that they're saying "Hosanna" praising Him for the miracles He had done. Which means they did not love Him for Him but rather for what He had done.

And it was empty and didn't sustain. So this is the first view, and there's some problems with it. Do not use this in any way as ammunition against the miraculous gifts. Because I believe you cannot biblically explain them away. You can think they're weird, you can not understand them, but you can't say they don't exist, not biblically. Now you can play some goofy games with the Bible and try that, but in the end the whole of Scripture says they're here until the return of Christ.

The second view about this kind of Christ engaging in miraculous ways the poor and needy started in the late 1800's and early 1900's. It was kind of revitalized in the 60's, as a lot of things were, and now it's kind of gaining momentum again. That view is that social justice and care for the poor and needy are the gospel, so that we are the gospel and we are doing the gospel and we are doing what Christ has commanded us to do in its fullness if we simply take care of the poor and the needy. Now, once again there are monumental problems with that. Right out of the gate, it's works based, which is the antithesis of the gospel not the fullness of it. Secondly, Christ came for a much bigger reason than to solve the felt needs of men and women. So that's the second view. It's very, very popular today. It's gaining momentum again. It really is true that if you don't learn from history, you're going to repeat it. Some of my favorite stuff now being written by younger authors is like they've stumbled across the key of everything. It's like they never read anything that was written in the 60's that said the same thing...right before it failed and burned. It's like, "We've discovered something!" You're like, "It's a Beta VCR. You didn't discover anything. It became obsolete in the 80's." And so it's a view. Watch it. You'll see it really saturating the emergent wing of Evangelicalism right now where, "If we would just care for the poor and if we would just be about social justice, that's what God's really after." And that's a piece of it, just like the miraculous signs are, but they're not the fullness of it.

Which brings us to the third view of Jesus' miracles, specifically His life with the poor, the needy, the hungry, the diseased and the ill. The third view is that Jesus' life modeled for us, both individually and corporately, what a life, a soul that had experienced the mercy of God through salvation by faith alone and grace alone would look like. So a heart that had been touched by the mercy of God freely and quickly extends mercy to others. So the life of Jesus on into the apostles' work with the poor and hungry social justice issues occurred so that Jesus would show for us and model for us what was going to happen to us as mercy was extended to us in salvation. In progressive sanctification, as we came to know Christ and began to mature in Him, more and more and more our hands were going to loosen up on what we deemed as ours and we began to extend mercy to those in need. So the miraculous plays out in that. And social justice and care for the poor play out in that because God is unbelievably serious about this issue. There are two ways I can prove this seriousness to you. The first is to take you on a whirlwind tour through all the books of the Bible, where over and over and over and over again God either demonstrates or commands a love and a care for the poor and the diseased and those who are oppressed. We can start in Genesis 3 where Adam and Eve, filled with shame, cry out that they're naked and God in the first act of mercy made them some clothes. We could go on to the establishment of the law where God commands the children of Israel, His people, to care for, love and give away portions of their wealth to the poor and the needy and the oppressed. We can move on the prophets where God grows enraged with Israel when they begin to believe that all of their wealth, all of their time, all of their energy was just about them and they continued to go into the temple and sing pretty songs and talk about the goodness of God while they neglected those who were dying around them. We could go into how many times they were conquered by other empires because of this sin. We could move on to Jesus caring for the poor, caring for the needy, spending His time in that venue. We could just go on and on and on, right into the seven letters to the churches in the book of Revelation where God once again goes, "What are you doing?" But we don't have time for that. So what I want to do is simply show you what Jesus says is going to occur when all is said and done.

That brings us to Matthew 25, a very difficult text. Starting in verse 31, *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”* Now let me stop because I’ve got to unpack something for you here. Because one of the problems with unpacking this for you tonight is you can go, “Okay, I’ve got to handle the poor, I’ve got to work with the poor. I’ve got to do that to make God pleased with me.” What you’ll notice in this breakdown is God says, “You’ve done these things,” and they’re going, “When have we done that?” as if they were unaware that they were trying to do something in order to please Him, but were doing something that was natural once the gospel hits their heart. Which is why they’re saying, “When did we do that?” Because it wasn’t a one week event every summer, it wasn’t a Saturday afternoon. It was what they did. It was how they lived. It was how they saw the world. So when the King on His throne says, “You did all these things,” they’re going, “When did we do all that to You?” And He says, “Well anytime you did that to the least of these, you did it to Me.” So this isn’t a works based thing. This isn’t at thing that they did in order to please Him, but rather once they felt His mercy it was a natural part of progressive sanctification.

Now let’s look at this next part that’s really horrible. Verse 41, *“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’”* There’s something behind that too. What’s behind that is, “If we would have seen You in those states, we surely would have done that.” They’re still stuck in the works based stuff. “Oh, if we would have seen You sick, if we would have seen You naked... You’re deemed as worthy of those things. If we would have seen You, we surely would have done something here.” But look at what He says. *“Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”* This is a difficult text because it appears that Jesus is saying that in the end there will be those that did and those that did not, and those that did will be welcomed in and those that did not will be excluded. But we know that Christianity is different from the world’s religions in that it’s not, “I do these things so that God will accept me,” but that the cross of Christ gives us acceptance before God, justifies us before God. So what this has to be is an external, objective evidence that the gospel has taken root in our hearts.

So if God is this serious about this issue, what does that look like at the Village Church? I think there are two fronts. One is the international front. For nearly six years, we have been heavily involved in Compassion International. Over 700 young boys and girls have been adopted by us, by you providing education, providing clothing, providing food monthly. We were actively involved in China doing everything from building what amounted to a clinic hospital to schools. And I know if you read a lot or watch things other than Comedy Central, you’ll might even be going, “Isn’t China a burgeoning power in the world? Aren’t they an economic giant?” In mid 2007, it was estimated that in China there were

1.3 billion men and women, over 20% of the world's population. Of that 1.3 billion people, 300 million (roughly the population of the United States) are middle class or above. Which leaves 1 billion people (over 3x the population of the U.S.) still in poverty or worse. So yes, China is an economic giant, but the rich are getting richer. So we were there actively working among the poor. This Tuesday night at the Highland Village campus, we've got three families that are gearing up to go Zambia, Kenya and Guatemala to work with the poor, to work with the oppressed, to work with the diseased, to work with the widow, to work with the orphan. You're going to hear their stories, because none of the grew up going, "I'd like to leave air-conditioning. I'd like to leave my friends. I'd like to rent out this house that I love to someone I don't know in order to go to a country that is wrought with conflict." So something happened to them. There is a greater joy somehow in going. That is what it looks like on the international front.

But we're not just in the outermost parts of the earth. We have a responsibility for here, Dallas. So locally, it takes on dozens of different little limbs, but let me give you the big ones. One is Transform. Already this summer over 2,000 people have been involved. Some are part of the church, others are just part of the community. They have gotten involved and in three campuses in the Dallas/Fort Worth area doing everything from mosaics to painting to building strong relationships within those schools. If you live in Denton or get the Denton paper, they had a huge article on what's happened in the schools, what's occurred in the schools because of what we're doing via Transform and some other things. Transform is a huge part of how we engage this community, how we engage the poor of this community, how we engage the oppressed in this community. And let me tell you one of the simplest, biggest things we do, and it's going to be hard for you to believe me at first. Probably the most powerful thing we do for the poor and oppressed in the Dallas/Fort Worth area is our mentoring program with junior high and high school students. For those of you who are my age or younger, you may be going, "I did that in high school. I was called PAL, Peer Assistance and Leadership. I did that. I went down to the elementary school and read a book. I just don't see how that's the big thing that transforms community, me spending an hour a week with a seventh grade punk kid." Okay, well let's chat. The public schools are the only place left where there is a mixture of every kind of socioeconomic, ethnic and religious background. There is no other venue that plays out like that. Sports does not, because the wealthier you are, you go to this kind of camp. The more money you have, you're on this kind of team. And just on a brief side note, \$6,000 so that your five year old can be on an elite traveling soccer team might be insane. E-mail me if you want. It might be crazy. I'm not saying it is...I'm just saying it is. And so the public school system is the last place left where you've got this combination of things. Let's just talk statistics. Do you know that a high school drop-out is 8 times more likely to commit a violent crime than those who graduated from high school? Do you know there is a direct correlation between drop-out rates and property value? Which means the higher drop-out rate at a school, the lower the property value is in that given area. Four in ten high school drop-outs receive government assistance. That means \$192 billion annually of taxpayer money goes to assist high school drop-outs. So theoretically if you can decrease the drop-out rate, you have started to affect the amount of violent crime in an area, you have begun to affect the property values in an area. There are other things that have to take place also, but those things can happen too. Decreasing the drop-out rate raises the financial value of an area. By spending simply an hour a week with a junior high or high school student that is at risk, you can deeply and powerfully transform a community. It also gives us eyes and ears on what is really going on in the community. And who we work with is those kids who have come from very dark, very difficult backgrounds. There is abuse there, there is neglect there, there are parents who are in prison. Let me give you some examples from some of our staff guys who mentor. Gilbert, who does communications here, is a dear friend who has been on staff about as long as anyone. The student that Gilbert mentors lives in a small house with 22 other people. I have an office at our house where I was looking over this this morning, and my son ran

in with a DVD and was like, “I want to watch this.” I looked at it and it was “Hello Kitty” so I spanked him. “No sir.” I put on “G.I. Joe” instead. Anyway, my point is that I live in a decent sized house with four people and finding the space to think, to do work is difficult. Can you imagine a house half the size of the one I live in with 22 people? I have two children. Do you know how difficult it is to give them both adequate attention? Twenty two people. That is a very difficult scenario. Probably the one that broke our hearts the most was Joe, who runs a lot of this program for us. Joe’s kid Christian has a dad in prison and his mom just really has a lot of rage. And she can’t pour it on her husband who is in jail, so she pours it on Christian. And last Christmas we did cards so the kids can take cards home and give them to their mom. And when Christian’s mom came to pick him up, Christian gave her the card and she looked at it, opened it, read it and was just like, “This is crap, like most of what you do” and threw it in the trash. Christian’s ten years old.

So the question is: Does mentoring really work? In October, we set out to find out whether or not it would work. Over 250 of you were trained as mentors and dispersed among 21 different schools in Denton County. Of the 250+ students who were mentored, who were every single one on a list of 100 of the most at risk students in their school, almost all of them were failing as they entered the program. Of the 250+ students that were mentored, only two did not pass or did not graduate. So over 99% of the students who were mentored passed on to the next grade or graduated. Where I try to get in my head in all of this is my daughter and my son. Because if I can’t put flesh on it and I can’t feel the weight of it and I forget that we’re talking about human beings here and people made in the image of God, if I can’t get that into my head, then this loses it’s weight. That’s over 250 individual boys and girls with this story, with this background, with this pain, with sorrow, with neglect, with abuse, with self-hate, 250 pain-wrought, gut-wrenching stories of life change because of one hour a week. I’ll let you see one.

Ben: “My name is Ben Kundmueller, and I’ve attended the Village Church for a year and a half. The first service experience that I had with the Village was Transform in 2007. A home group of Grapevine guys went down to South Dallas and participated in renovating a building for Cornerstone Baptist Church. They basically threw us a bunch of tools and put in a dark room, and we were pretty much in charge of tearing everything down. It was pretty awesome. Through that experience, I learned and got to see another ministry that the Village was involved in that I was unaware of. There was a group of volunteers going down to Cornerstone every week, and they were just loving on and working with the kids in the Cornerstone neighborhood. I got to meet pastor Chris Simmons, and I learned about the mentorship program at Cornerstone. I would say that that neighborhood is probably one of the worst areas in the Dallas/Fort Worth area just from the violence and poverty there. It’s just very challenging. So the mentorship program of Cornerstone and the Village was an opportunity for some of us to get in there and work with some of the kids that lived in that neighborhood. I started talking with one of the volunteer leaders about that opportunity, and God kind of began laying on my heart that this was something that He had for me or was on the horizon for me. But there was a kid named Cantrell Walker, who I had already met through the Cornerstone Kids ministry and I was already friends with, he took it upon himself to go to a mentorship event that was supposed to be for mentors and mentees. He went by himself and went up to Josh Sims, who leads the mentorship program, and without knowing I was interested in mentoring, Cantrell called me out by name and told Josh he wanted me to be his mentor. After Josh relayed that message to me, it might as well have been God telling me Himself that this was something that I needed to do, that I needed to mentor Cantrell Walker.”

“After sitting down with Cantrell for the first time and he began to share his story with me, I was very blown away and overwhelmed when I started to hear about his past and his background. He grew up in

Greenville, Texas, and he lived with his mom and dad, but there was an abusive relationship in their house on his dad's part. Eventually there was another woman in the picture, and there was a lot of verbal, physical and emotional abuse. Eventually they split, and that kind of started a cycle of really hard times for the family. His mom was in South Dallas trying to secure a job, and they were left in Greenville with their father. Many times they were sleeping in crack houses or motels. And there was actually one night where they were in a motel when two men that Cantrell's father had a previous altercation with came into the place they were staying with a gun, and Cantrell ended up getting shot two times. This when he was seven years old. I think we saw all the effects on the kids that we would expect to see. They were violent, they were performing poorly in school, they would lash out at family members and friends. They had anger in their heart, and basically every relationship that they had to this point was broken. Looking at those things and looking at the statistics, if you wanted to, you could have written Cantrell's life story. You could have decided where he was going to end up and who he was going to be, but God has really had His hands on this family and has done some really amazing things in his life. I think the most joyful experience I've had with Cantrell would be the day of his baptism. I got the chance to be there and visit Cornerstone and to be there with his family and his friends. Cantrell has actually invited kids to the Cornerstone Kids program and to his church, and two of his close friends actually have made professions of faith and joined the church and they're regular faces at Cornerstone Kids. So he has undoubtedly become a positive influence in his community and in his neighborhood. My hope in joining the mentorship program and working with Cantrell was to impact Dallas and guide Cantrell any way I can. He's not a project. He's not something that I have to fix or do myself. I've learned and God's shown me that all I need to do is just affirm and love him and spend time with him. I've just learned that time is the most important thing."

"In working with Cantrell, God's just shown me and gifted me with something so much bigger than myself. Before I was working with him, I would say my focus was most definitely me, even spiritually. It was my walk, where I'm at, what I'm doing in life, and now I just seem to think about helping him and working with him and being with him. It's brought more joy to my life looking through those lenses than it ever did when I was just focused on me. And I think that plays itself out in lots of ways like where I spent my time and money. I would spend my Friday nights I'd go out, and I would be all about going out and who I'm hanging out with. Now I'm in bed early, and I'm looking forward to Saturdays mornings. And the with money that I would have spent the night before I can take Cantrell out with his friends and eat and hang out and talk to them and talk about God. I remember I used to have to keep my car immaculate. My room always had to be clean, my car had to be clean. That was just something that was important to me. Yesterday I was still peeling off butterfly stickers from my car because some brat kids at Cornerstone Kids put stickers on my car. But that's just not important to me anymore. And each time I pulled off a butterfly, I realized that those kids love me enough to put stickers on my car. I would say small stuff like that has just changed me in my heart, and I fell like I'm better for it. I think the verdict's still out on that. I'm not sure what the end result is going to be, but I do know that the change and impact he's had on my life was completely unexpected. It's something that I can't explain and wasn't prepared for. And I think that God does things that make no sense to us, and in that we know that they can be only of Him. I believe that that accurately describes what the mentorship program and Cantrell have had on my life."

I think there are two ways to view this and see this. The first is how amazing is it that Cantrell has seen this transformation in his life. Because there really has been some profound transformation in his life. I believe he's going to a magnet school this fall. He was failing almost all of his classes, he was having these violent lashings out. The gospel so penetrated Cantrell's life that not only is he pretty much making all A's, but he's been invited pretty much into a private school that can increase the level of education he's getting. So we can look at this and see a kid that was in a drug deal gone bad, shot

multiple times, thrown out by his father. There's a lot to this story that wasn't on the video where his father actually tried to reenter the picture just a few months ago and threatened to murder him and his family. And Cantrell stood up in front of the church and asked for prayer and just said, "Let my old man do what he wants to do. I'm going to follow the Lord." So you've got this really profound thing that happened Cantrell. And I think that's a good thing, a right thing. The people of Israel were once in captivity in Babylon, and God said, "Here's what I want you to do while you're in captivity. I want you to find a wife and I want you to build houses and I want you to work for the good of the city." So we've got that here, but then there's this other piece that I need you to hear as Dallas suburbanites who like their rims a little too much. And that's that Ben here is stuck in this horrible cycle of self-absorbed Evangelical trash where everything's about him and everything's about his growth and the width of his spirituality is going out with good Christian friends on Friday night and making sure his car is cleaned and coming to the Village. That's his walk. And as best as he could unpack it there he just said, "Man, I'm bored out of my mind and stagnant in my faith. And a fourteen year old who's had the weight of the world on him has been used by God to transform me into a twenty something single guy who doesn't care about going to bed early on Friday and having butterfly stickers on his car. So there's one way to look at that – that this is that Ben did this thing that transformed Cantrell's life. And there's this other way to look at it – that God did this thing in Ben's obedience through Cantrell that changed Ben's life.

And if you come Tuesday night, that's what you're going to hear. I know the Smiths. They're not going to come up here with capes waving in the wind, talking about their super powers in the Holy Spirit. They're going to talk about what God did in their hearts when they went, how God used a little boy named Moses to transform them. That's what you're going to hear, imperfect talking about God's power through the poor, through the needy, through the oppressed. I know the Mendonzas, I know the Brimages. They're not going to stand up here and say, "We're going to save." Them going is part of their sanctification. They're going for their own joy. They're hedonists. And it is not going to be as romantic as they think; it is going to be much more difficult than they can imagine. In it all, Christ is going to breathe deep, sweet, beautiful life into all of them. Have you ever noticed when you go to the movies ho many ichthus fishes are on the cars? I'm not saying we shouldn't see movies. I got my *Dark Knight* on this week. Between you and me, I want to be Batman...a spiritual Christian version. I've got this thing that I've said from day one. Do you know what the problem is with most Evangelicals? We're bored. We're bored out of our minds, because everything is about learning more without applying anything. This is a very simple truth that's communicated from beginning and end, even through the cross. And what's being communicated is that the world and life is not about you. And the more you live that way and the more you're defined by that, the more destruction you reap on yourself. And I'm not talking about cosmic, horrific destruction where brimstone and fire fall out of the sky and burns up you and your home; I'm talking about your spirit drying up and what your spiritual life consists of is you week in and week out coming to church, getting motivated, doing nothing and wondering where God is. "Blessed are the poor" He said. This is our call. It's the call on you, it's the call on me. It's the call on us individually, it's the call on us corporately. It's why we're never building some \$60 million building. Because we don't believe in wasting capital on that thing when we can spend capital on those things. It's why there's so much emphasis and weight put on Transform, on the mentoring program. In Luke 3, John the Baptist looks at the people of Israel who knew the law backwards and forwards and says, "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance." Which means repentance is not a one time thing, but it's the rest of our lives. Over and over and over again, for the rest of our lives, we're going to have to look deep, we're going to have to answer the difficult questions and we're going to have to give an account. Which means we're going to have to move towards obedience or continue to move away from it. And every time you decide to move away from it, you dampen and dry out any vitality you might have with Christ. So the good news is there is very

easy ways to start on the path of obedience. Sitting out there in the foyer is the table for the mentoring program. If one hour a week is too much for you, we have lists of a bunch of school supplies for the kids that we work with. You can grab one of those lists and stock it. 250 mentors is what we have; we're shooting for 500 this run. And we want it to grow and grow and grow. I've told you since I got here, I love Acts 19 where the whole socioeconomic feel of Ephesus began to shift because of the gospel penetrating every facet of their society. That's what we're trying to do, work for the good of the city. I'm pleading with you to rescue you from a thousand trivial things that will just continue to perpetuate your boredom and your spiritual dryness.

Let's pray. "Father, I thank You for these men and women and just pray that they would use just the next few minutes take stock, to ask the difficult questions, to wrestle through whether or not they are living for them and them only or if they're being obedient to these things. I pray that they would hear the weight of Your seriousness about the poor, about the needy, about the oppressed, about how consistent, how commonly You call Your people to engage at this level, to forsake some of their own creature comforts, to forsake some of their own time, energy and money for the good of the city among the poorest of the poor. This is not the gospel, but it certainly flows out of it. So help us and move us and save us. We need You. It's for Your beautiful name. Amen."