

If you have your Bibles, let's go, Ezekiel. We'll start there, then head to Isaiah in a little bit and end up in Matthew 23. Last week...honestly if you're a guest with us here this morning or if this is your first or second time here, it's a good time for you to be here. We're kind of going through what we call our family traits. Or basically, we're having a very frank, very raw discussion about philosophically why we do the things we do, how we're built out, why we're built out the way we are, why we do certain things but don't do other things. And by no means, in any of this are we saying that we think we're the way. We just think we're a way, and we want to be obedient to Christ as He's disclosed Himself to us in the Scriptures and how we feel we need to be obedient to those. And so, last week we launched out and talked about the fact that you and I find ourselves caught up in this epic story that's behind everything in the universe, that a creator God created all things. He created them in rhythm, in harmony, functioning for the display of His glory, for the enjoyment of His creation and enjoying His glory. He creates it all, and it works well. And that lasts for two chapters of the Bible. And then from there, sin is introduced into the world, and sin breaks that harmony, breaks that rhythm, sends things spiraling out of control.

So these really beautiful things gave us for our enjoyment of His creativity and glory all of a sudden become at times perverse. The examples I gave you last week were: The Scriptures are really clear that wine was given to man to make his heart happy. And so wine then, instead of becoming that, moves and becomes drunkenness.

Food was given to us so that we might revel in and glory in a creative God who thought of flavors and how flavors would combine. So that in eating a fajita from La Hacienda Ranch, there should be an explosion of worship because God created not only the skirt steak but the guacamole and the cheese, and when that's combined, that's all God's stuff. And so, that was given to us so that dinner, lunch, breakfast, mid-afternoon snack would be these moments of gratitude laden worship. But instead, it has either become gluttony or consumed without gratitude at all.

Sex given to us...so the Hebrew idea behind sex is this word dode. It means "the mingling of souls." Instead of becoming this very powerful mingling between two people who are walking in trust and in mental and emotional intimacy, it becomes a mere physical act or outright adultery or the preacher word is "fornication." I still don't know what that means, but I have to say it because I'm a preacher.

So, this is what happens. All that was right, all that was in rhythm, all that was in harmony is fractured by the fall of man. Now, God intervenes in the middle of this broken, spiraling out of control creation and sends Himself in the flesh, Jesus, by the death of Jesus on the Cross, to absorb the wrath of God and prepare a way for men to be redeemed back to Him. Now, it has been my experience that most Evangelicals and most people who are a part of churches, in fact, I would say even most churches believe that the story stops there. Like, the whole story of what's going on is creation, fall, redemption and then the story's over. Now, the problem with that is the Bible, because the Bible isn't going to let the story stop there. When you stop the story at your redemption, then what you do is you, whether you want to or not, it just rolls down this way, when redemption is the end of the story, then you become central to a story that, in the end, you're a bit player in. Like, if you want to view this in 2007 terms, if this is a movie, it's a 9 hour move that you have 7 seconds in. You ain't Tom Cruise in this movie. A bit player. The other piece that we don't talk a lot about, because it's horrifically convicting, is restoration. Because the story of what God's doing and what we find ourselves caught up in doesn't end up in redemption, but rather redemption leads to the restoration.

And so, here's what you've got happening. You've got God creating harmony, rhythm, everything moving like it should, the fall fractures that, God sends Jesus, Jesus saves mankind, begins to save men and women so they wholly His. And in becoming wholly His mentally, emotionally, spiritually, our resources, who we are, what we do, by giving Christ ownership of that, we become tools of restoration. So He begins to use us, the church to restore broken places until His return at which He'll perfect all things. That's the whole story.

But it's been my experience that the majority of us are stuck on just the redemption thing. Now, don't get me wrong. I love redemption. I'm not complaining about redemption. I'm not saying, "Redemption's ruined this thing." That's not what I'm doing here because it hasn't. Saved by grace through faith, that in itself, a gift so that no man should boast in anything but the cross of Christ, it's this beautiful thing, but it doesn't stop there. And if it does stop there, if the church stops there, she becomes impotent and loses her place in the story. From the beginning, God has said, "I will bless, I will save, I will heal, I will redeem so that you might be an agent of healing, redemption, hope. I'll give you an example. In Genesis 12, which by the way is about as beginning as it gets, God comes to a man named Abram and says, "Here's what I'm going to do with you. I'm going to make a great people out of you. In fact, your relatives in the end are going to outnumber the sand on the beach and the stars in the sky." Now, I know some of you haven't been to a beach. Galveston doesn't count. That's not the beach. Don't get in the water there, seriously. If you've ever been out to the West Coast or Hawaii or some place like this, I mean you've just got all these granules of sand and God says, "This is what I'm going to do through you. And here's why. I will bless you, I'm going to bless you so that all nations of the earth will be blessed." So, listen to what God's plan was in the beginning. "Abram, you become Abraham, you become the father of many nations, and in blessing you, in saving you, in calling you out, I am going to push back what went horrifically wrong at the fall. I will right what's gone so horrifically wrong through you." So to this day, you and I, saved, called, healed, made whole. Not so that wholeness and healing terminates on us alone, but so that it pours out of us onto a dark and hurting world. But here's the thing. The church has always struggled with this. Like, she forgets so easily. And so, God, who's this great, great husband to you is the illustration in Scripture, He talks to His bride all the time about this.

Let me show you some of the things I'm talking about. Ezekiel 16. Now, if you grew up in church or didn't grow up in church, you'll know this story. There's this story in the Old Testament where God got angry at two cities and He destroyed them: Sodom and Gomorrah. Even if you didn't grow up in church, you know the story of Sodom and Gomorrah because some pastor on television referenced the story in a debate over homosexuality. Now, what we were told in Vacation Bible School or church...they didn't give us the whole story, they kind of built it around Lot and his wife. If you'll remember, God said, "You get out of here. I'm blowing the place up, and if anybody looks back, they're doomed." And so, Lot is in front of his wife, hauling it. And he turns back to find his wife, she's a pillar of salt because she looked back. He didn't grab her. He's like, "See ya." He just left his salty woman there and ran on without her. And she looked back and was destroyed by God, and fire falls from the sky and consumes Sodom and Gomorrah and no one is spared in those cities. Everyone is killed in those cities. Now, you and I have been told, if you've got any kind of church background at all, we've been told that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of sexual deviance. Now, that was a small part of it, but the truth is that's not the whole story. Once again, the problem that we get into is the Bible itself. The Bible's going to teach that Sodom and Gomorrah were for a heart issue that led to sexual deviance, but it wasn't the sexual deviance itself that He destroyed. Let me show you what I mean. Ezekiel 16, starting in verse 49, "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom:..." Alright, so here's what he's saying. This is what happened in Sodom. You want to know why God destroyed Sodom? Here's why He destroyed Sodom. "...she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy." Alright, so once again let's go back to the story. Let's go back to the context in which we find our lives being played out. God says, "You've been blessed, I've blessed you with wealth, I've blessed you with food, I've blessed you with harmony, I've blessed you with safety, and you are taking all that I gave you to push back what is dark and you have let it terminate on you." Now, look at this next line. I told you we'd talk about the sexual deviant part. Look at verse 50. "They were haughty..." And for the young crowd, it doesn't mean the whole

city was good looking. That's not hottie; it's a different kind of haughty. It's pride. I'm just trying to span the linguistic gap here. "They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them, when I saw it." Now, according to Romans 1, sexual deviance is a result of a man's heart and a group of men's and women's hearts that says, "My way's better than God's. I'm smarter than God." Romans 1 would say it like this: that we "exchanged the truth about God for a lie." And when we do that, the Scriptures say, God gives us over to a depraved mind to do what is not proper. Sexual deviance always follows self-indulgent, greedy hearts, always. If I could not be a pastor and just be a historian with you for a minute, if you're not a believer in Christ here, not church folk, if I could step down here and be a prof and use some of the history. I promise you, you can go study any superpower that's ever reigned, and that moment, at their apex, what you'll find is that they're all very comfortably living, they are all oppressing the poor and sexual deviance is out of control, whether that be incest, whether that be rape, whether that be homosexuality. Just watch it. Just go out to your library. It's this place that has books. Or Google it. On or the other. So, God comes to His people...now keep in mind, Ezekiel is written to Jerusalem. He comes to His people and say, "I have blessed you. I'm going back to the Abrahamic covenant. I have blessed you so that you would be a blessing. Instead of becoming a blessing, you have terminated My gifts upon yourself."

Let's go over to Isaiah. It will be to your left. Honestly, you can pick almost any Old Testament book. Let's go to Isaiah 1, we'll pick it up in verse 10. "Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom!" As soon as they heard that, they would have been like, "Uh oh!" Because Sodom occurred hundreds of years before this. So He's now calling them...this isn't a "Hey Billy, how are you doing?" This is not a nice greeting. "Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations--I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly." This is a very interesting passage of Scripture because all of the things He says quit doing, He actually commanded them to do. But they're coming before the courts of the Lord, they're bringing offerings, they're singing songs, they're lighting incense and God's going, "I'll have no part of what is sacred and what is evil before Me. Do not combine the two. You are doing right external actions, your heart's wicked. I will have no part of this." Let's keep going. "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil,..." Now, the church historically, we've loved this line. All across America today, there's a thousand if not a hundred thousand sermons on "cease to do evil." And evil is defined all over the board. For some, it's rated-R movies. For some, it's Disneyland. There are all these different levels of what's evil. The church has historically loved this one, but I think it's the second part that we've got to start being obedient to. Look at verse 17. "...learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause." Now, back to the story: creation, fall, redemption, restoration. He goes, "You keep coming and celebrating your redemption, but it doesn't terminate on you. You keep trampling my courts, but there's no obedience in you of what I've commanded of you. You keep singing, you keep tithing, you keep lighting your incense, but you don't do what I require of you."

Let's do one or two more. We'll do a New Testament one too since we figure it out there, except we don't at all. Go to Isaiah 58, starting in verse 1. "Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they delight to draw near to God. Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it? Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers." Here's God's complaint. God says, "Sure you're coming to church, sure you're doing churchy things, but you're a part of the machine

and the oppression of all those who are hurting and poor in your area. Is this what you think I desire, for you to come and fast and request of Me, righteousness when in the end you're a part of what's oppressing the poor and the wounded?"

"Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a person to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a reed, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?" This is an unbelievably interesting text, because the answer to that is "yes." I mean, if God's asking the question here, "Is this what I want from you, for you to humble yourself before Me?", wouldn't we all go, "Yeah, that's what He wants." Does anybody even want to go, "No, He wants us to boast before Him." My four year old, she likes to show me her muscles right now. It's pretty funny. You boasting before God would be something less funny. "You like that? You like that, God?" No, humble yourself. Yes, humble. Nobody would argue with that. That we would bow our heads like a reed before God? I think everyone in here would say "yes."

But once again, remember what we've been talking about here, that the church's inclination is to think that it ceases at their redemption with no carryover into the will of God in the greater story. And He's saying, "Okay, you do these things, you humble yourself, you bow like a reed, which are good things, but look at what I desire, that you see you will not do." Verse 6, "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?"

Scripture is saying that you are cut from the same cloth, you are created by God like everyone else. And so, to view the world as us and them is sinful if not outright bigotry. I have to wonder out loud if there is not still a high measure of bigotry and racism in the West. Less than a decade ago, there was a slaughter in Rwanda that had a million men, women and children killed in a hundred days. That's 420 men, women and children an hour for a hundred days. No U.N. peacekeeping force, no U.S. intervention, we watched the slaughter on our televisions. You tell me that happened anywhere in the west that the U.N. wouldn't have been there in a second. Less than two hours from here, in Guatemala, there are massive amounts of infants that die of such things as diarrhea. Tell me where we would allow that anywhere in the West, in Europe or in the States. Why? I honestly don't know, but you have to think it's this "them and us" kind of mentality.

The Scriptures go, "Why do you hide from yourself? They are you. I gave you life here. You weren't in your mom's womb going, 'Uh, I'll take Dallas, Texas please....I'll take safety, medicine and food. Thank You!'" What you've lived in, what you've walked in has been the grace of God extended to you. Why do you hide from yourself? Verse 8 is a real big verse. I want to try to explain it to you. I want to make a clarifying statement, then I want to explain it to you. "Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard." The things that we're talking about today, caring for the oppressed, giving to the poor, we don't do these things to gain the favor of God. We don't gain these things to be saved. We do these things because we are saved. Do you understand the difference? One is trying to earn the favor of God; one is being so moved by the free gift of God that you play into the story. Those two are wildly different. This last verse, verse 8, it talks about our healing, it talks about our wholeness, it talks about those who are following Jesus, who surrender to Him but are having a hard time finding that completeness. They're struggling.

And what He's saying here is once you're a part of that story, that thing starts happening. Here's why. Let me show you something. Breathe in for me. Let's breathe in. Keep going, keep going. Keep breathing in. Keep breathing in. Don't breathe out yet. Keep breathing in. My goal is for everyone to be unconscious. It will be like a Charismatic service. I'm going to get an e-mail from a Charismatic now. I believe in the gifts. Alright here we go. Now, breathe out as far as you can. Following Jesus is like breathing in and breathing out. I'm still amazed, it will wear off eventually, but I'm still

amazed at how many men I've met that have been studying the Bible for twenty years but doing none of it, who are on us all the time for more Bible studies around here. How about instead of seeking new revelation, we try to be obedient to what we know? I mean, that's a new thought, but I don't know. Don't get me wrong. The Scriptures hold a high regard here at the Village. Outside of family traits, we're almost always preaching through books of the Bible exegetically, line by line, phrase by phrase, word by word. But in the end, you've got to breathe out. If you don't breathe out, you die. And I'm talking to both groups here. Because you've got the group here that are kind of theology police, and then you've got the group over here that thinks it's all about social justice. But it's not all about social justice either. The cross and the cross alone stands as central. You breathe in, you breathe out. You breathe in, you breathe out. If not, you die.

Let me show you one more, then we'll chat. Matthew 23. This is one of those sermons that got Jesus killed. I mean, it was the will of God, but it was this kind of sermon. I know that there's this real weird picture of Jesus right now in popular theology where He's kind of this real effeminate, kind of floating around sprinkling love on everybody, but in the end, He was very aggressive towards those who are outside of the story, very aggressive to those who are enemies to the story. And you'll see here, He begins to rail on the religious rulers and begins to say, "Woe are you." In fact, you're talking about a man who said to the Pharisees and scribes, "How will you not escape hell?" Look at verse 23 of chapter 23 and you'll see what I'm saying. And you'll see that this is the same issue that we've been detailing as we've walked through the Old Testament. It's like even in the New Testament, they hadn't figured it out. Verse 23, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness." So okay, it's the same thing. He's going, "Okay externally, you're doing right, religious things, but in the end, you neglect the very core of what you were saved to do." Look at the next line. The next part shows it even more. Verse 24, "You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Now listen to this. This is one of those texts that, when getting ready for this weekend, I just kind of got chills over because I think it applies to us. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence." He's saying here, "Listen, you've done pretty well at prettying up your outsides and then justifying your expenditures as being blessings from God when in the end your heart is filled with wickedness, greed and self-indulgence."

So within the context of this story, the church...and when I talk about church, I never talk about a building. This is brick, mortar, something like sheet rock but cheaper. It's just a building. There's nothing sacred about this space. It's just a building. We've got some candles here; you've probably got some candles at your house. This is not where God hangs out. He's not like, "Come see Me down at the Village." So, when I'm referencing church, I'm referencing the people of God. Now, hear me. Within the story, the church has her enemies. And I know since we're in Texas, a lot of you are like, "You mean the Democrats?" No, I don't mean the Democrats. Now, there are two types of enemies of the church. Now, I want you to walk with me, and then I'm going to have to say some difficult things that will thin out our numbers but you can see, we need that. There are historically, if you watch the church, there are enemies of the church that are external. There are governments who decide that the basic virtues inherent in Christianity are detrimental to their authority, and so they will try to crush the church. We have had historically religions that target the grace and mercy that we teach as a threat or a danger to their hierarchical system of religion, so they will target Christianity and try to attack it. Now listen to this. At this point, 2200-2300 years into Christianity, no external force has been able to do anything but empower and strengthen the church. When governments have tried to press her down, when religions have tried to attack her, she flourishes and become unbelievably powerful. This was Rome's great frustration in the 1st Century. I mean, they were feeding us to the lions, crucifying us by the thousands, and it just kept growing and growing and growing until Constantine said, "Forget it. We're a Christian nation." And by the way, as soon as that happened, things went badly.

But there are also enemies within, and it is those enemies that have rendered us impotent and ineffective in the call of God on our lives. So, for all the hissy fits about rated-R movies and music and Disney World, our downfall comes from

within not from outside. Over and over and over again, the church falls prey to the lie that it ends with redemption. So all of our resources, all of our time, all of our money goes to padding our redemption. Now, maybe I'm just young, angry and bitter. Maybe twenty years from now, I'll go, "You know that \$5,000 we spent on having a coffee shop inside of our church so we can give our people lattes while the majority of the world died? That was a phenomenal ideal. That was a great expenditure of kingdom money." Maybe there will be a day where I will be like, "Aw, I was an arrogant, young and dumb." I think there will definitely be the day where I will be like, "I was arrogant and dumb," but can you with any kind of real conscience say that we look any different than the texts that we've been looking at today as American Evangelicals? 800,000,000 men women and children live in absolute poverty, 70,000,000 on the threshold of starvation daily, infant mortality in the poorest third of the world is at 14% (it is less than 1% in the United States of America), next week, 125,000,000 infants will die from treatable diseases and lack of hygiene. And we're drinking lattes and building multi-million dollar facilities that sit empty six days a week. That terrifies me.

Okay, so what can we do? There's 4,000 of us here at the Village. I mean, what can we do? 800,000,000 people in absolute poverty, what can our little group of people do? I mean, it feels overwhelming, doesn't it? I mean, you start looking at just the sheer statistics and you start looking at all the complications in it, governments that would take. I mean, you start looking and you're just like, "What can we do? This feels overwhelming." I've got a few things that I think you can start. And I have to rail against our culture a little bit. Here's the first one, and I'm going to use all kinds of inflections just to make sure we get it. Get out of debt. It is sinful to live beyond your means, sinful. Quit buying what you can't afford. It's madness. Get out of debt.

Like, do you remember in high school, how sad high school was when you're kind of deemed cool and uncool by whether or not you had the actual polo shirt vs. the "Knights of the Round Table" shirt with the flag instead of it. Do you remember that? By the way, if you're 22 and under, you have no clue what I'm talking about here, but us 30's, we know. Do you remember that? Do you remember when you were defined by and were categorized by what you drove and what you wore? As dumb as it was then, how sad is it when it's 30 and 40 and 50 year old men? I mean, how sad is it when we continue to define ourselves by fashion and cars and houses while the world burns? I mean, it's madness and it has no place in Christiandom. Now okay, let me clarify. I'm not saying that nice things are bad. Because I know, anytime you address this, the guy who owns a Porsche is going to be in his car going, "I swear, I love Jesus. I love Him! I love Christ! I have an ichthus on the back of this." Nice things are not sinful, but living above your means is sinful. And I'll push here. I think living at your means is sinful. Because all your money wasn't given to you to terminate on you; it was given to you to push back what's dark in the world. And I'm not taking an offering today, so don't worry about your wallet. Get out of debt. Call Jeremy Pace at our office. We have a ton of financial planners that will help you do this. Google Crown Financial. Maybe it will take you years, maybe it will take you a decade, but get out. Maybe the best thing in the world that you could ever find out is that you can't afford your house. It's okay, get another one. Get a smaller one, one that you can afford. And maybe \$500-600 a month for your car is too much. Now, I'm not trying to take your seat warmers away from you. We live in Dallas; we need those for six days out of the year. I'm not trying to rob you of that. I will not ask you to mortify your flesh like that by taking away from you your seat warmers in Dallas. I don't want to do that. God, how would you survive? It was just two weeks ago, "Arctic Blast 2007" We shut down the whole city, we really did. "What is this? Shut her down!" It was pretty funny. I don't want you to give away such necessities as that, but maybe it's okay to drive and live where we can actually afford to live and what we can afford to drive. There's some real peace there. Maybe we wouldn't need all this Ambien so that we could sleep at night. I mean, I could be wrong. I think that part of this disjoint that keeps us all up at night, maybe it's because we've slaved ourselves out for trinkets. Believers in Jesus cannot fulfill the role of restorers if they're constantly paying bills.

What else can you do? Get involved. We believe that the suburbs have a responsibility to inner-city. We're the ones that abandoned it 30-40 years ago and just let it destroy itself. So we have a responsibility back in. We work with a church

down in inner-city Dallas, doing everything from rebuilding a Minyard's so they can use the facility to anything they ask of us really. Just two miles from here, there's an apartment complex filled with day laborers. We make them breakfast on Saturday morning. We started by making them pancakes, but they were like, "We don't like those." And so, we made them breakfast burritos. It's true. So maybe you could help us there. You've got opportunities locally. Here's something else you can do. Go. Go, we'll take sixteen trips out of this country this year, to Zambia, to the Amazon, to Guatemala. We're working on a team to go back to Liberia, Asia. Go see. And can I talk to my parents in here? Take your kids. We went to Asia in June and I took both of mine. Because I see it this way. In our culture, I had two choices of who I could be: A) I could be the parent talking about how ungrateful my kid is or B) I could take my daughter and my son to see how the rest of the world lives. And then in seeing that, she would love that Barbie even if it was missing its shoes. Go. I want you to go because, especially if you go to one of our Compassion projects and you'll stand there with those well-dressed, educated, well-fed kids and try to play with them, while dozens that have built trash ladders to scale the walls to peer in watch you. I'll let you do that once and I promise you, you'll never be able to see the same again. Go.

Another thing that I can tell you that you could do...and I'm going to down shift here and go all Sally Struthers on you. By the way, those that giggled don't sleep well at night because they've seen the commercial. Those who don't know what I'm talking about go to bed at 8:30. I'm a big fan of Compassion International. I've been to some of their projects; I've seen what they do. I'm a big fan. When they approached us, when I became pastor of the Village, of doing Compassion Sundays and giving you the opportunity to sponsor children around the world, my thing was, I don't ever want...see, we're upper-middle class white America up here. If you'll just look at the census statistics, it's just staggering how much that's us. And there's a tendency here to just write a check to solve things. And so, I didn't want us to get out that easy. So, I was like, "Yeah, we'll do a Compassion Sunday, but I want all of them from the same country." And since Guatemala was a two and a half hour flight away, it's an easy trip, I said okay, we want them all from Guatemala. And so what we do when we do Compassion, we get them all from Guatemala because we'll give you four shots this year of not only sponsoring them month to month but hopping on a plane and going down and meeting them, touching, hugging, rubbing their back until they fall asleep. How do you get started here? Sponsor a Compassion child. \$32 a month. Clothes, food, education in one of the poorest countries in our hemisphere. \$32 a month. That's going from 800 channels to 300. That's a weeks worth of Starbucks. If you're a frappuccino person, that's three days of Starbucks. That's instead of your and your girl going out to eat and both of you getting massive plates where both of you only eat half plus an appetizer and desert, that's you getting an appetizer and splitting a plate...and still going home full by the way. That's you eating from home a couple of nights a week. College students, that's you getting a little Saturday job. 32 bucks. Out in the foyer, there are two tables set up with just a bunch of Guatemala babies on them. There will be a yellow poster board on one of them. On that poster board, you'll see pictures of members from the Village and a Compassion child.

So, we've got seven seconds on the screen in this epic that we find ourselves caught up in. We try to do things differently here at the Village. We have some philosophical beliefs that drive us. Like, we're the only church that I'm aware of in the United States that's trying to do church with 4000+ and 15,000sq. ft., and it's really not working well. If you don't know what I'm talking about, you'll have plenty of time to think about it in the parking lot when you try to get out of here. You'll have about 45 minutes to selah on that. But do you know why? Why even now, we've made very little moves outside of adding some video services and things like that? Because we think that your facilities teach. We're trying to model for you what we're talking about. We're trying to model it for you. There's no debt here. We're stretching our resources as far as they can possibly go. There will come a day where we'll have to build something. There will. That day's coming. In fact, probably in another month or two, I'm going to send us into a three or four month period of fasting and praying, seeking the Lord's face on what to do and how to do that and how to be obedient to what we feel like He's called us to in the middle of all that. There will come a day when we have to something, but even then, we're going to strip it down as much as Flower Mound will let us. We'll do it as stripped down as we can because our value and what we value and what we believe the gospel teaches is that it isn't at the end about comforting our redemption, but our redemption flowing

out of us into a broken world. So what will our seven seconds be? Singing? I love singing. Don't get me wrong. My wife wrote one of the songs we sing. It's a big part of our house. My wife plays the piano and sings, my daughter's already banging on the piano and singing, my son just yells. I mean, it's a big part of the Chandler family. I love preaching if for whatever reason, God puts this angst in me that I have to relieve, but I don't want that to be my seven seconds. Can you imagine, for all the whining about our culture that Christians do, how powerful and effective we would be if we quit crying so much about morality and instead pushed back the dark, broken, oppressed, wounded places. Oh, what a voice we would have then. But in this culture, in this place, it's going to be like climbing Everest.

Let's pray, "Father, I ask for Your help right now because this is a tough moment because we don't want a compulsion here. We don't want, 'Okay, I feel bad so let me get a Compassion kid.' That's the last thing we want. I do want those compassion babies, all 400 of them, represented out there. I do want them sponsored. I do want them clothed and fed and cared for. I want that with all my heart but not if that's where it ends. I pray that You change the way that we see, change the way that we live, change the way that we view our money, change the way that we view our lives. Thank You for what we find ourselves caught up in. I thank You for redemption. It is beautiful and good and right. I thank You that You would save us, extend grace to us, love us despite us. It is the good news. But I praise You and thank You that You, with redemption, create meaning and depth in our lives. So, I pray that we might walk in that, Father. Help us. It's for Your beautiful name I pray. Amen."

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