

Good morning. How are y'all doing today? I love worship through song, and the last two weeks Matt preached for a long time. It was good, but Randy had to cut all of his songs the last couple of weeks, so I told him as I was planning this a couple of weeks ago that I wanted us to be able to respond on the back end through worship, through song. I pulled it off last service. I tend to tell him I'll go 30 minutes, and then I go 45 to an hour. I actually pulled it off last service. My hope is to go around 30 minutes and then let us respond to the Lord through song.

If you've been at The Village any amount of time, you've heard what I'm about to talk about to some degree. If you've been a part of the Fort Worth Campus, you've heard me talk about it even that much more through Recovery, even through some of the preaching, but I feel like... I'm not going to assume this, because I know there are things that take a while to get into my mind and take a while for me to really latch onto. I'm not going to assume you believe what I'm saying or see it or understand it, so I'm going to treat this as a blank slate.

I believe it has huge implications for the believer, I believe it has huge implications for the Christian and, I think, the church in all of that, but for our campus, for what we're trying to do and get behind the Lord in doing for his good work, for his glory in this community, in this area, I really have a deep desire to see our people walk in about what I'm about to talk in.

I'm titling this *A Theology of the Heart*. What I'm going to do is try to start in the Old Testament and pick some keywords, *heart*, *soul*, *inner man*, and I'm going to try to break those down a bit and show you really what the Scriptures are talking about in those implications for our worship, our affections, and repentance. It may not seem like a big deal to you, but I think it is a massive deal, and I hope we can get into that some today.

The other thing is I just have concerns as a pastor, as a biblical counselor. That's my background. You've probably heard that if you've been here. In fact, I got a new couple in my office this week. They came into my office, they sat down in front of me, and they're at each other's throats. How do I say it? They don't like each other. They're married. They don't like each other. There's a reason they called and set up an appointment to get counseling at the counseling center I counsel at on the side.

They come in, and they could write a book about what seems to be broken from their perspective in their marriage. But hardly anyone in that setting knows what's really going on in the depths of their souls that has come out sideways symptomatically over here. That's a huge concern for me as a pastor. It's a huge concern for me personally, knowing I could, on a whim, say something out of anger to my wife, then back away and be like, "Where did that come from? She made me do it." Really? No, she didn't. That came from somewhere.

No one does that type of digging unless that's a Spirit-wrought work the Lord has done. So when we talk about the soul, the heart, the inner man, you're going to see in Scripture how God has designed and created those things as a fabric, as a center point, for his people, and the implications of that, especially because of sin, but then the response to that as a regenerate Christian. Let me read a text, because I'm going to end with this text, and then y'all can go ahead and turn to Genesis 2:7. I'm going to read from Matthew 15. This is Jesus.

"And he called the people to him and said to them, 'Hear and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.' Then the disciples came and said to him, 'Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?' He answered, 'Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.'

But Peter said to him, 'Explain the parable to us.' And he said, 'Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.'"

I'm going to break that down on the back end, but again, just as a biblical counselor, I read this and I'm like, "Mm-hmm." Yeah, that totally makes sense to me, especially with the example I just gave you with that married couple. This is a troubling verse to me, because the list he rattles off... Some are behavioral, some are thought life, some are hidden deep inside that you would never see, but he really doesn't miss anything.

Jesus rattles this list off, he doesn't really miss anything, and these are all of the things any and everybody who's halfway sensible sees and knows, "Yeah, that's pretty jacked up. That's not right. That's broken." Then Jesus says, "But that's not what defiles a person, because that came from somewhere that's already defiled." That should sober you. It's like an iceberg. Have you ever heard the thing about an iceberg? You

see the iceberg. That's 10 percent of the iceberg. The other 90 percent you don't see. That's why the *Titanic* sunk, because it got ripped open by the part you couldn't see.

My fear for us is that we see some things, and we'll critique them like, "Yeah, that's kind of bad. I'll get to that at some point. Eh, that's kind of bad." You'll see them, maybe rightly, maybe even before the Lord, but then what the Lord through his Spirit, through his Word, is really trying to press deep into you is like, "Yeah, but Lee, I love you so much, I'm going to show you what's broken in your soul that leads to this up here, because what's broken in your soul affects your worship, it affects your repentance, and oh, by the way, it really hurts your marriage." What am I focused on? The part that hurts my marriage. But God is after the heart.

All right, Genesis 2:7: "**...then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.**" Here's the context. That idea right there, *breathed* and *living creature*, means soul. When God took the dirt, he breathed breath into it, which is just amazing to me. He breathed breath into it, and the living creature had a center point, soul, heart, eternal part that's perfectly shaped by God, perfectly resonates with God, perfectly communes with God, perfectly worships God, and all affections are bent toward God in that.

Now we know Genesis 3 happens and fractures all that, but that's what's happening right there. In those two English words, that's what's happening right there. Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning...God." So there's nothing. The idea in the Hebrew is it's this crazy chaos. It's an environment that's not ready to be inhabited by man. If you lived there in that time and in that state, I don't know what would happen, but you wouldn't survive. You wouldn't make it.

God takes that, and he begins to create. Day 1, Day 2... You know the story, right? He creates, and what does he say after he creates? He says it's good. So God brings this rhythm. He takes this chaos, brings this rhythm, and now he takes some dirt, breathes life into it, and what's amazing... When God creates man and then creates Eve out of a rib from Adam... When he creates mankind, he does something different with them that he doesn't do with the rest of creation.

He just speaks that into existence. "Light," and then there was light. "Water..." On and on and on he goes. With man he takes dirt, breathes life into him, and gives him a soul, this center point, this heart, this incredible centric thing I can't really even put words to because we don't have good words for it, but it's eternal, and it has emotional implications. It has effectual implications. It has physiological implications. It *can* mean the physical heartbeat, but it has far more to do with what's really wrapped up in the center point of a person. God gave that to you. God gave that to me. So that's one idea.

Here's Psalm 23:1-3. I'll just read it. **"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."** You know it. **"He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my..."** What? *Soul*. It's the same word. What it's saying there in Psalms is that only God is the one who restores the soul. No man, no woman can change another man or another woman's heart or soul. That's the work of the Lord.

Now we proclaim, we minister, we share, we disciple. These are all agents and avenues God uses to minister to his people as he's saving some, sanctifying others, and bringing them more into the image of Christ, but the work of soul changing, the work of heart changing? That's the Lord's work, and it's the idea there in Psalm 23.

Another word... Go to Deuteronomy 4. It's just a couple of books over. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Then I'm going to go to Deuteronomy 6 right after that. Deuteronomy 4:29: **"But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul."**

This is a bit different, because the word is better understood as *heart*. Not physical heart, although there are some times and some implications to a physiological heart, a physical heart, like my heart is beating right now. Yours is too. If it's not, we need to call 9-1-1 because you're passed out somewhere. There are physical implications to that. But the word here is *heart*.

Then go to chapter 6, verse 4: **"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."** Again, you see *heart* and *soul* there. The idea here in both of these verses, in Deuteronomy 4 and then in Deuteronomy 6, is the center point of a man. When Jesus is teaching on this in Matthew 22, that's why it had such huge implications. I'll just recap Matthew 22.

The Pharisees and Sadducees are always trying to trap Jesus and trick him. So they come to Jesus. One of them is a lawyer, and he says, "What's the greatest command?" and Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6 right here. He says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Upon all of the Law and Prophets were these things built." What did the Pharisees and Sadducees get hung up on? The law.

He's saying, "God put these laws in place to align that center point, to align that heart with me, for your worship, for your affections, for communion with God. You don't have a shot at loving your neighbor if that's not working." When he puts those things: "Don't eat this, do this festival, do this fast..." When he puts the Pentateuch, the Law, in place for the people, it's not to punish them. It's never to withhold anything from them. It's to align that center point, that soul, the heart, the fabric of their being he breathed

life into in Genesis. It's to align them with him, the lover of their souls, the author and salvation of their faith. That's what's at stake.

That's why Jesus had to deconstruct what the Pharisees and Sadducees were doing. They were saying, "Do the law. Do the law. That's salvation." Jesus is saying, "No, he didn't even put those things in place for salvation. He put those things in place to align your heart with him so you could worship. That's where salvation is." Do you see the difference?

When he's talking here in Deuteronomy, when it's talking about the heart, when it's talking about the soul, that's what it's talking about. "Love God with that center point. Love him with everything." Then everything stems from that. You know what to let go of, when to let go of it, and how to see things in right light as a result of that. We don't have a shot when you remove that.

Then that center point... Guess what? It doesn't just dance off in no-man's-land. It gravitates toward something else. It always does. It's not created to be in neutral. It's going to gravitate toward something else. The soul and the heart, that center point of a person, were created for worship. So he sets these things in place for them. He says, "Love me with that now. Love me with everything. Then I'll show you how to love your wife. I'll show you how to deal with your enemy. I'll show you where I'm leading you, where I want you to work," and on and on and on you could go.

Jeremiah 17:9. I would like y'all to turn to this one. I know we're bouncing around a bit, but I have just a little bit of time to build my case, to build what I'm continuing with you on so I can get to the implications on the back end. This is a chipper text, and it's one I use in the first session every time. Seriously, every time. **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"**

Not too long ago, a 15-year-old young girl... I was talking with her about some of these things, and when I got to that, she wouldn't even let me finish to verse 10. She raised her hand and said, "So I'm in. I believe what you're saying. I agree with what you're saying. But if the heart and the soul are so important, who *can* discern it?" I'm like, "I'm glad you asked." Verse 10: "The Lord is the one who searches the heart and tests the mind to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."

The Lord discerns it perfectly. What ails you most on that center point, that broken soul, that broken, diseased, deceitful, lying, disgusting, murdering heart you and I have is perfectly diagnosed by God and perfectly redeemed accordingly. So it *is* chipper, actually. It's a punch in the mouth, and then it's like, "I can't do anything about it, but God knows. He sees it. He diagnoses it accurately, he diagnoses it flawlessly, and then he perfectly..."

He's not just like, "Eh, I'll get to it." He moves towards that (this is the gospel) through Christ and addresses the sick heart, the wounded soul, the broken life, that diseased center point. He gives us a new heart. He gives us a new name. We become a new man, a new woman. This is where the tension is created with the "already, not yet." Paul talks about this in Corinthians, where he's talking about, "Outwardly we are wasting away, but inwardly we're being renewed day by day by day. The old has gone and the new has come."

I'm like, "Well, which one is it?" No, I'm a new man right now. I have a new name through Christ. I have a new heart because of Christ, but he's working it out. It's called progressive sanctification. He is making me and transforming me into the image of Christ. He's bringing that to pass, although it has already been secured perfectly.

When you sin, you know when you sin, most of the time. That's evidence of the old man, evidence of the flesh, evidence of the old heart. Part of repentance is (and I'm going to get to repentance in a second)... *Repentance* is not a cussword. I know growing up Southern Baptist repentance was talked about like doom and gloom. "You stink. You're bad. You need to repent."

Yes, but that's an unfair way of looking at repentance, because the very fact God would call us out of something that's taking life from us to align our center points, our souls, our hearts to him would mean he loves us. So repentance is a beautiful gift from him for me and you to be realigned with him. Part of repentance comes when those evidences of the old man are seen. Okay, let me shift to the New Testament just for a second, and then I can try to weave this all together. Go to Matthew 16. I'm going to do verses 24-28.

"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his [life]? Or what shall a man give in return for his [life]? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'"

When Jesus is talking about *life* here, he's literally talking about the soul. I've heard this preached like, "You need to leave everything behind and follow Jesus." I don't think that's necessarily bad, but what he's really saying is, "Until you align and give me your center point, your heart, your soul, you won't follow me. Why would you let anything go if your heart is not aligned with me? Then if you acted like you did, I would

wonder what your motivations were. Would it be to make much of you? Because I sure don't have your heart. I sure don't have your soul."

He's saying, "Until a man is willing to give his soul to me, give his heart, give that essence, those affections, that worship to me, he won't lay anything down. He won't leave these things. He won't be willing to let go of this or go this way or go a different way and follow me. Why would he? He's the god of his life, or he has aligned all of these things around him that are the gods of his life. That's what he has given his soul to."

Do you see the implications here? There are massive implications. If we do have this inner essence that's created to terminate on him perfectly and it's terminating somewhere, what are you giving that to? What have you given that to? I would contend everyone is an eternal being, but it doesn't mean they're going to end up with their heavenly Father.

Another word... I'm just going to say the word. It's *soma*. It means body or flesh in the New Testament, but again, it's not a physiological thing only. It has physiological implications, but it goes well beyond that. It has heart implications, effectual implications. It's very, very similar to, in fact it's the same as Genesis 2:7, that breathed life, that whole part, the living creature. There's a real strong tie-in there. Let's go to Matthew 15, because that's where I started, and that's where I want us to spend the rest of our time. I'm going to read it one more time, then say a couple of things, and then try to wrap it up.

"And he called the people to him and said to them, 'Hear and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.' Then the disciples came and said to him, 'Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?' He answered, 'Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.'

But Peter said to him, 'Explain the parable to us.' And he said, 'Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.'"

Here's what's going on in the scene. There's some food. The disciples didn't go through the proper religious cleaning ordinances to eat the food, so then they became unclean. The Pharisees and Sadducees see it. They're whistle-blowers, and then they get into it. Jesus overhears it, and then the dialogue begins. Jesus says, "It's not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person. It's not you not observing some

religious observation or observing it wrongly and now you're unclean. That's not what it is. It's what comes out of the heart." He's saying, "Out of the heart flows all things."

If I stub my toe on the way out the door and I curse, that came from in me. The door didn't make me cuss. It's a silly idea to think you're such a victim that people are constantly making you sin. That came from your heart. They could contribute. I get it. I get that they can play a part, but what comes out of you was in you. It's not just some, "I'm just going to glaze over it," because that's what most of us do. It comes out, we're a bit disappointed, maybe shameful, and then we just want to move on.

We don't want to do the hard work like David, baring our souls before the Lord and saying, "Search my heart, O God. Search my soul, Lord." What's he doing there? Is he just beating himself up, punishing himself? No, he's like, "Align that center point; align my soul with you so I'll be blameless. I want to worship you." That's what he's doing. Then the Lord reveals and exposes. He deals with. This has massive implications for worship, affections of the heart, and repentance.

I'll throw myself under the bus. We have four kids. Luke is our oldest. Miriam is our last kid. (No, it's good. She's great. We're just busy. My wife is not here, so it's good she's not here.) Luke and Miriam were the easiest by far. All of our kids were pretty easy, pretty chill, but Luke was like a dream of a first kid. He slept through the night really quickly. He wasn't fussy. I mean he smiled when he came out. He was just so easy and gentle to deal with. Miriam has been very similar.

With Luke, the Lord was gracious to allow us to be able to let my wife stay home after Luke was born. I was pastoring in Flower Mound at the time. I would come home after a long day at work. It was great, because I wanted to see my son. I wanted to see my wife. But it was cool, because I would take Luke, and then she would go and just do her thing. If she needed to run errands, she'd go run errands. If there was stuff she wanted to do around the house, or go take a nap... Whatever she needed to do, that was her time, and she would then go do that.

Then *she* would come home, and *I* would get to go decompress. I would go and do some work in the yard. I would maybe finish cooking dinner, just something to kind of let the day roll off and just give that to the Lord. I've tried to do that, especially as I've been a pastor. So we'd both get our time with Luke, and then we'd both get our time alone, and then we would put him down, and we would hunker down on the couch and end the day talking, maybe watching a little TV, and just enjoying each other, and then going to bed. It was awesome. I don't think I dreamed it; I think it really happened. It has been so long, though. But that's what we did. It was a great rhythm.

Then Abel was born. Abel was not a difficult baby. He took a little bit longer to sleep through the night. He maybe cried a little bit more, but he was a real sweet baby. I'll never forget the first time I came home from work. She has Abel. Luke is not even crawling yet, so he's on the ground. So she said, "Here's Abel." I was like, "Okay." So I'm thinking, "Is she about to leave and I have Luke and Abel?" Then she went and tended to Luke, because she needed to tend to Luke on something.

As the hours went on, I began to realize, "I ain't getting downtime tonight. It's not happening." She didn't either, and she wasn't. I began in my heart to realize... That was very frustrating to me, and I felt a bit cheated. I was like, "Well, this is bull crap. I've been working all day." I could feel my heart going there. Well, we're both pretty tidy. She would say I'm anal tidy. I think that's a lie. But we're both pretty tidy. We've always kept a pretty clean house, but as we've added kids, let's just be honest. It's tough.

I was used to getting home and everything is where it's supposed to be. It's clean. There are no toys. Luke is starting to play with toys a couple of months into Abel's life. Now there are toys everywhere, and I'm like, "Hmm." So I'm coming home. All I want to do is maybe hold the kids for a bit, eat some dinner together, and then put them down and at least try to salvage the evening. That's how spring-loaded my heart is at this moment. So I begin to, in my heart, be driving home being bitter and cynical in my mind, thinking, "I wonder how many toys are out." Do you see where my heart is in this moment?

So I get home, and I just had had a long day one time. Abel is probably six months old at this point. My sin came out, and I said, "I wish the toys could be cleaned up every time I come home; that would be great," kind of sarcastic. She goes, "Well, do it yourself." I was like, *Ooh*. In that moment, it was a punch in the mouth. She sinned, guys. Don't give her a break. That was an inappropriate comment. No, she needed to tell me that, and in that moment I backed away, and the Lord began to speak to my heart.

I remember that next day just kind of processing that and asking the Lord, "What's going on right now, because we're not on the same page with this deal?" The Lord began to speak very clearly to my soul. He began to show me I was a slave to my circumstances, and that I was looking for peace in something I never would find true peace in.

Who's the author of peace? Jesus. Jesus is the author of peace, and I'm looking for peace in toys picked up. Do you see how my heart is tied to something other than...? Then it would spill over, and in that moment the Lord was showing me, "No, no, no, Lee. You're looking for peace from this. I want you to find it from me." So I began to take steps with my brothers. I confessed this to them. The Lord began to show me, "I want you praying on your way home." He even gave me some specific prayers to pray.

I would literally be driving home, the radio is off, and I'm like, "Lord, give me the strength of a lion, because I don't have it. Lord, would you give me the strength for the greatest ministry you've called me to, because I just gave it all to this other ministry. I'm done. I'm tapped out. Would you fill me, Lord?" I'm aligning my heart with him in that moment. That's not a bad thing. My affections are toward him in that moment, and he showed me a potential idol I had stumbled into because of stupid toys.

Listen. It wasn't about the toys. My heart was already prone that way. I wanted refuge, I wanted peace, I wanted downtime, and I was willing to kill anyone to get it. Do you see the difference between glazing over and allowing the Lord to peel back layers of your heart and soul and show you, "No, you're worshiping something other than me. I'm a jealous God, not because I need anything from you, but I've created those affections and that worship to terminate on me. Align your heart with me now, Lee."

I had to humble myself, go to my wife, and say, "I'm sorry I'm an anal jerk. I'm sorry I look for peace in the environment at our house. There are some things I just think would be ideal, but the Lord is teaching me to lay those down." Do you know what I do now when I get home? I pick the toys up. She doesn't have time. When would she do that? I'm training our kids to pick the toys up. That's how we work that now.

This makes me nervous, because that's hard work. I don't want to do that. I don't like laying my soul bare like that, and then having to eat crow with my wife and go tell my brothers I'm a tidy jerk. I don't like doing that, but the Lord in those moments is aligning my heart with him. He has created my heart to be aligned with him, and everything in the world wants to pull it away from that. Through repentance, he's aligning my worship and my affections back where they were created to be. This is huge, guys.

So why is this so important that I would preach a theology of the heart to the people who may or may not stick here at this campus, may or may not dive into community here and really try to do a good work in this area? I really believe that as we as a people come together, the Spirit in his grace is going to continue to reveal. He's going to continue to expose. Do you want or have eyes to see what he's trying to show you? Because it has far more to do with your worship than your marriage. He cares about your marriage. So much so, he's going to reveal the idols in your heart to give you a better marriage. Oh, and by the way, the better part is more of him.

This is a massive thing. It's not a scary thing; it's a beautiful thing. The very fact the Lord would do this and continue to expose, to make us into the image of his Son more and more, to expose these little things in our hearts that take our affections elsewhere, means he loves you, brother. It means he loves you, sister, and he desires to walk in communion and fellowship with you. It's a beautiful, good, and right thing. Trust it. Lay it down.

I think there's always a bit of a risk talking about this at such a high level. I tried to be a little bit specific, but not nearly as specific as I think I would like to be. I do think this is a discipline. I don't think you're going to stumble upon it. That's what I'm trying to say. If this isn't something you're seeking after, I don't think it's going to happen.

But if you're posturing yourself around other believers, asking them to look into your life, getting with the Lord, being in prayer, and just praying simple prayers like, "Lord, bare my soul today. Would you expose my heart? Would you expose the inner workings of my heart? Would you allow me to see things the way you do? Because you've diagnosed it perfectly. I know I have salvation through Christ, and you've given me a new heart. Would you continue to reveal the areas that aren't bent and centered toward you?"

That's a great prayer. That's a prayer I pray often. "Would you reveal the inner workings of my heart, Lord? Would you expose hidden motives? Would you expose areas of deceit? Would you expose hidden idols in my heart?" I don't know about you. I've had these moments where I've worshiped God and felt like I took light years forward in my walk with him just because of a worship experience. And it stuck. It didn't ever fall back.

I've had a few of them. I want to feel that more. I know it's going to come one day when Jesus comes back and takes us all home, or I go off to meet him because I pass on, but I think one degree of glory to the next, he's growing his children in and toward him, and this is what he's after. He's after our hearts. Let me pray.

Father God, I'm just grateful that you're in the work of redemption and that you haven't just airbrushed us a bit, dusted us off a bit, cleaned us up a bit. You've reached deep down into that center point, and you've given us a new heart, a heart that was diseased, a heart that was desperately sick and deceitful, that didn't have a shot to connect with its Creator. But in your mercy, through the gospel of Jesus Christ, you have reconciled us to you and given us a new name. You call us sons and daughters.

I thank you for that. I am humbled by that. I'm blown away by that, that in your continued mercy you continue to reveal those areas of our hearts you want to root out, that you want to change, that you want to remove for our good. Thank you for that, Lord. Thank you for moving in your people in such a way that's so intentional, more intentional than we could ever be. You go for the soul. You go for our hearts. So go right now, Lord. Do that work, Spirit.

Would you reveal in people? Would you expose in people, Lord, areas of hardness, areas of deceit, areas where we've relied upon something above you? Would you expose those things right now, Holy Spirit?

Then, Lord, give us a ferocity to leave and take seriously those things and begin to lay those things before you early and often and not rely upon them or lean on them so heavily.

Lord, would you encourage? I would hate it if anyone left discouraged over what I would consider the good news, the gospel of Jesus Christ. That is a freeing thing for those who believe and those who lay their lives there. So Lord, would you encourage the fainthearted? I pray blessings over everyone here. I thank you for gathering us together to worship your name today, to hear your Word, to commune a bit, to fellowship a bit. Would you protect them today? I pray you would allow them now to worship you in spirit and in truth. In Jesus' name, amen.

© 2013 The Village Church