

2 Corinthians 3:1-6

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[0 : 00] 2 Corinthians, we have seen that Paul is not rebuking a church or correcting a church or even trying to reprove a church like he was in 1 Corinthians, but rather he is encouraging the church and the believers in Corinth to live authentically. That is, to live out their life in practicality among the world that was watching them, but to live it out authentically and to live it out accurately. They were the witness of Christ in a godless generation to a city that was really a conglomerate of nationalities and a conglomerate of identities and a conglomerate of theologies.

They were a grand witness to the truthfulness of Christ, but the only way they were going to be that witness is if they lived it out authentically in truthfulness and in sincerity. That witness was not going to be effective if it was something that was confined to the inside of the church building.

Rather, it was something that had to permeate culture and society. It was something that had to dictate everything they did, and this is what Paul is encouraging them to do. We began to look as Paul was defending his concern for the church at Corinth, because if you remember at the end of the letter of 1 Corinthians, I know we've preached through Ephesians since then, so I'll remind you, and some of you weren't here even then, but at the end of 1 Corinthians, Paul stressed his desire to come there, and he was writing a letter of rebuke, and he said he was going to come and kind of help set things in order. Paul never went, so some within the church thought that Paul was really just blowing smoke, for lack of a better way of saying it. He was just puffing up. He never really intended to come.

He was just trying, he was giving empty threats. Paul reaffirms them that to spare them the sorrow of his coming, he did not come, that he had a love and a concern for the believers at Corinth, much like every other church, which God had called him to be a part of, and in the middle of kind of defending his concern for the believers, he interrupted himself. We haven't really looked at that concern, because it was in chapter 2, verses 12 and 13. We haven't looked at them yet, because they did not pick up until we get to the 7th chapter, starting in verse 5 and 6, and he interrupted himself with this call to ministry, and we have seen that the application to that was not just to Paul and his traveling companions, because we know that the Word of God teaches us in the New Testament, the priesthood of the believers. That is, God has called us to live as examples to him. In calling the nation of Israel to himself, God called them out of Egypt and said that he would make them a nation of priests. You remember that, right? He was going to make them a nation of priests so that a watching world would know what it looked like to live in relation with a holy God. They sinned, and they failed, and they grumbled, and they mumbled, and they complained. Sounds a lot like some of us that we know, because that sounds a lot like me. They got upset where God was leading them, and instead of becoming a nation of priests, they became a nation with priests. They needed someone to stand between them and a holy

God, so they kind of forfeited their call. God didn't give up on that plan, because the promises of God are unchanging. We read in the New Testament of what we refer to as the priesthood of the believers, that God now has a, not a nation, but a people of priests that would display to a watching world what it looks like to live in relation with a holy God, and would be the one in the middle that would stand between holy God and sinful man, and that is what we refer to today as the church, which means that we all have a ministry assignment. My ministry assignment just happens to be a vocational ministry.

[3 : 42] God has called me into vocational ministry, that is, he's called me to pastor. Your ministry assignment is just as important, though it may not be vocational. Your ministry assignment is in your workplace, or in your retirement, or in your recreation, or around your table, or in your home. Wherever it is, it is just as important as any vocational ministry, but it is a ministry assignment nonetheless. So Paul, when referring to himself, is also encouraging others in their ministry, and I say that because of our text this morning. So if you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm asking if you would join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God in 2 Corinthians

chapter 3, long introduction to get to verses 1 through 6. Are we beginning to commend ourselves again, or do we need as some letters of commendation to you or from you? You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men, being manifested, that you are a letter of Christ cared for by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts. Such confidence we have through Christ toward God, not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. Oh God, what a joy it has been to be gathered together in your house already, but Lord, we thank you that we can hear your word, read your word, and see your word. So Lord, we pray now that by the power and presence of your Spirit, you would speak to us through it, and Lord, that you would shape our hearts and minds by it, and may our lives be moved for it, and we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.

I want you to see this morning a validated ministry, a validated ministry. This is not just the validation that vocational pastors, vocational ministries need to have. This is not just the validation that we give for just a select few, but rather in application as to what we have seen, it is the validation that each of us needs to aspire towards, to have a validated ministry. Your ministry assignment may look different, but the one who assigned that ministry assignment to you is equally the same. The God who called me into pastoral ministry is the same God who calls you into the ministry that he has put and placed you in. Paul, who is writing this letter to the church at Corinth, also stood on Mars Hill and made this great declaration when he was in Athens in Acts chapter 16. Paul made this declaration that God appoints not only the season, but also the location, the time, and the place where every human being lives. That is, you are where you are today because this is where God wants you. You do what you do today, not because of the decisions, not ultimately because of the choices and decisions you made or the education you pursued or the ambitions that you took. Really, God in his sovereignty has so sovereignly ordained that you will be where you are today because that's where he wants you to do ministry. So you need to validate that. You need to understand what it looks like, and we hate to say successful ministry. What does a successful or a validated ministry look like?

And Paul is kind of highlighting that here just a little bit. He's really opening the door. If you remember, this is a long discourse. This is a long aside. Paul and I resonate with one another because it's very easy when preaching to get caught up in something and to spend most of the time talking about something that wasn't originally there. And Paul is not really on just a personal aside because we know that he's the man of God, writing the word of God as he's moved by the spirit of God.

So the spirit wanted him to go on this aside because God wanted us to understand the importance of ministry. He takes the bulk of, well, he takes the second half of the second chapter, all the third, fourth, and fifth, and sixth, and even into the seventh chapter talking about the importance of our ministry. And here he shows us what it looks like, how we can validate it and say, yes, I'm in it.

[7 : 53] Because just to be honest, we cannot judge our ministry. We cannot judge our effectiveness the way the world judges things. We're not counting numbers. We're not counting successes. We're not doing these things because the ways of the kingdom are totally different than the ways of the world.

But Paul gives us very clear validation here. There are three things we need to consider from this passage. The first thing that we notice is the practice that is common among man. The practice that is all too often common among man. And if we're not careful, Paul says, and he will spend a lot of this letter in particular in the next few chapters pointing back to this. It is a practice that is also crept into the church. It was already in the church during the days of Paul. And my friend, I can go ahead and assure you that it is more prevalent in the church today than it was then, because there is nothing new under the sun, the word of God tells us, and what has been will be, and what will be has already been. So we see these things. It didn't take very long for these practices to creep into the early church, and they have done nothing but thrive there. And it is the practice that is common among men. He says, are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Paul here is being charged. He was at first being charged with the fact you didn't come. You never intended to come. And now he's trying to defend his love and his concern and his, his empathy towards the believers at Corinth. And he knew that the accusation would be, well, Paul, you're just puffing yourself up.

You're just telling us how worthy you are. You're just talking about how good and how useful you've been. And Paul says, I'm not commending myself. I'm not sitting here, you know, tooting my own horn. I'm not, I'm not doing any of this thing. I'm not, I'm not trying to tell you why I'm worthy. I'm just spilling my heart because sincerity and honesty, if we're really to be transparent with some people, we, we run the course that people think that we're full of ourselves and we're trying to, to be honest with ourselves. And we're just really trying to puff ourselves up and make ourselves look better than we genuinely are. Paul says, that's not my case. And the reason he had to say that was because of this practice that had already crept in. He says, or do we need as some letters of commendation to you or from you? Over and over again in this passage, in the book of second Corinthians, Paul will refer to these letters of commendation because what had happened is after Paul left, Paul spent longer at Corinth than he did anywhere else. He, he hung out there. He spent some time in that region, uh, in that same region. He also was just a little bit far further from there with the church of Ephesus and all that reason. Corinth was such an important place. Uh, Paul spent so long at Corinth. He, he gave his life to them. He, he only planted the church. He fostered the church. He rose up elders within the church as was his practice in every other church, raising up a multiplicity of elders that would lead that church and they would be in good hands. And Paul is writing back to this church and he's encouraging this church. But after Paul's departure, because Paul was never called to stay in one location, God was moving him about for the usefulness of the kingdom.

He had a ministry assignment, right? After his departure, other people came in, supposedly, as we read the letter, they would have been Jewish individuals who came from Jerusalem. And when they came to the church, the first thing they presented to the church was a letter of commendation. This is why you should hear me because this is the recommendation I have from other people.

[11:08] There is the practice that is common among men. That is validating our ministry based on what other people have said about us. They were handing commendation strips or slips and saying, I did a good work over there. I did a good work over here and here. Someone wrote this letter. We would say a letter of recommendation. The last 18 months, we've had a number of individuals go to the mission field or be used in different opportunities that God was opening doors for them. And I said that I have filled out more reference forms in the last 18 months of my ministry than I did in the 17 years prior to that.

I'm in the 18th, 19th ministry, which is a good thing. But in that 18 month, there's always this commendation that you're giving. And I appreciate that. I appreciate that they're going to the pastor and they want to know, is this person in good standing? Because they're taking a leap of faith, accepting this individual to be a representative or a representation of that ministry on foreign field. And we need to understand that. But it is hard to write a letter of commendation regarding an individual. Because how do you put in words what you know about this person individually as they fit into the local church? And you're answering a series of questions and you're doing this. And I know why we have to do this. We have to vet people and all these other reasons. But too often, Paul was stating here that the people coming to the church were coming with the testimony of what other people were saying about them. When the greatest commendation that we can get is what the Lord affirms to us, rather than what other people say about us. Jonathan Edwards preached sinners in the hands of an angry God. Some believe it's the message that really set fire to the second great awakening in American soil. What most people don't know is that just a couple of months after preaching that message, the church fired him. They got upset at him. They didn't want him there. People that just a couple of months prior to that, when he was reading in a weak voice and being wearied all night long when he was wore out, he was reading that sermon. People were gripping the back of the pews and holding on that says their knuckles were white. The testimony of congregants in the building says it felt like hell was opening up below us and we were about to fall in. And if you've never read the sermon, you ought to read it. It would get you fired from most churches today too. That kind of preaching wasn't very popular with people, so they fired him. So if we were looking for a letter of commendation for Jonathan Edwards, we would not go back to the Northampton congregation because they didn't like him. What they said about him was not pleasant.

[14:05] Many, many pastors and even lay ministers have the same testimony. Paul didn't give everybody one fuzzies in their belly. He got thrown into prison for his ministry.

Most pastors, if we look throughout scripture and we fail to remember that every apostle save one died a martyr's death. And they tried their best to do that to John.

So if we were looking for letters of commendation from people around them, then the majority of the people would say they'll have nothing to do with them. But yet, most people, the practice of most is to validate our ministry based on what others say about us rather than the affirmation of the one who called us. It is far more important to understand what the Lord God says to us rather than what other people say about us. Because just as we saw when Paul says that he was on parade with Christ the victor behind him, that he was a fragrant aroma of Christ to God, he was given to people for God, he wasn't given to people for themselves. And we can burn ourselves out based on our, basing our ministry assignments upon what other people say or think about us. I have a great tendency, I am a people pleaser naturally. That's how I'm wired. I love approval. I love being around people. I just love it.

I love it. Some of you can deal without it and some of us can't. I just like being around people and I don't necessarily surround myself. When I, I remember when I was in young in the ministry, quote unquote still, and they took us through some of the training things, they gave you your strengths and your weaknesses. And one of my strengths was wooing, winning others over. I was really good at trying to win others over. That's really a strength. Sometimes that's a hindrance because you realize you're trying to use persuasion rather than using the Lord's conviction. And the whole wooing was for the purpose because I wanted people to like me. One thing I had to settle in the ministry was God hasn't called me to stand behind a pulpit so that people would like me. God has called me to stand behind a pulpit so that I would be faithful. So up here, I have been able to release that through much prayer, through much sweat. And sometimes some people say, oh, it doesn't really bother you.

Oh, it bothers me. I just try not to let it show. The greatest thing here is the affirmation given from the one who commissioned me, not really the affirmation of those who greet me at the back door. Not that I don't want you to do that. I mean, I really appreciate you. But the greatest importance here is to know that I found faithful in your ministry. It is not that you need mothers. It's not that you need someone coming beside you, though people ought to tell you you're doing a great job raising your children. It's that you need to know before the Lord God who entrusted you with those children that you're doing it his way. Fathers, husbands, wives, men and women, whatever God has called us to do as far as ministry for the kingdom should not be the practice of others looking what other people say about us, but looking at the one who sent us there says to us, which leads us to the second thing that is the profession of a changed heart. Paul says in verse two, you are our letter written in our hearts known and read by all men. He says, I don't need a letter of commendation from anyone. I don't need a letter from you because surely the people who came to them with letters of commendation would also ask them for a letter of commendation to other churches. And they were using this to get jobs and to, you know, do the normal practice. Paul says, I don't need that. I don't need someone to write a letter about me. I don't need you to write a letter to me, commending me that I'm doing the right thing because he said, the greatest validation I have for my ministry is the fact that your hearts are changed. He says, your life is our letter of commendation. He was writing to the church at Corinth, the very city that he went to, that there was no church when he went there. The very people who wanted nothing to do with holy God knew nothing of Jesus Christ until he got there. And because of

[18:20] Christ using him to preach the gospel, the Lord drew people to himself. People's lives were changed. They were radically transformed by the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. They come to a true understanding of the gospel. They're in their life and their life looks different. And Paul says, the commendation that I have is the fact that your heart has been changed. Your heart, which was desperately wicked and affront to a holy God that wanted nothing to do with him. Now, all of a sudden is, has a love for the Lord Jesus Christ, has a desire to walk in faithfulness and obedience.

And the fact that your life is changed is the only commendation that I need that God is using me. Because Paul, we're going to see in just a moment here, Paul knew the reality that he had not changed their hearts, but the Lord himself had changed their hearts. What Paul is saying is the only commendation that we need to have to validate our ministry is the testimony that the hearts of the people we are ministering to is changed because that shows us that God is using us. Now we need to understand this. We don't save anyone, but God uses us for the salvation of others. Jesus makes

the declaration that if you abide in me, you will bear much fruit. Sometimes that fruit is love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and long-suffering understanding, right? Sometimes it's the fruit of the Spirit that is being displayed. Sometimes that fruit is seeing other people's lives impacted. Society ought to be changed because of the presence of the believers within it. And it is the impact that the believers have on the people around them that is the greatest greatest validation of their ministry. It is not necessarily the fact that other people say they're doing good. It's the fact that God is using them for his purpose. Sometimes your whole purpose for being there is so that the Spirit can use the presence of your life to bring conviction of sin upon the life of another individual. I remember there were two jobs I had in particular before God called me to vocational ministry. One of them, I was in a factory and I was working across an assembly line, you know, where you had kind of stuck in this one little area and you have to stay there. And people would find out I was a believer and they would know real quick. And then all of a sudden people would just get uncomfortable around you. And, you know, you kind of had a captive audience for just a little while.

People were doing their work, but that was easy enough for them to kind of, you know, avoid you. They could turn their radio up or whatever. The other job I had, it was really good, is when I was working with the phone company and I was climbing telephone poles. I used to love climbing telephone poles with another individual. You get 30, 35 feet off the ground and you're working on a telephone line, and you're really nose to nose and they can't get away from you. It's really good. And I remember the most uncomfortable stance I ever got. I was on a pole with a gentleman, he was much older than me, and I was belted off below him, which meant he couldn't get down until I got down. So I was belted off below him and we were talking and we got to talking about salvation. [21 : 18] And he was of a different line of thought than I was a different line of thought. And he really believed in baptismal regeneration. I believe you're saved by faith in Christ alone, not through any works of man. And he got really upset, but he couldn't go anywhere.

And the Lord was using me to bring matters of conviction. I'd love to say we had a great revival up there on the pole, but he didn't have a great revival on the pole. He really just wanted to get down from the pole. But the good news is, is that at that moment, at that time, my whole ministry assignment was to bring clarity and sincerity to the gospel. I didn't have to try it. He actually asked the question, right? I didn't have to think, I just had to be surrendered that this is what God wanted me to do. As a matter of fact, most of the time that I was there at the phone company, very, very few believers. I was a lineman and the line crew was a little tough.

Very, very few believers there. I thought I had no impact whatsoever. I was gone about a year before I finally found out I had an impact. And the reason I knew I had an impact that God used me for his glory is because the last guy that I rode in a truck with, we rode in a truck together for about a year and a half. He had a miracle daughter. His wife wasn't supposed to get pregnant. I'd pray for him. He was a non-believer. I wanted nothing to do with Christ. I'm going to share this story with you.

He had this little girl, Ava was her name, was born right before I left. And we celebrated together. His name was Jim. And then I got a call about, it was probably two years after I left. Nobody wanted to call him. They said, it was the old lineman that I worked with. I said, Billy Joe, we need you to call Jim. I said, why? I said, his wife's nine months pregnant, but his little girl just died. So I had to call Jim and talk to her. She had a minor surgery and busted stitches open. It was tragic. But Jim had come to Christ in that time.

And we attended the funeral. I got to talk to his pastor and I got to talk to Jim. And you know, I never got to see Jim come to Christ, but I did get to arrive beside him for about two years. And I'd read my Bible every day and I would share with him the validation of your ministry is the impact on the hearts of other people around you. Friend, listen to me. When Christ is using you, and I don't say this because it has nothing to do with me. You have to stay with me to the third point.

[23 : 16] When you surrender your life to Christ and say, Lord Jesus, this is where you have me right now. He will use you and utilize you to affect the people around you.

And that's all you're called to do. Sometimes as a guy who ordained me into the ministry and was an interim pastor here before I came here, Brother Sidney Gibson used to say, sometimes you're just the guy who picks the rocks up in the field. Sometimes you're the one who gets to turn the field over. And sometimes you're the one who plants the seed. And sometimes you're the one who picks the fruit.

But if your job assignment is just to pick the rocks up out of the field, then you'd be the best rock picker-upper you can ever be. That's the validation of our ministry. It's the profession of changed hearts. Third and finally, we notice here the position of confident usefulness.

You can be used of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords for his glory. And you ought to be confident in that reality. But we have to answer the question that Paul asked in the 16th verse of the second chapter. And who is adequate for these things? Remember, we looked at the weight of the ministry. We looked at that last week, that God calls us to be involved in ministry. And there is a weight to that ministry because the impact we're having on individuals is an eternal impact. It's not something temporal. It's not something that's going to last for 10, 15, 20, 25 years. This is something that happens eternally, right? This is an impact of unbelievable weight. And when we realize that, when I stand before you and I say, thus said the word of God, there is great weight in that. And I want to make sure that I'm saying it accurately. If you're talking to someone, the things of Christ, you may be the only gospel conversation they ever hear. And there's a lot of weight in that because one day God will hold them accountable for the encounter they have with you.

[25 : 14] One day they will stand before the king on the judgment seat and he will look at them and say, you had the opportunity. And then one day also I will stand before that same judge, not a judgment unto condemnation, but a judgment unto eternal life. And I will give an account for all my wasted opportunities. He will look at me and say, I gave you the opportunity, but you didn't do it.

I gave you the opportunity. You didn't do it. I would, hay and stubble and it will be consumed. I will enter as though being saved by fire because I will have wasted opportunities. Much like every one of us, we missed the opportunities. But the reality is, is that we can be confident in our usefulness because Paul says such confidence we have through Christ toward God. I know it's a great weight, but this is what I want you to understand. He says such confidence we have. Paul was a confident individual. Was he not? It was Paul who said, be imitators of me. And he said, man, who would ever say that? He said, be imitators of me as I imitate Christ. Right? Paul had enough confidence to write to the church. He said, everything you see me doing, I want you to do everything that I do. I want you to practice. I want you to imitate me. And I've always thought, man, what confidence that man had.

I've had people come up to me and go, oh, well, pastor, before I die, what I want to see is a lot of little me is running around this church. And my prayer, when that individual's left, Lord, I don't want any more of him. I don't want anybody else walking the same way that guy walks because that's not easy. I want people imitating good imitations. Right? And we see this. Paul says such confidence we have, here it is, through Christ toward God. Paul says the work of Christ is sufficient to equip us and empower us before holy God to be used of him. So this is what I want you to understand. What Christ has done is enough. Through Christ, you have been made complete. Through Christ, you are fully equipped for the ministry assignment. The Bible tells us that before the foundations of the world were laid, that God calls us to himself. But he calls us for the good works he has prepared for us, which is an amazing testimony, which means you came to Jesus Christ because God called you to Christ. He led you to

Christ. You met the Savior and the Savior redeemed you and restored you. And when he redeemed you and restored you, he was redeeming you and restoring you for the ministry assignment he already made for you. That is, he had a work for you to do already. And you stand up in that work and you go, I can't do this. And he says, but you're the reason I saved you was for this, right? Through Christ, you can be confident to holy God because what he has done is enough to equip you. I was growing up, I hated public speaking. I used to hate, and to this day, I don't like drive-thrus. I don't like drive-thru windows because everybody thinks I'm a lady. They always say yes ma'am. So I try to get my real Randy Travis or, you know, deep voice, you know, I'd like to have, you know, that type of thing that I don't normally have.

Something about those speakers aren't good. I just can't stand them. But I used to hate ordering food at restaurants. I didn't like it. I didn't like making eye contact. And so when God says I'm calling you to minister, I said, there's no way, right? I don't want anything to do with that. Even today, I'm not a real big fan of public speaking. People think since you're a pastor, you like to speak in front of people, and you get asked to go to schools and speak. And I'm like, I really don't want to do that. You know, that's not my thing. But we understand that whatever it is God calls you to do, he had a purpose in redeeming you for that thing. And through Christ, you are sufficient to do it. And Paul says, I have confidence. But he kind of checks the brakes a little bit. Look at what he says in verse

5. Not that we are adequate in ourselves. We consider anything coming, anything as coming from ourselves. What Paul says, he says, who is adequate? Not me. I'm not adequate in myself. As a matter of fact, what Paul says, nothing that comes from me is any good for anyone. You know, the greatest way to be used is when you come to that realization. And I know this, let me don't say that, I don't want to say you. I have nothing good to offer anyone on my own. The harsher way is to say it is you have nothing good. But I'm going to put myself here, right? I have nothing good to offer anyone on my own.

[29 : 30] Because Paul declares all of my righteousness is like filthy rags. You know, the only thing I can offer you is another sinful human being who falls woefully short of the glory of God. I can teach you new ways to sin because I sin differently than you. I can't teach you how to be righteous. I can't teach you how to be perfect. I can't teach you how to be holy. On my own, I can't do that. I'm inadequate.

Paul says he's the chief of sinners. He says, I have nothing. Do you notice that? And you have to get to that point. Because the moment you think you have something for someone else, you're going to give them yourselves and you're not going to give them Christ. The moment you think, when you think you have some sufficiency within yourselves, you're going to talk about yourself. You're going to promote yourself. You're going to give them yourself. You don't need any more of me.

You don't. So there's nothing he says. Look at this. But our adequacy is from God. Who is adequate? Those who through Christ have been made adequate. Look at this. But our adequacy is from God. Who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant. He who calls you, makes you.

And he makes you adequate to do the ministry assignment that he's given you. And here's the good news. He's given you a ministry assignment that he says is of the spirit. For the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. The ministry assignment you've been given is not a ministry assignment of condemnation. That's the Old Testament. We'll get to that in just a minute. Not in just a minute. In another day. It's not, we can do it in just a minute if you want to. You don't want to, but if you want to, we can. We can keep going. God hasn't called you to be ministers of the Old Testament.

[31 : 26] You need to use the Old Testament. Someone needs to be slain by sin. They need to know the weight of their sin. But your ministry assignment is not to leave them in their sin. It's not to leave them with the remorse of their failures. It's not to leave them with the sadness of the depravity of their heart. Friend, listen to me. You get to show them how miserable they are. And then you get to show them how wonderful Christ is. And you get to show them that even though they deserve life, that the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, their Lord and Savior. You get to take it from judgment to righteousness. You get to take it from eternally condemned to eternally redeemed.

You have the confidence because God can make you adequate. He has made you adequate. And the ministry assignment he has given you is an assignment of life. You don't tell people they're dead. You tell them they're dead so that you can tell them how to be alive. And what a joy. You get to answer every heart cry of every individual that's ever lived on all the earth. How can I be made whole? Where can I find hope? How can I live eternally? Because God has said eternity in the heart of all men. You know it.

And I know it. And that's the assignment we've been given. And it's validated because hearts and minds are changed for the glory of Christ and not the glory of man. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. God, I thank you for your faithfulness and goodness towards us. We thank you that you've called us to be used by you for the sake of the kingdom. So Lord, now we ask that you would equip us further. You'd encourage us greater. And Lord, that we would walk forward in faithfulness. And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen.

Amen.