

The Church's One Foundation

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[0 : 00] In 1866, Samuel Jones penned down the words to a song that we sang just a moment ago.

! The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord! She is his new creation, by water and the word. From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride.

With his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died. No better words can express the context of the passage that we're looking at this morning, the one and only true foundation upon which the church is founded. Matthew chapter 16, if you'll turn there with me.

Familiar passage to you, no doubt, but take a look at it with me, if you will. Matthew chapter 16, we'll begin in verse number 13. And so, in honor of the word of God, stand together with me, if you will, as we read together. Verse 13, when Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou, Simon bar Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter.

[2 : 04] And upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Let's pray together, if you will. Father, again, we are grateful for the time that you've given us together as your church to worship you. Thank you for the work that you have done on our behalf through your precious Son that affords us this opportunity. And now as we come to the preaching of your Word, I ask God that you open our spiritual senses to hear what you have to say to us, to recognize those things, and then to be able to make the personal practical application of it all to our lives. And so we ask, Father, that you just accomplish your purposes in every heart and every life that's here today through your Word. If there by chance be anyone here that's never truly trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, I pray that you do that work in their heart and life to draw them to yourself and give them the ability to exercise saving faith in you. And we'll thank you for what you do. And we ask it all in Jesus' name for his sake we do pray. Amen. Thank you. And be seated if you will.

The events that we just read about are really, really formulated, set up, if you will, in chapter number 15. Look over there with me for just a moment, if you will. Jesus is dealing with the scribes and the Pharisees who have asked the question, why are your disciples transgressing the tradition of the elders because they don't wash their hands before they eat bread? And so Jesus begins to deal with them. And in verse number 7, we begin to see the foundation for what he gives us in chapter 16. He said, Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, The people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Jesus said, in reality, all of this is a matter of the heart. Even the apostles, the disciples, if you will, were lacking spiritual understanding at this point. Look, if you will, in verse number... well, let's go ahead in verse number 9. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. And he called the multitude and said unto them, Hear and understand, not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. Then came his disciples and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying? What a shame that is. Amen? Yeah. But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be ridded up. Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind. And if they be blind, if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. Then answered Peter and said unto them, to him, Declare unto us this parable. Look what Jesus said. Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? See even the lack here at this point of the

apostles, of their lack of spiritual understanding in the things of God. Now, in chapter 16, in the first part of chapter 16, we begin to see the integrity of Jesus put in question here. In verse number 1 of chapter 16, the Pharisees also with the Sadducees came and tempted, desiring him that he would show them a sign from heaven. Where is the proof that you are what you say you are or who you say you are?

Surely there's something you could do right here in public, in open air, to show us the reality that you are indeed the Christ that you proclaim to be. And then he answers them in verse 2, when it is evening, you say, it'll be fair weather, for the sky is red. And in the morning, it will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and lowering. Oh, you hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and there shall no sign be given it but the sign of the prophet Jonah. And after he left them and departed, when the disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread, and on and on it goes here. Where is the proof? Where is the legitimacy of your claim to be indeed the Christ, even the Son of God? Show us something, if you will.

Even in John chapter 7, the Scripture says his brethren even began to doubt who he was. And I really think even the beginning process of this was even in the minds of the disciples, of the apostles.

[7 : 31] You know, they trusted him, they believed in him, but still, he's gone so long now without giving us anything to really prove to us who he is. So Jesus, in his wisdom that only he could have, takes his apostles and withdraws from Jerusalem, withdraws from everything there is to have to do with Judaism, goes to a chiefly Gentile district to begin to speak to these 12 men that he had called to be his apostles. And he does that to accomplish something in their lives, something that's completely separate from Judaism and the law. I think it's a good principle for us here to grasp a hold of. He gets them away from the clamor and the clatter of everyday life, of everyday religion, and just gets alone with them in the quiet of the region to begin to speak to them.

What a time it will be for them. It's a place where the foundation of the church then is laid. Jesus said, we'll say, I will be building my church. Realize this is just, if you will, a stone's throw from the area that some tremendous thing will happen in the lives of Peter, James, and John.

That transfiguration of the Lord Jesus will happen about six days after this event. A place and a time where the glory of God is expressed, that they see Jesus speaking with Moses and Elijah, and he is then in swathed with the glory of God, his own glory. And they hear a voice from heaven that says, this is my son, the beloved, in whom I find pleasure. Hear ye him. You ever wonder why Jesus allowed those three men to go through that experience? I think it's simply because here was something that they heard, something they saw in the Lord Jesus, that they were going to have to have in the days ahead to accomplish the work that God has called them to do in service to him. This is my beloved son. Hear ye him. Think about it just a moment. We likewise need to catch a glimpse, if you will, of the glorified Christ Jesus. We could do that through the Word of God. And we need to hear what the Father says about the Son. Hear ye him. Hear everything the Son has to say to you. We need to grasp hold, not just of what that says, but grasp hold of it and experience that during our day. Now the question is asked, whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?

[10 : 42] The people who had watched him, watched his works, listened to what he had to say, see what he did, all of those that did that, what did they or who did they regard him as being?

You see, all these things express the idea that he was more than simply ordinary man. So who do they say that I am? Some say you're John the Baptist. Some say you're Jeremiah. Some Elijah or the prophets of old.

But then Jesus asks of these 12 men, ask for you guys, literally, ask for you, who do you say that I am? Now, these that had been continually with him, especially in those very personal and private moments of their lives in his life and his ministry. And all of those things they privately have been taught that he had spoken to them about. As for you, who do you say that I am? Again, different than any ordinary man. Who do you say that I am? Well, that deep-seated conviction that they had within themselves demanded that he be declared by them to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. That's who you are. And again, that's something you and I have got to have solidly ingrained within our hearts and in our minds. That's who he is. He is the Christ. He's the Son of God. And nothing less, more than just ordinary man, even though he is God walking in a body of flesh. He's the heir of the whole Testament promise, the hope and realization of Israel, and through Israel, the

hope and realization of all of mankind. Now, when Peter expressed that, of course, Peter being probably the closest of the three of the inner circle of disciples, expressed, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. When he did that, he separated all of those, all of the twelve, from everybody else. It gathered them together as one in Christ. I think that interesting that that begins the process here of what Jesus said.

The church had not yet begun, but Jesus said, I will be building my church. It comes on the day of Pentecost. Now, here he brings the disciples, those twelve men he had called, together as one in himself, in Christ Jesus, and thus marked out the foundation upon which the church is going to be built.

Now, the response of Jesus to Peter's reply is a pivotal one. In verse 17 and 18, Jesus said, thou art Peter, the Petros, and upon this rock, the Petra, I will be building my church.

[14:17] Realize the word Petros here is the idea of the fragment of a rock. Those of you that have been to our house recognized the fact that we have in the front of our yard a big old rock. Amen? Yeah, I mean, that thing stands about so tall, and it's about so wide. Yeah, and it gets longer and longer.

Big old rock. I don't know why it's there. I don't know who put it there, but it was there when we bought the place, and that's one of the reasons I wanted that house. Amen? It was that rock. Now, in reality, you could call it a mini boulder, I guess. So that's what Peter is. Christ Jesus himself is more like the rock of Gibraltar. Amen? Yeah, yeah. So Peter, you're a small fragment, but you're a fragment of that large rock, that large structural rock. It signifies, it's a metaphor, really, of strength and stability, and that speaks of the strength and stability of Peter's confession. But there's something else here. Notice, there's got to be a change here.

There's got to be a change in the mode of Peter's thinking, and thus, for that mode to change, there's got to be a change in Peter's spiritual life as well. In order to understand, if you will, and know the purpose of the church that Jesus is about to begin, there's got to be that spiritual change within Peter, and really all of the apostles, if you will. But upon this Petra, it's upon this gigantic Gibraltar-sized rock that I will be building my church. Upon all that Jesus is in and of himself, he will be building his church. And all he is in himself as the Christ of God, his deity, his holiness, his sovereignty, all on down the list, every characteristic he possesses, that's what the church is built upon. In Psalm 118, verses 22 and 23, the Scripture says, the stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing.

It is marvelous in our eyes. Now, when he says the stone that the builders refused, the builders that refused it are not from the outside of the kingdom, of the nation.

It is the leadership and the people of Israel that refused it. And what it refers to is the reconstruction of the temple after the return from captivity in the day of Ezra.

[17:13] That thing was small compared to Solomon's temple. Jesus really, or God had promised to them not only a rebuilding of the kingdom after captivity, but that rebuilding would be a magnificent one, including, they thought, the structure of the temple. But it was small. And the builders rejected that.

The builders refused that. They despised that. But in Isaiah 28, verse 16, Isaiah said, Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation stone, a tried, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation. He that believeth shall not make haste, that is, be ashamed or give way hastily in sudden panic. God said, I lay in Zion that chief cornerstone. And then in 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 5 through 8, Peter identifies that chief cornerstone as the Lord Jesus Christ.

You also, as lively stones, are built upon a spiritual house and holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scriptures. And he quotes that, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you, therefore, which believe he's precious, but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same as made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. Even to them which stumbled at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed. Jesus is the despised and rejected one.

But in his glorification, he is, if you will, the eternal glorious temple in which all of the Godhead dwells. And that in bodily fashion. And that is united to humanity, which has been atoned for by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus. So it's no wonder when the psalmist saw that coming of the cornerstone as Messiah Jesus and the church, they said, it is indeed marvelous in our eyes.

Glorious thing that they saw when Jesus comes as with the church or beginning the church, instituting the church, instituting the church, and making it become what is designed for it to become in the purpose of God. Upon this rock, upon this Petra, I will be building my church.

[20 : 18] And the entrance to that new assembly, of course, comes through faith and trust in the person of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. And I want to say today, if you've never come to that point, you're not a part of the body of Christ. You're out of that. So I encourage you, place your faith and trust in Christ Jesus, because it's by his precious blood that he redeemed you so you could be saved.

Now, I will be beginning my church, the ecclesia, that group of called out ones. In this usage in the New Testament, he designates this particular assembly as something separate from the Jewish community of the synagogue.

Something new, something different. An assembly of people tied together in and with Christ Jesus and tied together with each other through confident faith and trust in him. Now, notice the term, my church. He's the owner and he is the head. Over in Ephesians chapter 1, you can turn there if you would like. Ephesians chapter 1 and verses 17 and following, Paul in his prayer says, I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of the glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation and the knowledge of him. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him to be, set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And hath put all things under his feet, gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. There's a lot of stuff right there. He is the head. By God's design, he has raised Jesus. In raising Jesus from the dead, he's made him sovereign over everything.

Raising him from the dead, placing all things under his feet, he makes him sovereign over everything. And then, being sovereign over everything, over all, he gave, God gave him as its head, as sovereign over all, to the church. The reality here is this. In all that Jesus is, as the head, as sovereign over all, God gave him to the church as his love gift to the church.

So we know the one that is the head, the one that begins the church, the one who is the foundation of the church, and now the one that directs the church. He is the head. As that community of vital believers together in connection with him, we have Jesus as the head, as the source of our life, sustained and directed by his power and the instrument by which he works. That is the church.

[23 : 57] He says it's the fullness of him that filleth all in all. Fullness, that which is or has been filled. It's that New Testament body of believers as that which is filled with the presence, the power, the agency, and the riches of God in Christ. Do you ever think about that?

What God has given to us in Christ as a love gift to the church. He fills the church, thus fills his people with everything that is of Christ. His presence, his power, his agency, his riches, all in Christ. God's fullness then abides in it, and that becomes our example or his example to the world. Now, I want you to consider this just a moment. Colossians said it's in Christ that all the fullness of the Godhead dwells. All of the divine powers and qualities that are in Christ Jesus is imparted by him to his church.

Now, let that soak in a minute. Everything, everything in Christ is imparted by him to his church so that it is pervaded by his presence, animated by his life, and filled with his gifts and energies as well as his graces. So, he has given to the church everything that it needs for the fulfillment of its calling by God. You realize, take a look around and let everybody hear. I've got a panoramic view of everybody, different forms, shapes, sizes, beauty, ugliness. No.

But dwelling in every one of us are the graces of Christ, and that by the presence of the indwelling Spirit of God.

So, potentially, you see amongst everyone here, all compacted together, the fullness of Christ in the church.

[26 : 43] Now, what God wants is that fullness to be able to be expressed through the church.

Now, Ephesians chapter 4, verse 7 and following, verse 7, he says, unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

He gives gifts. He goes on and expresses that. He gives gifts to the, a gift to the believer. He gives the grace that's necessary for that gift to be expressed and used in the body.

All right? And he does that in verse 12, for the perfecting of the saints, so the saints can perform the work of ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ.

So, you see what he's saying here.

[28 : 00] He's saying he's working within every individual in the body so that the time would come and progressively more and more, the fullness of Christ would become more and more complete and thus express outwardly through and from the church body.

That's what he's doing here. And he does that so we're no more tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. Verse 15, But speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, I love this verse, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. A lot in there too. The body compacted, this frame that you see here, as adorable as it looks, is frail. Amen? It is. But we just got finished a couple weeks back, three weeks ago, getting to see for the first time our first great-grandchild.

Eli is his name. He was what? Where's my wife? There you are. Was he three months old when we went to see him?

[29 : 33] Wasn't he? No. Two months old. That was a month ago. Two months old. Went to pick him up and like picking up a bag of cement.

That kid was so heavy. But in that little body, every element of that body put together in such an integral fashion that every part depends on every other part.

That's how it functions. That's how you know when you get older, and some of you have, you wake up in the morning and something's not working right. Amen?

And the whole body recognizes that. Yeah. How many of you, be honest with me now, how many of you folks, men and women, especially men, when you sit down in your chair, it doesn't make any difference what time of day or what chair it is, when you sit down, you go, ugh.

Or you get up, you go, ugh. Yeah? Yeah. How many of you have found yourself doing that just by habit? Amen? It's not that you're hurting, not that you're tired, you're just doing it.

[30 : 44] I found myself, my wife looks at me, and she said, are you doing that in reality, or are you just doing that? Yeah. Well, I'm just doing it. Because you're supposed to when you're old.

Amen? Yeah. Yeah. Everything working together as the body of Christ in the fullness of Christ. Christ.

Now, all working together to accomplish the purposes that God has for us. Now, when it comes to salvation, we're all saved the same way, the same process.

That's through faith in Christ. But when it comes to understanding and exercising the faith that we have, there's a difference. And it all is in accordance to what God has done within our life.

Now, unity of the faith can only come through a knowledge of Christ. Full, precise, correct knowledge is the word that's used here.

[31 : 46] So it all comes through faith and unity of faith is found when we all thoroughly know Christ. Think about that. When all of us thoroughly know Christ.

that's why it's imperative for every believer to nurture their walk and the relationship with Christ Jesus so that we can know as a church, collectively, the fullness of Christ at work within us.

Now, that degree of unity of faith is conditioned by the degree of spiritual maturity in every single believer unto what Paul calls the perfect man.

Now, that perfect, mature, complete, fully grown man unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ as he has said. Now, that's why we need to be filled, controlled by the Spirit of God.

Our mind, our will, and emotions continually controlled by the Spirit of God. Now, I want to get somewhere here before we shut this thing down.

[33 : 04] Ephesians chapter 2, verse 19 through 22. Think about something. And Jesus said, upon this rock, I will be building my church.

Ephesians chapter 2, verses 19 and 22, through 22. The apostle says, Now, therefore, you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets.

Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together for inhabitation of God through the Spirit.

Notice how much in that phrase, in that passage, he speaks of being built. Jesus said, I will be building my church. And Paul reiterates that fact here as he speaks about us being the building fitly framed together.

that's the idea of joining to join closely together as a holy temple, as that inner sanctuary really is the idea there, is the word of what it speaks of.

[34 : 37] Not the outward structure with all the porches and buildings, the magnificent structure that it was, even the small one. But that holy, the most important aspect of the temple, no matter which temple, whether it was Solomon's, whether it was that in Isaiah or Ezra's day, it was an edifice that was great to look upon, that you would want to go to.

But he says here and reflects to us the idea that the most important aspect of that structure was not the outward, but what was in the very middle.

That holy of holies, that holy sanctuary where the presence of God is. And that's the most important aspect for you and for me.

Now I want you to notice something. Think about this just a moment. In Exodus chapters 25 through chapter 31, God gave to Moses the instructions of how to make the instruments and all the things that would be used to erect the tabernacle.

interesting how he goes about that. Speaks of every element, not just the curtains, not just those outer skins that would cover the top, the curtains around the outer perimeter, but every aspect of that.

[36 : 07] He instructs him how to make that, what it's to be, what the dimensions are to be, and it's to be specific. It's to be correctly done.

Nothing different from what God has shown. It's God's blueprint. That's how it's to be done because every element of that tabernacle some way, somehow, reflected some characteristic of the Messiah to come, the Redeemer.

And so as a result of that then, he said, you're to pick out the best craftsmen in all the kingdom, in all the nation. Pick out the best craftsmen, the most skilled craftsmen, for every element of that tabernacle.

And he's the one that's to make those elements. Not one guy doing all of it, one guy for each element of the tabernacle.

because it's got to be just exactly right. Because it reflects the coming Christ.

[37 : 23] Now, likewise, think about this, likewise, the fitly framed church that he talks about here needs to be the same.

That church that he is building, every element of that church needs to reflect Christ.

That's its purpose. This building's set on a great place, got great exposure. But this building should not be this church's identity.

This church's identity needs to be every single believer that's a part of this church that has the fullness of Christ working within him, working through him, and showing outwardly Christ.

Yeah. Just like the elements of the tabernacle and the temple later on. Yeah. Now, just as the elements of the tabernacle, the fitly framed church has to have a master craftsman.

[38 : 46] Amen. Yeah. Got to be a master craftsman so it can reflect Christ. And guess who that master craftsman is?

It's Christ Jesus. The son. The one that is building his church. And he's crafted us, continues to make us, continues to mold us.

I don't, I don't know, do you know how long it took them to, to, to put all those things together for the tabernacle? I don't remember. I don't know that I ever knew. But boy, it's probably not near as long as it's taken him to mold and shape us.

Amen. Yeah, he's still working on us. But the key is, we need to let him do that work of molding us and shaping us.

And the only way we could do that is to get our focus and keep our focus on the person of Christ Jesus. Now, recognize also that it's not just for our own benefit.

[39 : 58] Again, we are collectively brought together, molded together, shaped together into one body. Paul says that in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, verses 13 and 14.

For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free. And we've all been made to drink into one spirit.

For the body is not one member, but many. All right? Now, so he gives those spiritual gifts.

And every one is vital. You know, he gives that analogy of the human body. The foot, the toe, the little toe, the big toe, all of that. The more comely parts, the more uncomely parts he speaks of.

But they're all equal. They're all important. They're all vital. For the church to experience the fullness of Christ and have that being expressed to an ungodly, unsaved world.

[41 : 01] world. That's what our identity needs to be. Now, here we are. Not having seen, but living in the realm of faith.

There's a question. How strong is our conviction of the Lord Jesus? And what is the level of our submission and yieldedness and obedience?

That's a good question for tonight. Amen? Yeah. What's the level of that submission, that yieldedness, and that obedience in our lives?

Yeah. that we be the church that Jesus is building. Amen?

I believe we are. But we're not there yet. Amen? We're not there yet. How many of you, men or women, doesn't matter, how many of you like to create or make things with your hands?

[42 : 16] Yeah? Yeah, men like to build things, women like to sew and crafts. Some women like to build things, you know, whatever. How many of you, when you get started on a project, you just go to it and you get it done?

Pat? Of course. How many of you, it takes you a while? Amen? You work on it a while and it's, it's, it's, you're ready to set it aside for a while then you get back to it later or it's just not quite like you want it to be.

And so you tear it out and you start all over again. Yeah, yeah. I did that this past week. Amen? I'm not going to tell you what it was but I had to do that.

anyway, me of all things made a mistake. Go figure. Now, Jesus, in his mercy, in his long suffering, in his steadfastness, is very, very patient, long suffering.

He continues to work on us, to build us. We need to be sure that we are not being a hindrance to what he is trying to do through us and in us and to us by his spirit.

[43 : 48] In other words, we don't, we need to get out of the way of his doing that so we can experience and express the fullness of Christ. When we fail to do that, it's not just ourselves that suffers, it's the whole body.

simply because we have not let God be and do through us what he wants to be and do in this body. Amen? We've got an awesome responsibility to one another.

Yeah. We know Pastor Mike has a great responsibility as pastor to the body. His first and foremost responsibility is to Christ but also to the body.

but realize we also have an awesome responsibility to each other and to Pastor Mike. There's nothing more frustrating to a pastor say amen to this than to get up here and to preach and to teach the truths of God's word and not see fruit or change in the lives of God's people.

Amen? That's the most frustrating thing I've ever experienced. Almost as bad as this silly microphone. Now, let's be the church.

[45 : 20] Let's surrender. Let's yield. Let's allow God to continue to mold us and shape us and bring us to where He wants us to be.

To be that church expressed in Ephesians chapter 4 or 2 whichever it was 2 so that He can be glorified.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if somebody when we were at Walmart or Lowe's or some other place and somebody saw us and they could say and we don't have our red shirts on.

Somebody could say they're a member of Highland Park Baptist Church. Why? Because they see how we walk. They see how we live.

They sense Christ working from us and through us. I'll close with this. Hesitated to do this but I'm going to do it anyway. I'll never forget gosh, this was back this was back after my second year of college.

[46 : 38] I was getting ready to go into the Air Force but my home church Trinity across town sent me to Nevada as a summer missionary to work with churches out there.

Mostly did Bible school stuff, worked a lot with kids but I'll never forget I think it must have been the Friday you know that's when you had Friday night commencement and all the parents came this

one sweet precious little girl holding her mama's hand walking up the corridor of the porch and I was walking toward them and this little girl who I had in my class looked at me and looked at her mama and she said look mama he's just like Jesus oh I thought to myself no no no no no what is it that she saw that she sensed it was like

Jesus that's the way our lives ought to be I see something different in you what is it tell me you don't have to have anything strung around your neck or pasted on your arms to say this is what I am they need to see Christ that gives them an interest to know why we are so different that's what happens when the fullness of Christ is at work within the life let's bow our heads together father thank you for your loving kindness thank you father for the joy of the day and for this time together in your word father we just praise you today for your wisdom how you fashioned and formed the church your body your bride the bride of your son to be able to experience your fullness the graces of Christ within our lives being an operation through us to impact the world father thank you for that and now I ask that you enable us to be honest with ourselves and honest with you today in this moment as you've shown us things in our lives that you wanted us to see because we needed to see those now Lord give us the grace to be able to respond in obedience to you and whatever you've shown us today and what you want us to do and we'll thank you and we'll praise you for it if there's one here not saved I pray God you'll speak to their heart draw them to yourself today as only you give them the grace to exercise their faith we'll thank you for it in Jesus name for his sake!