

A BLANK CHECK

Sermon by Pastor Dan Brown

Mark 10:17-30

August 21, 2011

I recently was reading a study done by Gallop Poll. Gallop Poll does these studies every once in a while and they were defining what the number one religions are. I found it very interesting because Gallop Poll found that 8 out of 10 Americans, 80%, identify with a Christian religion. Now in order to understand that, 80% of America identifies themselves – wait, there’s something wrong here. We have to define what this term Christian even means. If 8 out of 10 say they are Christian, we have to define what Christian means. If I look at the word Christian, in its simplicity it means “Christ follower”. A Christian is a Jesus Christ follower. What that entails is that not only you’re a follower of Jesus Christ but you agree with everything that He says in His word. If you agree with everything that He says in His word, then we have to live our lives like that. So if 8 out of 10 Americans, who identify themselves with the Christian religion, actually understood what it meant to be a Christian, I am convinced that that number would be a lot lower. A lot lower.

Today we are going to be in Mark 10. How many have their bibles? Put them up in the air, wave them like you care because you do. For those who don’t have one, go out to the Next Step Booth, get one later because we don’t go to battle without our weapon. This is our weapon. Every day we wake up we go to battle. We have a real enemy. This is God’s living word that transforms lives day in and day out. Bring your bible. This screen could go out and you would be lost. We could go down to zero screens and you are left to my word and these other people who are agreeing with me. So I challenge you every week to bring your bibles because it’s reading, it’s seeing, it’s applying, it’s marking, it’s highlighting, it’s all these different things.

In Mark Chapter 10 we are going to look at the encounter that Jesus has with the Rich Young Ruler. This story is found in 3 of the 4 gospels. It’s not found in the gospel of John. This is an encounter, it isn’t a parable, and it isn’t a hidden teaching. It’s a real encounter that Jesus had with somebody. Many of us have heard this story before, like many of the other bible stories, and go “Oh yeah, the Rich Young Ruler, I’ve heard that story before, check two.” Don’t do that because there’s so much we missed. We are going to go through this encounter pretty much verse by verse because there is so much to this story that we miss. There’s so much to this story if we read it straight through that we miss.

VERSE 17

Let’s start with Mark 10:17: **“And as he was setting out on his journey. . .** We have to stop there because I’ve got to already define some terms here. He is Jesus. What journey is He setting out on? At this point in His ministry, Jesus is now on His way to Jerusalem to the cross. His destination is

Jerusalem. This is the culmination of all His ministry here on earth, is the cross. This is from this step forward, everything that happens, every encounter, every teaching; this is on Jesus' mind, as He's making His way to Jerusalem. I said this story is found in Luke Chapter 18 and Matthew Chapter 19. But early in **Luke 9:51** it says this **"When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem."** So this is Jesus' perspective. Jesus' perspective on this journey is His face is towards Jerusalem. His destination is the cross. So this is on the front of His mind. Do you ever have this one-track mind; you know where you are going and it doesn't matter if anything gets in the way. "I'm going there, it's my destination." So this is Jesus' mindset through this.

Back to **Mark 10:17** **"And as he was setting out on his journey, (Where was the journey to? Jerusalem. Destination? The cross. Alright.) a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"** There are a couple of things we have to notice here. We know this is a rich young ruler because when you tie all the gospels together, one said he was rich, one said he was a ruler and then later we hear that he's a young man. So we know he's a rich, young ruler. He's a ruler probably in the local synagogue; he's a local religious leader; he's a well-respected young man. In the first century men did not run. I've convinced today that running is not a sport. I know, I already got an email saying running is a sport. I agree but I don't like to run. Men in the first century, they didn't run. So you have this well-educated, respected, local leader running up to Jesus and kneeling before Him.

The other thing we have to notice is Jesus was a rejected teacher. The Pharisees had rejected Jesus and they sought to kill Him. So you have a local, religious leader running up to a rejected teacher in public. Jesus was already on His journey. There are people around and the ruler is kneeling before Jesus. In a sense he is saying "Jesus, I'm a well-respected man. I am a wealthy man. I am a local leader but I have this sense that something's missing." This something that is missing is salvation. This something that is missing is eternal life. So the ruler runs up to Jesus and kneels before Him with everybody looking around him. His life is no longer the same after this point when people see him. He ran up and knelt to a rejected teacher. He said, **"Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"** In Luke and Matthew it says, "What good deed must I do."

VERSE 18

Look at Jesus's response: **Mark 10:18: "And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone."** This is an interesting response because it doesn't answer the guy's question. The guy says, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus response is "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. There is another portion of scripture that says, "No one is good but God." We are not good people, we are inherently sinful. There is nothing good in us except that which is of Christ. So Jesus' says, "There is no one good except God alone" and if there is no one good, we kind of have to redefine the definition of what good is.

John MacArthur writes this: **"No one is good except God alone. That makes good absolute and not relative. There are relative degrees of bad. "You're not as bad as everybody else." "I'm not as bad as everyone else." But none of us is good. Only God is good. This is a smashing**

blow for the legalist. Nobody is good. There are different varying levels of bad in society but nobody is good.

Remember Jesus told the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector. They were talking about the 2 prayers and the comparison between them. The Pharisee lifts his head to heaven and says, "God, I am so thankful I'm not a sinner like these other people." He has this self-righteous attitude. Then you have the tax collector that doesn't even lift his head and says, "Oh God, be merciful to me for I am a sinner." You have these 2 varying responses. By understanding that no one is good, we have to redefine what good is. If there is no one good, it shatters the whole works for salvation. "What good deed must I do? What thing must I do to inherit eternal life?" If Jesus says, "None is good" then none of our works are good so salvation doesn't work. When people think they are good, they have a superficial view of what sin is. We have a superficial view of ourselves. We have a superficial view of God. To understand that only God is good, we have to have a correct understanding of what sin is. Sin isn't just an action, sin isn't just a mistake in our lives, sin isn't just, "Oops, I messed up. Forgive me." Sin is rebellion against God. You have the perfect, holy, just, righteous character of God who hates sin. Hates it. Then there's us that define sin as just messing up. Sin is a rebellion against a Holy God. We have to understand what sin really is. We have to have this purging of sin from our lives. This has to shatter the good works. There's so many of us that get so caught up in doing things for God. We get so caught up in showing up to a church service or serving somewhere and saying, "I'm doing so much for God." We take these works and pile them on ourselves and say, "I'm good. I'm doing these good things for God." Jesus said "There is no one good but God."

This serves as another purpose too. This is a veiled way of Jesus claiming He is God. So many people defy Jesus as God. If Jesus says, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except for God alone", his next response is if he's not God, "Don't call me good." That would be the logical next step. The fact that the ruler is kneeling before Jesus and Jesus saying "No, no, don't kneel before me. You only need to kneel before God along. Stand up." Or how about with doubting Thomas. Doubting Thomas bowed down before Him and said, "My Lord and My God." If he's not God, don't worship Him. If He's not God, He can't forgive sins. You can't say to somebody, "Your sins are forgiven. Go and sin no more." This is another veiled way of Jesus saying, "There is no one good except for God and I'm God so it's Ok you can call me good." So now that we have that out of the way, Jesus answers the question for him.

VERSE 19

19 "You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" The guy asked "What must I do? What good deed must I do?" Jesus gives him something to do. He gives him the law. When Moses came down from Mt. Sinai he had two tablets. The 1st five commandments had to do with loving God; the 2nd five commandments had to do with loving others. So here he references the 2nd 1/2. All these have to do with others: Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother. Jesus gives him the law; he wanted something to do. "Here do these". The law is meant as a mirror for our lives. The law is meant as a mirror for over lives to draw us to Christ. What a mirror does is reveals what's wrong with us. When we woke up this

morning we looked in the mirror and said, "I need to fix this." Or at least I did! The law is a mirror to show us how sinful we are. The point of the law is to point us to Christ and say, "Yeah, there is no one good. Only God is good." The law is meant to point this across. A mirror's job is never to wash us; a mirror's job is only to reveal to us. A law cannot make somebody like Christ. The law can only point somebody towards Christ. It's only grace that can make somebody Christ like in their lives. Jesus had given his this response because the guy asked "What good deed must I do? Give me something that I must do." I love the guy's response.

VERSE 20

20 And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." I laugh at this. Go back one verse to Verse 19. We'll touch on Matthew 5 in a minute because Jesus expounds upon the law. Think about this "Do not murder". Let's just say the guy didn't kill anybody. He didn't commit adultery; he didn't steal; he hasn't beared false witness and he hasn't defaulted. But honoring your father and mother – this is a difficult one. Think back to when you were a kid, I know for some of you it's difficult, and your mother and father told you to go clean your room. If there was enough space underneath your bed, everything went under there. Everything, it didn't matter what it was. Then your mom would say, "Did you clean your room?" And you'd say, "Yes, I did." Now my definition of a room clean is you can see the floor. Doesn't matter how you can see the floor, as long as you can see the floor. But my mother's definition of "clean your room" was clean your room and don't shove everything under the bed. This honoring your father and mother – think about lying to your parents for a second. Your parents say, "Did you clean your room?" "Yes", you said. That's a lie already. "Did you do your homework?" Yes. "Did you punch your brother or sister?" No. . . ahh yes, I did. This guy who's a rich young ruler, how does he get around this? I don't think there is anybody that can just follow this one their whole lives. This one alone convicts us. Honor your father and your mother – yeah, that one's out the door. For those of you who have kids now, you're dealing with this. You understand they are not honoring their father and mother constantly. I always remind parents to think back when they were a kid. You have the same responses as your kids have with you. They're just different. My parents spanked me for what I did was wrong.

MARK 10

Do Not Murder

Do Not Commit Adultery

MATTHEW 5

If you hate somebody in your heart, you've committed murder against them

If you look at somebody lustfully, you've committed adultery in your heart

But now we have to expand upon this for a minute. In Matthew Chapter 5 – Do Not Murder. “I didn’t murder anybody.” But Jesus said, “If you hate somebody in your heart, you’ve committed murder against them.” Let me tell you something. I murdered the dentist every day of my life! If you’re a dentist in this room, I’m sorry, but I hate the dentist. I always tell them that, “I’ve just murdered you in my heart.”

“Do Not Commit Adultery. In Matthew 5, Jesus says, “If you look at somebody lustfully, you’ve committed adultery in your heart. He expanded upon the law. I know my thoughts, you know your thoughts and thankfully you don’t know my thoughts and I don’t know your thoughts. But it’s impossible for us to live without impure thoughts. It’s impossible. Jesus has taken the law, from mirror these actions in Matthew 5 and says, “No, no, no. It has to do with your mind too.”

This guy’s got this checklist down. He says in verse 20 “all these I have kept from my youth.” Do not murder – check. I think this is our attitude many times. It’s though we have what our lifestyle looks to be controlled on the surface to other people, but it’s us that truly knows what our hearts are like. And this is where we get our definition of good. Definition of good is what other people will say about us. How many times have you and I said or heard about ourselves, “They are a good person”. How many times have I said that? “They’re a pretty good person.” I will never say you are a good person ever, and I hope you never say to me, because we are not good people. There’s nothing good in us except for that which is Jesus Christ. This is what we do as an “8 out of 10 Christian.” Give me a list of something to do. “I woke up and I spend a few minutes in prayer today and I read my bible and I meditated on it. I was a good Christian today.” It’s totally missing the point, it’s a heart issue. So many people say, “Tell me what it looks like to be a Christian. Give me something tangible I can do, that I can check off a list and that will make me a good Christian. Just give me something to do.” People want this type of attitude. People can keep a list of rules and checkmarks and still miss the heart of the issue. Can you imagine if we treated all our relationships like this? I told my wife I loved her today – check – once. I would not be married! For some reason we think it’s OK to treat the relationship with God this way. We think it’s OK to treat the relationship with Jesus Christ this way. It’s that, “What must I do to? Give me something to do. “It’s a heart issue. The issue is our heart and our heart’s desire. When God’s word says that you were born again. You were born again with a new nature. You were born again with new desires. You were born again with new passions. You were born again with a new love. You were born again with everything that Christ is. When you were born again everything that Christ has, all of His righteousness, all of His riches, are added onto you, imputed righteousness. When God looks upon you he does not say you need to walk around and say, “I’m a sinner, I’m a sinner.” No, no, we are saved by God’s grace, clothed with Jesus Christ. Let’s start living like that. This guy’s response is ***“Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.”*** He must be feeling pretty good at this point, I’d imagine. But it’s a heart issue.

VERSES 21 & 22

21 "And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." 22

Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." Jesus said you lacked one thing. Go sell all that you have and give it to the poor and come follow me. He gets the greatest invitation that he would ever have: Come follow Me. Jesus' destination was the cross. His call for us to follow Him is the same. The guy walks away disheartened, sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Why is he disheartened? He asked Jesus, "What must I do?" Jesus told him what he must do, "Go and sell." Why is he so disheartened and sorrowful? This is the radical New Testament faith. That when we sing a song that says "Love So Amazing, So Divine" it demands my heart, my life, my all. Jesus hit right on the point with this guy, and even though he'd given him the second half of the 10 Commandments, all he had to do was touch on Number 1: "You Shall Have No Other Gods, Other Than the Lord Your God".

This guy was holding money so tight that he could not receive the free gift of salvation because both of his hands were clenched around the stuff that he had. Jesus hit it. He said, "Do you want to follow me? You want salvation? Give up all your priorities. Give up all your rights." I understand we live in a country that likes to hold tightly to their rights. I don't want you to get me wrong. I love our military. I pray for our military. I love our Vets. I have many dear friends who are currently deployed. These rights that I have, why do I have them? Because I was born here? I look at God's word and it says my citizenship is not here. My citizenship is in heaven. When I follow Jesus Christ, I give up all my priorities, and I give up all my rights. One of my favorite verses is Galatians 2:20: "**It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me and through me.**" I gave up myself, I gave up my priorities, and I gave up everything that I wanted to do. Now what Jesus isn't saying here is that you are not saved by selling everything that you have. Don't mix this up. This is the one thing that he was holding onto. This was his Lord; this was his god above God. Jesus said "Go sell everything you have. Come and follow me." Jesus touched on the sore spot in this young man's life because love of money is the great sin that was keeping him out of the kingdom. Sinners cannot come to Jesus Christ and hang onto their sins at the same time. There must be this true repentance of heart that grace and mercy can work with.

*YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED
TO COME AND FOLLOW ME*

We look at this story and it's very easy for us to see this man and go, "Just make the right choice. What are you doing? Don't you understand that you got the greatest invitation of "Come and Follow Me". You get to follow Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God. He just invited you into his circle of disciples, the ones that he was closest to." For us on the outside to sit there; it's easy to say to do it. It's salvation and it's so worth it. Let's stop and ask for minute, what would you say if Jesus told this to you? What

would I say if Jesus told this to me? Jesus isn't telling all of us to sell everything that we have but he may tell some people that. He's not telling us all to sell everything that we have but he is asking that we'd be willing to be able to do that.

August 29, 2011	
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Wells Fargo Bank	<u>DANIEL BROWN</u>

I have a blank check here. It's a blank check I've signed so if I drop this, anybody could find this on the street and could make it out to whoever they want to, for whatever amount. People could make it out for \$1 million – won't get them anything! It will get me a \$20.00 fee at my bank for bounced checks so please don't do that. If I gave this blank check to somebody it's there's to do for whatever they want. They can make it out to whoever they want for how much ever they want. This is what Jesus Christ is calling our lives. Our lives are blank checks for him that we sign over our lives for him and say "God, my life is for your glory, no matter what you want me to do, I will do it." This is the point of the Greek word "doulos" and so many of our bibles miss this. They translate it "servant" but it's actually translated as the word "slave". It's the only time it's meant as slave is when you are a slave of Jesus Christ. While we are slaves of Jesus Christ because He paid the ransom on the cross for us. If He's paid the price, we are owned by Him, for Him to do whatever He wants. That's the definition of the word "doulos" - it's a slave, simply that. A slave of Jesus Christ. A life as a blank check for Him. Of me saying, "You know what God, whatever you want me to do, I'm in. I'll do it. Do you want me to sell everything? I'll sell everything."

I was having a conversation with a youth student. Asked him what he wanted to do when he grows up. A lot of people ask this question. I still get asked this question. He gave the ideal answers, "I want to be a pro sports player." This kid was gifted. He's very talented in sports, a natural athlete. I said, "That's great but what does God want you to do for your life?" It kind of changes it for a second, doesn't it? He said, "I don't know". I said, "I know you want to be a pro sports player but may I ask you a question? If God called you to be a homeless person, that you may go live the lifestyle that so many live and be able to understand them and administer the gospel of Jesus Christ to them, would you be OK with that?" And I turned and asked myself the same question which is a dangerous thing. Would I be

OK with that? If Christ called me to give up everything that I had to go live on a street, to understand that lifestyle that I may be able to administer the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ to them, would I be OK with that? Would you be OK with that? He doesn't call us all to sell everything but he does some people. He calls us all to be willing, a blank check for however He wants to use it for His glory that His name will be made known.

VERSES 23-25

23 "And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" 24 And the disciples were amazed at his words." The disciples had this thinking. That's why there were so amazed with this. Wealth = God's blessing. When they looked upon people that had wealth, they thought, "Man they love God for God has blessed them because belief." The story of Job shatters this. But they have this mindset that wealthy equals blessing. So they are amazed at this statement. **But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."** Many people have tried to say it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle and they said there's this smaller gate and then there's this bigger gate and that was the eye of the needle and if you have a packed camel you couldn't get it through for if the smaller gate was inside the larger gate why not just open the larger gate for the camel to get through? Jesus literally meant the camel through the eye of a sewing needle. We look at this and go that is impossible. If entering the kingdom of God is trying to put a camel through the eye of a needle, it's not just difficult, it is impossible.

In Matthew 7 it says that ***narrow is the path that leads to life, and few find it. Wide is the path that leads to destruction and it's a pretty crowded path.*** There's a reason He says this. Salvation is the free gift of the finished work of Jesus Christ for anyone and everyone that accepts it. The gospel of Jesus Christ is such a humiliating thing because it forces us, prideful, self-efficient, fallen human beings to fall on our face and say, "I cannot do it. I am weak. This is something I cannot earn, this is something I cannot work towards, and this is something that I cannot obtain. Salvation is by God alone, through God alone. And I am so thankful it is."

VERSES 26-27

26 "And they were exceedingly astonished (they moved from amazed to exceedingly astonished), **and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" 27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God."** Talking about salvation here. Some would hope with salvation that we can earn it, so we can have some type of pride in it; it's something we earned; it's something we obtained. Really salvation has nothing to do with us. God does not need us. We are not that amazing and impressive that God goes, "I need them." God's will and purpose is going to be done. It doesn't matter that I am up on stage and I fall down dead right now. There may be a handful of people that are sad, but God's will and purpose and His word are still going to go out. The great thing is we get to be a part of God's plan. We get to be used by God for His glory. That the creator of the universe would even want to use us is a humbling, humbling thing, and it's such an honor to do that. Jesus says, "With man it is impossible. You cannot save yourself. But not with God. For all

things are possible with God.” ***Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*** It takes this complete trust in God to be able to totally and completely abandon all for Him. I need to constantly remind myself of this. God is either sovereign over all or He’s not sovereign at all. He’s either in complete control over everything or He’s not in control at all. There’s no either + and/or. It’s either all or nothing with God. It’s either all the marbles are in or none of them are in. God is either in complete control over your life, or He’s not in control at all. We cannot say, “God, I will trust you with these areas of my life, but let me do these other things. I think I can do better.” And there’s that clenched fist again. I’ve noticed when you hold things in an open hand; it hurts a lot less when they get taken away. If you hold things with a clenched fist, it hurts a lot more when they have to be pried open to be taken away.

VERSE 28

28 “Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.” I love Peter. Peter’s like “me foot-in-mouth syndrome”. Many times you know what I am thinking because my mouth spouts it off before my mind says, “Don’t say that!” This is Peter. This is whom the church is built on. He has this commercial view of Christianity. “Jesus, we did what the rich young ruler didn’t do. We left everything and followed you. Look how cool we are.” What he is saying is, “God, we gave it up. We left it all. What’s in it for us?” We don’t give up everything to get anything. We give up everything because He’s worthy of giving everything up for. It’s a heart matter.

VERSES 29-30

29 “Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel.” 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.” I love this because Jesus’ promise is such an encouragement, such hope, such peace. This is you and I. We play a role here. Pastor Scott has been preaching on this for the past couple of weeks. This is where the body of Christ comes in. This is where the church plays its major role. When somebody walks through these doors and has left all for the sake of Jesus Christ, and for the sake of the gospel, that we as a church family gather around them. If they lost their place to stay because they’ve been kicked out for following the gospel, we find them a place to stay if we have an extra room. If they’re hungry, we give them something to eat. If their whole family has rejected them or excommunicated them because they’ve left, they have a family that’s 100-fold times bigger because they now belong to the body of Christ. This is where we come in. This is where the church unites. We rally around these people that have left so much for the gospel. And we support them. So many people sacrifice and give up everything for this. If somebody walks away from a cult religion to follow Jesus Christ, they are excommunicated from their family. They are excommunicated for the sole purpose of making them so lonely that they come back. If they are excommunicated and they walk through these doors into the body of Christ, and we accept them, their family has now multiplied bigger than they could ever have imagined.

I love that Jesus adds **“with persecutions”**. I’m convinced if we are not being persecuted, we are not living our lives for Jesus Christ. Jesus promises that the world will hate you. He promises that the world will despise you because of Me. Because the world hated me, it’s going to hate you, my followers. Where we are at, persecution looks a little different than what it does from the rest of the world. We don’t get arrested for following Jesus, we don’t get our tongues cut out, we don’t get our land taken away from us, and we don’t get our families shipped from us. We get persecuted, we get mocked, we get made fun of, ostracized a little bit, maybe called a “weirdo”, or a “Jesus freak” or bible thumper, or whatever. But those are OK with me because Jesus Christ is who I follow. In the age to come is eternal life. We can work so hard for our reward now here on this temporary, broken earth or we can work hard for an eternal reward in a perfect heaven. That’s our choice for what we work toward.

I disagree with Pastor Scott on one thing. It’s his view of Apple. Pastor Scott does not like Apple. I love Apple. He says Apple is the forbidden fruit, it’s the devil’s company, and it’s got the bite taken out of it. This here is my phone. These new phones have things called “Apps” on them. They’re applications or add-ons to the phone. If you were to turn on my phone, you would see that I have a Surf Forecast App, or the Weather App, or the Bible App. I purposely don’t keep games on this because I don’t want to be distracted. But we have Apps. I’m convinced that many churches and people are taught that Jesus is an App to your life. Jesus at best is an “add-on”. We have our lives and we have everything that circles around us. We have me at the center. I like surfing and golfing, and yeah there’s Jesus and the word and other things but still at the center controlling it all is me. Jesus says, “No.”

For this young ruler it was possession. Jesus says, “No.” New Testament faith is giving up all your priorities, putting Jesus at the center and everything that you do revolves around Him.

Let me challenge you with a question: Are our lives blank checks for God to cash however He wants? Are you OK with it, if He calls you to go? Many of you know in my family my brother and his wife and 2 kids leave next Sunday for 2 years in Africa for a tribal immersion. A group that has never heard the gospel, never heard the name of Jesus. They don’t have a bible in their language because it’s a tribal language. Nobody knows the language except for those in the tribe. God has called my family. I’m not bragging or boasting but this is the call from God to all of our lives to go and do this.

Let’s pray.

God, we just come before you humbly. Knowing that it is you alone that brings upon salvation. God, there is nothing that we could do or earn your love or salvation or eternal life or for anything. That is not a work’s based thing. It’s based on placing our trust and faith and hope in Jesus Christ. If you are here today and you don’t have a relationship with Jesus Christ, one true living God, that’s what it’s about. There are no right words, there’s no special prayer, there’s no just check this box and you’re saved. It’s placing your complete trust and faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. If that’s you, and you don’t have that relationship, just in the quietness of your heart, between you and God, say, “God, I am a sinner. I am not good. There’s nothing good about me God and only you are good. God, I believe your journey ended on the cross, paying the price for my life, and taking upon the full wrath of God that was due me. But you rose from the grave and defeated death. And you are mighty to save. God I put my faith and hope and trust in you and your finished work.” For all of us in here that have placed our faith

and trust – if Jesus were to call you, and he already has, to write your life as a blank check: “God my life is not my own, it is yours, cash this however you want.” Are you OK with that? That is the commitment that Jesus is calling us to. That we give it all up, give up our priorities, give up our rights, give it all up for Him and His glory. God we thank you for your word. I thank you for my brothers and sisters in Christ in this room and all around the world. I pray that you bless them, God. Those in here that are hurting, those that are struggling. God I pray that you would let them know that you are near, that you would wrap your arms around them and remind them that you are God and that you are sovereign over everything. God we thank you. Thank you for your love, your grace, your mercy. God we praise you for what you do, what you’ve done, and what you’ll continue to do in our lives and the lives around us. May our lives live to give you all the honor, all the glory and all the praise. In Jesus’ name. And everyone said: Amen