

My name is Afshin. I don't know if you remember me from a while back, I think it was last November. I did a two week series on Abraham. It's good to be back. I'm in the middle of my summer death tour of youth camps. I'm doing eleven youth camps this summer. I've already done six with five more to go, so pray for me because I'm just like, "Wow!" It's been going well. And it's neat to be here at the Village and I'm sure you know this, but the man, the Village podcast is just blowing me away. There's not a place I go without somebody saying, "Oh, I listen to the Village. Just last week, I got an e-mail from someone in Thailand who was listening to the Village podcast who used to be in my college ministry. She's in a year long deal in Southeast Asia, and she was like, "We were just really depleted and needed something to pour into us. And I'm the only one from Texas and our leader said, 'Hey, come listen to this podcast.' And she pushes play and it was you. You were talking about Abraham, and it was the Village Church." So I was like, "The Village is in Thailand." So I just want you to know what the Lord is doing here on a weekly basis. It's unbelievable. It's not just here, it has far reaching effects all over the world. Well as I said it's been a long time since I've been here, and a lot has changed in my life. And since this is my home away from home, I want to share this story with you. I met a girl. Well, I've actually known her for a long time. In fact, I met this girl about eleven years ago. I'm a fast mover if you can tell. She was in my college ministry as was Josh Patterson and Natalie, his beautiful wife. They were all in my college ministry. I didn't date Meredith (this girl) when she was in my college ministry, just to make sure you know that. We were all good friends, and as I left the college ministry I remember one time being with Josh and saying, "You know who I could see myself marrying one day?" And I'm sitting here thinking he would freak out when I say Meredith when he goes, "Oh Meredith." And I was like "Yeah." He was like, "Oh, we all know that." Anyway, I ended up dating the girl for four years, and this is where you're going to throw things at me but to be honest I never pulled the trigger even though at one time I had the diamond ring and I had the place. I was going to propose, but I didn't because there were some things in my heart I needed to get straight. So I pulled the plug on this proposal or my attempt at one about two months prior and didn't propose. I ended up breaking with this girl. And then I had three years away from her, but actually a year after we broke up I went back to her with my tail between my legs and said, "I was an idiot. Will you take me back?" And she said, "Yes you were, and no I won't." But I kept pursuing her and pursuing her until about '06 she started dating another guy. So I had the whole broken heart experience and ended up having to let go and just move on and trust God. I moved on and went to Houston. I bet you didn't think you were going to hear my whole love life, but here you go, you're getting it. In '07 she broke up with the guy, and in September we saw each other in Austin and hung out and all the sparks were there. So we started hanging out and hanging out. And after a while she said, "You know, I've always loved you, and I've always been afraid to let go." So we kept hanging out some more and ultimately I asked her to marry me and she said yes. So I'm engaged, can you believe it?

Anyways, let me just tell you the night I proposed was the most magnificent night, and the Lord is just so good. There was a period of time where I was just wondering if I had just messed up my life and God had forgotten about me. It was a dark period of time where even my ministry started to suffer. So what I wanted to do today is first of all tell that story because I wanted you to be excited with me. Not only that but I want to share with you probably the biggest lesson I learned through that whole love saga. And I want to do that by looking at Scripture. Before we do that, I want you to bow your head with me and close your eyes. And I know we just prayed, but I want you to pray. I want you to pray silently, individually and just take a quick moment to say, "God, speak to my heart today." Because what we're about to do is worship. We're continuing in worship. It's not just about the singing, it's about getting into God's word, about hearing from Him. "Father, we come to You now. We thank You for Your word. And Lord, we thank You that Your word is God

breathed, that it never returns void, that it always accomplishes the purpose for which it was sent. And God, we pray that Your word would shape and equip, rebuke and change, guide and mold us today. In Christ name we pray. Amen.”

Grab your Bible and go to 1 Timothy 6. Paul wrote this letter to his disciple Timothy. After his first imprisonment, Paul goes with Timothy to Ephesus, the church where he started. And he leaves Timothy in Ephesus to lead that church as he goes on to Macedonia. And he writes this letter back to Timothy, giving him instructions on how to guide and lead the church. So he talks to him about fighting false doctrine. He talks to him about the qualifications for leaders, for deacons, for overseers and how to select those leaders. He talks to him about order in the church. He talks to him about him being an example and not letting anyone look down on Timothy’s youth. He just encourages him, and then I believe in chapter 6, he goes to the very heart. The most important he wants to nail I believe is in that last chapter. And I want to jump into a verse that you may know, verse 11 of 1 Timothy 6. He says, “But as for you, O man of God,...” By the way, that phrase “man of God” is only used twice in the New Testament and both times it’s referring to Timothy. It’s used about 70 times in the Old Testament referring to a man who speaks on behalf of God. So he’s saying to him, “You are a man of God. You represent Christ. You are here to speak on His behalf.” And the first thing he says is, “But as for you, O man of God, flee these things.” Now I know it’s kind of awkward that we started there because you don’t know what things to be fled from. We skipped all that, but I want to start there to say that the first thing he says is the man of God needs to steer clear of a few things. And those are the things that I want to talk to you about today, and those are some of the things that I believe crept up into my life, probably the biggest lesson I had to learn in this whole ordeal that I just shared with you. I want to get into the heart of the whole thing though, and it’s in verse 6. It says this, “Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment,” Now I’m jumping in the middle, there’s some stuff prior that we’re going to look at, but I want you to start there. Godliness with contentment is great gain. And the heartbeat of this chapter is verse 6. What he is trying to leave with Timothy is that God wants from you godliness to run after the things of God, to run after being Christlike coupled with contentment. Why is contentment such a big deal for God? Why does God desire contentment from us? Let’s contrast it. The opposite of contentment is covetousness. To covet something is the opposite of being content. So when we’re coveting something, we’re showing our lack of contentment in God. Have you ever wondered that the first and the tenth commandments of the Ten Commandments are essentially the same command? The first one is “You shall have no gods before Me.” The last one is, “You shall not covet.” And ultimately those are the same command. He starts and ends with the same command. What do we do when we covet something? We are saying, “God, you are not enough. You are not fulfilling. And if I had that something or someone, if I just had that, then I would be fulfilled.” That’s what sin is. Whenever we choose something else over God. That’s the bottom line of what sin is. So when we covet, we are bringing an idol into our life. That’s why Paul says in Colossians 3:5, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you.” And then he goes through a whole list. And then the last thing he says is, “[Put to death] covetousness, which is idolatry.” It’s idolatry. It’s worshiping something other than God. So that’s why contentment is such a huge deal for God, because when we’re not content, we’re starting to worship something other than God. And I want you to know that that was the enemy’s plan from the very beginning, it was for you to covet. Adam and Eve in the garden, the enemy comes in and says, “Oh, God told you not to eat from this tree? Well God knows that if you eat from that tree, you’ll become like Him.” So in essence that lie was this, that there’s something more out there for you that you don’t know about, that God is keeping from you, that if you just had that then you would be fulfilled. So it was God + something. If you just had that, then you could be God yourself. And they bit that lie. They went after coveting. And that’s the enemy’s plan at the beginning, and the enemy wants you to covet. Because when you covet, you lose your richness in Christ, the fulfillment you have in Christ. And that’s what God wants you to fight against, and that’s what Paul is urging to Timothy. Jesus says it this way in John 10, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” If you’re sitting here wondering why you should give your life to following Christ fully, I’m here to tell you if you don’t you’re missing life. Jesus says if you try to save your life, you’re going to lose, but if you would lose your life for His sake, you will find life. God doesn’t want to take life from you, He wants you to experience life to the fullest. And so He wants you not to covet.

Alright, so how do we stay content in God? I want to give you three things this morning. The first one is for us to be content where we are. Be content where you are, in the life stage you are, in the position you are and where you find yourself. Now go back to the beginning of 1 Timothy 6 and look at verses 1-2 with me. "Let all who are under a yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these things." By the way, the slavery that was going on then was more like indentured servitude. It wasn't like forever slavery. They were slaves for a set period of time, like seven years. And in exchange for their service to their master, they had all their food and clothing and shelter provided for. So in some ways, it was even better than a day laborer. They had everything taken care of for them. And the second thing he says is, "If you have Christian masters, just because you're a Christian and there's equity there, you're both co-heirs with Christ, don't take that as an excuse to not be diligent and not serve." And then the first thing he says may be to believing masters. "You ought to serve them so that the doctrine, the name of God would not be blasphemed." In Ephesians 6, he says it this way, "Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ." What is all that talking about? It means this. The position you find yourself in as a servant, you be obedient to God and you serve it because you're doing it to God. If you complain about the state you're in, about position you're in, the place you're in, if you're discontent where you are, what are you doing but expressing your lack of faith in God and His plan? You're saying, "God, You're not good enough for me," or "God, You're not coming through for me. God, you don't have my best interests in Your plan." So whenever we're discontent wherever God has us, we are screaming our lack of faith in God, not just to God but to those watching us when we complain and grumble. No wonder Philippians says, "Do all things without complaining so you will shine as stars." When we complain where God has us, we are displaying our lack of faith and we're coveting. We're saying, "Man, if I just got to the next stage in life..." And I want you to know that I struggled with this. I want to be transparent with you today. I'm going to be very personal with you today. When I was dating Meredith, Josh was dating Natalie, all my other friends were dating their girls, we were all kind of in the same stage. And then we broke up and all my other friends moved on to marriage and then they moved on to the first kid and then the second one. And I felt like I was falling behind. And I've got to tell you, I started to covet. There was a period of time when I was struggling with discontentment, and I hated it. I would be joyful when my friends had kids, but there was a part of me, because I believe I'm called to be a father, there was part of me that had a tinge of pain and I'd say, "God, when for me? When will I get married and have kids?" And so I was discontent. And we say, "If I just got married, then I'll be fulfilled...And then if I just had children, then I'd be fulfilled." I'm going to tell you something. If you're not fulfilled in this stage of life, chances are you won't be fulfilled in the next one. You've got to deal with discontentment, because it's an issue of your heart. It's not an issue of you having the right situation to be fulfilled, it's an issue of your heart, because your heart isn't content in God. That's what it shows.

The story of David is so awesome here where Samuel is looking for the next king of Israel. He goes to the sons of Jesse and says, "Hey, we're going to have a consecration service." So all the sons of Jesse, they primp themselves up to be the next king. They're all coveting that next stage. So guess what happens. They all pass by Samuel to see who's the next king, and he sees one of them and says, "That's got to be the next king." And God says to Samuel in 1 Samuel 16, "Do not look at his outward appearance, because the Lord does not see as man sees. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." God says, "I'm interested in the person whose heart is mine, who is full and content in Me and isn't trying to covet the next stage." And so they all pass by and he's like, "None of them. Is this all your sons?" And Jesse says, "No, I've got one more. He's out there with the sheep." David, who didn't see himself fit to be king, who was content where God had him, he was obedient to the place where God had him. He was serving the sheep, that's where God had him. He wasn't trying to get to the next step. And guess what? That's the guy that God uses. That's the guy that God calls to be the king and shepherd God's sheep. Isn't that interesting? Because he was content where He had him. Luke 16:10 says, "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much." God desires for you contentment where you are.

Number two: God wants contentment with what you have. Now look at 1 Timothy 6 starting in verse 3, "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." He goes, "The heartbeat of the people who are teaching false doctrine, they suppose godliness to be a means of gain. That's what you're supposed to run away from. Do you know what's so interesting? He says that they're using words and twisting words, they're obsessed with word arguments to make godliness be to their benefit. I think Paul is about to talk a little bit of smack here. You might have missed it if you don't look really carefully. He says they're into word games and then he turns a little word game on them. He says, "You think godliness is a means to gain. I say to you godliness with great contentment is great gain." He just turns it on them. They see this, "Godliness + something will fulfill me." And Paul's saying, "Godliness + contentment." Isn't that interesting? Contentment really means "minus everything else." Meaning, you don't look to anything else as a source of fulfillment and this thing becomes richer. It doesn't mean that you devalue God. You can't devalue God. But you devalue your experience of fulfillment in God when you run after other things as a source of fulfillment. That's the sort of formula that Paul is talking about in Philippians when he says, "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." Don't run after the stuff of this earth. He's going to go into the love of money. Look at verse 7 of 1 Timothy 6, "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." Don't run after money or material wealth, because it won't last. It's not going to go with you to heaven. It's not eternal. Then he says this, "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare." As Mark 4 says, it's like the seed thrown in the thorns, that the cares of the world and the riches of the world come and choke out the word and prove it unfruitful. That's what the love of money does, it chokes out your spiritual life. Let's keep going. Verse 10, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith." He says if you run after money, if you run after the stuff of the world, it also leads to other sins. That's why it's so dangerous. It leads to greed and lust and hate and envy and jealousy. So he says don't run after that stuff.

Now all of us here can hear that and say, "Okay, I understand. Don't run after godliness in terms of financial gain." And I believe that's the heartbeat of this, it's specifically financial gain. And all of us know those preachers who get on TV, which I don't understand at all, that say God wants you to be rich. They get on there and say, "Give me your money and you'll be rich." And I'm sitting there thinking, "Wait a minute. If I give you my money, won't you be rich?" So we all understand, "Okay, I'm not buying into that." But I want you to know something. This godliness as a means of gain can sometimes have a subtle deceptiveness to it that can strike all of it. Maybe you're not running after God to get rich financially, but there are times where godliness has some perks with it. Now we know about the struggles of walking with Christ. We talk about that a lot, but I don't think we talk enough about the stuff that comes with following God that we sometimes start to worship. Let me explain it to you in my experience, and again I'm going to be very transparent with you. I'm supposing you don't know what it's like to grow up in America as an Iranian. I'm just going to go ahead and take that leap that most of you don't know what that's like. So let me just give you a little flavor of it. If you grew up in the 70's and 80's in America as an Iranian, you absolutely hated the Beach Boys. You absolutely hated them. Now you may be going, "What in the world? What's wrong with the Beach Boys?" I'm kind of joking, but here's the deal. A long time ago, the Beach Boys wrote this song about a girl called Barbara Ann. And when the Iran Hostage Crisis hit, a bunch of Americans were held hostage in Iran, it was not a cool thing to be from Iran and live in America. So what they did on the radio is take the Barbara Ann song and they changed the words. "Bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb Iran... Bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb Iran..." Everyone's singing that song. And then you'd go to school and your friends would look at you and start singing that song. And then you get to junior high in the early 80's and Reagan went and bombed Qaddafi. Then the next day, you had to deal with the ignorance. It doesn't matter if you're from Iran; if you're from that area of the world you had to deal with it. Then you go to junior high and you get some junior high kid come up to you and say, "Ha ha, we bombed your people!" And I'm like, "It was Libya." And they'd go, "Oh, same thing." I can excuse

ignorance, but at least get it in the right continent. And here's my deal, and I'm not trying to throw a pity party here, but you kind of go through life thinking that you're a little bit inferior than everyone else, you're off, you're not like everyone else. Again, I'm not throwing a pity party, but I want you to see this. Then you accept Christ. Now you're a former Muslim who became a Christian? Now you're a hot commodity. Now all of a sudden they throw you up in front of the church to share your testimony. Everyone comes up to you and says, "You're amazing...Wow, God's got great plans for you." Then all of a sudden they put you on the radio after September 11th to tell people your story. Then all of a sudden they put your mug on the cover of a Christian magazine that goes all over the nation. Then all of a sudden people are calling you. And I'm going to be very transparent and honest with you. I love Jesus, and I was sincere when I lost my father and lost stuff to follow Christ. But I want you to know, when I started following Christ, there was some good stuff about following Christ that came my way, some heady stuff. And it was really easy for me to start worshiping those things. Godliness as a means of gain. And I don't think I'm immune to it, and I had to deal with that. I had to get to the point where I had to deal with that.

And I don't think it's just me; we all do it. It seeps into our minds in the Christian culture. Last time I was here I talked about when God comes to Abraham and says, "I'm going to be your God, and also I'm going to give you the land." And we go, "What? The land?" and we start running after the stuff of God and start worshiping the blessings of God instead of Him. And we talked about this with Abraham, that the great message of the gospel is "I'll be your God. You get Me." You were broken and removed from God because of your sin. The great message of the gospel is this, that God was in Christ reconciling you to Himself. You get that relationship back. And we start to grumble because our eyes are on the blessings of God instead of Him. And we are discontent and unfulfilled. So that's what happened to me. We do it with heaven. Jesus says in John 14, "In My Father's house are many mansions." And we go, "Whoa!" and everything else He says after that is pretty much like the teacher in "Charlie Brown." We don't hear anything else after that. We're read "In my Father's house there are many mansions," and we're like, "I can't wait for heaven. There's going to be mansions and streets of gold." And we make it about that stuff. But if you just stick with Christ a little bit more, you'll notice that He says, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." Wow, that's the great news of heaven. Jesus says to His disciples, "You get to be with Me forever, not the mansions." At least we don't go as far as another religion that I'm familiar with that has some weird theology in some places where if you die a martyr's death, then you get virgins in heaven. At least we don't go that far, right? If you don't know what I'm talking about, in Islam there's some theology in places that say if you die as a martyr, you have that in heaven. And I've got to tell you this. I'm sorry, but this is a rabbit trail. One time I was sitting with my step-mom and her mother and we were talking about Christ. And I don't know how we got on this topic, which is kind of awkward with your grandma. But we did and I just said to my step-mom, "Mom, I've got a question for you. Do you think the idea that sex would be a reward in heaven for faithfulness on earth is an idea that came from God or an idea that came from a man?" And my step-mom went, "That sounds like a man." And I didn't say anything else after that. And then my grandma goes, "What are you saying." And she goes, "Mom, that sounds like a man's idea." And I walked away going, "I can't believe I just used sex as apologetics tool." But seriously, we all think that's absurd (I hope you do), but a lot of us still make it about the stuff too, even sin. We think the tragedy of sin, like when we mess up and sin against God and we think "Oh, He won't bless me now." So we even make sin about the stuff of the gains. We might lose the stuff that God wants to give me. Do you want me to tell you what the tragedy of sin is? It's that you've walked out of step with God. In 1 Peter 4, Peter says it this way, "You should stop running after the lusts of men, because we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing that." He says that you should spend the rest of your lifetime running after the will of God. So for Peter, the tragedy of sin is wasted time. Yes you should mourn the sin that you committed, but you should also mourn the time that you wasted that you could have had in the fulfillment of walking with God. Do you see that it's not just about the blessings? We do it with church. "Man, I get a lot out of that church." It's all about what I get out of it. "I love that church. The preacher there is amazing. Sometimes I have to listen to that Iranian guy come, but the preacher is amazing." And he is. You've got an incredible preacher here. I told Bleecker that in heaven we probably won't need

preachers like myself, Matt and the rest, but we probably would need worship leaders. And if I get to heaven and had all of today's worship leaders in heaven, I'd want to go to the corner of heaven that Bleecker was leading, because I love worshiping under his leadership. You have great leadership here. "I get a lot out of it." But I listen to the podcast, and not to make anyone feel guilty here, but with the upcoming expansion project, about 20% are really involved and engaged in that and about 80% aren't. Again, I'm not saying that to make anyone feel guilty, I'm just saying that to say, how many of us go to church and just consume? And how many are going to give? Even love. Hollywood tells us about love, that it's all about what I get out of it. We watch "The Notebook." And let me tell you, "The Notebook" came out right when Meredith and I broke up. I wanted to shoot the TV. So we watched "The Notebook" and we're like, "Aw, that guy loved her. I want someone to love me like that. Never mind the fact that he was sleeping with another girl when the girl and knocked on the door...Oh well. I just want someone to love me like that." We want that love, and it's about what we get out of it. And what happens is these Hollywood get married and they lose that passion and they punt their wife and go get another wife, thinking that if they just had the right wife, they'd have the stuff, the passion, the gain. Love's not about get out of it; love's about what you give. The object of love is not you, but it's the person that you're loving. It's about what we give. And so I say to you, if you're running after God, be careful of running after the gains of God. You will never be fulfilled in life. But if you're running after Him, I'm going to quote Henry David Thoreau but I'm going to Christianize it. I think all truth is God's truth, and he had a little bit of it cornered here. "A man is wealthy in proportion to the number of things he can afford to do without." I just thought that was brilliant. So he takes affordability and turns it on his head. And now let me Christianize it a little bit. We think that affordability is about how much wealth power I have so that I can gain and attain stuff and toys and worldly treasures. But affordability is really "How rich am I in Christ that I can afford to lose other stuff as a source of fulfillment? Because I'm already full." That's what richness is. And you can run after the wealth of the world, or you can run after that kind of wealth. It's going to last, and the other one will never fulfill you. You were made to be rich in Christ. And so Paul says in Ephesians, "My prayer that you would know the what is the inheritance of the saints, what is the richness of the glory." Today we sang "The glory of it all is that He came near," that you have Christ. David says, "One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life." To be in His presence, is that your desire?

Okay, you're content where you are, you're content with what you have, let me give you one more. You're content by knowing the truth. And this is how you get to contentment. You are content by knowing the truth. Look back with me at 1 Timothy 6:5. He says that these men teach false doctrine are "men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth." They are void of truth. They don't know the truth. Why does he say that? Listen to what they're running after. Go back to verse 4. He of the man who teaches false doctrine, "he is proud, knowing nothing." He doesn't know the truth, he is proud. The untruth, the lie, the falsehood is that it's about you. So that's why they're obsessed with twisting things for their gain, and they'll never be fulfilled. In fact, it will lead to more destruction. And the real truth is when you come to Christ, you understand life is not about you becoming great. Life is about Christ becoming great in you. And there is such a joy, there is such a burden lifted, there is such a freedom and a peace that comes from knowing and embracing that truth, to know life isn't about me. There's a comfort in that. There's a comfort and a release that comes from that. 2 Corinthians 5 says, "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again." There is a transfer that happens when you come to Christ. You have a whole new ballgame, a whole new way of judging success. From now on it ought to be that you see everything through the lens of this: Does this thing make the name of Christ great or make my name great? And I'm telling you, there is such a joy with that. It's like when everyone went to John the Baptist to be baptized by him. The leaders came and said, "Who are you?" He said, "I'm nobody. I'm just a voice in the wilderness. But there's coming someone else after me. His sandals I'm unworthy to loose." And Christ comes on the scene and says, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." And look what happens in John 3. John's disciples come to him and say, "We've got a problem. All the people that were following you have left you. They're not following Christ." What are they saying there. "Your gain has turned into a loss for Christ's glory." And so John says to them, "This

joy of mine is fulfilled." John the Baptist, his whole purpose for being born was to prepare the way of the Lord. He's like, "I'm fulfilled. I did my purpose." If you're a follower of Christ, you were created for Him. Colossians 1:16 says, "All things were created through Him and for Him." You were created not for you, not for your parents, not for your glory but for His glory, to make Him great. And so he says, "This joy of mine is fulfilled." He goes, "I'm just the friend of the bridegroom." In November I'm going to finally be the groom. But I've been the best man, I've been a groomsman and I've ushered like 5 million times. I've been in that line where I stand here, and I want you to know that at that wedding, it's all about what God is doing between this man and wife, the two becoming one, the mystery that is between Christ and His church. It's all about the glory of God here. I have never once been tempted at a wedding to all of a sudden stand in front of the man and wife and stand in the spotlight and say, "Hey everybody, look at me up here." Now that's a ridiculous thought, I understand. But we do the same thing with Christ. We receive Christ and then we want to get in the spotlight and live life for us. And you can do that and never be fulfilled in life. The sooner you understand life is about Him becoming great, there's contentment in that. It doesn't matter what state you're in, it doesn't matter what you have then, because it's not about you. Paul puts it this way in 2 Timothy 4, "[I am] being poured out as a drink offering." There would be this altar sacrifice and they would get this precious wine and pour it out. He's saying, "That's who I am." And that precious wine being poured on this burning hot altar with the sacrifice would evaporate away. He says, "My life is just a pleasant aroma to God. And when people look at me, they don't see me. I've evaporated away. They see the sacrifice." Is that your heartbeat, that when people look at you, they wouldn't see you, they would see Christ?

I would like to close with a story. I have become a major soccer buff. I'm a sports fanatic, but I've gotten sucked in to soccer. My team is a team from Liverpool, England. Liverpool Football Club, that's my team. I love Liverpool, I root for them big time. Now there's a thing called the European Champion's League, which is all the champions, all the runners-up and the second runners-up of all England, Spain, France, Germany, all those leagues. They come together and are thrown in a pot and there's a big tournament. And the last two standing play the equivalent of the Super Bowl on steroids over there. The entirety of Europe just shuts down to watch this game. The tickets were being sold for 2000-4000£. That's like \$4000-8000. That's how big time it was. And my buddy and I had tickets for free because we knew someone who lived in England and had connections. So we went to this match and were sitting center-pitch twenty rows up. If you know who Clive Owen, the British actor is, he was sitting behind us. So we had great seats. It was so incredible. In the middle of that match I look down and pull out the ticket and I saw where it says the price and it was blank. There was no price listed. And I looked at my friend's and it didn't have price. My neighbor's ticket didn't have a price either. I remember seeing the tickets the scalpers were selling had prices on them. Mine didn't have a price listed. And then it dawned on me. That whole section where we were sitting, those seats were too good to be able to purchase. Those seats were already paid for by corporate sponsors, big time sponsors, and they give them to people they know and love. So the only way you get that ticket is if you know someone. It doesn't matter how much money you have. That's exactly the gospel. It doesn't matter how much money you have, how much stuff you have, how much religion you have, how much you go to church, you cannot buy what Christ wants to give you. A relationship with God, it's too good. In fact, it's already been purchased by Christ, and the only way you get that ticket is if you know Him. You say, "How do I know Him?" You come to the end of yourself and say, "I've gone after stuff of the world and it's never fulfilled me. Jesus, I need You." You just say a prayer and say, "God, I turn my life over to You." You don't just say a prayer, you commit your life to Him and you follow Him. The Bible says all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. And my prayer is that you'll stop running after the world and run after Christ. He fulfills.

I want you to bow your head with me, close your eyes and I want us to pray. "Father, we love You. We thank You for Your word. God, we pray that Your word would speak to us, continue to speak to us. God, I just pray if there's anyone in here who needs to give their life to You, that they would. I pray if there's anyone here who needs to just let go of the stuff that's just been unfulfilling, that they would just rest in the contentment that comes in You. Lord, we want to be full of

You. You say You are the bread of life, that 'he who comes to Me will not hunger and thirst.' We don't want to hunger and thirst for the world anymore. We love You, Lord. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen."

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