



Lesson Goal:

For you to further your understanding and experience --

- ⇒ To see that the gospel is not just for you....but to give away to others
- ⇒ To grab a hold of God's plan for His Kingdom
- ⇒ To realize that the Spirit has equipped you to be used in wonderful ways



1. Listen to or watch the Lesson 12 talk.

Use the following transcript of the talk while you listen or watch.

Propulsion of Grace

Josiah Bancroft

The missionary heart of our Father and His children

1 **I. A DIFFICULT TIME OF MINISTRY- "WHAT AM I DOING HERE?"**

2 We will be looking in your Scriptures at 2 Corinthians, chapter 3. So if you'd like to open
3 your Bibles there and get a head start, you could. But as you're doing it, I want to start with a
4 story which is true, unfortunately. As I was working in Ireland with World Harvest Mission,
5 Hunter Dockery, who was my field leader and friend, had a call from Siberia. A fellow that we
6 had not worked with before, but who knew of the ministry of World Harvest and how we teach
7 grace, had been working with some Siberian Baptist preachers and he said that they could use
8 some of us and would we please come and help. And so in mid-December, Hunter came to me
9 and said, "Look this guy has asked us to fly into Siberia and to teach the gospel to between eighty
10 to a hundred and twenty church-planting pastors that will be sent out across Siberia. Would you
11 like to go?" And I said, "That sounds great. . . I think. . . when are we going?" And he said,
12 "We'll be there the month of January." And I thought. "Well, this must be from the Lord,
13 because this is not an opportunity I would have sought . . . particularly." And I prayed about it

15 and talked to Barbara and we just couldn't say no to it. I grew up praying every Wednesday night
16 at the Fellowship supper in Ruhama Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama praying for our
17 brothers and sisters behind the iron curtain. And who would have known, who could have
18 possibly have known I would be given a single opportunity to talk to some of these people and to
19 encourage them in their faith. You can't say no to that can you? And so Hunter was excited about
20 the opportunity and we said, "We'll go."

21 So we signed up and early in January we got ready to go. Now my dear wife was looking
22 after me and by the time I got on the plane, though it was only 50 degrees in Ireland, we were
23 going to where it was really cold. And by the time I got on that plane I looked like the Michelin
24 Man. If I had fallen down, Lord help me, I wouldn't have been able to get up. And so I was
25 sweating profusely all the way into Moscow and Hunter was the seasoned traveler; was traveling
26 a little lighter than I was. We got into Moscow late afternoon and our flight from Moscow to
27 Novosibirsk, where we were going in the dead center of Siberia, the geographical center of
28 Siberia (they have a star where it's the middle). The flight that we were going in didn't leave till
29 after midnight that night and so we had to wait around Sheremetyevo, the airport. And if you've
30 never been there, it's not a tourist place. And then in the middle of the night we got this bus and
31 we got hollered at by some policemen for crossing. We didn't know what we were doing
32 dragging this luggage and very confused, got on this bus, spent the night. It was colder than I had
33 ever been, being from Alabama. We went across to Sheremetyevo 1 and it was a whole other step
34 down. They had, and this is not a joke: you know you have a cigarette with a little international
35 bar through it "No Smoking." They had a symbol on that plane that showed a guy in silhouette
36 dragging a goat up a gang plank, with a line through it. It was not a good sign. It really wasn't.
37 And as that plane took off I was a little nervous. They took us out to the end of the runway and it
38 felt like they taxied like six miles. It was almost zero. They got out there and revved the engines
39 up and then taxied back. And we watched out the window as they opened the engines and begin
40 to work on the plane. They kept de-icing it. I kept waiting for Babushkas with mops to get on the
41 wings. It was really a little unnerving and then we took off and of course sleeping in that kind of
42 condition is just impossible. We flew.

43 Our tickets were very simple. They said Moscow—Novosibirsk. I had learned enough of
44 the Cyrillic alphabet to where I could sound out what they said and so I knew we were OK. We
45 landed, everybody on the plane gets off, its mid-morning/early-morning by the time we arrived;
46 6:00-7:00 in the morning. We went down waiting for our luggage. We found that British Air had
47 lost all of our luggage. And we were waiting for it to come and it never came. And we were
48 waiting for Paul, our ride, to come pick us up and he never came. And as we waited I got more
49 and more nervous. And finally I looked at the wall and I noticed, I sounded out the name on the
50 wall and it said Nizhnevartovsk. I thought, "What does that mean in Russian?" I said to Hunter,

51 “Are you sure we are in Novosibirsk?” “Oh yeah.” And we waited and waited. We couldn’t make
52 a phone call. There wasn’t a coin that we could put in the box. We didn’t know that you had to
53 buy a special plastic token because the currency fluctuates so much you have to buy this token on
54 the day and use the token to pay for it. We didn’t know any of that. We couldn’t make a phone
55 call. I finally was worried about where we were and went upstairs and I asked a guy in a uniform
56 with a rifle. Nobody in the airport spoke English, by the way. I did the international thing, you
57 know. I said, “Novosibirsk?” And he said, “Novosibirsk.” So I tried it again. “Novosibirsk?” He
58 said, “Novosibirsk. . . ha ha ha ha ha.” So I went down to where the luggage was. Hunter was
59 still waiting for the bags to come around and they never came. And waiting for Paul to come and
60 he never came. We had gotten off that plane. It was so cold. You know Hunter, I was having to
61 give him...we were sharing clothes. He had my scarf wrapped around his head. I mean, we were a
62 pretty desperate looking group. And I told him about the “Novosibirsk? . . . Novosibirsk. . . .
63 Novosibirsk. . . Ha ha ha ha ha,” and he said, “I don’t know what it means.” And finally we went
64 upstairs and I took my ticket and we pushed it through a little glass with a large lady behind it.
65 And she looked at it and immediately picked up the loudspeaker and people started coming and
66 they ran over and they began to argue among themselves. And this large square Russian woman
67 in a uniform. . . big lady. . . came up and she said the only English we heard the entire time we
68 were in Nizhnevartovsk, because we were not in Novosibirsk. We were not even close to
69 Novosibirsk. We were five hours by air away from Novosibirsk. We were lost in Siberia. Now I
70 have been lost before. But I want you to know, this brought lost to a whole new level in my life.
71 And at this point, I want you to know I’m not proud of this, but it was basically every man for
72 himself. You know boy, the pressure came on and I mean there was no grace in my life at all. It
73 was all righteousness, works, survival, out-of-my-way. Oh, it was so bad. This woman came up
74 to us and the first thing she did was she took both of our tickets and then she took our passports
75 and visas and said, “You sit.” Which we did. It turned out in the Lord’s providence that this was
76 an angel. She worked for a competing airline, *the* competing airline, and gave us free tickets to
77 get from where we were to Novosibirsk. What had happened was the plane had had a change of
78 schedule which they’d announced in Russian but we didn’t know it; and everybody had just
79 gotten off the plane to get a cup of tea. They all got back on. The guard was pointing at the plane,
80 “Novosibirsk,” which he found extremely humorous.

81 This was not an auspicious beginning to a month of ministry. I had never been in 45
82 degrees below zero before. It was just very evident; if I get lost, I die. You know, there are
83 frozen dogs on the side of the road. It was pretty scary stuff. It really was. And Hunter had been
84 there before and I was really glad for it. He was such a help. He kind of kept me from going
85 completely crazy. We had two or three weeks of wonderful ministry. And God really blessed our
86 time there. It was not easy. The first day they ran me around with forty pounds of books on foot

87 all over Novosibirsk. And when I stopped I fainted. Hunter caught me on the way to the ground
88 and our interpreter came around the corner just as Hunter kind of dipped me and was patting me
89 on the face saying wake up and our woman translator Nelly came around and went, “Huhhhh!!”
90 And we never spoke of it. But God gave us good increase. I was really excited about how God
91 used Paul and Hunter and me in leading these men. And the response we were getting — they
92 were hungry, they were open, it was a great time of ministry.

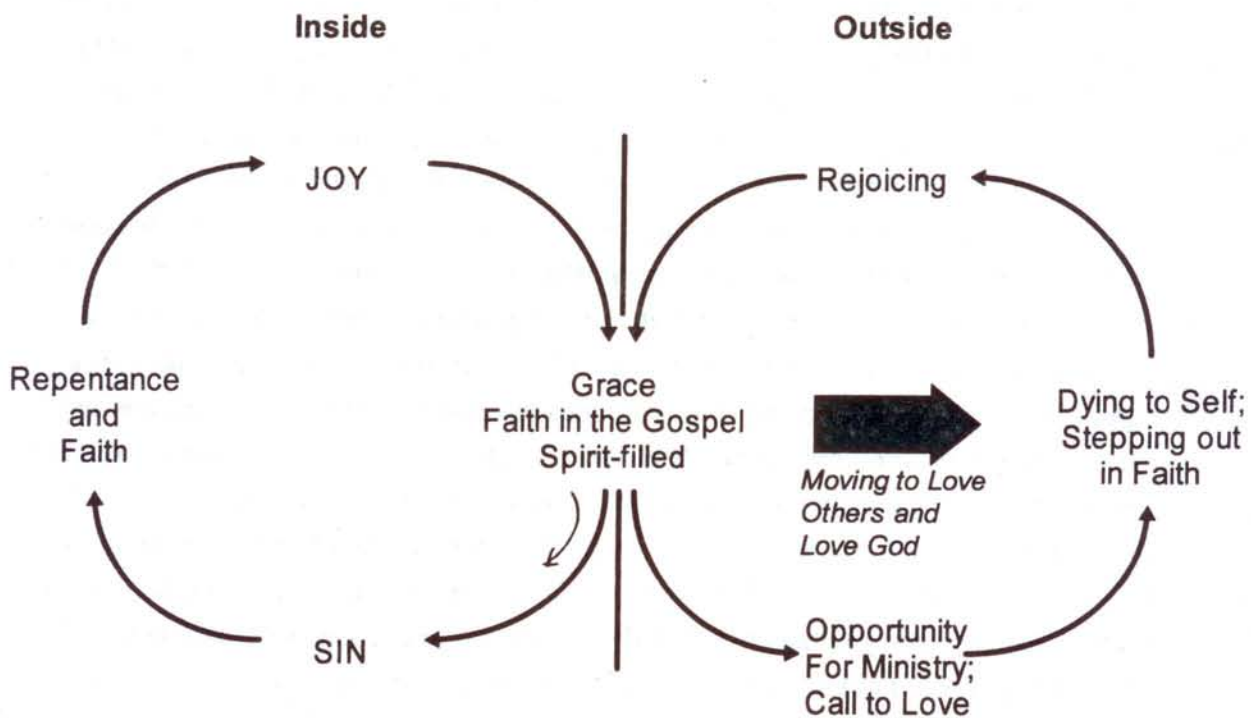
93 We had another crisis toward the end of that. Hunter said, “I’ve got to go.” And Paul said,
94 “This is the worst church we’ve been in, coming up. And they are not real happy about what’s
95 going on and you are going to have to do some hand-to-hand with these guys. And then we were
96 at his house in Novosibirsk getting ready to take a bus ride to Barnaul where this church was. We
97 were there over the weekend. We were going to drive out on Monday morning, and I spent a long
98 weekend. Hunter left; he picked up his luggage at the airport. It finally got to us, and he left. And
99 while Paul and his wife Cindy had chores and errands to run and they left me alone in the house
100 on Saturday. The passport guard came in a truck. I let the guy in . . . he didn’t. . . I mean it was
101 just a long hard weekend and most of the weekend I was thinking, “What am I doing here? What
102 am I doing here? Who told you you could do this?” You see, that’s the battle of faith, isn’t it?
103 That’s the struggle to believe that God can and will use me. My weaknesses are pretty evident.
104 The struggle is to believe that God uses me and that he doesn’t wait until I’m perfect to do that.
105 And I must admit to you I really struggled with that all weekend. And really late Sunday night
106 faith finally broke in. And I decided “You know, I’m here, and there is no one else. And I believe
107 you said ‘Come,’ and so I am going to trust that you will use me even without Hunter or without
108 Paul. That you will use me in this situation.” And do you know what? He did. It was a fine week.
109 God was very gracious. He met me in that moment of need.

110 **II. THE SPIRIT MOVES YOU OUT**

111 And part of what I want to talk to you about this morning is the fact that the renewal that
112 God is bringing in your life leads somewhere. It goes somewhere. It isn’t for you. There’s push
113 behind it. There is a propulsion in it. It wants to push you out into new areas. For some of you
114 that may mean missions. For some of you it may mean a new ministry right where you are. For
115 some of you it may mean not an official ministry but a picking up of a family responsibility
116 you’ve struggled with or opportunities to love difficult people around you. I don’t know where
117 the Spirit will propel you. I don’t know what that will look like, but I do know this: God has not
118 changed your heart and spoken grace into you to bear no fruit. He has not spoken that to you just
119 for you and for your family. He can and will use you to do things you could never have imagined.
120 That’s the kind of God He is. That’s His plan. He delights to use the weak things of this world.
121 Not many wise, not many noble. You qualify. You do! You are messes!!

122 And that is what I was trying to say to the church a couple weeks ago. Paul ministered not
123 out of his strength, but if you read 2 Corinthians 11 and 12, what does he say? Out of weakness.
124 **“I will boast in my weakness.”** ^{2 Corinthians 11:30; 12:5,9} Well, let me ask you. Are you weak enough yet
125 to do ministry? Or do you still think that ministry flows from your strength and what you do is
126 you go to God who makes you stronger than anyone else so you don’t have to trust anyone or
127 anything else and, “Now I’m ready. I got my act together.” Well you read the New Testament and
128 you read Paul. And what he says is, “I will boast in my...” What? “weakness.” Why? Because it
129 is in that weakness Jesus said **“My power is made perfect in your weakness.”** ^{2Corinthians 12:9} You
130 see, Jesus doesn’t give you all these things so that you can go and do ministry. He just goes with
131 you. He just goes with you. He promises to work through you. And that’s the step of faith. It’s
132 not faith to get myself so well trained and so experienced and so intelligent and so capable that I
133 can go and do ministry I’m sure I can accomplish. Where’s the faith in that? You know that’s the
134 way we think about it. I’ve got to be so together that I can see the end from the beginning and
135 know there’s a good chance of success. I am not saying that preparation is wrong. It is not. You
136 need it. And seminary and training and all these things; pursue them. I am just saying to you, they
137 will not give you ministry, and you may not trust them; they’re never enough. What you need is
138 Jesus, and the willingness to kind of step out; into dangerous territory. Now that doesn’t have to
139 be Siberia. The dangerous territory may be, and for many of you is, your marriage. You may find
140 it more easy to believe that God could use you in Siberia than He can change your cold hard heart
141 toward you wife or your husband. But it is the same power and the same grace that does both.
142 And they are linked. As He works in your heart He also works through you with others. What I
143 want to do is I want to put these things in some type of order. “When my heart is perfected, then I
144 will go.” And Jesus says, “I want you to trust me more than that. I want you to believe that I will
145 use you, wreck though you are,” and go and step out.

146 I frequently have done a whole lecture based on this diagram [next page], and I don’t
147 want to do that today. But I want to point out something to you by showing this. The line down
148 the middle between these two circles is the difference between the inside of your life and the
149 outside of your life. And inside, grace and faith and the gospel show you your sin; push you to
150 repentance and faith so there is some measure of joy and Jesus in your life. And that’s shorthand
151 (there is a lot more), but that gives you kind of a shorthand for how the inside runs. And you see
152 you move from one to the other. And then from joy to resting in grace again and looking for
153 God’s Spirit to move you ahead. And really that’s the side that we’ve talked the most to you
154 about, isn’t it? But that’s not the only way God works.



156 Jack Miller, I don't think, did "Sonship" the way that we're doing it. I liked the way that
 157 Jack taught me grace. Let me tell you about it, because it's the same thing; and it is, running this
 158 outer circle [on the diagram]. What Jack would do is, He would look for ministry and say to me
 159 "Come alongside" and then when I was at the proper point he would give me to God and leave.
 160 And guess what happened? Revival. All of a sudden I needed Jesus. Do you understand? Let me
 161 tell you how it worked.

162 Jack comes and he speaks in Dublin. While he is speaking in the front of the church
 163 building at Hope [Hope Fellowship Church, Dublin], there is a guy in the back in black leather
 164 making deals to sell dope on a cell phone in the back of the church, that's listening to Jack
 165 preach. So when the service is over, Jack goes and introduces, "Hello I'm Jack Miller. This is
 166 Steve. Hello Steve, how are you? This is my friend Steve, Josiah." I thought, "Thanks Jack."
 167 ("Aliases only here, you know?"). And he talked to Steve and Steve said "You all just scare me
 168 to death." (That's not what he said. He was a Dub so he used a lot more language than that, but I
 169 won't use it here). He spoke pretty rough and he said, "You all scare me to death." And Jack
 170 said "Well let me pray with you about that. Lord, help us not to scare Steve to death. And Steve,
 171 you really need to learn about grace, and my friend Josiah will be glad to come to your
 172 apartment. Josiah, give Steve your address and phone number." Do you know what Jack was

173 teaching me? Faith. Grace. That God is there. That he will use me. And let me tell you what.
174 Revival sprang up in my life. All of a sudden I needed Jesus in whole new ways. Help me Lord!
175 And I found myself on more than one occasion sitting in Steve's bed set, watching the prostitutes
176 come in and out, some of them working in the room next door, speaking to him and them about
177 the love of Jesus for sinners. And God was with me there. My faith was not so large that I didn't
178 park my car a mile away. But God was with me.

179 And you see it's hard for us to know which comes first. Is it that renewal in your life
180 leads to mission, whether that's family or church or overseas, but to mission? Or is it that
181 mission in your life forces you back to renewal? Who knows? But they go together. They go
182 together. This is not a self-improvement program, so that you get good enough to do something.
183 This is the power of God at work in your life. Making you audacious, as Rick said [in a previous
184 lecture at the seminar], and bold, and ready to try something and step out, fearful and struggling,
185 and yet going anyway. I'll tell you the picture that keeps coming to my mind. I think about Peter
186 in that boat [Matthew 14:22-33]. And they see Jesus coming, and there's a storm; they are afraid
187 for their lives. And they're in the boat, and Peter looks out and they see, and they think it's a
188 ghost, and they're frightened. And they begin to think it's Jesus and they call out to him. And
189 Peter says, "**Lord, if it's you, bid me to come to you on the water.**" ^{Matthew 14:28} You remember
190 that? I think that's tremendous. Let me tell you why. I've looked through the Old Testament and I
191 have yet to find the "water-walking promise." This was just something that came out of Peter,
192 "Boy I want to do that!" Right? Which promise in the Old Testament says "When thou sees Jesus
193 walking on the water thou shalt ask and if He bidst thee thou shalt come." I mean it's just not in
194 there. I had one Old Testament professor say, "Well, he was kind of thinking about parting the
195 Red Sea." And I told him, "That's the dumbest thing I ever heard." Peter was thinking first, "I'm
196 gonna die," and second, "Boy, I'd like to do that." That's what I believe. And Jesus said, "Come
197 on." (If he had come from Alabama he'd say "Come on.") He said "Come." And Peter grabbed
198 hold to the side of that boat and he put one foot out. There are waves, you know. And he gets the
199 other foot out, hanging on the side of the boat and then he lets go. And here he goes. And he gets
200 part way there, and what happens? He begins to sink as he looks at the storm and he thinks, "I
201 can't do it! I can't do this." He becomes frightened, and turns his eyes to himself and to his
202 circumstance. And all these eleven guys in the boat are saying, "Golly, what an embarrassment.
203 You can't take that man anywhere with you. I knew it. I knew it. I knew he wouldn't make it.
204 Who does he think he is? Why would he do that?" And Jesus, to comfort Peter, comes to him
205 and says, "Oh slow to believe," and picks him up and takes him back to the boat.

206 Now let me tell you what. Those guys in the boat may count that a failure, but I don't.
207 Because it was only one of those twelve that walked on water. And I'll tell you what, dear hearts,
208 I'm not going to live my life for safety. I want to see God use me somehow, for something other

209 than feeling better. You know this isn't about me just getting better and doing better and better at
210 what I am doing so more and more people like me. There's a Kingdom, and God has a call in
211 your life. I don't know what it's to; I don't want to presume. It may be missions, it may be
212 ministry in a church, it may be a new ministry in a family, it may be to your children, it may be to
213 your parents. It may be to the poor where you live. He may open up new doors right where you
214 are, but renewal is not a coin you can spend on yourself. And so Peter steps out, and moves, and
215 the circles here... [see diagram]. I just want to point out to you, the arrow, instead of being
216 focused in, says that grace moves me out. It moves me out of myself. To love God. To love
217 others. It moves me out of me.

218 And so how does this work? Well the Holy Spirit will give you opportunity for ministry.
219 He calls you to love. And he will give you great opportunity to do official ministry, and just to do
220 acts of kindness and love with all sorts of people in all sorts of places as you follow him. It's a
221 world of opportunity for ministry. As you listen to his voice and as you begin to think maybe
222 Jesus is walking on this storm and maybe I should step out of this boat, there are opportunities
223 for ministry. And in every case, that will move ahead as you die to yourself and step out in faith.
224 And dying to self may mean dying to some pleasures, but it may be also dying to your doubts,
225 and believing that Jesus can use you; and stepping out, trusting not yourself or your preparation
226 or your abilities or your ministry. But in your weakness and need, stepping out and trusting that
227 Jesus uses weak men and women like you and me. I am making no excuse for lack of
228 preparation, but the truth of the matter is, after you've prepared all your life you'll never be
229 ready. I'm not talking about sloppiness and not trying to do things well, but the best you do falls
230 far short, doesn't it? And so you have to die to that, to reputation, and to step out; to step out.
231 And do you know what happens? God will use you. Now I'm not saying that I don't step out of
232 the boat sometimes and just go straight under because it wasn't Jesus on the water in the first
233 place. Yep, that happens. Has anybody here ever started a ministry that was your own idea
234 instead of God's? Would you raise your hand? Thank you, thank you, thank you. I see that hand.
235 Absolutely. And of course what he did was, he said the penalty for that is, "I'll never use you
236 again." Golly, think of our Heavenly Father and remember what it's like to teach your child to
237 walk. You know you get the kid and you set him up and he's just toddling . . . and you take a
238 couple steps back and say "Come on. Come on, I'll get you." And he takes a couple of steps,
239 right? And then he falls and you catch him. And he may hurt himself a little when he falls and
240 you pick him up. And then you sit him back down and say, "That's it. Everybody in our family
241 walks. You had your chance. I am so disappointed in you. All these people watching. What an
242 embarrassment." Right? I mean that's the way we think of God sometimes. I think as a pastor I
243 really struggled with that. I really wasn't worried about them. I was worried about how it
244 reflected on me, for them to step out and try ministry and fail. So self-protective. So set on being

245 the expert. And when we see God use us, what happens? [see diagram] It creates joy in my heart.

246 Do you think I wound up having a good time in Siberia? You better believe it. I went
247 back the next year and took my sixteen-year old son. And we both almost froze to death. We
248 really did. We couldn't get him to wear a hat the first two days. His head was just freezing solid,
249 and we really struggled with that together. And he got to see me mess up, and worry, and fail,
250 and find Jesus and be used anyway. Isn't that what it's about? And was there joy in that? You
251 better believe it. So, I delight to tell you about that story, warts and all, so that Jesus might be
252 glorified. And did you notice the arrow doesn't stop there [see diagram]; and this is very
253 important: when Jesus sent out those disciples who didn't have a clue, and said go cast out
254 demons and preach the Kingdom, I think that's a step of faith on his part at the very least, don't
255 you? Sending Peter out, oh my, sword-and-all; sending him out. Wow, that's kind of scary.
256 How's that going to do Jesus' reputation? You think that's going to do his reputation a lot of
257 good? I don't think so. And they come back. And Peter and all those guys they say, what? **"Lord,**
258 **even the demons were subject to us in your name."** ^{Luke 10:17} And they rejoiced. And do you
259 remember what Jesus said? Don't rejoice that the demons obeyed. Rejoice in grace. Rejoice in
260 the gospel. **"Rejoice that your name is written in heaven."** ^{Luke 10:20} Right? Because there is an
261 eternal joy there. Even whether a ministry does well, whether they are subject to you, whether
262 they run you off, your name is still written in the book of heaven. And so we return to rest in the
263 gospel, and waiting for the Spirit to open a new door.

264 And I think this is the pattern of the Christian life. Look, this stuff is not to be spent on
265 you alone. I really struggle whether to talk to you about this, because it is so important that you
266 get grace in your own heart, I didn't want to interrupt that process. Some of you are so work-
267 oriented and task-oriented, I was afraid if I talked about missions, vrrrrrru. . . off you'd go. The
268 truth is that you've got to do both with your heart. And those of you who are hearing deep in your
269 heart about God, it's not just for you. And those of you that want to get about the work, you need
270 to listen to what God's saying in your heart. And he'll sort you out and he'll get you there. He
271 really will. But these two things go together: Heart renewal and Kingdom work. They go
272 together. They support each other. They're the same thing. They're the same grace just expressed
273 in different areas of our lives. It's not two different things. It's the same Spirit. It's the same
274 principles. It's the same power, working both in me and then through me to other people.

275 III. COMPETANT TO MINISTER: EQUIPPED IN CHRIST

276 I'd like you to look at 2 Corinthians. I don't want to spend too long with this, but I think
277 it may be a help to you, to see somehow Paul involved in this same process. And I'm not going to
278 try and exegete every verse. There really is a wonderful flow here. And I wish we had the time
279 for it, but I want to pick just a few principles and let you work on this later, all right? 2

280 Corinthians, chapter 2, verse 12. **“Now when I went to Troaz to preach the Gospel of Christ**
281 **and found that the Lord had opened a door for me. . .”** ^{2 Corinthians 2:12} “I stepped through that
282 door into a season of effective ministry that changed that city.” Well, now that may be the letter
283 he wrote back to the folks at Antioch like most missionaries. No, Paul was an honest man, wasn’t
284 he? Look at what he says. Isn’t this a remarkable thing? **“I still had no peace of mind, because**
285 **I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said good-bye to them and went on to**
286 **Macedonia.”** ^{2 Corinthians 2:13} “God opened a door for me for ministry and what did I do? “I didn’t
287 find my friend, I was alone, so I moved on.” I think that you see here, Paul, some of his weakness
288 and struggles. Do you understand? And he’s just saying, “An open door for ministry, I didn’t find
289 Titus there, I moved on.” You don’t see a lot of shame involved with this.

290 Notice where he goes with this verse. **“But thanks be to God.”** ^{2 Corinthians 2:14} And he talks
291 about how God always leads him in a triumphal procession. Isn’t that an interesting
292 juxtaposition? “I didn’t find Titus though I had an open door and I left, but thanks be to God in
293 spite of those struggles. In spite of that. He always leads me in a procession of triumph. God still
294 is at work in me and through my ministry. In spite of my struggles and failures.” And you’ll
295 notice that he continues. In verse 16 he says, **“Who is equal to such a task?”** ^{2 Corinthians 2:16} The
296 ministry he’s called us to: who is equal to this task of being a fragrance of life to some people
297 and a fragrance of death to others and the aroma of Christ to God? Who can do it? Who’s equal
298 to that? And let me tell you, if Paul writes like this, how much more will you and I struggle in
299 these ways? Right? Who is equal? And he continues. And he talks for a few sentences here about
300 his relationships specifically with the Corinthians. I am not going to go into that.

301 But I want you to notice where he ends up in verse 4: **“Such confidence as this is ours**
302 **through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for**
303 **ourselves, but our competence comes from God.”** ^{2 Corinthians 3:4} And I would ask you, where does
304 your competence and your confidence in ministry come from? There is a part of me that will find
305 that in all sorts of places. I am competent because I went to seminary. I’m competent because I
306 was raised in a good family. I’m competent because I have the resources. I look for my
307 competence in my experience, in my friendships, in my support, in the Board, in the
308 denomination, in my past. All these things, right? And when I get this far, then I’ll be ready for
309 ministry. I’m not ready yet; one day I will be. And what does Paul say? “Whatever was to my
310 profit, I now count as loss.” My competence comes from God. **“Not that we are competent in**
311 **ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.”** ^{2 Corinthians 3:4}
312 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant. God will make you competent for
313 whatever ministry he calls you to, whether it’s a missionary like Paul or whether it’s mom at
314 home. He will make you competent for that ministry so that you can be confident in Christ in
315 what you do. Not perfect. Not having prepared so much that you can meet every contingency, but

316 having Jesus. Having the Spirit. Being made competent for whatever ministry he calls you to by
317 God himself so that you can step out with some confidence. So that you can step out with some
318 confidence.

319 And you and I, we wind up looking at all these different things. Lord, I am not good
320 enough yet, I am not practiced enough yet. Lord, I am not knowledgeable enough about this yet.
321 And let me tell you. It's really just not about you. I don't know how to make that any clearer. It's
322 not about your competence or your incompetence. It's not about your progress or your lack of
323 progress. It's not about your joy or your sorrow, it's not about your success or your failure. It's
324 about Jesus and His Kingdom moving forward in your life and through your life in the life of
325 others. And we get so self-focused that it eats the heart out of our spiritual lives. So fearful, so
326 captured by the struggle, that we can't believe that God would use us, but he will. He will. And if
327 you have faith the size of a mustard seed he will use you and answer your prayers, and use you
328 mightily in the lives of others where you are. And if He moves you out of there; where He sends
329 you. Because it's really just not about you, it's about Jesus the King and His Kingdom.

330 And so he wants to turn me from being this sucking black hole of need and self-interest
331 so the church is about me, and ministry is about me, and you're about me. Norm and I were
332 laughing in the car on the way over here, he quoted a line from a movie. He said, and it's true,
333 the reason it became kind of a saying on our team, it's sadly true about the way that we are in our
334 flesh. He was quoting from Groucho Marx. He said that in the film that somewhere someone (I
335 don't know what film) said, "Well I've been talking about me too long, that's enough about me.
336 Tell me, what do you think about me?" That rings true doesn't it? And the reason is I am so self-
337 focused. It's like everything winds up being about me somehow, like all the universe turns
338 around this peg. And you are all bit players in my drama. It's not about me. There's great
339 freedom in that. It's about Jesus. It's about His Kingdom. It's about a call to come and die, to
340 take up your cross and follow the King, so that grace will free you to suffer, and not live a risk-
341 free life. Freed from self-concerns so that I can bare the cross. Freed from self-concerns so I can
342 give my life to other people in other places so that it's not about me. Freed from reputation so I
343 can entrust my family and my life and my work to Jesus, and it becomes about Him. And about
344 faith. And there's great joy and peace and liberty in those things.

345 **IV. THE CALL TO COME AND DIE**

346 This morning, in just a minute, I am going to ask you to consider a call of God on your
347 life and some of you need to consider foreign missions. I'm going to ask you to do that. That is
348 why we gave you this card. I am going to ask you to fill those out in a little bit, or begin to pray
349 about it actually. But as I was coming in the room praying with folks, I said to them, "Look I
350 don't want to give people a guilt trip. I don't want to interrupt the important work of calling you

Colk's summit talk

351 to grace with a task. I don't want to exalt World Harvest. I don't care who you serve with. I'd
352 love to work with you. There are a lot of great groups out there. I don't want to take you away
353 from your church if God has called you there. I don't want to interrupt those things. But at the
354 same time, God has put a burden on my heart to say to you "Come." You come. You die. You
355 join in the suffering band of those who see the sufferings of Christ filled up in their body for the
356 sake of the expansion of the Kingdom. And Barbara said, "You know Josiah you can do that with
357 a clear conscience because it's been the most wonderful thing we've ever done." And she's right.
358 It has been harder than I can tell you. And I wouldn't give it up for the world. It has cost me more
359 than I knew, and yet there has been great peace and joy. And that's not just foreign missions,
360 that's in whatever God calls you to. To take up your cross and to be like Jesus, dying so that
361 others might know the grace of God.

362 Some of you are doing just exactly what you ought to be doing right now, and what God
363 is calling you to is to a renewed heart for the life task he has already placed you in. And we want
364 to do and to say nothing that would discourage or interrupt that. For you, leaving would be
365 wrong. He's got you right where he wants you. And he is going to renew your energy and your
366 passions and your powers and your calling right where you are. And that's a wonderful thing.
367 There's some of you however that perhaps God has already been at work in your life, and it's a
368 new ministry. Maybe in the area where you are, a change in focus. You need to go to a pastor
369 and say "You know I've had this burden in my life to work in an inner-city, I've been frail, would
370 you partner with me in this?" And to build a new partnership in your local church in service in
371 some area that you've been afraid to step into. And if that's true, when you pray over this and you
372 ask God about that, where it says "Please pray for me about . . .," fill that out, and at the office,
373 we would love to pray with you. And if you need the back, fill that out, and tell us how we can
374 pray. "You know, I think God may be leading me to this new ministry right in my church. God is
375 leading me to the nursery." And he does! "God is leading me to serve my family with new
376 vigor." "God is leading me to love my wife, and I'm scared to death about that ministry. I would
377 do anything else." So it may be that there is a new facet or a new piece of a ministry right where
378 you are, and we want to partner in prayer with you about that. So, tonight, tomorrow, sometime
379 before the service tomorrow, I'd like you to think and pray about that. And we would love to
380 partner with you in praying about it. However, there is a particular partnership that we'd like to
381 have with those who might be considering foreign missions. And it may be that God has said to
382 you, as it happened in our lives; as grace woke up, it freed us to hear a call from God that we had
383 not heard before, to overseas work. And if you are interested in exploring that, if you think
384 maybe that's what God is calling me to, there's places here for you to check and for you to tell us
385 how we can pray with you. You don't have to be certain of that. Maybe it's what you want to
386 investigate: "I'm suspicious, but I'm not there yet." Well, that's fine.

387 What's the point? Grace goes somewhere. Grace goes somewhere. It's not just for you. Its
388 not just about you. Grace is for the world. Grace is for the Kingdom. Jesus will use you in
389 wonderful ways. Would you believe that? Can you believe it? Boy, looking at you I don't know
390 how. It takes a lot of faith. But that's the point. We got a big God and He can use even me and he
391 can use even you in wonderful new ways. Let's close together in prayer.

392 Father, I ask that you would deliver every heart here from guilt. Guilt about going into the
393 ministry just makes hard and miserable ministers and missionaries. Guilt is like spiritual pain and
394 sometimes it does awaken me and prompt me and remind me and call me to places. But Lord,
395 doing a ministry out of guilt is just purgatory. And I pray that there would be nothing that we say
396 and do that would leave people feeling guilty or second class because of where you've called
397 them. So I ask that you would reconfirm in the hearts of many the place that you have settled
398 them into, and if they would have renewed hearts and vigor and vision for just what you've
399 called them to. So, I ask that you would renew that calling and strengthen it. And strengthen their
400 hearts so that they might return with grace abounding in a new way for the work that you've
401 already called them to. Lord, it may be there's some folks here who have begun to suspect that
402 you're calling them into a new work right here: Evangelism, outreach, discipleship, ministry to
403 the poor, the beginning of a Christian Legal Society or a Medical Society. Lord, all the different
404 things, the doors you open to us. Or maybe someone is just beginning to hear that voice, and it's
405 indistinct, they don't know what you are calling them to. But they want to step out in faith.
406 Father, I ask that you would encourage their heart; that Jesus will be there for them and with
407 them as they step into their family with renewed faith, step into their church and to their lives in
408 these new areas. Father, I also ask that you would call some here to foreign service. That you
409 would call some here to leave the comfort of this nation and to spend their lives for people
410 they've never known. Father, I know that that is a particular calling. I ask that you protect people
411 from romanticizing and following it when they are not called. But Lord I believe that there are
412 many more called to do this than have responded. And so I ask that you give them great liberty as
413 they begin to think through your call on them, their life, perhaps their family's life. And as they
414 pray, that you would liberate their hearts to begin to believe that you can do great things in them
415 and through them. Lord, we ask that you would bathe all of this with the grace of Jesus. That you
416 would liberate our hearts from trusting in whatever work we do, or ministry we pursue, as being
417 even one ounce of our righteousness before you. We count even these things as filthy rags in
418 order that we might rest alone in the righteousness of Jesus. In whose name we pray. Amen.



2. Memorize Galatians 5:13-1

“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge in the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”