

“The Summit’s Mission and Message” // Church at the Dome // Acts 16:13–34 (Su 3pm)

Wow, Wow, Wow. That’s amazing. That’s like the heart of the Summit Church in a single story.

*Could we just take a minute and take this in? **Isn’t this amazing?***

UNC and their staff has done so much to make this possible for us-- could take a moment and put our hands together to thank them?

I know worshiping like that for many of you in here was surreal... you’re like:

- “Of all the amazing things I’ve seen in here, I never thought praising Jesus like that would have been one of them.”

On the other hand, for others of you, I know just being in here gives you the heebee-jeebies.

- You’re like, “This is the last place I’d expect the name of Jesus to be glorified.”
- Church unity is always a challenge here. I was getting ready to speak one week and I was having prayer with the worship team and the drummer was one of our Duke students and he had a shirt on that said... **GTH Carolina**

We had a guy who came to faith in Christ a few weeks ago here at the Summit and he told us he wanted to be baptized, and **we were like**, “Hey, we’re going to do a big baptism at the Dean Dome in a few weeks, what if you just did it there?” And he said, and I quote: **“I’m not getting in any (bleepety-bleep) water at the Dean Dome. Go Pack!”** (Except he didn’t say bleepety-bleep!)

- (BTW, how much do I love it that God sends people like this to our church, who come in with no church background and don’t even know the appropriate words to use when talking about BAPTISM! I’ll take it!)

But here’s what this guy said, and I quote: “Finding Summit has been an answered prayer for me and my family. Today I am several months sober, and I give sole credit for this milestone to my newfound relationship with Jesus. I’ve learned more about myself and God’s plan for me since walking into The Summit in March than in the prior 36 years on this earth. This community and this church are special. My family is so thankful for this church.”

Well, this guy is getting baptized--but **needless to say**, it’s not gonna be today. He’s waiting until October :)

But TWO things I want to say from that story:

- ***First, Summit: THIS IS OUR 23 year legacy.*** Take this in: *Today, Lord willing, we will baptize our 10,000th person since we started as The Summit Church in 2002.*¹
 - (In fact, if you've been baptized at this church, would you STAND UP?) That's not to mention the thousands more who've been baptized in our church plants around the world.)
 - And BTW, Summit, **it occurred to me as I was working on this:** this is our 23rd anniversary as the Summit Church--how appropriate that we celebrate our TWENTY-THIRD anniversary right here, since that's the number of the basketball GOAT, whose jersey hangs right up here behind me. That **has to mean that the ceiling is the roof** for us on what God wants to do in and through our church, Amen?
 - Also, on a morning like this, I think of my friend Carl Scott. And I know that name won't mean a lot to some of you, but Carl Scott was **a charter member of the Summit Church** and an OG member of the Rams Club. His season basketball tickets were right over there where that sign sits. He used to bring me to the UNC-Duke game here every year. He went to be with the Lord a few years ago, but oh how Carl would have loved to have seen this day.
 - ***And that reminds me of all those people whose faith and sacrifice*** built this church. **Listen:** If you were at our church in 2002, or came during that first year, when we started as The Summit Church would you stand up?) Could we thank them?
 - (BTW, **in the UNC fight song they sing at the end of the games**, Carl shouted "go to hell Duke" louder than any of

them. I looked at him once when he did that and he said, "I AM praying for Duke students to come to Jesus; but this is basketball; it's different)..."

- ***Here's the SECOND thing I want to say: We're going to be offering a chance for any of you who have never been baptized to do so at the end.***
 - **Maybe you're new to the Christianity thing** and you wonder, "What is baptism?"
 - **Baptism is your official declaration of faith...** Scripture teaches that it's the first thing you should do after accepting Christ: It's like going public with your faith
 - And maybe **you've never done that:** Maybe you've only newly trusted Christ, or maybe you'll do that today, and today you'll publicly declare that through baptism; or maybe you trusted Christ a while ago and you just didn't know you were supposed to do this. Either way, we're going to give you a chance.

So, **let me explain for the next few minutes why you would even consider that**, and I'm **going to use one of my favorite stories** in the Bible to do so.

It's the story of the **gospel's first entry** into Europe: **ACTS 16** (if you have your Bibles and want to open them)

- It's the story of the Apostle Paul taking the gospel into Philippi.
- Of all the cities in the Bible, I've always thought Philippi most resembled the Triangle.

¹ The total prior to today is 9,937.

- You see, **Paul meets 3 people there whom he brings** to faith in Christ, and I feel like they are the same 3 kinds of people we meet in our city--the same 3 here today.

The first is...

Lydia: (And I'm gonna call her...) **"The Seeker"** Look at **(vs. 14)**

One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

- **Lydia was basically a high end** businesswoman on a business trip.
 - She was put together. Professional.
 - **Religious**, but she'd never met Jesus personally. She had a lot of questions.
- **And how does she become a Christian?** Well, Paul basically engages her in an evangelistic Bible study.
- And as Paul is speaking, **vs. 14** says that, **"The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul."**
 - That word "pay attention" is the Greek word used for **addiction to alcohol**. There was something about Paul's message that stirred her deep in her soul.
 - That word refers to **when God does something** to get your attention.
- **Maybe that's happening to you right now.**
 - Maybe like Gabby and Lauren, you're just really struggling to find happiness right now. **You joined a sorority** because you thought it would give you that meaning and belonging in life you've always wanted.

- **But it's left you empty, hurt, unsatisfied, insecure, and something draws you toward Jesus** this morning.

Something in your heart is telling you "this is the answer."

- **One of my friends has a daughter in her mid 20's who just came back to Jesus** and she told her dad, *"Dad, I've spent my whole life loving things that didn't love me back."* Maybe that's you.

- Maybe **it's a health scare you've gone through**. You just got a cancer diagnosis and it has shaken you to your very foundations.
- **Or maybe it's just the awareness that something is missing** in your life.
- HEAR ME: **God is doing in your heart what he did to Lydia's**: he's opening your heart to pay attention.

The SECOND person, vs. 16, was...

The Slave Girl: (And I'll call her...) **"The Captive" (vs. 16)**

- This girl is the **opposite of Lydia**. She's not a put-together businesswoman; she's a captive.
 - Acts also tells us that she had a **demon**.
- **How does she come to Christ?** Not through one of Paul's Bible studies. She **couldn't have come to one of those** even if she wanted to.
 - **She was a captive.**
 - **Paul has to bring her to faith through an act of deliverance--** he got involved in her life and helped her find freedom in Jesus.

- **Maybe this girl describes where you are:** There are things about Christianity that attract you, but you feel a **barrier between you and God**:
 - Addictions you can't shake
 - A spiral of bad relationship choices that have left you feeling trapped. You don't know how you got here and don't know how to get out.
 - Shame over past decisions. You think, *'You know, I'm surprised God doesn't strike me dead just walking in here. If other people could see the real me, they wouldn't even want me here.'*
 - Maybe you just found out you're unexpectedly pregnant
 - Or maybe your wife just left you
 - Or maybe you feel like you're simply UNABLE to follow Jesus
 - **There's a guy on our staff who works closely with me who for a long time was interested in Jesus but just felt like Jesus would never be interested in someone like him because of his weaknesses.**
- The **GOSPEL'S MESSAGE** is not '**GO and CHANGE**' and then God will accept you; it's that God accepts you as you are; and if you'll let him come in, he'll change and heal you.
 - One of my favorite gospel stories is **John 8**, the story of the woman caught in adultery. The story basically goes like this...
 - **God's acceptance is the power that liberates** from sin; not the reward...
- **What Paul offered to this slave girl, I offer to you this morning:** FREEDOM. The good news that God loves and accepts you as you are and if you let him, HE will change you.
- **Hear me, Chapel Hill:** A church is not like a waiting room for a **job interview** where people **try out for Jesus' team**; it's like the waiting area for the **Emergency Room**, where you bring all your brokenness and shame to Jesus, and you find out he is ready to **ACCEPT** and heal you.

The third person to come to Christ was:

The Philippian Jailor: "The Cynic" (vv. 23–34)

I call him "the cynic" because **jailors in those days were usually retired Roman generals** who were given by Caesar a jail to run in their retirement as a reward for their years of service.

- IOW, they were part of the ruling class; they were **battle-scarred** and war-weary.
- They were usually pretty cynical: they'd seen it all; they'd traveled the world; they'd stood before Caesar.
- Rome had all kinds of religions represented in it; they'd seen them all and concluded they were all basically the same.

*How did this **Cynical Roman Jailor** come to faith in Christ?*

- **Vs 24** says they were put into the stocks in the dungeond
 - (BTW, when I say "stocks" don't think that will contraption like you and your sister got your picture taken in on that field trip to Williamsburg; these were...). **This was cruel and painful treatment.**
- **And yet vs 25 says, after all that** **"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them."**
- *Instead of being bitter, or laying there complaining like I would have done, they're singing with happy hearts.*
- **And** the prisoners and the jailor sat there listening, wondering: **How can they have such joy?**

- And then, **vs 26, while they were singing, God sent an earthquake that knocked their chains off and opened the prison doors.**
 - *(BTW, I love how the old AA preacher Tony Evans explained this... He said, "Paul and Silas sat there in that inner dungeon, just singing, and God was listening, and God started swaying, and God started tapping his foot along with the tune cause he loved their singing. Well, you know, the Bible says that Heaven is God's throne and earth is his footstool, and so when God started tapping his foot, it shook the earth, and the walls of the prison fell down.*
 - ***That may or may not be exactly how it happened; but whatever it was, the earthquake set them free***
- **VS 27** tells us that when the jailor saw this, he planned to take his life.
 - **You see, in those days** any prison guard who lost his prisoners had to pay with his life; it was public humiliation for him and his family, so he's just going to end it...
- But, **VS 28** says that when Paul saw what he was about to do, he went back in and... **"Paul cried with a loud voice, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.'"**
 - **So, get this picture: Here stands Paul**, who has been wrongfully imprisoned and tortured, and on his right hand is freedom--God-provided freedom. And on his left, this jailor, there's a jailor who had probably been the one to beat him the night before.
 - **And Paul turns his back on his freedom to go back in for the jailor.**
 - ***It WAS AN ACT OF INCREDIBLE, RADICAL GENEROSITY***

- **Vs 29: "And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas ... and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'"**

- The jailor seems to be more shaken by Paul and Silas' joy and their radical generosity than he had been by the earthquake!

!!!OK, so we have 3 very DIFFERENT people in 3 very different sets of circumstances, all of whom respond to Jesus and become a part of this first little church in Europe.

- **??These people could not be more different, could they??** A businesswoman, a slave girl, a Roman jailor, and Paul, a former Jewish Pharisee.
 - BTW, this is interesting: the **Siddur**, the official Jewish prayer book used by men at the time, tells us that each morning a Jewish man would thank God they weren't "a woman, a slave, or a Gentile." Do you think it's any coincidence that the first 3 people saved in Philippi are a woman, a slave, and a Gentile. **The first church in Europe** would have included a woman, a slave, a Gentile, and a Jewish Pharisee!
- **The gospel has a way of uniting humanity** like nothing else can, because it teaches us that **at our core**, all of us have **the same** problem: sin. And only one hope of escape: Jesus' death and resurrection.
 - **Regardless of your background**--sorority girl, academic intellectual, or someone who feels like life is crashing and they are on the brink of despair--the source of all your brokenness, pain, and confusion, is being separated from God.
- **At the end of the day, we're not Republicans or Democrats; black or white or hispanic; educated or blue collar; rich or poor; young**

or old; religious or irreligious; we're all just sinners in need of a Savior.

You see, even though these were 3 very different people in 3 very different sets of circumstances, Paul preached the exact same message to them: **RESURRECTION**.

- Acts 17:18 summarizes Paul's preaching this way: "Paul came preaching the resurrection."

Because, you see, in the Resurrection was the answer to all 3 of their problems. *Let me show you:*

A. To the seeker, the Resurrection offers confidence and completion

- Maybe you're a Lydia--and spiritual things interest you, but, like her, you often find yourself wondering: How do I know what is really true?
 - Maybe you've thought to yourself: "Maybe the only reason I'm considering Christianity is that I was born into a Christian family?" You think, "If I'd been born into a Muslim country, I'd probably be Muslim, and if I was born into an atheist home, I'd probably be an atheist." Just because your parents believe something, that doesn't make it true. Right?
- What gives you confidence in what you believe? Is it simply that a bunch of smart people agree with you that that makes you feel confident?
 - I mean, your professors seem like they know what they're talking about. They seem smart.

- I remember one of the most disorienting things that happened to me in college. I was a pre-Law major--and in one of my classes we had to read all these Supreme Court cases and I'd read some justice arguing his verdict on the case and think, "That's it. Case closed! The logic is perfect! How could anyone disagree with that?" And then I'd turn the page and another Justice would lay out the exact opposite case and I'd think, "Well, that sounds perfect, too, except he came to the exact opposite conclusion as the previous guy."
- And the lesson I learned: Smart people can make anything sound convincing.

So, how do you know what is actually true?

- For Paul and the Apostles, there was one answer: *the Resurrection...*
- The Resurrection gave them certainty even when they had questions they didn't quite know how to answer.
- There's a story in Acts 4 where Peter got called before the Sanhedrin, who represented some of the smartest people in Jerusalem, and they start asking Peter a bunch of questions about Jesus that he can't answer, saying, "There's no way Jesus could be true because what about this and this and this?"
- And eventually, Peter says,
 - Look, I don't know what to tell you... *I know I'm not smarter than you*" (when it comes to education, you guys have more degrees hanging on your wall than a thermometer, and I was the kid who had to take remedial recess.). But see, there was this guy, Jesus, whom we followed for 3 years.

- And we saw him killed. I mean, we saw it with our own eyes.
- **We** saw a Roman soldier pierce his heart with a spear
- **And then** they put him into a tomb with a big rock on the front and a whole garrison of Roman soldiers stood guard and then
- And then on the 3rd day he pushed the rock aside and knocked all the Roman soldiers unconscious and walked out.
- And then he came and found us.
- **And then he talked with me just like I'm talking with you.**
 - (And at first I thought it was just a ghost but then he ate a piece of fish in front of me... and then hugged me--he hugged me!... and I knew it couldn't be a ghost... and lot all these other people saw it, too, at the same time, so I knew it couldn't be a hallucination)
- **So, Peter says, "Listen, no offense to your degrees. You're smarter than me.**
- **But here's the thing:** If I've got a choice between believing a bunch of smart guys who got all their information from reading books and one who rose from the dead... ***I'm going with the guy who rose from the dead.***

Listen: Becoming a Christian does not take away all your questions--I still have a lot of my own--it just gives you a foundation to stand upon in the midst of those unanswered questions.

- When I **don't know the answer to a question**, I keep studying it out, **but I hold onto** the assurance of an empty tomb.

And you say, "**Well, how do I know the resurrection happened?**" This is not the place here for me to go in a full scale defence of the Resurrection, but I'd invite you to **study it out. The Resurrection is one of the most well-attested-to events in history. It's the only satisfying explanation for how a bunch of scared, blue-collar fishermen from Galilee defied the Roman empire and started the largest religious movement in history. Again, study it out for yourself.**

I agree with the German scholar Wolfhart Pannenberg said: ***"The evidence for Jesus' resurrection is so strong that nobody would question it except for two things: First, it is a very unusual event. And second, if you believe it happened, you have to change the way that you live."***

If you came in as a skeptic, maybe that's your takeaway today.

*To seekers, the RESURRECTION offers **CONFIDENCE**. And let me say, to the seeker, it also offers **COMPLETION**.*

- *The resurrection provided Lydia with what she'd been looking for all her life.*
- ***Maybe this is where you are: All of your life has felt like a quest to find some missing piece.***
 - *And you thought it might find it in the sorority or in the frat parties or the job or the perfect body or the boyfriend or the marriage or the kids or the drugs--but you've spent **your whole life loving things that don't love you back.***
 - ***What you're looking for is found in the resurrection; it's found in eternal life; it's found in the love of God.***

- That's why the **early church father AUGUSTINE** said: "Our hearts will always be restless until they find their rest in you."

So, to the seeker, the Resurrection offers confidence and completion

B. To the captive, the Resurrection offers freedom

- Paul's message was **not just one of forgiveness**, it was one of freedom
- I said this a minute ago, but I know for some of you, you feel like there's an obstacle between you and God.
 - Shame over past choices
 - Addictions
 - An inability to find happiness. It always seems to be just beyond you.
 - An inability to be the kind of father or husband or person you want to be
- Christianity is **not just a new worldview** or a **new set of morals**. It's the **power of an empty tomb**.
 - It's not **turning over a new leaf**; it's the **power of new life**.
- Let this **BOOK** illustrate your sin...
 - **Now his power can come** into you...
 - Salvation is **not turning over a new leaf**; it's receiving new life.
 - **Salvation is not you reforming your behavior**; it's the life of Christ coming into you and making all things new.
- **This is all pictured, btw, in BAPTISM**. In baptism, you are being put under the water, showing your sin was buried with Jesus, and then you are raised up out of the water, showing that you are raised in him and the power of his new life comes into you.

To the **SEEKER**, the resurrection offers confidence and completion;
To the **CAPTIVE**, the resurrection offers freedom.

Finally...

C. To the cynical, the Resurrection offers hope

- There was **something about Paul and Silas' unshakeable joy** in the midst of suffering and his radical generosity in suffering that got the cynical jailor's attention like nothing else could.
- **Several years ago, I was flipping through the TV channels one Saturday morning with my daughter** when I came across one of those televangelists who is always trying to swindle you out of your money....

I don't think Christians should make a habit of cussing, but if there were ever a time I felt like it was justified, it was this moment. First was just the shameless greed of it all, but also, just the illogicality of what he was saying. **My thought was**, "WHY would your neighbors be amazed to see a smile on your face as you drove a new BMW? Wouldn't anyone smile in that circumstance?"

NO: What gets their attention is when everything goes wrong and that smile stays on your face anyway.

- Because it's then they say, "What do you have that I don't?"

You see, here's the thing: PEOPLE CAN ALWAYS FIND A WAY TO EXPLAIN AWAY A MIRACLE. "Oh, it was a coincidence. There were factors we didn't know. It was a deep fake."

But deep in our hearts, we all know we're going to die--new report from the science department here at UNC: the death rate is holding steady at 100%--we all know that death is certain, and we all want to know if there's a hope beyond this life, because **deep inside we know we're created for something more.**

In the days leading up to his death, an interview asked **STEVE JOBS** **Jobs whether he believed in God or not.**

- **Steve Jobs** paused for a minute and said throughout his life sometimes he had and sometimes he hadn't, but as he was approaching his death, he found himself believing in God more and more, because
- "It can't just all end," he said, by flipping a switch and then it all fades to black. That can't be all there is. **That was why, he said, incidentally, that he didn't like to put easy on-off switches on Apple products.** He just didn't like the idea of being able to flip a switch and everything just turns off.²

And that's where Christianity gives a unique answer: We proclaim One who has faced death and overcome it, and who says, "Those who live and believe in me will never (truly) die."

- There's a place in Medina, Saudi Arabia where you can visit the grave of **Mohammad**. (It's kept in a small room just off the side of the mosque that bears his name.)
- The **Buddha's remains** were scattered over sacred burial mounds across India and Nepal, mounds Buddhists still visit on pilgrimages today.

- You can go to **Nauvoo, Illinois** and visit the grave of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism
- You can go to **Alta Mesa Memorial Park, in Palo Alto, California** and visit the crypt that contains the body of Steve Jobs

But there is no grave where you can find the body of Jesus, and that's because he didn't stay in a grave; he resurrected, and that empty tomb is the **only thing on which to build your life.**

So hear me, friends: the message of Acts 16 is that the risen Jesus meets every kind of person in every kind of place--

- ***To the seeker like Lydia***—the ***one who has questions***, who feels a restlessness even in her success—he offers confidence that what you've been searching for isn't an IDEA but a PERSON, a resurrected PERSON who offers confidence in faith and completion for your restless heart.
- ***To the captive like the slave girl***—the one who feels trapped by shame, addiction, and chains you can't seem to break—he offers freedom, not as a reward for finally getting it together and cleaning yourself up, but as a gift of his grace **WITH THE power to break chains** you cannot break yourself.
- ***And to the cynic like the Philippian jailer***—the one hardened by life, skeptical because you think you've seen it all—he offers hope, a joy that sings in the midnight of suffering, a generosity that disarms even the coldest heart and a hope that declares that death doesn't get the last word.

² Walter Isaacson, Steve Jobs, Chapter 41: "Legacy," published 2011.

THREE PEOPLE, in 3 very different circumstances, all of whom find hope in the resurrection of Jesus.

And, here's why I'm standing here: If the resurrected Jesus can meet each of these people in Philippi, he can meet you right here, right now, TODAY, in the Dean Dome.

The story of Acts 16 ends by showing us how the Roman jailor responded to this message about Jesus:

[29] And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. [30] Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" [31] And they said, Do? There's nothing you can do. Salvation is not something you do; but something Jesus has done for you. "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

- I love that word "**believe.**" In Greek, it's the word *pistis*, and it means more than just mental assent. It literally means "lean your weight upon."
- The example we always use: CHAIR

The Christian gospel is this:

- God loved you so much that he came to earth to save you.
- He loves you as you are
- and he died to pay the penalty for your sin, and he will fully and totally forgive you--
 - you can't earn your way to heaven; you can't be good enough, go to church enough, it's a **GIFT** you have to receive.
- **If you receive him**, he will give you forgiveness and new life: his Holy Spirit will enter you and infuse into you the power of new life.

- But there has to come a point where you accept Christ for yourself. (SIT DOWN) Where you receive Christ on your own.

A relationship with Jesus is not something you can be born into, or something you even grow into over your life.

- **We always describe it like getting married.** I got to know Veronica for a long time, but there was a glorious day one July when I stood before an altar in Richmond, VA and I said those two magical, life-defining words to her: "I do;" and she said "I do" back to me.
- **And in that moment, all my earthly possessions became hers and all of hers became mine... At the time she was...**
- **In the same way, salvation is when you say "I do" to Jesus.** And then all that is yours becomes his... (your sin, your shame, condemnation); all that is **HIS becomes yours** (righteousness, sonship, freedom).
- **2000 years ago Jesus said "I do" to you.** Have you ever officially said "I do" to him?
- Have you ever officially sat down in the chair?
- **Will you do so today?**

Here's what happened next: Vs. [33] And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family ...

- He got baptized, and he led his family to that, too.

As I said at the beginning, **baptism is the public sign that you've made the decision to trust Christ.** And today, I'm offering you the chance to do that if you never have.

- **Some of you say: "Well, do I really have to do this? I don't want to get wet in front of a bunch of people?"**
 - o **Well, let me be clear: getting baptized is not what saves you.** Receiving Christ as your own in what saves you.

- o But if you really believe this, you should be willing to do what Jesus asks you.
- o Jesus was stripped naked, publicly humiliated and died on a cross for you, you can get wet for him
- Some of you have other excuses popping into your head right now. For example, you say,
 - o ***“Well, I rode with people and they won’t want to wait.”*** Listen, if you drove a car today, raise your hand. If you are **unwilling to wait** for whatever person who rode with you who wants to get baptized, **leave it up...** that means they should get baptized
 - o ***“I don’t want to walk up there by myself.”*** That's fine. Ask your friend to go with you. Shoot, bring your whole row with you. In fact, right now, look at the person next to you (everyone...even if you don’t know them) and say: *If you go, I’ll go with you.*” (See, now they’re OBLIGATED to go with you; you don’t have to go alone.)
 - o ***You say: “I don’t have the right clothes.”***
 - o We have everything you could need: **shirts, shorts, bras, drawers, hair products, blow dryers...**you name it, I promise we’ve got it. This ain’t our first rodeo.
 - o And if you need more stuff than we have, then you're probably vain and high maintenance, which is **another reason** why you need to be baptized.
 - o Here’s a big one: You say, ***“Well, I was baptized as a baby”***
 - o I respect that. But see, Scripture always presents baptism as a confession of your faith.
 - o If you were **baptized as a baby**, that was your parents’ faith. I’m inviting you to come and ratify their decision by being baptized of your own accord.
 - o You’re **not rejecting that baptism your parents gave you**, you’re fulfilling it by ratifying it of your own volition.

- o You say, ***“Well, I’m not ready to switch denominations...”*** I’m not even sure what denomination Summit Church is, but honestly, you make me nervous, J.D.”
 - o **Listen: I’m not asking you to switch denominations.** You don’t get baptized in the name of a denomination. You are getting baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit. We are not going to baptize you as a Baptist, or a Presbyterian, or as a Catholic, but as a follower of Jesus.
 - o ***“I just don’t want to do that here; I’m a Duke or NC State fan.”*** OK, honestly, that’s between you and Jesus. But what greater act of defiance is there than to come right into Satan’s territory here and declare your allegiance to Jesus?

VAMP

Listen, even if you’re unsure whether you are 100% ready or not when you walk forward today, what's going to happen is that you’re going to talk with a counselor **who will help determine if you’re ready**.

- Stepping out doesn’t mean you have all your questions answered...but it means you’re ready to have the conversation... and we can take it slow. We can even wait a week or two if you want...
- **The question is simple:** Would you say Jesus is your Lord and Savior and that you’ve repented of your sin? Then you’re ready.
- Now, I will say: **For kids, we like to take a little bit longer to make sure they understand**, so if kids come forward today, 8th grade and below--and we would invite that (!!--that will start a conversation that will lead to being baptized, though it won’t be today.

In just a moment I'm gonna give you the opportunity to come forward—*literally* you're going to come forward, down on to the court here and **go to my right into this tunnel.**

- **For those of you in the upper decks**, there are people out in the concourses wearing orange shirts and holding signs who will point you the best way down here.
- **And when you get down here, you'll immediately be met by our baptism team** who will take it every step of the way from there.

This is not a great time to slip out early and beat the traffic: I mean, through a series of honest misunderstandings, you might end up in the baptismal pool

For right now, I'm gonna ask everyone **to BOW THEIR HEADS...**

- Pray this prayer with me... *AMEN*
- If you just prayed that prayer OR if you prayed it before today but have never been baptized, **I'm gonna count to 3** and we're all gonna stand together and if you need to be baptized, you're gonna step out and come right down here to my right. In one motion, you stand and start to make your way to the closest aisle and make your way down here.
 - **We'll have ushers in the aisles** to help guide you, ok?
 - **(BTW, if someone starts moving in your aisle, make it easy for them.** OK?)

Father, give courage... YOU READY? 1...2...

