

## *Enemies of a Growing Church*



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What a delight and a privilege it is to be here with my friend and brother Bill Hybels. First of all he said his mother was watching in Kalamazoo with Joe Brooks, and his mother is my mother. “Hey, Mom!” And listen, he spoke so well in the first session after talking about how sick he had been, until I was sitting there wishing that I had puked all night. You know that anything that Hybels does is marketable. And I can see the next book now: Puking: Fast Track to the Anointing.

I am just grateful to be here with he and Lynn and the Willow family and to think of all of the great things that are happening in the body of Christ at a time as this in America. This afternoon when the sermon is over, the staff of Salem and the staff of Willow will have lunch together and all of the counterparts of Salem will be with their counterparts at Willow. I believe that if we’re going to strike a blow at the racial division that we have in our world, it’s going to start with the body of Christ. And I thank God for that.

Let’s start. Matthew 13:24. Matthew chapter 13 verse 24. It says, “Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.” Verse 28 says, “He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?”

I want to talk about the enemies of a growing church. Now I know that people are watching all over the world, and we’re excited to have you here. People are in Australia and Brazil and Denmark, the Netherlands, South Africa, Puerto Rico, Port-au-Prince, port-a-potty. Everywhere they could get a screen, the Willow people have put a screen—and so we are excited. We’re excited to be here. How many of you are senior pastors? Senior pastors raise your hands. Senior pastors. I’m even happy that my pastor all the way from Fort Worth, Texas, is here. Senior pastors, one more time,

where are you? Don't be ashamed. We're glad to have you.

Let me ask a question of all of us across the board: How many of you would like to have 1,000 more members in your local church by this time next year? If that's you, raise your hand. You would like to have a thousand more. Okay, that must be the Willow folk that didn't raise your hand. Talking about like—you kidding?—as long as it takes us to get in and out of the parking lot now. Let me tell you that you can have a thousand members or more by this time next year. But in order to do that we must learn to root out the enemies of church growth.

The Salem Baptist Church of Chicago was organized in 1985, 21 years ago. We started with 213 people, and today we have over 24,000 members. Since July of 2005, in one year we've seen a total of 9,624 people walk our aisle to become a part of our church. Of that 9,624, 5,728 were candidates for baptism. We baptized 5,000 people in this last year! I remember a time when every Christian everywhere would have been excited about 5,000 people being baptized.

I come today, not to talk about what I heard. As a matter of fact, Hybels told me—he leaned over to me, the last thing he said as I got up, he said, “Preach black.” Do I have a choice? And so, since I'm preaching black, I'm not talking about what I heard. I'm not talking about what somebody else told me or what I read in a book, I know that church growth is possible. And not only do I know that church growth is possible, I know that you can have a growing church. And so I want you to repeat after me: We can all have growing churches. Now this is interaction, I need you to tell the person next to you: You can have a growing church. Tell somebody. Hybels, you see what noise sounds like in church? You can have a growing church.

The text [Matthew 24] says that “the kingdom of heaven is like . . .” The kingdom of heaven is the place where God is in charge. The kingdom of heaven is a place where God reigns. It's a place where God rules. The Bible says that the kingdom is like a man who planted some good seed in a field. Notice now that the kingdom is compared to planting and to growing. Why? Because planting and growing, or planting and growth, is a principle of the kingdom. Everything in the kingdom of God, or shall I say everything that's planted in the kingdom, is supposed to grow. Did you get that? Everything that's planted is supposed to grow, which means that if your church is in the kingdom of God, representative of

the kingdom, connected to the kingdom, then your church is supposed to grow.

The Bible says that this guy, he planted some seed in a field; and while he slept an enemy came and sowed tares, or shall I say planted weeds. I was going to say, “planted weed,” but I don’t want anyone here to lose your salvation and ask, “Where’s the field?” The Bible said that while he slept someone planted some weeds among his wheat in order to stop the growth of the wheat. I contend today that there is an enemy of the kingdom who desires to stop growth and progress in the kingdom of God even today. I contend that the enemy is still sowing tares among our wheat. I contend that the enemy is still sowing seeds of doubt in the minds of pastors today, and we don’t really think that church growth is possible. Let me rephrase it. I think we think that church growth is possible, but we don’t think that church growth is possible for us. We think that there are a few people that God has set aside and so chosen and so ordained that they could have growing churches, but not everybody. Well I came to talk to you because you can have a growing church. But we have to deal with these enemies. Are you ready?

The first enemy of a growing church is lack of faith—lack of faith. In order for growth to happen, we must believe that growth can happen. Now don’t forget now: Those of you who are sitting here, you’ve sold yourselves short, you’ve sold your ministry short, you said “our church will never grow.” Don’t forget now that the Scriptures teach us that whatsoever is not of faith is sin. We have developed a lack of growth expectation. We’re not even looking for it. We don’t even plan for it.

Charles Spurgeon in his book entitled *Lecture to My Students* told of a time when a young man, a young student came to him. And the young student said, “I’m confused because when I extend an invitation to Christ, when I stand and ask people to come forward,” he said, “Doctor Spurgeon, I don’t get the results that you get.” He said, “When I stand, oftentimes nobody comes forward, and that’s not how it is with you. You have a different effect on people when you extend an invitation, and I don’t get the same results that you get.” And Spurgeon looked at him and said, “Young man, do you expect people to join or come forward every time you extend an invitation?” The young man was puzzled, and he said, “Well, not every time.” Spurgeon said, “Well then, that’s why they don’t come.” You have to believe that they’re coming. You have to expect that growth is going to happen.

I have pastored a New Testament church for the last 26 years. In our church, in our culture, we baptize every first Sunday. For every first Sunday for the last 26 years of our ministry, we have never had a first Sunday where there was not somebody to baptize. I don't know how you feel about it. I don't know how you look at this growth thing for the kingdom, but I would die if there were no conversions. I would be ready to quit if there were no conversions. As a matter of fact, I would get saved again. And I would get baptized if there were no conversions. And so the first enemy that we have to overcome—and those of you who are here, and I know that sometimes in a conference all it takes is one spark and that's what we're looking for today—the first thing we have to overcome is a lack of faith.

The second thing we have to overcome, or the second enemy, is a lack of knowledge. We just don't know that church growth is possible. We have not been exposed to the principles of church growth. And Hosea says that people perish. Does anybody know why people perish? Why? Because of a lack of knowledge. The rest of you who didn't know it, now you know it. People perish because of a lack of knowledge.

A man's house was on fire, and he and his family ran out. They got out of the house safely and then they looked around; and the man did not see his 7-year-old daughter. He ran back in to look for her. Now she had already escaped. She was next door at the neighbor's house. He did not know that she had escaped, and while in the house a beam fell on the man and killed him. You know why he perished? Why? A lack of knowledge. He did not know that his daughter had escaped. Well, what are you trying to say, Pastor? This is what I'm trying to say: What you don't know can kill you. What you don't know can kill you. What you don't know can stifle your church's growth. What you don't know can cripple and hinder the growth of your ministry; which is why around the world we can applaud Bill Hybels and the Willow Creek Association for the love that they have for us, the love that they have for church leaders, because oftentimes all it takes is exposure. That's what we're doing here today. That's what we're doing all around the world. We are exposing church leaders to some new information so that people will not perish because of a lack of knowledge.

Number three, the third enemy of a growing church (and I'll stay here longer than I stayed at the other two), is the failure to realize that God is no respecter of persons, failure to realize that God is no respecter of persons. I remember 25 years ago and going

to conferences and sitting there and listening to all of these great stories and all of these great churches, and I would think to myself—like some of you are probably thinking to yourself—Well that’s for them. God has picked them. God has chosen them. And I’ve come to realize something today: God does not love Billy Graham or John MacArthur or Rick Warren any more than He loves me. You didn’t hear that. I said, God does not love Billy Graham, John MacArthur, or Bill Hybels any more than He loves you. Amen. See that was better. They said, you know, God loves me as much as He loves Hybels. Did you hear everybody? As a matter of fact, we spent the night, speaking of how much God loves us, we spent the night sleeping. And I think the Scripture says, “He giveth His beloved sleep.”

Now listen, God is no respecter of persons. You have to get it in your head, because I know that ministries everywhere we think that God has just selected a few people, and He’s going to do a great work through them, and He’s not going to do a great work through you. God does not respect people. In Joshua 1, God said to Joshua, all right, now, “Moses my servant is dead.” He said, “I want you to take these people, and I want you to lead them into the Promised Land.” And then God said a word to Joshua that I want everybody here to get it in your spirit. God said to Joshua, “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.” In other words, you will be anointed also, you will have discernment also, you will have wisdom also, because God is no respecter of persons.

You see, there are laws and principles of church growth that, once properly applied, just as they work for John MacArthur and Bill Hybels and Rick Warren, they’ll work for you. You have to believe that. It’s just a matter of finding out what are the laws, and Bill calls it DNA. What is the DNA of a growing church? But when the law is applied, it will work for you. Okay, I see the way you’re looking at me, you’re not getting it. I see the way you’re looking at me. You don’t believe that the same law that applies to Bill Hybels, Rick Warren, and Billy Graham applies to you. So here it is, the law of gravity. If Billy Graham, Bill Hybels, Rick Warren, and you all jump off the tallest building in the world, as you are on your way down, I promise you the results will be the same. It’s all right to applaud, that’s all right. The law of gravity will not say, “Oh, that’s Billy Graham. Something different better happen. That’s Billy Graham. Billy Graham, he needs to float.” The law is not going to say, “Oh, that’s Pastor Rick Warren. Oh no, he can’t go down. He must go back up.” Listen, I’m here to tell you that there will be purpose-driven guts all over the sidewalk. Because

the same laws that apply to them apply to you when applied: The law of math. If Billy Graham added one plus one, John MacArthur added one plus one, Rick Warren added one plus one, and you added one plus one, Billy Graham's one plus one isn't going to be six. Principles when applied, laws of church growth when applied, will work the same for everybody.

Now let me tell you something else. Growth laws know nothing about ethnicity. Growth laws, you didn't hear me, know nothing about ethnicity, because I know some of you are thinking, That'll work in the black church but that ain't gonna work for white people. That'll work for black people; that don't work for white people. Some of my friends—I have a lot of people who won't come to conferences like this—they say, “Well, you know, black folk ain't like white folk, and it's just not gonna work the same.” Listen, I learned all of my church growth principles from white churches. But since the principles didn't know what color I was, and since the principles did not know how famous I was not, they worked. So you have some enemies here: We have a lack of faith. We have a lack of knowledge. We have a failure to realize that God is no respecter of persons.

And church worker and business people, if I could tell you—and Bill said, “Don't forget the business people. There are a lot of business people.” And when he mentioned business people, and he mentioned Warren Buffet and Bill Gates, I got mad all over again. Why? Is Warren Buffet going to give his money to Bill Gates, who don't need no money? You got poor people walking around here like us just wishing, Come on, Warren. I mean a hundred thousand dollars or something. How you going to give a billionaire more billions, and the rest of us walking around here we done snuck in the Summit cause we couldn't afford it? But to all of the business people—principles have, and God has, no respecter of persons.

Number four. Let's not forget this one, this is a big one: Growth is always the goal of a New Testament church; growth is always the goal of a New Testament church. Let me do a hand check here. How many of you are involved in some way in a New Testament church? Raise your hand. New Testament church? Okay now, that's all I know how to help. I don't know anything about cults. But I know how to help New Testament churches, because I believe that that's what has brought us together. Am I right? Growth is always the goal of a New Testament church.



I don't care how small your city is. I don't care how small your town is. A lot of people have settled into a dull existence: me, Joe, "us four and no more." Your church is supposed to grow. And you cannot sit back and say, "Well, you know, there are not a lot of people in our city, and we just have a small town, therefore, our church will never grow." Hammond, Indiana, is one of the smallest places on earth. Jack Howes used to pastor the First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana, and for years that church led the nation in Sunday school attendance with 6,000 to 10,000 people in Sunday school, and Hammond is a small place. Well, wait a minute, why am I going through all of that? South Barrington. South Barrington, this is not the biggest city in the world. Only nine people live in South Barrington. Eight of them are in Hybels' family. However, the reason this church has the acclaim that it does and people are watching all over the world is because the city's not big, but the church has big ideas. And whenever the church has big ideas, the world will beat a path to the door. Your city does not have to be big in order for your church to be big. People drive to our church from Barrington. You know, it does take a long time to get here from the south side of Chicago. You know we had another two buses coming but they didn't make it through passport control. It's a long way.

Don't fold yourself into the blanket of lack of church growth based on the fact that the city's not big. People don't care. People will drive. People will commute. People will do whatever they have to do to go to a church that's really meeting their need. In John 15:2 Jesus said that, "Every branch that abides in Me will bring forth fruit." There's another passage in Luke 13. Jesus goes to this tree, a fig tree, and said a man goes to a tree and he looks for fruit and he doesn't see any fruit. And so he decides that he's going to cut the tree down. The man owned the fig tree. He went there looking for fruit. He had a right to expect fruit from a fig tree because that's what fig trees do. What do they do? Produce figs. Well Jesus has a right to expect growth from His church because that's what Christians do. Christians produce other Christians. That's the Great Commission. That's what Jesus said to do. He said, "Go into all the world and produce other Christians."

Now, let's not get fooled with this logic. Listen to this because you've heard it before. Maybe you haven't said it. If you've said it, maybe you won't say it anymore. Let's not get fooled with this logic: Well our church is not a growing church, but our church is a healthy church. Right. Right. Show me a baby that ain't growing, and try to prove to me that the baby is healthy. Show me a baby

that's the same size at 2 years old and 18 and try to convince us that the baby is normal. That's not normal. Things are supposed to grow. Churches are supposed to get bigger. And then don't let these people fool you who think that those of us with numbers are bragging. You hear this? You know, they give the size of this church. How many people did Jesus feed with two fish and five loaves, anybody know? Come on now, speak up, how many? (5,000) How do they know that? Somebody counted. How many souls were added to the church in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost, anybody know? (3,000) How do they know? Because they counted. Don't be afraid to count. A lot of people don't want to count because they don't want to know how bad they're doing. Growth is the goal of the New Testament church, and we are supposed to care whether or not the church is growing because Jesus cares. And I love growth because it says that hopefully the branches are abiding in the vine.

Number five, another enemy of a growing church, an unsure pastor—an unsure pastor. The speed of the leader is the speed of the team. If a pastor, and Bill talked about it, he had boards and graphs. I've always wanted to do that, you know, stuff to write on. I can't spell. I don't want everyone to know. And Bill wasn't really doing that great with spelling. He wrote the beginning of the word and then rounded it off to its lowest common denominator, you know. However, he put the ownness on the pastor to develop and to develop other leaders, because every major project, every church-wide project, must be run by Moses and not Aaron. The mistake that most pastors make is to think that people are going to follow other leaders, the committee people in the beginning, and not follow them. You have to be a sure pastor. You have to be a sure pastor. You've got to be the person who demonstrates that you're in control. When you stand there, you have to stand there like you're in control. If you don't know what you're talking about, you've got to act like it. You're in control. I mean, because people actually are looking to you as the person with the answers. They're looking to you as the person who knows what to do. You have stepped up to the mantle. You've accepted the responsibility; now you have to be sure about your leadership. You have to think fast, you have to know what to do. Just like—this is the last time I'm going to use Bill for an example, but I couldn't wait to use this example—just like when Bill was out on the boat naked with the men. That's all right. We've all gotten naked in our 20s when we shouldn't have. But he had to think fast.

Listen, pastors, Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and another



they will not follow.” I think that we lead with too much ambiguity. I think that we lead with too much ambiguity. Jack Howes tells a story about a man went to church, and a pastor saw him sitting there for 3 years and he never joined. Three years he sat there every Sunday morning, every Sunday night, never missed a service, but he wouldn’t join. Finally the pastor walked back and said to him, “Listen, I’ve seen you here now every Sunday morning and every Sunday night for 3 years. Why is it that you’ve never joined?” And the man looked at the pastor and said, “Because I don’t believe a word you say.” He said, “Wait a minute. What do you mean? You come here every Sunday morning and every Sunday night, you don’t believe a word I say?” He said, “I don’t believe a word you say.” So he said, “Well then why do you come?” The man looked at him and said, “Because I believe you believe every word you say, and I just like to hear a man who believes everything that they say.”

Another interpretation, we have too many politically correct pastors. We don’t stand up and say what the Bible says. We stand up and we say what’s politically correct. We’re afraid to offend anybody. You know, sometimes people’s feelings ought to be hurt. If people are living in sin, people are living and think that racism in America is right, and if people are living with hatred in their hearts, they’re supposed to be upset when you tell them that that’s wrong and that’s not the will of God. I don’t mind saying what the Bible said. It ain’t up to me to back the Bible up, it’s up to God to back the Bible up. But when you have an unsure pastor who stands and who’s not sure about where he’s taking the church, if he ain’t sure where he’s taking them, they ain’t sure where they’re going. And so you’ve got an unsure pastor.

Number six (favorite one of mine), another enemy of a church is failure to build upon small victories, a failure to build upon small victories. We built our Sunday school—and my prayer partner is here, pastor Charles Lyons—and I went to a Sunday school conference and found out that his church and his father’s church had the largest Sunday school in the city of Chicago. One had 400, Charles had 400, his father had 500, and at that time we had 75. And so I made a covenant with God that we would build the largest Sunday school in Chicago, not just so that I could rub it in with Charles every day I talked to him, but I thought that a city the size of Chicago should have more than 500 people in a Sunday school. So we started having big days in Sunday school. We had 75 people, so our goal was to get 150; and we made it on a particular day. The next time the big day rolled around our goal was 300,

and we made it. And then we had a goal of 500, and then 700, and then 1,000, and then 1,400, and finally 2,000. Why? Because a song that we sing says, “Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin; each victory will help you some other to win.” Every time you win a victory you use that victory to help you win the next victory.

The reason we were able to close down all of the liquor stores in Roseland is because we took the victories that we had from building a Sunday school, and we projected that we could do something else. David defeated Goliath, and pastor talked about that a moment ago. But defeating Goliath was not his first victory. His first victory was he had defeated a lion. And then he had defeated a bear. When Saul came to him and said, “Hey, you can’t fight this giant. How do you know that you can beat the giant?” He said, “Once I killed a lion and then I killed a bear, and the same God who gave me the victory over the lion and the bear will give me the victory over this uncircumcised Philistine.” When a church gets used to winning, when a church gets used to having victories, that church will cry out like Sarah: Is there anything too hard for God? Who would have ever thought that a church in our community, a church with our resource base, would be able to build a 10,000-seat auditorium? I’ll tell you who would’ve thought it: We would’ve thought it because we’ve seen God do so many little things that when you build upon victory after victory after victory, you expect God to do the next big thing.

Number seven, pastors, you’ve got to hear this now. You can’t miss it. If you really want to grow in church, learn how to preach the announcements. You’ve got to preach the announcements. What happened is whatever you want the masses to know and whatever you want the masses to do, it cannot be announced, it must be a sermon. You cannot stand and say, “Okay, tomorrow at 12:00 we’re going door-to-door soul winning. We want everybody to join us on our annual door-to-door soul winning,” and then go on and preach about something else. The sermon has to be about that announcement.

There was a particular day that we decided to knock on 15,000 doors in our community, and I preached the sermon entitled “The Church with 20/20 Vision.” It came from Acts 20:20. And we talked about how Paul said, “We cease not to go from house to house.” You have to preach the announcement. When we got ready to shut down the liquor stores, I preached the sermon entitled “Let’s Get Ready to Rumble,” because Jehoshaphat goes out and goes to war, but he puts the choir in front of him and they sing, “for His

mercy endures forever.”

When we got ready to go out and win the prostitutes, the ladies of the night, in our community, I preached a sermon entitled “Did They Save the Prostitute or Did She Save Them?” When they went out to meet with Rahab—you remember that story—and Rahab said that she would put the spies up, she hid the spies. And then there was another time when the spies hid her; and I argued that they saved her once but she saved them twice, because in the family line of Rahab the prostitute is Jesus the Christ. And by them saving Rahab, they saved the Messiah; and I contend and I argued with the church that when we go out tonight we don’t know who we will be saving. We don’t know who we will be delivering. We don’t know who our next heart surgeon, our next president will be, and so when you save a prostitute you might just be saving future generations.

We got ready to minister to gangs and I preached a sermon called “Sinner in the House.” We got ready to go and stand on corners. We have 818 corners in our community. Every Thursday night for one hour, from 7:00 until 8:00 in the month of June, we have something called corner prayer. You can’t just go ask 1,600 people to go man corners and make an announcement and be done. It has to be a sermon. So I preached “Do What Jesus Said Don’t Do.” Jesus said don’t pray on the corners. You’re getting it, you’re getting it. He said don’t pray on the corners and don’t pray out in the street. But I talked about that Jesus was actually talking about motive.

Now why is it important to preach the announcement? Because at the end of the sermon, then you give an invitation to involvement. Did you get it? You give an invitation to involvement. When the sermon is over, you say, “Okay now, how many people want to come down and get involved?” I believe that people in the local church will get involved but they must have a biblical basis for why to get involved.

Number eight, lack of corporate fasting and prayer. That’s another enemy of the church, lack of corporate fasting and prayer. The Bible says that we ought to pray that the kingdom would come and that the will of God would be done on earth as it is in heaven. Let me cut to the chase. If Bill Gates wrote a 5 billion dollar check for you, your name is on it, and they put it up on the ceiling, taped it on the ceiling, and you had to get it down, you would figure out a way of how to get that thing down. First of all, you would ask

everybody in your row and everybody in their row, could we sit on each other's shoulders and just keep...? Next thing you'd do is you'd ask the man with the big crane: Can I ride on that? Can I ride on that? Because if it's a 5 billion dollar check up there for you, when everybody's out there at lunch, you're not gonna be at lunch you're gonna be . . . Well I know that it is the will of God that we have growing churches, and so our church comes together every Wednesday night by the thousands and we pray for one hour that the kingdom of God would come because some things come only by fasting and praying. And I think that the reason God wants us to pray for things corporately is so that when they happen, we can rejoice corporately.

Number nine. The other enemy of a growing church is getting started. Listen, you can't plan an event to death. Eventually you have to get out of the war room and get started. Nehemiah decided to build a wall; and he prayed first, then he surveyed the wall, then he enlisted some help, and then eventually he had to get started. Too many of us, you all, we want all the I's dotted and all the T's crossed. I've come to realize that in most projects, God's not going to show us everything. It does take some faith. We have to get started. There are many of you sitting here with great plans and great ideas, and you just have not gotten started until . . . now listen, let me tell you the other thing—you don't want to do this—don't wait until everybody . . . “Well what are you waiting on, pastor?” “I'm waiting on everybody of the church to catch it.”

Everybody's not going to ever catch it. I learned this when Pastor E. K. Bailey, God rest his soul . . . the importance of—pastors, if you're writing anything write this—go with the going crowd. Go with the going crowd. There will be people who are ready to go when you say, “Go!” If not, you're in the wrong profession to begin with. If you can't influence anybody, you're in the wrong profession. It took a minute, it took a minute. Go with the going crowd. Those that are ready to go, you go. Leave the rest behind. Go and do what it is that God wants you to do; and when you come back on Sunday, stand up and make an announcement. It could've been five people that went with you. Stand up and make an announcement: “Man, we had the best time of our lives! Too bad all the rest of you didn't come, but man we had the time of our lives.” You don't even want to announce to the church that only five people went with you, by the way. But go with the going crowd.

Last of all, and I'm done, the last enemy of a growing church

is motive. Why do you want a big church? Why do you want thousands and thousands of people? Now you should want it, but we've got to want it for the right reason. The reason David killed Goliath is David said, "I'm going to take your head off so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." You have to want these things for the right reason. If you want them for the right reason and God, who is the only one who knows our heart, then He will honor your heart. You can't want a big church so that you can stand on the big stage with all of the big dogs. You have to want it so that your life can give glory and honor to God.

It was said that there was a young man who had his first violin recital, and he played in a big hall like this one; and at the conclusion of his recital everybody stood and they applauded, they clapped, they cheered, they stomped, everybody was excited. And in the midst of all of that merriment and excitement, the young man looked into the crowd, burst into tears, and he ran off to the dressing room. Somebody came in there—his friends—and said, "What's wrong? What's wrong? This is your shining hour, this is your finest moment, and you're crying in the dressing room. Listen to the sound out there, listen to them cheering for you." And the young man looked up, tears in his eyes, and said, "Did you see the man in the fifth row sitting in the center? He never moved. When everybody else was standing and clapping and applauding, he sat still, he never moved." They said, "Hey man, come on man, you mean to tell me that people are standing all over the auditorium screaming and kicking and you are locked into one guy? Come on, get over that guy." He looked and he said, "I can't. That guy's my violin teacher. In other words, he knows all of the notes that I missed."

I came to tell you today that it doesn't make a difference what you do. And if everybody is applauding and patting you on the back, if God is not pleased and if God is not satisfied, it does not make a difference. But decide in your mind that you are going to satisfy God; you are going to make God happy, you're going to make heaven happy. And regardless of who else does not go along with you, when you get back home announce, "Hey, guess what, in the next year 500 new people are going to join this church, 200 new people are going to join this church, 300 new people are going to join this church." And start working from now until the Summit next year to make sure that you get rid of all of the enemies—and you can have a growing church.

*Christ-Centered Learning — Anytime, Anywhere*