

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Grace Family Commitment Sunday, Part 2 (10-14-84)

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 80-4

Well, you can come over the microphones and just stand there and wait your turn, if you want to give just a brief word of testimony. What does Grace Church mean to you? Encourage us all with that. We'll start right in the middle there. Give us your name first.

MIKE: My name is Mike Hilliger. I have been coming to Grace Church about 14 years with my wife Carrie. I was saved over in the chapel in one of the back rows and I just want to say how excited I am about all the things that are happening, especially right now. I don't think my wife and I have been as excited about anything that's ever happened in the time we've come to the church, except for right now. And I personally want to thank you, John, for nurturing us and training us and lifting us up for the last 15 years.

JOHN: God bless you, Mike. I have to tell you about Mike. The first time he came here he was a long-haired hippie and now he's an elder. Now that's transformation. That's great, Mike. God bless you.

I think we have two little guys who have been in line in the middle there. Give us your names.

SEAN GIDREY(??)

JOHN: Good, Sean

SEAN: And I want to...I've been in the junior high group for two years and they really showed me that being in junior high and you're a teen ager that you can be happy and a teen ager at the same time.

JOHN: Amen....Great

DAVID: My name is David Shepherd(?) and I just wanted to say how happy I am that you have been planning on building a new junior high group and a new school for the junior highs.

JOHN: You're welcome, David. Thank you very much. That's great.

Okay, right over here, Stan.

CLAIRE(???) I'm Claire Peterson from way down under in New Zealand. John, I want you to know and all the folks at Grace Community Church what a blessing your ministry and your tapes have been

down under. They're hundreds and thousands of people that I know of that have been blessed, pastors have been encouraged, and we just thank you and praise you for your ministry so far away. Thank you.

JOHN: Well thank you. You know, these people come to visit, precious people from New Zealand, and every time they come they give me a book, one of those beautiful coffee table books with all the pictures of New Zealand and say to me, "Would you like to come to New Zealand?" And I would in God's good time, we'll minister there, I trust. Yes.

CAROLYN: Hi, I'm Carolyn Fieldhouse and last Sunday was my four-year birthday, I became a Christian about four years ago at a job. And like what Ken Poore said at the meeting this weekend, somebody from this church spoke to me. I had never been to a church really or anything like that. He shared with me at work and I became a Christian through his ministry to me. And then I came to Grace, never heard of it, never heard of John MacArthur, was baptized...I really just owe all my spiritual growth to what God is doing in this group of people. Thank you.

JOHN: And we love you and thank you. She's one of our secretaries, too. Great, Carolyn. Now you don't have to clap all the time, we want to have as many people talk as possible, okay? So don't applaud each time, just applaud in your heart, okay? Unless it's really good, okay? No, no, just save it to the end, all right.

ELAINE: My name is Elaine Laudate(?) and I am tremendously blessed to have been here for five and a half years. I came here as a newborn baby Christian and I've come to understand that next to salvation, the only real important thing in life is the uncompromising teaching of the Word of God. And I have you to thank for lot of the growth in my life and everything here.

JOHN: Thank you, Elaine, and God bless you.

PAULA: I'll make this short this time unlike my baptism(?). My name is Paula Versnor(???) and I want to tell you that the libelist lies that are in the newspaper, I'm here to tell you that they are lies. If it were not for Grace Church, I probably would have killed myself a year ago.

JOHN: Bless your heart.

PAULA: Many of you who have been at my baptism know my past. He's moved me to the Hollywood area and in just one year I am now called a fanatic.

JOHN: God bless you, thank you so much.

BEATRICE: Hi, my name is Beatrice McGary(?) And I used to go to Catholic church before. And I used to be blind and I really didn't know but now the Lord has guided me to come to this church and

I've been coming here for eight months. And now I truly see what the Lord has had planned for me and I just praise Him for guiding me here to this church.

JOHN: Thank you, Beatrice, what a joy to have you. God bless you.

JOHN WARREN: Hi, my name is John Warren and my testimony is short. I was a creep and God by His grace saved me. (Laughter)

JOHN: Now there's an honest man, right there.

JOHN WARREN: When I decided to get involved in a ministry when I came to Grace Church, and that was about six years ago, and I saw a ministry grow from two people in a house down the street to over 300 and that's Special Ministries. And the thing that's special about that is look around at the other churches and see what they're doing. Nobody, very few, are doing anything. And it's the money that Grace is willing to put out, it's the money that you people give every week. John made a statement this morning about the church gives him more than he needs. When I came to Grace, I thought that's where all the money went, to the pastors, to the people who worked at the church. But after being involved in Special Ministries, I found out that the money goes a lot of different places. And if you think that it's wasted, just go out to the blue bus that pulls up here every Sunday and just ask those people who special it is that a church will take the time, spend the money to go pick them up. You're enjoying the fellowship tonight, you got in your car and you drove down here, you walked down here. They can't do that. The only way they get here is because Grace is willing to spend the money. The elders are willing to put it out. So I think you should thank yourselves because they thank you ever Sunday.

JOHN: Yeah, and we want to say too, John, that it isn't just that, it's people like you and many others who are willing to do that. And I know Stan Carter feels that way. We've got great people working with our special folks. And they're special. They really are special. Thank you, John.

LARRY: Hi, John, my name is Larry Collins. I was born again a little over a year ago. And when I was, I went to my neighbors on both sides of me and I said, "I need a church, where's a good place to go?" And their eyes lit up and they brought me to Grace Community Church. And I thank God for that because when you are born again, you're like a newborn baby and what a newborn baby needs is love and nourishment. And, John, I've received it here in abundance. Thank you.

JOHN: Well bless you, thank you, Larry.

JACQUELINE: My name is Jacqueline Owens and I've been knowing the Lord now for about eight years. I am especially thankful for this church. I came here about five years ago and I hated it when I first got here because I was coming out of a Charismatic Movement. I used to sit here and groan

because it didn't agree with what I thought was right. But the Lord has really, really brought me to a place where I can get an acceptable worship and you go with me everywhere I go, John, in my car. I love your sense of humor, too, by the way.

JOHN: We better clarify this.

JACQUELINE: On tape.

JOHN: On tape, I see.

JACQUELINE: And I have to do like this so that the people won't see me laughing and praising the Lord. All day long in my car when I'm in and out of my office. I do a lot of traveling in my job so I'm in my car a great deal of the time. I listen to about four tapes a day, so I have to...

JOHN: God bless you. You know, the other night when some of our kids did a skit and they had one of those boxes from McDonalds, they put their sandwiches and they say, "We've got a Big Mac," and they opened it up and took out a tape." So...I mean whatever works, okay? Yes.

SANDRA: My name is Sandra Marley, I'm a new Christian. And I thank God daily for guiding me to Grace Community Church. I thank God daily for John MacArthur, his wisdom and love. And Grace Community Church means to me love, fellowship and wonderful guidance. Thank you.

JOHN: Oh, bless your heart. How long have you been a Christian?

SANDRA: A few months but I just after I became a Christian I went to New York to work for the summer and I started growing this past month since I've come to you. And it feels wonderful.

JOHN: Good to have you. Yes.

MADLINE: I'm Madeline Shelton and this morning you said the Lord was really working in this church and He really, really is. I've been a Christian for approximately five years and the first year I was involved with The Way International and it was through Dick Mayhue that he told me to come to this church. And I've grown tremendously. And I thank you very, very much for D.E. I'm currently involved with D.E., I'm out to get them. So I thank you very much for that. And I praise God tremendously for this church. And we're very, very fortunate.

JOHN: Oh that's wonderful. Really, when someone gets in the Way International which is a very heretical cult, it's like a bran snatched from the burning to get someone out of that into the truth. Okay, over here.

CELICE: Okay, my name is Celice. I've been coming to this church for about five years and people don't know what I have deep inside is a closet alcoholic. And God has really been working to bring me here and there's two ladies who have been real committed to disciple me. I've been accountable to them. And I'm now been having the victory over that, over alcohol. It's been really...if it wasn't for coming here I wouldn't be here, I would have gone home. The Lord would have taken me home early. But God gave me the chance to live. Been able to minister to other people.

JOHN: Oh, bless your heart, isn't that a beautiful testimony? Thank you...thank you. That sweet girl is one who signs in our deaf choir. That's a wonderful testimony.

JIM: My name is Jim Ott and Grace Church means to me a real commitment to reach out to a loss and a needy world. I really appreciate seeing all the people in the church who share the gospel with their neighbor, just on their own or through D.E. or ministering to international students, or going overseas. I really appreciate that.

JOHN: Amen, amen. Encouragement to evangelism. Boy, the lines are long, don't anybody add on yet. We may run out of time. Okay? Right here.

MEKSHIM:(???) I'm so grateful and thankful and praise God for giving me such a church which I've never dreamed that I'd be ??? and coming in here. I became a Christian when I was quite young and I decided to know the Word of God and Grace Church provided. And now I'm so grateful and thankful the church can minister to me and many others. And I would like to say one word for the younger generation, please don't waste your time, commit your life and serve the Lord.

JOHN: Amen, God bless you for that. That's good. Okay.

KAREN: Hi, I'm Karen Wong(?) and I just really want to praise the Lord that I have come to this church. My life has changed drastically in the last year and a half. What I really want to share is that I pray that everyone here would feel the deep commitment to support both the people leading at Grace and all the people in the body that we support each other in prayer, that we are unified in serving the Lord. And I just wanted to share that I know no greater joy in my life than to know that I'll serve the Lord the rest of my life.

JOHN: Amen...God bless you, that's great. Thank you for that. Yes?

TOM: My name is Tom Mitchell and I won't even go into how the church has been a real blessing and other parts of my family. I'll just say that when I used to counsel at Hume Lake from quite a number of years beginning in '65 when John and Kenny Poore were there and my life changed then, by the way. I used to watch the kids come out of those programs, H & I, and I would just see the excitement glow on their face and the joy they were having. And I used to yearn in my heart...there were big churches,

this is up in the mountains and I'd yearn in my heart that there would be churches down the hill, as we would say, where they would go where they would have this, give this joy. And I want to say that Grace Community Church is one of the only churches...of course I haven't been all over California...that really even tonight just watching the people bubble and bounce and a joy just radiates from their face. I really know that yearning that prayer was answered back there when I was just thinking about a church that would just glow every Sunday as these kids do as they go up to camp during the summer time.

JOHN: Amen. That's a good perspective. And as I said this morning, we're so privileged to have what we have. Yes? Leslie....

LESLIE: Yes, hi. John, you are Paul's image to me. ??? ??? ??? from Judaism to the church. Thank you. (Can't understand what he is saying.)

JOHN: God bless you. I love you, Leslie. (Applause) What a dear and faithful man and friend Leslie's been. Bless your heart.

MONIQUE: Hi, my name is Monique Newman and I really appreciate Grace Church. Its first impact on me was about two thousand miles away in Montreal, Canada through the tape that Grace gave freely to my dad in his ministry up there. I think the study in Ephesians had the greatest impact on me in understanding what a church really should be from the foundation up. And then when we moved back here and were able to become a part of this group that understood the principle of what a church should be, it was really thrilling. Grace has also been a special place of fellowship. The maturity of the people being able to have fun and yet being able to have a real serious understanding of the Scriptures and a love for the Lord that affects our entire life was refreshing because you don't find that everywhere. And the other thing that Grace has meant to me has been a whole new ministry like John shared, Special Ministries became a real love of my life and I would have never had that opportunity if it hadn't been for here, unless God provided it somewhere else. But just becoming a part of Special Ministry changed my life, including providing a husband who was involved in Special Ministries and now together we can serve Him. So it's been a great joy.

JOHN: God bless you, Monique. That's Marty Wolfe's daughter, Gene Newman's wife. We're so proud to have you. Yes. Somebody else is thrilled to have her too because the Special Ministry's people know who gives their heart to those people, that's right. Yes.

???? I'd like to just thank you, you know, being there, you know, like people need help or something, need somebody to talk to. I just want to encourage all of you guys like if you have a problem just call somebody up because they're always there.

JOHN: They're always there. That's right. That's what God's people are for. And if they're not there, just keep going down the church directory until you find somebody who is, right? Good. Okay.

ROMEO: Hello, John, my name is Romeo Milan and it's been....

JOHN: You're the first person I ever met named Romeo. That's terrific. I'll never forget.

ROMEO: That's not the first time I've heard that.

JOHN: No. That's the first time I've said it.

ROMEO: Anyway, this church means a lot to me. First of all, I was led to Christ, been a member of Grace ten years ago. Second, since I moved back from Orange, County...first I lived in Simi Valley, then moved to Orange County, then moved back to Simi Valley. Since I moved back from Simi Valley, between you and David Hocking...I have grown tremendously in studying the Word. Anyway, so the second point, Grace Community Church means to me an uncompromising stand in the Word of God. Secondly, Grace Community Church means to me ministry. This is where I learned to get involved interacting with people through D.E., LOGOS, and now Flocks. I have learned what it means to be used by God, leading people to Christ, explaining to them the Word of God and just like you said, being an example. You know, through the power of the Holy Spirit given to me to the best of my ability. I've tried to do just that.

JOHN: Amen, what a great testimony. That's what we're after. God bless you. Yes.

JIM: Hi, my name is Jim Wilke. About three years ago I was in a Catholic Church and I left the church when my girlfriend showed me that it was not the place to be. And I went to a Pentecostal church and my heart wasn't right, there was something they were trying ...didn't work, something inside the heart wasn't right. And I did some prayerful study, asked God to direct my heart. I started reading about Romans in chapter 4 and my life became a lie because I understood that it was by grace I was saved. And I came to the church when I got a job here in Los Angeles and my dad had rejected me. I found family here and the first days that I came to this church you were preaching on the very same thing that excited me in Romans 4. I appreciate your teaching. Thank you.

JOHN: Thank you, Jim. That's good. I remember meeting you that day, too. Didn't I meet you that day you were here? Sure, right up here.

STEVE: My name is Steve and I want to be thankful that one or two, three things that God Himself dwells in this place and Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit resides in His people and that the Word of God dwells in the hearts of each and every individual.

JOHN: Good, that's great. Thank you, Steve.

GRACE: Hi, my name is Grace Forest and I've been a Christian for three years. I used to go to a Christian school to summer camp but the very first day I wasn't there I wasn't a Christian, but one or two weeks later the fifth grade teacher prayed for me so that I could be a Christian. Two years...no, three, and a few weeks ago, me and my mom agreed that I have to learn more about Christ so I decided to go to AWANA and it's really fun.

JOHN: Hey, really great. I knew we were going somewhere with that. Boy, that was...I'm telling you, AWANA is so much fun that if I didn't have to be over here and wasn't so old, I'd be in AWANA. I want you to know that. I mean, nobody loves to run in circles anymore than I do.

BRUCE: Hi, John, my name is Bruce and I've been here for about six years and standing here in line I've been scanning that time and so much has happened, meeting the Lord here and I just want to express my thanks to the elders, my love to you and to Pat for sharing you with us. Not only my own life in the past six years has been blessed by Grace Church, but also Grace Church has blessed me further in preparing me and equipping me to also reach others for Christ.

JOHN: Amen.

BRUCE: And it's the greatest thing...greatest experience God could give us in this life. And I just want you to know we love you and I know I speak for my family and we just thank you very much.

JOHN: Thank you, Bruce. God bless you.

DOREEN: Hi, my name is Doreen and I want to thank you, John, and Grace means a lot to me, it means family, fellowship and I met my husband here in AWANA, too.

JOHN: Oh, that's good. That's great.

Okay. Right over here.

KATHY: Hi, John, how you doing? My name is Kathy Baker and I've been saved for two and a half years. I came to Christ basically naked in the sense of materialistic things. And I didn't have a place to stay, I met a guy at a roller skating rink and later on through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, I came to know the Lord and I came here and I've been out here ever since. Since that time I've...I've had people bring me into their homes. I've had people do...I mean, here at Grace...and I just want to encourage the people out there that may be hurting that there is really people here that care. But most recently and I went to LOGOS last year, and for anybody that's contemplating that, go. It is tremendously great. But what happened is the Lord used, I mean, I've been dreaming of this

opportunity to encourage and to really share with the congregation what the staff on LOGOS has done. I mean, they were so incredible teaching day and day, in and out studying the Word of God. And just presenting themselves in such a godly way to be an example to us. And just hearing John speak about the elders meetings and all that they put in to the time and Clayton and everyone, the janitors here, the pastors in the school. I mean, we are so blessed and I just want to thank you so much for the examples that you've been. But not only that, it doesn't stop there. It's a point that convicts me to live...John, at such...everyone is just doing so much and that we need to put in our part, too. And I just want to say thank you. I just want to encourage people out there who don't know personally, I mean, all the pastors and the elders, I mean, they've taken me personally aside, a few of them, and I know them personally and they love me when I needed someone, when I was down and out, when I needed someone to love me and comfort me. And they are just incredible. I thank you. When we were singing the song, "When I love you with the love of the Lord," I saw the lines...I can see in you the glory of my King, and that's what I see in all of you, the glory of my King, our King. And I want to thank you.

JOHN: Thank you, Kathy. You know, she was rescued...you were rescued off the street really, in New York, that's kind of where you were. The Lord has really transformed her life. She is an encourager. And she doesn't hold back what's in her heart, you'll know...you'll know. Okay.

JEAN: Yes, my name is Jean. And I was born here and I was nurtured here. And I...the Lord was gracious and put me on staff in the children's position. And for five years when I first came here, I sat and made like a sponge and I knew in my heart that I wanted to give some of it back. But I sat here and I said, "Oh, there's so many." Look around me, so many people here, they don't need me. I want to tell you, first I want to thank you for the people that do so much and then for the rest that are like me, or was like me, thinking they don't need me. You're wrong. We need you so bad. There are so many of God's little ones over there that are just dying to have you come and hold their hand, give them a smile, give them a hug. We need every one of you. The children need you. God needs you. So please come.

JOHN: Thank you, Jean. That's great. Yes? We've got, speaking of little ones...

JOSEPH: My little girl Shereen says she'll be real quiet if I came up and shared some things...she wanted me to translate some things.

JOHN: Oh, how old is she?

JOSEPH: Seven and a half weeks. You wouldn't understand her yet. My name is Joe, or like the Bible says, Joseph. What Grace Church means to me is so much that I can't say in just a few words, but I'll try. Most of all, I came to know the Lord here. That's the most important thing. I came from a broken family but the Lord gave me a beautiful wife and now this little byproduct of that. And we have

a little boy, not a little one, he's eleven and a half. He's been able to listen and hear the gospel. The Lord is making a lot of progress in our home. We've had chances of taking a job elsewhere but I think the most important thing is my family life and spiritual life, so we want to stay close to Grace always. So we thank God for you people, for you, John, and really praise the Lord for what He's doing here and hope that we can be a small part somehow of His work.

JOHN: Thank you, Joe. God bless you. Why don't we take that next one there, because we have another little one waiting there.

JACK: Hi, John, this is Wendy, she's about two months old. And we just are really blessed with her. On behalf of Alice and Tammy and myself, we'd like to thank the body of Grace. We lost our son, Jacob, last April, four and a half years old, and the testimony of the FLOCKS really came through to us. And really engulfed us in their love and in the love of the body, too. And we just thank Grace Community and your ministry. And we praise God for the continued growth and the growth in our family. We thank you, John.

JOHN: Listen, Jack, we all went through that kind of with you. His little four and a half year old...I can't imagine anything more wonderful than a four and a half year old. And this little guy actually died in the bathtub, didn't he? Drowned in the bathtub somehow.

JACK: He had a convulsion, it's called a grand-mal seizure. He had no history of that. In fact, he had bilateral detached retinas about six months previous to this where the doctors were completely amazed because the viral infection hit the back of his eyes and the Lord blessed Jake and recovered his eyesight 20/20. And then they did a full work up physically, neurologically, the whole gamut and there was absolutely nothing wrong with him. And within not even five minutes, six minutes as anyone having a four and a half year old leaves their child in the bathtub for ten minutes at a time, he was...Alice is an LVN, she came in and found him underneath the water.

JOHN: Grace Community Church is a great place. Heaven is a lot better...a lot better place. And we'll all see him there. Thanks, Jack. Yeah, God bless that dear couple, very faithful.

MELISSA: Hi, my name is Melissa Sholey, I came here about a year ago, God gave me a wonderful husband and he..I started coming here with him and I got immediately involved in the three-year-old class and Jean over there took the words right out of my mouth, we need you. And we got involved in Mike Hilliger's FLOCK and it's just been a real blessing to us. And I'm involved in the deaf ministry and that's really..I can't tell you what that's done for my life. But I just want everybody to know, if you're not involved in some kind of ministry here, you don't know what you're missing, you don't know the blessings that God can give you in working with the children, in working with the deaf, working with the handicap. Just something, God wants you somewhere and all you've got to do is start looking and He'll give it to you.

JOHN: That's good, that's so true. So right.

FRANK: My name is Frank Cunningham. I came to know Christ in the summer of '83. And I just want to take this time and thank Grace for their junior high staff and high school staff because they
(Applause)

JOHN: Let's hear it for the junior high and high school. That's great. (Applause)

FRANK: They've not only kept me accountable and many other high schoolers and junior high accountable. And I just want to thank you and the staff to keep on doing what you're doing because you're really showing a lot of improvement daily. Thank God.

JOHN: Frank, it was a pleasure to baptize you last time, buddy. That was really special. Yes.

VINCE: Hello, John, I'm Vince Gerhold(?). I looked around and saw many familiar faces, people I know, my family, my friends here. I learned how to share my faith at this church through disciples, D.E. Which I'm more than happy to give a plug.

JOHN: Good.

VINCE: But I think the one thing that I'm really grateful to Grace for on Sunday is that cross because on Sunday mornings it's, you know, between lapses in the sermon and things, I'll look out the window, or look at the world and I'll drift off to what I'll have for lunch or where I'm going to go, but I'll fix my eyes on that cross and remember where I belong and who I belong to. And so I thank God for the teaching.

JOHN: And all that the cross means is bound up in the simplicity of the symbol of the cross. Thanks, Vince. God bless you, brother. Yes.

BARBARA: My name is Barbara Barber and I've been to Grace Church for only about seven or eight months and it's changed my life completely. And I just want to thank...be thankful for all the high school and junior high staff and especially for Russ Mort(?) and Jack, they've changed my life completely.

JOHN: The best, those are the best people, really are. Thank you. Okay, we don't want anyone else to add to the line and we're just going to take these folks and our time is gone, and we'll do it again, okay? So you can all have a chance to share. Yes.

ARNOLD: Yes, my name is Arnold Camden and I'm in the junior high ministry and I just like to thank Grace Community for just bringing me to know the Lord because when I was younger I went to a

Korean church and I just went there because it would look good for me. And when we got to the valley, one of my friends invited me to Grace, to AWANA, and ever since then, like I started getting into the AWANA, like the verses and memorization. And they just did it so exciting, so I just...the next year after that I went to camp and I heard this story and I just right then and there I just recommitted myself. At my Korean church I was more like a leader cause I was one of the first kids to be there, so always all the kids were following me and I wasn't setting a very good example. And I'm just thankful that I came here because now I'm learning more like D.E. with the junior high. And just all the ministries and I just thank you for that because it's just preparing me to go back to that same church and teach those kids in the future.

JOHN: That's great. God bless you. Thank you. And that's what we want to do, is prepare people to go and do that in other places. All right, we'll kind of hurry along here.

BRIAN: Hi, John, my name is Brian Gibson. Eight months ago I lived in Pittsburgh. I became a Christian and I poured my heart out one evening and I was broke and destituted and it so happened that a check had come in from a school district that I wasn't supposed to receive and from that evening, I think, on that week I came out to California. I don't think it's by chance that God had brought me to this place. The first Sunday that I listened to John, I poured out my heart and I understood that that was the truth. And the Spirit had filled me and through several ministries in the Fundamentals of the Faith and the Grace Saints, I've grown as a Christian and right now I'm involved in Search and I really truly am thankful for what He has done for me in my life. And the one thing I'd like to say here is that I have a friend of mine that just came out from Pittsburgh and I hope that through the teachings here that I have been a fine example and I wish that Tom, if you can now, it's the greatest thing in your life to accept Christ as your Lord and Savior.

JOHN: Amen. That's a direct approach, Tom, wherever you are. That's great. And it's so exciting to meet this young man, too. Bless your heart. Yes, right back here.

STAN: My name is Stan Stansso and I've been here for like about a year and I just appreciate John MacArthur's preaching. It's really helped me a lot to become a good Christian and I've just learned a lot more. Before I used to be in an orphanage and it was pretty hectic. I mean, it was more like satanic music and just...but sometimes there was where we'd preach and it was okay. But I'm just glad that now I can go to Grace and just really appreciate it a lot.

JOHN: You're living with a foster family, aren't you?

STAN: Right.

JOHN: That's great, isn't it?

STAN: Yes.

JOHN: God bless you, isn't that a sweet testimony? He came to see me this morning to thank me for my preaching. And he listens and his foster mon said, "I know he listens because he laughs when you say something funny and he gets serious when you say something serious. And he follows along in the Scriptures." He's ten years old. So I put my hand on his head and I said, "That's the stuff that preachers are made out of." Who knows? Dave...

DAVE: My name is Dave Johns and you asked about coming up here and what Grace means to you, I just couldn't sit there. There is so much. You see just how great the music ministry is. And you should feel when you're a part of it, just to be there. And even with the children, and you can see how well behaved they are, they're just sitting here patiently. But for four years, a lot of people here had a great impact on my life. And most of them sit over there somewhere and now they've moved around all over the place. But I was on high school staff for about four years and I didn't really stand in the middle here, but there's two people plus Linda behind me who is going to say something, and to be a part of a ministry like that is life changing. You cannot help but change. The people, you know, the kids, they don't listen to you unless you live what you say. And if you...even if you slip once, it means a lot. So it really challenges you and, you know, if I just say here that if you want to grow, look for something like that.

JOHN: That's good, Dave. We have a lot of people like Dave and others who we say are on junior high staff, high school staff, college staff, it doesn't mean they're employed by the church. They're volunteers. But, I mean, they volunteer a lot of hours and a lot of effort. They really do. (Applause) Okay, all right, we're going to have to hurry a little bit or the ice cream will melt. Do you understand that? Right. Dave.

DAVE: My name is Dave Hartee(?) and I find the church means a lot to me as well. For one thing, I owe my life to the church. I came here about ten years ago and two weeks after I came I met my wife at a Bible study. My wife, Jan. And also, I was thinking that I've made a lot of friends here, developed some rich relationships around the Word, around Jesus Christ. And the greatest relationship I have is with Christ and I thank you and the staff for helping to open up the Word to me and help develop my relationship with the Lord with not only the preaching of the Word every Sunday but also the attitude of worship that you and the staff convey and also the corporate worship that we have here at the church. And I want to thank you again for that.

JOHN: Thank you, Dave. God bless you. Let's take this gentleman right here, too, and we'll finish that line.

BOB: Hi, John, my name is Bob Wall(?). I'm here tonight, I've never publicly committed myself to Jesus Christ. I started going to this church about three or four months ago. I have personal tragedy. And I promised myself and God that if He helped me through this, that I would commit my life to God as long as I live. And I'm here tonight to tell you that I love the Lord and I commit myself to living as Jesus Christ would want me to live the rest of my life.

JOHN: Oh, God bless you. (Applause) Oh boy, great. You had a good line up over there, Stan. You really did. How wonderful.

MIKE: My name is Mike Rolfstein(?) and I just want to praise God for the ministry of music here and the tremendous part it is in worship.

JOHN: God bless you. Thank you for that. We all are blessed by that. That's right. Let's go right back here.

MARTY: I'm Marty and I want to thank the Lord for His mercy and loving kindness, and I want to thank you for the last four years for answering all my letters. Thank you very much.

JOHN: You're very welcome, Marty. Thank you for writing them.

????? I came here six years ago and I wanted to do some missionary work. So I joined the tape ministry and that's my missionary work.

JOHN: Oh bless your heart. And I go down there and see her filling those little orders and putting the tapes in there. God bless you. That's missionary work, that's right. Good way to look at it.

Okay, we have these four ladies over here.

BECKY: Hi, my name is Becky ??? and how my legs got me up here, I'll never know. But I just wanted to say that I never felt more of the bond of unity with you people since I have today. And I don't believe that you have to go to a small church to feel close to the congregation because I feel like I have a second family here and one that will care for me and keep me accountable with my walk in the Lord.

JOHN: Oh, you do have a family here, Becky, yes you do. God bless you.

JOYCE: My name is Joyce Sevant(?) and I'm in the high school group. I'm grateful to God for the high school, the junior high group because when I was in junior high that was when I really committed my life to Christ. And it was through the examples of the staff to and then as I was here in high school, God blessed me with Tim Jack, who was my pastor, and just for the other staff because without them I don't think I would make it because I went through a lot of hard things. And they stuck

by me and sometimes I take them for granted and I just wanted to tell the junior high and high schoolers, don't take the staff for granted, get to know them, they are really encouraging and they're good examples.

JOHN: God bless you. That's so good. Listen, I just got a message, the ice cream is melting. So hurry, Linda.

LINDA: My name is Linda Jack and I just wanted to take this time to thank the Lord for Grace. I came here 19 years ago as a senior in high school who loved the Lord but didn't know how to live for Him. And I didn't know how much He could love us and the people at Grace took me and they became my family. They meant so much to me and through the years everything I've been through they've been there supporting me and encouraging me and getting me through it so that today I can really be living for Him and I can have a family that loves Him and I can share that love with them, and I'm just so thankful.

JOHN: Bless you, Linda. And Linda's husband, Tim Jack, is our high school director and a dear, dear friend. Thank you, Linda. (Applause)

CAROL: My name is Carol and I'm really, really nervous, this is only my second time here and I'm the last one up here, I'm really embarrassed. I just wanted to say that all my life I've wanted to learn all about God and Jesus but my family, they're all Mormons, and they're not involved in church so it was really hard for me. But recently I just prayed about it a lot and I was fortunate to have one of my best friends, Maria and her family, tell me about Grace Community and they brought me here and I was just in the past few weeks I felt really good and a lot of happiness and I like it here and I want to come here a lot. Thank you very much.

JOHN: Well God bless you. Thank you very much. Okay.

Now listen, folks, this is going to be a very short dismissal prayer and you go directly to the ice cream. All right? Let's stand and bow our heads for just a moment.

Lord, thank You for this day and the wonderful fellowship and bless the ice cream in Jesus' name. Amen.

Now go.

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