

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

### **John MacArthur's 25th Anniversary Celebration**

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: GTY48

ANNOUNCER: Well, this is a time for our multimedia presentation. Most of us have had the privilege of sitting in this auditorium every week and we have no concept of how far John MacArthur's pulpit ministry extends worldwide. Only eternity will reveal the full scope of it. Every day of the week and at any given moment, night or day, more people around the world are listening to John's preaching through Grace To You radio and cassette tapes than the total number of all who sit in our combined morning and evening services on a typical Sunday. Multiple millions each week listen to the messages we are blessed to hear firsthand. God has literally sent John MacArthur's preaching to the uttermost parts of the earth. Jesus Himself said, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own hometown and in his own household. It's one of the wretched tendencies of our sinfulness that we fail to appreciate those whom God raises up in our midst. John's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary is a reminder to us of the command of Hebrews 13:7, "Remember those who led you, who spoke the Word of God to you and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith."

Human words fail to convey the depth of our gratitude for John's labor on our behalf. And, of course, there's no way we can honor John MacArthur in the way he way he deserves. That is something only God can do in the glory of eternity. But we want to express our heartfelt love to him and our profound appreciation for 25 years of faithful, fruitful ministry. In two thousand years of church history, only a handful of churches have been blessed as we have with such a rich heritage of careful, faithful, verse-by-verse exposition over so long a period of time. Of course we are both collectively and individually accountable for what we do with all that we've learned from our pastor/teacher. "To whom much has been given, much shall be required."

Of course, this ministry did not spring up from nowhere. What we enjoy today reflects years of disciplined preparation, the influence of godly parents, the support of a loving wife and family, the encourage of other mature men of God, the commitment of a loyal congregation and above all, the sovereign power of our God and through the power of the Holy Spirit has used His Word to glorify His own name.

Who is John MacArthur and how did his ministry at Grace Church come about? Although he rarely talks about himself, we managed to glean a few personal glimpses into John's life as he gave them in his own words. We put together this brief autobiography taken from years of sermons and radio broadcasts. Listen.

JOHN: I looked at my childhood and it's getting harder to see all the time, as it gets further away, I admit. But I look at my childhood and I think about my mother who prayed that God would give her a son who would preach. And then when I was born, she kept asking God, "Is this the one? You've got a little work to do, Lord, if this is the one."

Through the years of all of my difficulties, I didn't know where I was going in life. Oh, when I was a little kid I would stand on a soapbox in the backyard and preach at my sisters. But that was because I was kind of copying my Dad, that's what I heard him do. I went through life, a couple of times almost lost my life. One time I fell off a cliff up by Forest Home, another time a car accident almost took my life. God spared me both times. Breaking my own human will, my own desires, charting my course all through the years, God knew exactly where I'd be.

I remember as a little kid, my Father used to tell me, "God sees everything you do. I may not see it. Your mother may not see it, but God sees everything you do." That was indelible. I was a little tiny kid and I...that stuck with me...that's always stuck with me. I remember a friend of my Father's came home from the II World War and brought a German helmet that he got in Europe. And he gave it to me as a gift and he told me that it was bulletproof. And I can remember consciously wearing that little helmet around on my head and thinking, "Ha, now God can't see what I'm thinking because even bullets can't go through this."

I was very conscious that God was watching. And my Father also reinforced a lesson to me one time when the teacher left the room and I was in the second grade and I decided to jump from desk to desk, showing off in the classroom for all the other kids who were egging me on. And I was like that, to be honest with you, when I was young. And I was jumping from desk to desk just as though orthopedic wedges' came back in the door, you know. She was one of those with a bun on the back...you know, she was an old fashioned teacher...she came in the door and there I was, you know...full flight.

I thought back about the fact so many times that to get caught by an authority figure in the midst of something like that is a pretty serious thing and I paid dearly for it, I will be the first to admit. I remember when I was a little kid, some neighborhood kid, he got me in some bad influence, you know. He got me to think it was kind of a neat deal to smoke a cigar, see. So I smoked the cigar and I thought, "Boy, this is really living, you know, big time deal." So then he decided he'd show me how I could steal things from the dime store. I was really a great kid, I just got in bad company.

And...right?...right. But anyway, so we wound up stealing some stuff from Sears. And as we were leaving the store, we got caught by the store detective and they put us in jail, in the city jail while they called my father who was playing golf with some deacons. And poor guy, he didn't know what was going on.

Anyway, he came to the jail, he thought it was mistake and he had the deacons with him, they were coming back. Couldn't be my son. So anyway, he comes and I'm in the cell there, sitting there. So my Dad arrives and he bails me out of there and, you know, I remember going to church and My Dad was a preacher, so everybody knew who I was. The word got around about me being in jail, and didn't do a whole lot for my family's image. And I used to tell myself it was bad company that influenced me, but now I know it was just plain depravity, you know.

When I was in junior high in the seventh grade, I had a little friend named Roger. Roger was a little guy, we were both in the seventh grade. And Roger, he was just kind of...he looked like about a fourth grader. He just hadn't really developed much, he was kind of pudgy, looked like the Pillsbury man that you poked, you know. He was just puffy and cute and cherubic. And Roger was my little friend because I was the pastor's son and he was in the church too and we were Sunday School buddies. And so, you know, we walked around this very rough junior high. I mean, this was a really rough junior high. We had knife fights all the time and in the boys room where you go in, they had a fuse box and on the fuse box the kids would open it and they'd leave marijuana cigarettes burning and everybody would come in and take a drag. And this was in 1950...I don't know, sometime in the 1950's you know, and it wasn't like...we think of drugs as something very modern. No, no, it was going on all the time then. Kids were spaced out all the time. We had a parking lot for the kids that drove to school in junior high. For some reason they liked to tease Roger. He just, by his looks, invited, you know, that kind of stuff. And so we'd go walking along, you know, and they'd be always yelling stuff at Roger and teasing him.

And one day, this was very common, we'd be walking down and they'd come up and hit the back of us and knock all our books out, which we'd carry under our arms, and then kick 'em. There would be about six of them and they'd just keep kicking them all down the walk and into the bushes, you know, and neither one of us could defend ourselves against that kind of stuff.

And we just kept getting it, you know. So this went on all the time. And this one kid named Johnny was the leader. Well one day we were in the locker room and we were just preparing to leave after gym class and the gang came by, you know. And they were the Hoods, the hard guys, we'd called them, and they came along they thought it would be real cute and they came by and elbowed us and we went over the bench and into the lockers and the back of our heads...you know, it was like a comedy act, just together, foomp, you know, bang, see, Alphonse and Gaston, you know. And there we are laying on the floor.

And, you know, Roger finally says, "That's enough." You can only take so much, right? Well I said, what are you going to do about it, Roger? Well, he said, he's going to tell his brother. And I said, "Well that's good." And his brother's name was Steve. I'll never forget them, the Williams family. Steve played middle linebacker for Long Beach State. Steve was 6'4", about 245 and had a 30 inch waist.

And I'll never forget Steve because I remember the first time I heard him give his testimony, he was driving a bread truck and he hit a concrete wall going 40 and walked away. That's the kind of guy he was, tremendous physical specimen.

Anyway, Roger said he's going to tell his brother. So I said, "Good, Roger." So he came back the next day and he said, "Steve's coming to school tomorrow and he's going to do something."

So these guys all had an area by the gym where they had worn out the grass. They'd come early every morning and smoke and sneak in pot and everything and they'd stand there, you know, and wear out the grass and just carry on their conversation. About six or so of them and they were just always there. So this one day Steve was there, only he stayed behind a building where they couldn't see and it was about fifteen minutes before school and Roger and I were, you know, just sort of hanging around waiting to see what happened. And so Roger yelled and he says, (in a high voice,) "Hey you," you know, to this Johnny. "Come here." And they were laughing, they were going to really lay it on, so this Johnny kid comes swaggering out, he had a police record and he was laughing and mocking Roger. Just at that point, Steve walked around the corner of the building. And he walks up to Roger and he says, "Which one?" Roger says, "That one." At which point, Steve walked over to this guy, I'll never forget, this is exactly what happened. He just picked the guy up by the shirt, lifted him up, took his fist and knocked out four teeth with one shot, just crushed his nose down, his two top teeth and I don't know what all, and then he picked him up. And, of course, the guy was out. He picked him up and there was a big hedge in front of the wall of the gym and he threw him over the hedge against the wall and down behind the bush. And then he said to the rest of the guys, "Don't you ever mess with Roger again." And he walked away.

You want to know what happened at our junior high. Roger ruled. No question about it. Roger ruled North Downey Junior High.

I went away to college and...although I was willing in my heart to do what God wanted me to do in a general way, there was some areas of my life which were not really submissive to Christ and so I chafed a little bit under the direction, although I was sort of resigned to it, it wasn't a joyous anticipation for me and I was somewhat rebellious and the Lord knew that and He knew there needed to be some further refining. So driving across the United States with five other young people in a car, after my freshman year in college, the Lord worked out a very special plan for me. The car got involved in an accident. I was thrown out of the car, slid along the highway over a hundred yards. Of course, wound up with severe burns and friction problems and scars everywhere and wound up in a hospital and then in bed for nearly three months.

And it was at that point in time that I made the total commitment of my life to Christ. I was just 18 years old, really at the time. And I said, "Lord, I can see now that my life really is in your hands and You have absolute control of my...not only my eternal destiny but my time here in this world. And He

spared me and every other person in the car, even though it rolled at 65-70 miles an hour. And I could see God working so I committed my life to Christ, I spent those three months drawing close to Him and reading His Word and reaffirming my commitment to do whatever He wanted me to do.

And when I was coming to my senior year in college, it was suggested that I run for student body vice president. I was very active in sports and in church ministry by then, but somebody said, "You ought to be student body vice president. And I said, "Really, I don't want to do that," but there was a friend in our class, he was particularly a classmate in philosophy class, a brilliant student. And he said, "I'm just going to take it upon myself to put your name in." And I thought nothing would come of it. I really thought he was kidding. But he did. And on the day of the election when they were allowed to post banners and signs everywhere, I came to school to a shock because ten to one my signs dominated anybody else's signs. I hadn't known anything about it. What made it extremely curious was, this friend who was so gracious and so concerned to see me run, had a reading disorder, a form of dyslexia which caused him to be unable to spell. And as a result, my name was spelled wrong on every poster. Not only that, it was spelled differently on every poster. And it was so funny, that I won the election. So I want you to know that the only place my natural talents ever got me in leadership was backing in by virtue of a joke to the vice presidency of my college student body.

You know, when I was a student in seminary, Dr. Charles Fineberg was a dean of the seminary, he's a brilliant Jewish man. In fact, he studied to be a rabbi, and then got converted to Jesus Christ and started to study the Bible on his own. He was so brilliant, he knew 35 languages. I remember in two weeks he taught himself Dutch so he could read a theology, just an immense mind. I was so in awe of this guy. He became my personal mentor through seminary. I took every class he taught and I broke my back to get an A in every class he taught because I just wouldn't ever imagine that anybody would get less than an A in his class and be satisfied with it. And he took me under his wing personally. He took me to his home and he showed me his personal library. And, you know, some people have books on the Dead Sea Scrolls, he had photocopies. He read the Scrolls, not the books about the Scrolls. You know, I mean, he did his devotions in the Syriac Pashida(??), you know. He was in some other dimension.

Well he decided to make me his personal pupil because for some reason he believed in me and so he would bring me in his office and he'd say, "Here's a book, I want you to read it and tell me what you think." And he'd give me his own books and he'd call me in and he'd talk to me and he's share with me. And he just make sure I was growing and learning and he'd stimulate me. I was his personal little project.

One day he came to me and he says, "I'm so happy, John," he said, "you've won the scholarship award for this year." He thanked me for that and I thought, "Boy, that's wonderful, I didn't know about that." And the next day he called me in and he said, "You know something?" he said, "we were wrong yesterday when I told you that, we had to check again and you didn't turn in a paper in some class

and you didn't win and I'm very disappointed in you." I just went phrmp, you know, I just melted.

My second year in seminary, we had to preach every year before the whole faculty and they sit behind you when you preach and they have eight-and-a-half by fourteen sheets of paper, and they criticize you. You know, where's his hands, and what are his gestures like. I mean, they're in to all of that stuff. They talk about his intonation, does he, you know, scratch his nose when he's preaching. Does he slump in the pulpit? Does he have a powerful presence? What kind of voice does he have? Well how was his outline? Were his illustrations good? Did he rightly interpret the text? And so they're sitting there the whole time you're preaching, checking off all these boxes, you know, and drawing diagrams on what you should have done. And how your gestures, you know, you shouldn't say, "God loves the whole world." You know, you should say, "The WHOLE world." You know, all that kind of stuff. And, you know, they go through all of that. And they're back there.

Well I was assigned to preach in my second year and I got up and I had the passage that Fineberg had assigned me, 2 Samuel chapter 7, and I had to do a Bible exposition of that, and preach a sermon. And I preached my heart out the best I could. And all these guys had filled their criticism sheets but there was only one of them that I was really concerned about. I'll never forget, the greatest lesson I ever learned. I walked out the door in seminary, and they all stand there and hand you the sheet as you go. And then you read what they think of your sermon.

Fineberg was last. And he looked at me and didn't say a word and handed me a sheet. No box was marked, nothing was checked, no lines, no comments in the spaces, in red ink across the middle of the page, "You missed the entire point of the passage!" exclamation point.

Now there's one thing you don't want to do when you preach and that is, miss the entire point of the passage. If you can avoid it all costs, it's a good idea.

How I met my wife. My wife was in the college group where I was a teacher when I was in college and seminary. I was the college pastor in my father's church. I was going to college and going through seminary and working in the church as a youth pastor, working with the college department. She was in the group. She became a good friend of my sister, Jeanette, my next to younger sister, I have three younger sisters. And Jeanette and she were good friends. And at the time, she was going with another guy. He was a little weasely guy, but anyway, she was going with this guy. And so I never thought anything of it. But I really liked her because she was full of fun and she could cook like gangbusters, and very domestic and she came from a super family, godly parents. All of her sisters and brothers loved Christ, three of them wound up on the mission field, you know. Just a great family. And she was a lot of family. And I used to say to her. "If you get rid of that guy you're going with, I'll take you for a ride in my Volkswagen." And she'd just laugh at me, you know. She would just kind of laugh. But I wasn't really being funny, I was trying to be serious without giving away, you know, my feeling.

So she finally decided that she ought to marry this guy. And so she was engaged to him. And then it came to be the wedding time, and this is true, she got the invitations to send out, put them in the trunk of her car, and couldn't mail them. She just...something wouldn't let her mail them. And, of course, we now know it was the Lord. But the guy was really have a tough time. He kept saying, "Will you please mail those invitations because nobody's going to show up if you don't mail them." And the wedding date was set. She couldn't do it.

And as a result of that, she made a decision that rather than marry him, she would like to go for a ride in my Volkswagen. And, you know, it was amazing. In fact, I took her home from church one night, I was taking a bunch of kids out for pizza and the guy she was engaged to was in medical school away in another city. So, I took her home last. And I was just kind of teasing her, but I tried to make her think I was real serious. I said, "You know, I just kind of a feeling that maybe the Lord might have you for me."

Well she didn't want to hear that. And I didn't know what I was saying, I was just young and acting dumb, you know. But that kind of planted the thought and over a period of time she said "I can't marry you," and she gave the guy's ring back. And that was the end of the invitations and the wedding, and the whole shot. And that started our relationship and friendship and the Lord led through that and we got married. And now we have four kids. And so it's kind of interesting how the Lord led, and really the Lord had prevented her from going one direction because she's a perfect complement to me. She's strong where I'm weak, and weak where I'm strong. And we match up really well, I think. I mean, I'm blissfully happy. If it gets any better, I don't know what I'm going to do with myself. It's a wonderful happy great marriage and she fits in so wonderfully to the ministry of the church. I'm very, very grateful.

I think the thing I'm most grateful about with Patricia is the investment she made in our home and in our children. And now we're starting to reap the benefit of four kids that just the love the Lord Jesus Christ with all their hearts. And that's a father's greatest joy. And I've got to tell you, folks. You know, in the busyness of my life, the whole thing has been very, very much dependent on her faithfulness to support the things that I've believed and taught day after day in the life of those kids. So I'm very grateful for that.

You know, I have a lot of things in my mind, going around all the time. And sometimes it's difficult for me to really be sensitive and to really reach out in love and understanding and knowledge and know where she is and know where she's hurting, or where her joys are. But I'll tell you one thing, I have committed my life to love that woman till I die and I'm going to chase her around heaven for all eternity.

(Applause)

ANNOUNCER: John MacArthur was just getting out of high school when Grace Community Church was incorporated in 1956. The founding pastor, Dr. Don Householder had been.....but Dr. Household described Grace Church simply as inter-denominational, evangelical, evangelistic. The church's motto was, "In essentials unity, in non-essentials charity." The church experienced remarkable growth under Dr. Householder's ministry. But Dr. Householder died suddenly, just before the church's tenth anniversary in 1966. Dr. Richard Elvy became Grace's second pastor. At the time, John MacArthur, a recent graduate of Talbot Seminary, was preaching at youth rallies and traveling as the seminary's representative. Then Dr. Elvy's ministry was cut short when he died unexpectedly in September of 1968. One month later, John MacArthur, then only 29 years old, was asked by the elders to candidate for the pastoral role. John's only hand's on pastoral experience was a two-year stint as assistant pastor to Dr. Jack MacArthur, John's father. But having grown up in a pastor's home, he had more than enough practical knowledge. In January 1969 the church called John MacArthur to be their pastor.

JOHN: You know, when I went to Grace Church, I can only tell you my experience, since it's the only church I've ever pastored. I knew they had problems. I believed in immersion, they didn't even have a baptistry. They took people, if they wanted to be immersed somewhere, if they wanted to be sprinkled, they'd sprinkle them. If they wanted to be poured, they poured them. If they wanted to get squirted with a hose, they'd squirt them with a hose, you know. And I knew that would be a problem, and their founding pastor was a Methodist and they had Arminian theology all through the church, I knew that would be a problem.

But the mitigating thing with all those problems was that when I went to meet with the men there, they said, "Look, we just want somebody to come and teach us God's Word and then we want to do what it says." That's like saying, "Sic them to a mad dog." You know, that's all I needed to hear.

Came February 9, 1969, that was my first Sunday there. Hadn't reached my thirtieth birthday yet, still in my twenties and felt like I was getting in over my heard. But I had such a hunger to teach the Word of God. I've been traveling for about three years all across America, preaching to young people. I would spend all summer speaking to junior high and high school kids at camps and conferences and I was speaking in colleges and high schools. All kinds of places preaching 40-45 times a month. But I...my heart was not in it. I didn't mind doing it, but I wanted to be in a church and I want to study the Word and shepherd the sheep and I wanted to grow. And I found out that being on the road all the time didn't lend itself to my spiritual growth. I couldn't study and I couldn't prepare and I wasn't fresh in the Word. So I prayed that the Lord would give me a church.

And the folks from Grace Community Church contacted me because I had spoken at their youth camp and the kids came back and said, "We'd like him to be our pastor." Their pastor had died, they

only had two pastors, both of them died of a heart attack. So, you know, they were supporting two widows, two very godly, precious women who have meant so much in my life. But I think they said, "Let's get a young guy, so we don't get a third widow on our hands." And so, they said, "Would you come on a Sunday night and preach?"

Well I was really ready. I knew the church was a wonderful, warm church, enthusiastic, and I knew the kids from camp. And I was happy to go on a Sunday night and preach. I said to my wife, Patricia, I said, "I'm going to preach on Romans 6 and 7, I've been studying it all summer." I had been at Hume Lake Christian Conference Grounds for nine weeks in a row, talking to junior high and high school kids and in my daily Bible study, I was studying Romans 6 and 7, one of the greatest passages in all of the New Testament. And I had so much of that stuff in me that I hadn't been able to preach, you know it's like fire in your bones, Jeremiah says, you've got to get it out. And so I said, "I'm going to preach on Romans 6 and 7." So this was the night they wanted me to candidate. And I went ready to preach on Romans 6 and 7 and I don't think I had anything more than a piece of paper like this, with notes on it, cause I had so much in me. And when I get a lot in me, I really let it all go, you know. So I got in the pulpit and I just preached my heart out and explained the significance of those two chapters. And tried to challenge the people to the application of those great truths. And I felt like I really delivered my soul and it seemed like they were attentive. And there were probably about four hundred people there that night. And they were packed into a little chapel that seated about 300 people and we had a wonderful evening that evening. And I just poured out my heart.

When I was done with my message, I just walked down and stood by Patricia, down there. And I felt that satisfaction and some guy got up to lead the closing hymn. And I looked down at her for the wifely affirmation that every husband preacher needs, you know. And she looked up at me with those big eyes and she said, "Well, that's the end of that church." I said, "What do you mean?" She says, "Do you know how long you talked?" I said, "No." She said, "One hour and 25 minutes. What were you thinking?" she said.

Well everybody knows when you preach, you're not thinking. You know...you're just preaching, you know. You don't...you don't want to cloud the issue by thinking. And besides, there was no clock on the wall, you know. There was the next week...a big, big clock. There still is only now it's on the pulpit, it's a huge clock, you know.

But I...you know, and I felt awful. I mean, how could I do that. But I was so into it, you know. I'm sure the nursery people were going stark-raving mad. So afterwards, the chairman of the board came up to me and without even a reference to the length of the sermon, he said, "John," he said, "if you were our pastor, would you teach us the Word of God like that every week?" Oh man, that was like saying, "Sic 'em to a mad dog." I could not believe it. I couldn't believe that they would want...I said, "Yeah, but shorter, I will, I will, but shorter."

So as the Lord would have it, I was asked to be the pastor of that church. I had never pastored a church, it's the only church I've ever pastored in my life. I went in there with no sermons in the file, no sermons in the bag. And for all these years I've been preaching stuff and everything I know, I've already told them. In fact, I've told them more than I know, to be truthful with you. But I've just...and I have to study every week cause everything I've already said, they taped.

I want to share with you this morning on the theme when God builds a church. And this is something the Lord has just really been laying on my heart to think about and consider because of the character of our experience today in entering into this new worship center and in days to come of beginning to realize what God has provided for us here. It's important, I think, for us to realize what it is that God is doing when He builds a church. And it isn't the building that I want to talk about, it's you. This building never really has been a church, it's just been like a big cave here. The first time it was any way, shape, or form like a church was when you arrived this morning. This is the first time the church has met here. In fact, some folks stopped by during recent weeks and saw this and thought it was a big theater, a big stage theater and they saw the ticket booth out there. And they wanted to know where do you go to buy season tickets to the theater and why somebody would built a theater so close to a church. It's kind of like the people who came by one day and wanted to know if any of the apartments in the other building over there were for rent. So you see, this could be an apartment building, it could be a theater, it could be anything. It isn't a church until you're in it.

I think a lot about the life of our church. I think about the early days when everything was going fast and furious and all, we were sort of a glad, happy, small group of about five, six, seven-hundred people and it was as if a bomb was exploding all around here. And no matter what we did, everybody came. I remember one Sunday night I preached on "Why the Antichrist must be a Jew." The place was packed. After I preached, some guy came up to me and said, "You're wrong," and he opened the Scripture to me and explained some things. And so the next Sunday night I preached on, "Why the Antichrist must be a Gentile." And then we had a tape for each view. But, you know, no one even really cared. We were having such a great time, nobody even cared who the Antichrist was...to be honest with you.

God gave us some great days. And the days when we were looking at some old photographs the other night at home, and I saw pictures of the chicken coops that used to be out here in the parking lot and on Sunday we used some of them, and old bums lived in the other ones. You don't know about that, but that's really true. There were some old drunken derelicts that lived in the back. We tried everything we could to evangelize them. We didn't evict them. And they occupied some of chicken coops and we had our classes in the other ones. And it was a sad day when they bulldozed the chicken coops, to be honest with you. That's where the Grace Book Shack got its name. It started out as a book shack, and we saw what the Lord had done.

I went through some of those pictures and began to see all of the things that the Lord...and I remember one Sunday night we talked about building this building and a young couple came to me and said, "We have saved all our money for our honeymoon, but we want to have that new place to worship, so here it all is." And gave it to me. And another night after church I went back to my office and there was a paper sack in front of the door and I thought, "Oh somebody's left some oranges or apples," and I reached down to pick it up and almost broke my arm. It was completely filled with silver bars and a little note that said, "I don't want anyone to know who it is but this is a gift from me to the Lord for this building." And that's the way it went in those great exciting times. We used to preach in the chapel and there were as many up on the platform some nights as there were in the pews. All packed around us everywhere. And those were great times.

And then for many of you, you remember when we were in the gym over there that we used to seat people in the parking lot, just facing away from the sun. They couldn't see anything and we had a little speaker out there so they could hear the message. And I remember everybody came to Grace, it just seemed like it was the place. And we had three morning services and we packed them in. I remember one time some people were working on the sound system, so they said when the choir sings, you go to the back of the auditorium and listen, see if the choir sounds any better with these new speakers. And so I went to the back and a lady came in the back door and she had a dog on a leash. And it was properly dressed, had a little red sweater and a rhinestone collar. But she came in the back door with this dog and I realized that this was a little unusual. I thought I'd watch the usher to see just what he did. And she came right down the aisle during the singing of the number, and he did kind of double take before he realized what was happening. And went down about ten rows and stopped her and brought her to the back. And I stood there just to hear what he would say. And this is the truth. He said, "I'm sorry, mam, you can't come in here with your dog. You can't do that." And this is exactly what she said, "I'm sorry, sir, but my dog has rededicated his life and we're on our way to the prayer room." I mean, I'm telling you, God was doing tremendous things.

Now we all concluded that that lady's elevator didn't go to the top floor. But everybody was involved at Grace in those days. I remember...I remember my first Easter Sunday and some man would pick up his wife from Camarillo Mental Institution on the weekends and he decided that the best place to take her was Grace Church. And at the conclusion of my first Easter sermon, just about ten minutes from the end and I was coming to a closing of the resurrection message and she came out of the aisle and started coming down the middle aisle combat style on all fours like she was crawling under barbed wire. And the chapel was relatively small and everyone looked and saw this lady, about 55 years old, snaking down the middle aisle and so I hastily closed in prayer. And somebody picked her up and took her out and she made a little bit of noise.

One time I recall over there, I was preaching and we had the USC football team in 1972, they won the national championship undefeated and I was kind of the chaplain for the team. And the line, the

offensive line sat in one spot and a heckler came in and happened to sit right in the middle of them, which made it very interesting. And he started to shout at me during the service, upon which he was immediately removed, so fast I know he didn't know what happened to him. The last I saw, he went out the door about three feet off the ground with his feet going like this..... In fact, we used to have a little slogan, "Grace is where it's at." And the young people printed up t-shirts and you'd see t-shirts and bumper stickers all around, "Grace is where it's at." And people were trying to figure out what it was but definitely this was where it was.

ANNOUNCER: John's ministry at Grace flourished from the very beginning. Especially significant has been the tape ministry. It begun in John's earliest days as pastor, the Grace To You tape ministry has become the largest cassette ministry in history, offering the sermons of a single pastor. Grace To You now has more than two thousand titles in the catalog and recently presented John with a gold-plated copy of the ninth millionth tape. John's influences as an author has also emerged over the past decade. His books, *The Charismatics*, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, *Our Sufficiency In Christ*, *Charismatic Chaos*, *Faith Works*, and *Ashamed of the Gospel* have all become best sellers, unprecedented for books devoted to theological issues. No other author in our generation has produced such an important series of doctrinal studies. And no other single author since the Puritan era has produced so many doctrinal studies with such widespread popular appeal.

Here in John's own words are some insights into his philosophy of ministry.

JOHN: This person in our church took me to lunch, said, "I'm leaving the church." I said, "Why?"

"All your sermons, frankly they're just boring. You need to tell more stories." And he said, "Just not enough stories."

I said, "Well, you better go somewhere else because God didn't call me to tell stories. God called me to preach the Word. (Applause) And I suppose someday I'll be standing all by myself and Patricia will be there because she has to come, but I'll go the grave doing what God called and gifted me to do. I really don't...in fact, I can't do anything else, folks, if the truth were known. Don't tell anybody. Young guys always say to me, "Well if you weren't a preacher, what would you be?" My answer is, "A bum." I don't think I could make a living.

Somebody was upset because I...they thought I was too humorous. And I was thinking about Spurgeon. Somebody said to Spurgeon, "You're just too humorous in the pulpit." And he said, "You ought to hear the things I think of but never say." Same problem. I can't say that, I can't say that.

I would rather preach here than anywhere. And I mean that sincerely. Than anywhere. And yet the flesh in me would say, "But, MacArthur, when you preach here, you have to study hard because they know everything you know and you have to come up with something different every week." And that's

right. But I would rather do that. I would rather spend 25 or 30 hours a week, at least, studying to tell you something once, than to be a traveling speaker. And you know there's a lot of kind of glamour in being the traveling whatever, you know, who comes to town, the professional Bible teacher. That's a great ministry. You know, I used to do that for about three and a half years or so, I did that. I went all over the place. And, you know, it was in a very real sense very difficult to really minister in the Spirit. And I want to tell you why. When you do that, you find wherever you go there are certain messages that you use. The good ones...in the business we call them the sugar sticks, see. And you go back to these, you know, and you always get excited as you can get when you hear you're going to go someplace you've never been, see. All your good stuff you can use, see. They've never heard you, right? And that's very easy to do. And then there's really nothing...I'm not knocking it, I mean it's fine if you can handle it in the Spirit. And, of course, it was always the same things. You know, they always want to hear salvation, Holy Spirit, prophecy and something about marriage and sex. Always the same things.

And so, you had a little series that you...you know, you'd come in and you'd say, "Let's see, it will be message number 13, 14, 15, or 16 this week, and you punch your little button..wah-wah-wah, see. And that's it, you know. You've got it so into your brain, you know exactly when they're going to laugh, you know how to build up to it, you know when they're going to cry. You know everything. You've got that outline, you know. If your wife punches you in the middle of the night, you sit up and repeat the message, you know. It's there. Let's face it. You've got that one down-pat. Believe me, you can have absolutely no connection to God and you could give that thing. I know, I've been there.

And, you know, I did that for just a few years and I realized that that was, in a sense, unfulfilling. Now I don't want you to call up the people that I'm going to minister to this summer and say, "Remember, he'll be ministering in the flesh." I'm working on it, I'm working on it. But you know, I said to the Lord, I began to pray about this, "Lord, I have to be somewhere I am dependent on You, you know, where I can't go in there knowing that I've got a winner." I mean, sometimes I come to preach here and I am scared because I say, "You know, I work on that, Lord, but it didn't fall together. It isn't there. I don't understand just how to put it together and where you're going to put the emphasis." And I get down on my knees in my office before I get over here and I just really pour out my heart to the Lord. And I come in here, and I'm worried, and it's over, and God really blesses, you know. And other days I work through and it's terrific. And I get down I say, "That's good, that is going to get them. That will be a hot item on the tape." And you know what, you come in here and nothing, zilch, nothing. And you go away and again you just say to yourself, "You know, Dumbo, one of these days you're going to learn."

Let me tell you a little principle, guys. It's very easy to be hard to understand. Did you hear that? It is very easy to be hard to understand. All you have to do is not know what you're talking about. And if you don't know what you're talking about, they'll never know what you're talking about either. It is very difficult to be crystal clear because you have to master your subject. If you know what you're talking about and you've got something to say, you're going to see the power of God change your life. And

you can make it clear. That's why I love to speak to young people. I think young people can do a lot more than we think they can, mentally. And I've always loved young people because if they're not interested in what you say, they have the courtesy to talk...which is a very gentle way of reminding you you're not making it. Adults just sit there and grin, you don't know if they're in there, or out of it. So, that's why I love speaking at the college. It's a challenge every Monday morning, I go in there before that mob of kids in the gym and, man, I've got to hold their interest. I've got to hold their interest for 45-50 minutes and keep them moving with me. And I know right away when I don't have it. You take a thousand kids, put them in a gym, and if you lose them, you know...you know. I appreciate that. I speak to three thousand people at Grace Church and if I'm not even connecting with the first row, I don't know it, they're just sitting there staring, looking down, counting the E's in the bulletin, you know.

I told you about the guy I heard on a Christian talk radio program, and he said he's a counselor, works with young people, and does family counseling. And they asked him, you know, "Where was he trained?" And he said, "I just got my PhD. in psycho-theology." What is a psycho theologian? The only thing I could think of is a theologian who kills people. I'll tell you what, I wouldn't carry the label of a psycho-theologian.

There's a high level of accountability for me here. I, both in my family, personally with my wife and children, that's a very real place for me to live, you know. They're not under any illusions about my greatness. As my son Mark says to me, "In the pulpit you're really something, Dad. But at home, you're nothing special." And he was serious when he said that. He thought that was profound. I thought it was unkind.

QUESTIONER: And I'd be interested in your comments on the biblical perspective on borrowing money to build a sanctuary, and some things like that.

JOHN: Sure, I mean, if you're not in debt, you're not even in the ministry, what are you going to pray about? You know. No, I'm being facetious, edit that out of the tape, or I'll be in a lot of trouble for that.

My favorite letter than I've ever gotten and it's just really the ultimate compliment, my favorite letter, and I have a lot of letters that I keep because they're just for one reason or another really unique. But my favorite letter that I have ever received came from a little old lady in the Midwest and she wrote and said, "I've been listening to you on the radio for a number of years, but I have to write and tell you that I will never listen to you again." She said, "Because now I know you're using all my pastor's material and you never give him credit."

So, I wrote her back and said, "Forgive me." That's all I said. No way was I going to blow that.

I told you a few weeks ago that my little boy said to me, "Are you going to retire, Daddy?" And I'll never retire, retire from preaching? I'll probably be playing a tape at my funeral.

(Applause)

ANNOUNCER: John, thank you for your 25 years of consistent, faithful, diligent study and teaching. We rejoice at God's goodness these past 25 years. Only the first 25 years of ministry that we pray will continue for many more years. We love you, brother.

(Applause)

John has two other sisters, Julie and Jane, they live in Portland and were unable to be with us tonight. But I know their hearts and prayers are with us. Thanks so much, Jeanette.

Behind every successful son, there's a mom and dad who modeled righteousness, and who prayed. And that certainly would be true of Dr. Jack and Irene MacArthur. And Dr. Jack and Irene, we're going to ask both of you, for a moment, to come to the platform, if you would. Irene, I know you weren't planning on this, but come on anyways.

(Applause)

And then I'm going to ask Jeanette and Patricia to come and John's going to bring a corsage for his mom and Patricia, a boutonniere for Dr. Jack.

Well they asked me if I would introduce Dr. Jack and I felt utterly unqualified to do that. I'll tell you one thing about him, and then I've asked John to give just a special personal touch to the introduction of his father. And Dr. Jack is going to come and share some reflections of the MacArthur household. Dr. Criswell, this morning, I mentioned had been involved continuously for 50 years at First Baptist Church in Dallas, a world-famed church which is a rare, rare thing in Christendom. Since 1944 has he been involved in Dallas. Since 1943, Dr. Jack has continuously without any break been involved in Christian radio and television up until this very hour preaching the gospel.

JOHN: This whole thing is overwhelming. I'm usually in control to some degree of what goes on, and it's embarrassing to hear the ridiculous things that I've said through the years. Oh, he's amening it. I...I...my love and commendation to you is even greater now that I know what you've listened to. It's unthinkable that anyone would say the foolish things that I've said. But there were some moments of clarity, weren't there? In all these years, and it all sort of made sense. I suppose I'm...there's so many things that I could so and I don't want to beg the issue, but I tell you one thing I can say about my Dad, among many, many things. He gave me a love for books. And to this day he reads and reads, we went up to see them a few weeks ago in Eugene, Oregon where they lived and I walked in the

house, I wasn't there two minutes until he had stuck two books and three articles under my nose and said, "You have to read these." He sends me faxes, you have to read this book, I'll be checking with you later to get a report on what you think. The love of books, I never see him without a book in his hand. What a legacy that is.

And I think of another thing, apart from the love of the family which we share, and that is a love of the church. All through the years of ministry, my father has loved the church and devoted his life to the church. And I grew up seeing a man who loved the ministry in the church. And that's where I gain my love for the church. And I'm so grateful for that.

And then he began in his ministry, from my earliest recollections, to do Bible exposition and started the book of Matthew, and the gospel of John, the book of Romans and going through verse by verse and really set me on course for my own life and ministry. I still cherish every opportunity I have to be with him and to talk, to be together, to compare ideas, to be stimulated. I just thank God for my father who is much more than a father to me, in every sense a mentor and a sort of ongoing teacher and motivator. And I love him greatly, and that's all I'm going to say.

(Applause)

DR. JACK: Johnny reminded me of the preacher that was eulogizing a man who died, and finally the widow said to her little boy, she said, "Go up and look in the casket, and see if that's really your dad."

I think tonight I've gained a tremendous insight into John's ministry and some of the ridiculous things that he said. And I thought that I was supposed to tell you some of the ridiculous things, but I think it's been done so well that it isn't necessary.

I will tell you some little interesting insights into the what I call the sovereignty of God. Johnny is actually the fifth preacher in a whole line of preachers in our family. And when Irene was knowing that she was going to have a child, she said to me, "Jack, we're going to have a little boy and he's going to be a preacher." And I said, "Irene, that is presumption, you do not know that. There is nothing in the Bible that would give you any grounds for that. That's a terrible thing to say because you don't know that."

She said, "Yes I do know that. We're going to have a boy and he is going to be a preacher."

Well she was right. God gave us a boy and he became a fair preacher, there's no question of that. When he was five-years-old something happened that was very interesting. I went to the barber shop to get a haircut and the barber said to me, he said, "You know, there was a little kid in here, he said, and you'll never believe this little kid." He said, "He asked me if I was a Christian." And I said, "Of course I am, I'm a Seventh Day Adventist." And he said, "Well you might be a Christian, but if you're a

Seventh Day Adventist, you're sure mixed up on the Sabbath day and I'll be glad to get a book to help you." Five years old.

Many times I took him with me to meetings and he wouldn't fidget, he would listen to everything I said. And I preached a strong sermon on hell. And I scared the daylights out of him. So when we were driving home, he usually wasn't over affectionate, but he got as close to me as he could possibly get and he said, "Say, Dad," he said, "You have any idea of what's happening in the backseat?" And I said, "No." He said, "Well," he said, Satan and God are going at it in the backseat," he said. He was very quiet for a long time. And he said, "By the way, Dad," he said, "Do you know where the Holy Spirit is?" And I said, "Yes I do, He indwells..." "No, no, no," he says, He's right over there underneath the cowling there, that's where He is." So when we got home, he said, "Would you leave the car lights on while I go up to the door?" The impressions that he had as a little child were just amazing to me. And has already been suggested, he was preaching all the time and he had one resistant audience and that was Jeanette. There was no way that he could convert Jeanette. And he would really preach to her and tell her that if she didn't repent of her sin and accept Jesus Christ, she was going to go hell." And Jeanette would say, "And I don't even care."

And then he'd be all upset and he'd coming running in the house and he'd say, "Dad, Jeanette's going to hell and she doesn't even care." And this has a beautiful ending because when I was pastor of the Fountain Avenue Baptist Church in Hollywood, one Sunday morning and I preached and I felt led to give an invitation to those who wished to give their lives to Christ. And Jeanette was about oh maybe five or even ten rows back and in a little deep into the pew, and all of a sudden Johnny just got up from his seat where he was near the front, he walked down the aisle, he went in and he got her and he took by the hand and brought her down.

He never stopped being concerned for the spiritual welfare of his sisters, to the point that they weren't appreciative at all. And what was so wonderful in our family was that he took over the full responsibility of disciplining his sisters. And I had the wonderful privilege of just sympathizing with them. And Julie told me that she was walking down the hallway at the Azusa College with a young man, and Johnny walked up to her and said, "What are you doing with that guy? He don't belong with anybody like that, on your way, fella." And Julie said, "Daddy, I was so embarrassed I didn't know...it was just awful what happened." I said, "Julie, it was terrible," and I was thinking, "Oh how wonderful." He never stopped. He was the discipliner and I was the sympathizer. What a marvelous combination it was.

Another little interesting thing about Johnny was, his coach...wasn't his name Brownfield? Brownfield came to me, and Johnny played, I think half-back, weren't you playing half-back? He came to me and he said, "Dr. MacArthur," he said, "For a nice young man, I've never seen anybody commit so much mayhem on a football field in my life," he said. "Boy," he said, "when he hits somebody, he takes them apart." And, he said, "It isn't congruent with the rest of his disposition." And I said, "Well, that's the

way he does everything. He's enthusiastic." And, believe me, I feel he's carried that over into his ministry and I'm grateful for it.

We used to notice that, and probably Johnny doesn't even know that we noticed it, but we had a guest house on the other side of our swimming pool in our home. And that was Johnny's place of study. And the light would go on there every morning at five o'clock when Johnny would be having his own private devotions there. And we took note of that because we knew that our son was spending time with God. And that light went on every morning at five o'clock. I don't know whether he remembers this, but one day I was talking to him about his ministry and I said, "You know, Johnny, what I'd like you to do is just saturate yourself with the Word of God...just saturate yourself with it so that when you get up, it will just flow from you." I said, "I heard you preach the other day and I was not satisfied with it." He was just right out of seminary. I said, "You can do better than that." And it wasn't very long until Johnny's messages were indeed all that I ever anticipated they should be and could be. He was teaching and preaching the infallible, inerrant Word of the living God.

I think that what Irene and I are most thankful for, if I could name one thing, it would be, of course, first of all that we were privileged to come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ as the true Lord of life and the only Savior. And secondly, and nothing else would matter if this wasn't true, nothing, all of our family...all of our children, all of our grandchildren, all of our precious little great-grandchildren are all going to be with us in heaven...all going to be there because they've all been redeemed in the precious blood of the Lamb. What could be more wonderful than to know that you have a family like ours in the love bonds of Christ that are going to spend the whole eternity together.

We've got a lot of folks up there ahead of us. My wonderful father is there, and next to the Apostle Paul, I feel that he was the most wonderful man of God that ever lived. I always feel that sons should exceed their fathers and I rejoice in the ministry that God has given to Johnny. He might not remember this, one day I said to him, "You know, circumstantially, and providentially God has placed you in the center where there are very, very large populations, tremendous density of population. Which means there are more people to reach. And God has blessed you. But suppose in the providence of God and His sovereign grace, He had made you a pastor, for example, in Junction City, Oregon? You think you'd be any different than you are now?"

And he said, "No, Dad. I serve the same Lord there as I would serve here." And that's what we all should keep in mind that God's servants are called to preach, maybe to a large congregation or to a small congregation, but if they're called of God, their responsibility is simply to feed the flock. And Johnny has faithfully fed the flock. God bless.

(Applause)

ANNOUNCER: Oh, that was rich and I suspect there's more where that came from. So check in with Dr. Jack for more.

Well that's a view of John's life from one perspective, the home of a dad and a mom. But John has raised four children and there's a perspective from the children and son, Mark, is going to come and just share a little bit of that and gratitude from the children.

MARK: I come tonight, it's kind of a tough act to follow, Pomp. We call him Pompy if nobody knows that. It's been a wonderful day. I'd like to thank three people in particular this morning, or this afternoon, or this evening. It's been a long day. But first of all, I'd like to say thanks, and I speak for the family, at times I might speak personally, but I can't help it. But as a family, as kids, we'd like to say thank you to the church. I guess if this is Dad's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary here, it would be my 24 and four months. I've known nothing else as far as a church, as far as a lifestyle, as far as what you do on Sundays, as far as what you do on Mondays. Life with the MacArthur household has been very similar for the last 25 years and I'll share later that that's not all bad.

But we wanted to say thanks to the church. There's many people here, in fact I'm sure there are some even here in the crowd tonight that were here when Dad came, that were here when I was a tyke and Matt and Marcy were here, a lot older than I at the time. We want to say, "Thank you very much." There's a lot of familiar faces, names, smiles, prayers. I think of a lot of the older people in the church that even came around Dad and Mom when they were young, that I look at and I can't believe that I had the privilege of just being around them. I think of the Michaelsons, I think of the Haws, I think of some other families that I know for Mom and Dad speaking for them even, have been an incredible encouragement to them.

Secondly, I wanted to thank my Mom. As you know, Dad's a pretty busy guy and he has a lot of responsibility. And it takes quite a woman to be a part of that. And yet, as you know, never cause a stir in today's world with so many pastors leaving, or even just not wanting anything to do with their wives. I never have seen my Mom and Dad happier. I think a lot has to do with my Mom for a couple of reasons. One is her support, no matter what it took, Mom was there to support us. If Dad was to be gone for a Pastors Conference, Mom was there for us. And we always knew Dad would be home soon, but Mom was supporting us. Two is prayer. If Dad couldn't tuck us in and pray with us, Mom did. And we always knew Mom was praying for us. Probably the biggest thing when we were little is praying that we wouldn't get in a lot of trouble to embarrass Dad. But I know she's a prayer warrior.

Patience as Pompy just shared, Dad's got a lot of enthusiasm. At times it might get over-extended. But her patience is unwavering. And, lastly, I want to just personally and from us kids just thank Mom for being a Mom. We didn't want somebody to challenge Dad. We didn't want somebody to have to write books. We didn't want a speaker. We didn't want anybody to go work at the church. We just wanted a Mom cause we had a Dad and we wanted a Mom. We wanted to have somebody make us

breakfast, make us lunch, make us good cookies. We just wanted a Mom and that's what she is. And you know what? She is something special. She's something real special. She's a great Mom. And I think personally that's a pretty good compliment for a woman. (Applause)

Lastly, I want to just thank my Dad. I hope I can get through this. In just trying to think of some things that possibly we could in some ways thank Dad, speaking for the four kids. A few just key things just came to my mind. One would be giving. All of you know for the last 25 years my Dad's given his life to the church. But when we were kids, we didn't have much. We didn't have a lot of money. We didn't have a lot of things. But we didn't even know the difference. We really didn't because Dad gave us two things that you can't replace and that was time and love. And for all we cared, that's all we needed. We didn't have much, but we have those two things. And people say to me, "How does your Dad do it? I mean, how does he have time for you?" And me, in retrospect, how did he have time for you? He was always there for us. I mean...I really mean that. Matt and I can both say our biggest fan in all of growing up, in sports, or clubs, or AWANA, or SEARCH is Dad. He was always there. If Dad needed to be there for something, he was there at no cost. And usually if there was a cost, it was at your cost. And that's the way it should be. Too many times people have given up their families for ministry and that's not the way it should be. And that's not the way my Dad did it.

Another word is consistency. Something that personally, if I could just have an inch of my Dad's consistency, I'll go a long ways. Being married, and now having a little girl, I...when we first found out we were going to have a child, people came to me and said, "Well you're beginning to feel that pressure and that responsibility to be father." My first response was no, I'm not. Parenting is not that hard...so I think. I mean, maybe it's just me. And let me explain why I say that because the way were brought up, if you live your life for the Lord and you do what's right, you put your family first, and you excel in everything else, then it's not that difficult. And it's really not difficult and praise the Lord, we had two great examples, and namely Dad because Dad's a leader. He led us and we followed. And when I have a little girl and I look at the little girl and I think, "Man, she's coming up in worst world than I grew up in." Well all the more, I've just got to follow what the Lord says. Dad said, "Just pray about it and make good decisions." I want to thank him for that.

Along that same lines and one thing that I believe sets my dad apart from any other pastors and therefore pastor's kids, I think there's a stigma among PKs. Either they're the worst kids in the church, or they're not at church at all. And the reason that's why...the reason why I believe we've come out half-way decent and I hope I have the liberty to say that, is that the same man you come and talk with tonight, the same guy that stands at this pulpit week after week, is the same person that we live with for 25 years. He's the same guy. He's just the same guy. I remember when I was younger, people used to always ask me, "Did your Dad practice his sermons on you?" I said no. Not everything in life is a spiritual issue. Life is a spiritual issue. The things in life are just reactions to the spiritual life that you're already leading. He's consistent about all those things and we want to thank you for that, Dad. That's something that many people in this world don't have.

And lastly, we wanted to just say thank you very much for everything, we're really proud of you...very, very proud of you. And our spouses, too. In the short time that they've been able to be a part of our family, I know they're as proud of you as we are. Not only do I see my Dad as a father, but I see him as a pastor and a teacher. I listen to him every morning now that I'm away from home and live in Chicago, 7:30 every morning. I'm so doggone proud of him. I get to work and I've got to tell somebody what my Dad said this morning. And in sitting down there, just before I came up, and I don't want to go long, but it's in the blood, (Laughter and Applause), I was looking for a term that would explain Dad and I think the word patriarch comes to mind. And I think that's a word that we don't very often use anymore. But I think he deserves it, he's a patriarch to our family, he's a patriarch to the church of Christ, to the people, to the country and to the world. I'm constantly falling into or rubbing elbows or meeting somebody no matter where I go, I've been privileged to travel literally all over the world and I meet people in the funniest places that know my Dad. And you people, you think you're proud of Dad and you think you're proud of your pastor, imagine if he was your own Dad.

I have a funny story. Dad and Mom came out to visit us this week. Dad was speaking at Founder's Week and he invited Erika and I to come down and stay at the hotel with them Friday night, this was just last Friday. And I got on the elevator to go get something for Erika and there was a group of people at the conference, oh about four or five couples. And I was just standing there and they started to talk to each other. "Well what are we going to do tonight? What are we going to do?" And one of them said, "Well I know what I'm going to do, I'm missing Larry Burkett, going to dinner so I can be there for John's sermon." The other one says, "John who?" He said, "John MacArthur, he's our favorite." And I got a big smile on my face, big smile and I just walked out of the elevator and I thought to myself, "Man, how often...how many people can say that? That people all over the country God has used your Dad to touch their lives. You know it's not by Dad's choice, but it's by his choice to serve God. God didn't chose to touch people, but because he chose to serve God, that's why he's able to.

And lastly I just want to share one thing. Often times all of us kids are asked the same and similar question. "What's it like to be John's kid? Is it tough to be MacArthur?" And Matt and I both say the same thing. "I don't know anything else. I mean, I don't have anything to compare it to." But I do know this, all of us would say the same thing, we wouldn't trade it for the world. We'd do it all over again. Wouldn't trade it for the world

Dad, we consider being your children not only a blessing and a joy, but we really consider it a privilege, a great privilege. And I pray that with Christ's help, the MacArthur legacy will continue through us and our children the way it's continued from Pompy to you. And from the family, we can't say thank you enough. As much emotion as there was this morning, as much emotion as there is tonight, ten times over that's our emotion for you. We love you very much.

(Applause)

ANNOUNCER: Mark, that was so well said. There might be a future for you in the ministry. You ought to pray about that.

Well it would not be fitting if we didn't let the preacher have the last word, would it? He's just come back from Chicago where he's ministered to thousands of people at the Moody Founders Week. Tomorrow morning he's on a plane to Ukraine to some dear, dear people who are holding their once every four-year congress to a new leader. But, John, the last word is yours.

(Applause)

JOHN: Thank you. Dr. Crisswell just leaned over and said to me, after hearing what Mark said, "That is worth a lifetime." And it is. I'm just really overwhelmed and so grateful. I have nothing to say more. I just...all I can say is what the Scripture says. "When all is said and done, I've only done what I ought to have done." That's all. Just serve the Lord as I knew how. And that's a matter of duty and I think of the Apostle Paul who said, "Don't commend me, just pray for me, because woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." And thank you, thank you family, you're precious to me, you'll never know, you're on my heart 24 hours a day, in my prayers incessantly and constantly and I can't ever think of you without being literally flooded with feelings of love and joy and I feel the same way about the people you've married, and our little grandchildren. I don't think of them without just being flooded with joy. I have to be the most blessed and happiest man on the earth. And I am sandwiched in the middle of so much love, it's just incredible. From my parents and my children, life couldn't be more blessed because of that. And thank you, you as my family here at the church, certainly have given me more than I've ever deserved. Thank you.

(Applause)

While you're standing, why don't you stay standing? That would be appropriate. It's been just a wonderful, wonderful day. I'm sure John at this point feels drained. But flooded with joy over your thankfulness for what God has done through Him. And maybe more importantly, the anticipation of what God's going to do through Him in days to come, not only here but around the world, whether it be on the radio, tape, or as John is able to go in person.

Eldest son, Matt, is going to come and dismiss us in a word of prayer.

MATT: Just before I pray, I wanted to make a brief comment and that is that oftentimes, folks that I've run into over the week ask me, "Matt, what's the greatest sermon your Dad has ever preached?" And it doesn't take too long. I think next to Mom, I've heard more sermons than anybody in this

auditorium, I've been here just actually since Dad came in '69. But the real answer to that is, it's not from this pulpit, it's not from any pulpit. It's his life.

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