

Engaging the Culture
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 Foothills Christian Church

I'm going to ask you to raise your hand to a question, and a lot of times when we ask a question and ask you to raise your hands, like "Who's breathing?" and like 15 people raise their hands. So listen, I want you to actually raise your hands if this applies to you, okay? How many of you have started coming to this church within the last 2 years? Raise your hand up high. Let me just get kind of a good look at you all. Right on. Thank you very much.

You know, when I first started coming to this church it was a little bit of a culture shock. I had never experienced a church like Foothills before. The church experience I had had was more kind of mainline denominational, almost Catholic kind of experience of church, and it took me a while to kind of figure out what this place was all about. You know, a lot of times those things aren't immediately obvious. I was thinking about this with our family. My wife and I have 4 small kids, and in our family Hannah and I are regularly talking about what kind of culture do we want our family to have? What are our values and what are we trying to cultivate in our home that we want our kids to be like and think like and all these kinds of things? So we have come up with this phrase. I think we actually stole it from the Eslinger's, but it is "VanMeters are" Right? So "VanMeters work hard" or "VanMeters use their strength to help the weak." We have a neighbor. Her name is Marian. She is almost 100 years old, and she looks much older than that. She is like ancient, okay? I live in the house my mom grew up in, so it was my grandparent's house, and she has been my neighbor that entire time, so since the 1950's. She has been widowed for like the last 30 years, and so she has lived there by herself. And every week we take Marian's trash out. So we go take our trash out and my kids never want to help take our trash out, but they are always helping me take Marian's trash out, and we talk about it. Whenever we are doing anything to help her I say, "Why are we doing this for Marian? It is because we are strong and Marian is weak, and so we want to use our strength to help people who are weak." I say "VanMeters are good neighbors" or "VanMeters use their strength to help the weak" because I'm trying to reinforce these values that we want our kids to have and that we want our family to have.

Well, we view church in the same way that we view family. This is not just kind of a random collection of people, but we are brothers and sisters, and the Bible gives us this idea of the church as family. We as a staff have certain values and certain distinctions that we believe God has specifically given to Foothills that we want to take and we want to preach and teach those things and encourage them in our congregation, to you guys. There are certain words you are going to hear over and over again. When we say those things we don't always explain everything that they mean, but there are certain distinctions and certain important values in our teaching that we want to have in our church. One of those teachings I want to talk about this morning is the kingdom of God. The kingdom is a word you are going to hear around here a lot and you might not know exactly what we mean by that. One of the reasons we don't explain it every time is because it is this very big important theological umbrella, almost like one of the main beams that runs through the center of our house that has all kinds of things attached to it and coming off of it, certain implications and applications that the theology of the kingdom of God means. The kingdom of God is one of the most important topics in the Scriptures. In fact, it is the topic that Jesus taught on more than He taught on any other thing. The word "kingdom" is mentioned 126 times in just the 4 Gospels. In fact, Jesus said that the kingdom is the first thing that we are to seek. He says in Matthew 6:33 ***But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.***

In Mark 1:14-15, it says ***Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*** Now this wasn't a line that Jesus just went into town and kept repeating, this is the summation of what Jesus' message was: The kingdom of God is at hand;

therefore, repent and be baptized. Almost all of the parables are about the kingdom of God. Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking a fine pearl that when he finds it he goes and sells everything he has to purchase it; that the kingdom is the most valuable thing. The kingdom was the message that he entrusted to the 12 disciples to go out and to herald. It says in Luke 9:1-2: ***He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing.***

So what is the kingdom of God? This morning I want to use as a definition for the kingdom of God: The rule and reign of Jesus Christ. Now we have to understand this in two ways, because in one sense, everything is God's; Jesus is ruling and reigning over everything that there is. But in another sense, while Jesus' rule and reign and His authority is total, we see lots of places where His rule and reign is rebelled against. Right? So not everywhere is His will accomplished. But this morning I want to use the idea that wherever Jesus' will, the King's will, is being put into action is the place where His kingdom has come. Wherever people are being converted and God's Word is being consulted on how we should live and how we should interact with each other, wherever there is spiritual growth or repentance or turning toward God, there is the kingdom of God. Now again, like I said, this is such a huge massive topic that we are just going to scratch the surface and look at a few specific principles about the kingdom of God this morning.

Let me just say this, Mark is here, Dave is on vacation. This isn't for Mark. Mark cover your ears. Mark and Dave have been gifts to the body of Christ. Really tremendous. A blessing to not just our church but when you go out and you talk to other pastors here in San Diego, they talk about Mark and Dave with a ton of respect and admiration that these guys have been faithful for the last 30, going on 40 years, here in San Diego County building the kingdom of God. And of all the blessings, specifically Mark, one of Mark's greatest contributions to the kingdom of God has been his teaching on the kingdom. He has written 3 books, you might not know this. He has written 3 books on the kingdom. The first is Unlocking the Kingdom: Key Principles to Release God's Kingdom Power. It is a book about kind of basic life principles you can put in your life to unlock God's kingdom. The second is a book called, On Earth As It Is in Heaven: The Power of God's Kingdom At Work Today where Mark lays out what the kingdom is and how it functions and what principles it exists upon. The third book is not specifically about the kingdom, but it is about what the kingdom of God brings about, which is our book on youth ministry, called The Joshua Principle: Changing The World by Reaching Children and Youth. I would like to commend to you this morning the second book that he wrote, On Earth As It Is in Heaven. If you want to know more about what we believe here at Foothills or you want to know more about how the kingdom of God exists and how you are intended to operate inside of it, grab this book. Mark lays it out in great detail, and it is a really, really powerful book that will bless your life.

This morning, like I said, we are just going to look at kind of one application of the kingdom of God in our church and one of the distinctions about our church. If we are going to understand how the kingdom works, there is a really important aspect about it that we are going to need to understand, which is that the kingdom already is but also not yet. Okay? So this is the idea. We read in Mark 1:4 that the time has come, the kingdom of God is at hand. And if the kingdom of God is the rule and reign of Jesus Christ, we can look out at the world and there are certain things we could look at kind of broadly in the world that we can say, "Yes, the kingdom of God is growing." We can look at the way that people in this last century have been pulled out of abject poverty. We can look at the abolition of slavery. We could look at the rise of democratic freedom and all these things that we can say, "That is the kingdom of God at work in the world." But for every one of those, we could look at 50 other things that say, "This looks nothing like the rule and reign of Jesus Christ." All you have to do is go out those doors and walk down the street and you will see all kinds of things that don't reflect the kingdom of God. They don't look like the kingdom of God. And that is because there is this principle that it already is but it is also not yet. The Bible talks about it as being "at hand," but it also uses language in the future tense talking about the kingdom of God will come.

One of the ways Jesus explained this to us is He said ***the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. It is the smallest of all the seeds. Once it is planted in the ground it grows into one of the largest of all trees.*** So as Jesus came to inaugurate the kingdom He planted that seed and at the eschaton, the end of time, when Jesus returns and we see the full fruition of His kingdom it will be that full tree.

Right now we are in the middle of it where it is shooting up and sprouting out, but it is not yet totally clear that it is going to become the all-encompassing complete and total rule of Jesus in this world. All of us know this from personal experience right? When I got saved I didn't wake up the next morning as Mother Teresa. Right? I got saved, I gave my life to Jesus, and the next day I woke up and I thought all the same things were funny and I used all the same language and I did all the same kinds of things, and it was a slow process of the Spirit of God convicting my heart, sanctifying me, and growing me. You are probably looking at me thinking, "You're still nothing like Mother Teresa, Mike." And you're right because this process is going to go until I die, until I come into full glory with Jesus. And that is how the kingdom of God works. It works slowly, over time, constantly advancing, constantly growing.

Jesus said when the disciples asked Him how to pray in Matthew 6:10 in part of the Lord's Prayer he says to pray: ***Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.*** "Lord, the way that Your will is accomplished in heaven, that Your commandments are completely obeyed, that You receive all glory and honor in heaven, Lord, let that happen here. Let that happen here in my life but not only in my life, in my family, in my home, at my job place, on our streets, in our government, at the mall. Let the glory of God and the obedience to God's commandments flourish and be everywhere that we see." That is what He commanded the disciples to pray for and to work toward, and that is what He has called us to pray for and to work toward. God's will accomplished in our midst.

Another really important thing you need to know is that Jesus isn't the only one who has a kingdom. In fact, Satan has a kingdom as well. Look what it says in Luke 4:5-8. This is when Jesus had been fasting for 40 days, no food, no water, and at the end of those 40 days at the beginning of His ministry He is out in the wilderness and Satan comes to tempt Him. One of the temptations is this: ***And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours."*** Jesus answered him, and said, "You can't give what you don't have. This isn't your kingdom." No, He doesn't say that. He says: ***"It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"*** But He recognizes, yes, all these kingdoms are under your influence. Right? He says it more clearly in John 14:30: ***I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me...*** that there is a ruler of this world, it is Satan, and he has a kingdom here. And in the same way that Jesus' kingdom is wherever His rule and reign is being expressed, Satan's kingdom works the same way. Wherever his rule and reign is being expressed there is the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of Satan, and we know what Satan's will is, the one that he wants to express. It is to kill, steal, and destroy. It is to bring destruction. His values are the opposite of Jesus' values. He values malice and destruction and deceit and hatred and bitterness and division and selfishness and gossip, all manners of lust and iniquity. And so whenever we look out at the world and we see those things, we know we're dealing with the kingdom of darkness.

Here is where we've got to be very careful as Christians. How many of you guys have that person in your life that is just drama. Whenever you are hanging out with them somehow their messiness sucks you into this vortex so it becomes your messiness. Their problems all of a sudden become your problems, and so you want to avoid those people, right? You see them coming... you go the opposite direction because you don't need that kind of drama in your life. You don't need to get in trouble, right? And so we have this temptation when we see the messiness of sin, the ugliness of sin, we have this temptation to recoil or to retreat into our own kingdom with our own people. Our kingdom is with cleaned up people who are mature and nice and just real pleasant to be around, right? And yet, that is a temptation that God has called us to resist. In Matthew 5:14-16 in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said: ***"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."***

One of the applications God has given us is we are to engage the world. We are the light of God. We are to go into dark places and illuminate the darkness, not hide out in our own little kingdom. We are to take the kingdom of God into the kingdom of Satan. So we believe the church is called to go into all the world, not come out and be separate. Not move into a walled city. Not to surround and insulate

ourselves with only sanctified people that are just like us, and we feel the right amount of comfortability with (not too holy, just holy enough) while we watch from afar as this world burns. It is not what God has called us to do. This is what the church has been doing since its inception. We have been going out into dark places, into hopeless places, into broken places, into dangerous places and bringing the good news that Jesus is not far off. You have not lost all hope. In fact, He is dawning upon you. You have a Savior, and you can be saved from this. That is what Jesus did. He saw our plight, and He didn't say, "Oh it's a mess down there. I'm going to hang out here in heaven." He came down and He walked among us. He got involved in our situation. So God wants us not to run away but to lean in.

Now here is what you need to know though if you are going to bring the light into the darkness, there is going to be conflict. When the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God come into contact, there is conflict. There is battle. Now most of the Christians I know didn't become Christians because they like to fight. In fact, there is this kind of meme in the world about Christians that we are kind of this weak, limp-wristed kind of people. Ned Flanders character on *The Simpsons*, right? Homer's neighbor. Homer borrows his lawnmower and never gives it back, and he's like, who cares? Like just getting pushed and run around because we don't want conflict. And yet part and parcel with and necessary for the Christian life is conflict. To be a Christian is to be in conflict. Look what it says in Ephesians 6:12 ***For our struggle is not against flesh and blood***, but there is a struggle. This word "struggle" is a very interesting word. It means "to fight" or "to wrestle." It is the Greek word *palé*. This word is a problem because we don't have anywhere else in the Bible where this word is used. This is the only place where it is used. Normally when we are translating Scripture when we come to a word we see how it is used in other places in the Bible and we use that to help us get a sense of what the meaning is. But there is another way. We can go outside the Bible and look at the way that Homer and Aristotle and Plato used this word. They all use this word *palé* to mean a battle between two men in which it is over when one man has pinned the other to the ground and has his hands around his neck. That is what the word *palé* means. There are two kinds of fights in this world. I'll call the first one a friendly fight. Now it is not friendly. It is a real fight, but it is over when one of us doesn't want to fight anymore. Say me and Dan are having a fist fight. Dan punches me in the eye, I say, "That hurts. Can we not do this anymore Dan?" and Dan says, "Yes, fine. I win." Okay? In your dreams, Dan. The second kind of fight is what I call one-of-us-is-going-home-in-a-body-bag fight, and it is exactly what it sounds like. This fight is not over when one of us wants to give up. This fight is over when one of us is dead. Now this word *palé* means more like the second kind of fight. This is a fight that is not a friendly fight. This is a fight for total domination, for total destruction, of the other person. ***For our struggle (our palé) is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.*** This fight that the Apostle Paul has envisioned, that the Bible is giving us, to understand our walk is a fight not against other people but against spiritually dark forces that are ruling over this world. It says that in this fight that God has put us into, we don't win it with guns or knives or tanks. In fact, the Bible explicitly forbids us from using guns or knives, and the reason is because these weapons are powerless against our enemy. It can't be won that way.

It says in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 ***For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, (ours is not a physical war, it is a spiritual war) for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.*** God has given us weapons for us to use in this struggle, in this battle, in this fight, and they are powerful weapons that are effective for the pulling down of strongholds and every dark and devilish thing that would exalt itself against the name of God. Our weapons are evangelism and prayer and preaching and teaching and love and forgiveness, and God has equipped us with these things to go out and fight the kingdom of Satan. If you are thinking to yourself, "This doesn't sound very Christian to me," this is exactly what Jesus came to do. 1 John 3:8b, ***The Son of God appeared for this purpose***, Why did Jesus even come? ***to destroy the works of the devil.*** Matthew 10:34, ***"Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.***

I'm just going to quote Mark here. He says it better than I can.

“The kingdom of God is present wherever the works of Satan are being destroyed and his kingdom is being driven back. This is a ceaseless war between these two kingdoms that has never known a ceasefire, and never will. There will be no ceasefire until Jesus’ final, total victory. Jesus’ followers are not allowed to live in peaceful co-existence with Satan’s kingdom. If they do they are living outside of the kingdom of God.”

Listen, there is a battle raging, and there are a lot of Christians who are sitting on the sidelines. I want you to know this morning you are not experiencing the kingdom of God in your life because you are not involved in the fight. And so here is the distinction that Foothills has when we talk about the kingdom. It is this view that Jesus has come to establish His rightful rule and dominion over the earth, and the way He plans to do this is to raise up His people, His church, to be His army to go out to these rebellious fiefdoms, these places that are rebellious against Jesus, and to bring the terms of Jesus’ peace to them. We do this by walking in the fruits of the Spirit, preaching and teaching, exposing lies, and going into dark places and building and bringing about the kingdom of God. So where should we do that? One of the ways to figure that out is to look around and see where do you see the most destruction? Where are the casualty rates the highest? Where is Satan’s kingdom winning? Where is that battle taking place? Let’s go there. Where do we see the casualties of the kingdom of this world from violence, hatred, abuse, sexual brokenness, bondage, hopelessness, addiction, homelessness, and school shootings? The place where you see these casualties more than anywhere else is the place where people are the most vulnerable, which is children and young people.

Again, I’m going to quote Mark out of The Joshua Principle, which is our book on youth ministry. He says this:

“Presently in America there is a great machine that grinds up and destroys our young. It is everywhere. Even reaching into the womb. Even there our children are not safe. A multibillion dollar abortion industry has destroyed more than a quarter of the children who have been conceived over the past 40 years. If they survive the womb, the machine is waiting there for them on the day of their birth. It seeks to harm them through an epidemic of physical and sexual abuse. It wounds their souls through a culture of easy, no-fault divorce and broken homes. It continues its assault on their hearts and minds with a secular humanist education, a morally depraved entertainment industry, a dangerous and predatory internet culture, the availability of drugs and alcohol, and a culture of moral confusion and sexual license. Together it forms a great machine that grinds up and destroys the spiritual, moral, and physical lives of our kids, and there are relatively few who escape it without serious problems. Little help will come from the government social programs or our educational system. In fact, they are often part of the problem. The only answer is for people who are touched by the love of God to place their lives into the gears of this machine and stop it long enough to pull a child out. It will require the people who are willing to win the war for our children one child at a time.”

Listen, this is my sixteenth year I’ve been on staff here at this church. I’ve been doing youth ministry for almost 20 years, and I just want to tell you that the examples are too numerous of this. Just in the last couple of weeks I was talking to Chris Alley, who is the director of our Youth Venture that is on Broadway, and he was telling me about these two boys who were getting in fights and causing all kinds of problems, and he had to discipline them. He took them outside and told them why they weren’t going to be able to come back to Youth Venture, and he found out from both boys that both their dads were incarcerated. You know, one of the things I tell Junior Highers all the time is, “You couldn’t pay me a million dollars to switch places with you,” because from 11 to 15 was the hardest time in my entire life. I can’t imagine what it’s like to try to be a 12-year-old boy and your dad is in prison. There were a couple of girls who got in trouble on Friday night. Just to give you some background, I’m the Junior High group pastor. We have our Junior High group on Friday nights, and these girls were here. They were getting in trouble, and when you get in trouble eventually you come see me. These girls had like just all the sass in the world. Eyes rolling back like 360 degrees in their heads and all that body language and all that kind of nonsense. I was explaining to them, “Okay, well, you gotta go because you can’t have that kind of attitude here, and your behavior is unacceptable.” One of my youth workers was giving them a ride home, and she said, “You need to call your mom and let her know what happened.” The girl calls her mom and my youth worker can hear what is happening on the other end of the phone, and her mom is screaming at her and saying, “You mother-effing B, when you

get home I'm going to beat your A." You know? These aren't isolated instances. These aren't rare. These are relatively common. I was just thinking, "All you did was roll your eyes and be grumpy with me?" Like I would be so furious if that was my life. If I was going home to a mom who was threatening abuse and when I was kind of in trouble or vulnerable was just going to make it ten times worse and all you did was roll your eyes? I'm amazed you're doing so well you know? I can't tell you all the times I've called CPS or kids have come here with bruises or I get kids coming in... boys thinking they are girls and girls thinking they are boys and struggling with all the scars and brokenness and just heinous things that kids are going through in our culture. When you look out at the world you see evidence of this predatory culture if you pay even a little bit of attention.

One of the things we have been talking about a little bit over the last two years is this new sexual education curriculum that is coming out in San Diego Unified School District, and I thought about bringing in some examples from the 6th grade sex ed curriculum that we are teaching to 130,000 of our students in San Diego City Schools, and I thought better of it because I thought Mark and Dave might fire me if I put that up on the screen. I'm not joking. Like if you are over 18, I want you to go home and Google San Diego City Schools Sexual Education Curriculum. What you will find is it is perverse and it is offensive and it is disgusting, and there is not one Christian I've talked to who is okay with it. In fact, every Christian who knows about it is appalled, and I've seen a lot of people posting on Facebook or protesting, and we've had a petition out here, and we've tried to go to voting, but let's say we are successful with those things. What is going to happen? What is going to happen is that San Diego City Schools might, if we win, get a little bit less perverted sex ed curriculum. But who is going to go teach these kids about the love of God, about the purity of God, about their value and what God's plan is for their lives? Who are the people who are going to step in and put themselves in the gears of that machine to rescue kids out of it? Because God has not called us to sit back and be passive. He has called us to go and be light and that is why you are going to hear a lot about the kingdom at this church, but you are also going to hear a lot about youth ministry at this church. We believe that God has called us at Foothills to be involved in children and youth ministry for this exact purpose. In 2017 as a church we spent 1.7 million dollars on ministry to children and youth. That is over a quarter of our budget. Our budget includes mortgages and payroll and all the other things that you would think that it includes. The youth department here at this church is by far the largest department in our church from an organizational perspective. Every Sunday we have an army of buses and vans that go out from here to pick kids up from apartment buildings around here in East County and bring them here to church to hear the gospel. But it is not because of our large staff or our money or our buses that we have been able to bring the kingdom of God to so many young people in the city. It is because of the hundreds and hundreds of volunteers who work with children and youth. People who stepped into the space.

What kinds of people are these? Who are these people? Who is God calling to go out and rescue these kids from the kingdom of darkness? I will tell you about a couple of them. Two years ago we were getting a lot of kids from our El Cajon South Youth Venture coming to Foothills on Fridays. A lot of these kids were coming totally unchurched, and a lot of them were just having real behavioral issues, and so I was in the situation where I was dealing with a lot of discipline issues with these guys, and none of those issues were going very well. We have a saying around here: "Rules without relationship leads to rebellion." If a kid doesn't know you love them and you care about them, when you are trying to discipline them they are going to get defensive and pull back, but if they know you care and they know you love them, they are going to lean in and it is going to go a lot better. So I thought, "I need to build relationship with these kids." The majority of those kids are black, Hispanic, and Middle Eastern that are coming from that center from that neighborhood, and so there are some cultural barriers and some things that are already set up that are making it difficult for us to connect. So I got a shift at El Cajon South Youth Venture 2 years ago. Thursdays from 3 to 6 I go to El Cajon Youth Venture, and I'm just developing and building relationship with those kids, and it's going really well. In fact, last week that video of those kids that got baptized, all those kids are from El Cajon South. It has been really phenomenal. It has been a good work. I'm teamed up with this guy Terry Barret. Terry Barret is a 67-year-old. He is going to be 68 in August. He is a 67-year-old white man, retired, who has been doing that shift for the better part of the last decade. This last Thursday, Terry was out of town on vacation. He told me he wasn't going to be there, and he wasn't there. So the kids are coming in, and the question I heard more than any other question was, "Where's Terry?" You've got to understand, I've

been doing youth ministry for about 20 years. Youth ministry is my business and business is good. Let me say it a different way. There are not a lot of things in this world that Mike VanMeter is excellent at, but one of them is youth ministry, okay? Maybe one of the best in the world, I don't know. I mean really, maybe one of the best in the world. Honestly. So these kids are coming in, I'm like, "Hey, what's up guys? What's up? What's up?" "Where's Terry?" Now I'm not as cool as I used to be, but I'm a lot cooler than Terry Barret, okay? I am the prize here, boys. But they don't care about me. Where is Terry? The reason they are asking where is Terry is because for the better part of the last decade, every single Thursday of their lives, Terry Barret has been there when they came after school. Every single Thursday, Terry brings a snack for every single kid. He feeds about 50 kids every Thursday. He uses his own money, his own dime. Every Thursday after his shift he gives kids a ride home who live on the other side of El Cajon who came there just to see him. Where is Terry?

When me and Terry get off of our shift at 6 o'clock, Frank Baptista shows up. Frank is a 55-year-old white man with one leg from South Bay. The fact that he has one leg only matters if you see him you will know who I'm talking about. Frank works and has a family of his own and he lives in South Bay, and every Thursday at 6 o'clock I'll tell you where Frank is going to be. He is going to be showing up at Youth Venture South with a bunch of pizzas to feed these boys. Terry was just telling me, "I remember when I used to get out of school I was so hungry. I would come home and mom would be making a snack for me. So every Thursday that is what I'm doing for these boys." When we give these kids a ride home, a lot of times they are going home to houses where nobody is thinking like that. Nobody cares about what they are going to eat. Nobody cares about what is going on with them. There are ten thousand other things these 2 men could be doing and to lay down what they are doing and to say, "I'm going to invest in these boys who are not mine. I'm going to love these boys." Those are the kind of men that God is going to use to bring about His kingdom. Terry and Frank are not unique. They are not unicorns. There are literally tons of people around here who are just like them who are laying down their own lives to rescue kids out of this machine.

You find out an interesting thing about the kind of people that God uses to gain the kingdom. Matthew 11:12, ***From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force.*** When we hear the word "violent" a lot of times we think of ungodly and unholy. That is not how the Bible is using it. It is saying the kind of men who gain and build the kingdom are violent men, spiritually violent, spiritually forceful men. Men and women who are not going to be swayed, who are not going to shrink back, who are not going to be intimidated, who are not going to be distracted, who are not going to be overcome by something else. They are men who are going to put the kingdom of God in their sights and go for it. It says that John the Baptist was this kind of man. It says in Matthew 11:7-8, ***As these men were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? All these people had been going to the wilderness to see John the Baptist. A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear soft clothing are in kings' palaces!*** That word soft clothing is the word *malakoi*. It means effeminate. Did you go to see a man just swayed by whatever public opinion was? John is an archetype of the Christian. When Jesus came to inaugurate the kingdom, it was John who went to pave the way. So the men and women who are going to pave the way need to become the kind of men and women who have one thing in their focus: The kingdom of God. Who are not going to be deterred and who are not going to be swayed. Men like Terry. Men like Frank. Men and women who are not going to shut up because they didn't want to offend. Men and women who aren't going to fall all over themselves apologizing. Men and women who are going to stand for the kingdom of God no matter what comes.