

# Called to Follow

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Date: 13 April 2025

Preacher: Dr. Julio Guarneri

[ 0 : 00 ] We did before we start that video. Can I introduce it real quick. They were right on top of it, man. That was the next thing. Joseph Adams. I'm the pastor here at First Baptist. There you go. Perfect. We'll start that in just a moment, but I appreciate that. We have a guest speaker with us this morning. Dr. Julio Guarneri. He is the executive director of Texas Baptist. He's a native of Mexico City and holds degrees from Texas A&M; Kingsville Southwestern Seminary and Dallas Baptist University.

More than 39 years of ministry experience as a senior pastor, minister of education, and youth minister. Most recently, he served for 13 years as the senior pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in McAllen, Texas.

He was elected as the 21st executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Texas Baptist, in 2023, and he served as the convention president before that and first vice president from 2020 through 2022.

He is passionate about sharing the gospel with the nations, about cross-cultural missions and ministry, and his wife Monica is here with them. They have four children and two grandchildren, and he is the first Hispanic executive director in the history of Texas Baptist.

So we are so grateful that he is with us here this morning. He's going to share a little bit with us about Texas Baptist, about the work that they do, how we are involved in it, and he's going to give us the message that God has laid on his heart.

[ 1 : 28 ] Before we start that, before he comes to speak, I wanted to show this video for you today. Joseph Adams is pastor of First Baptist Church, Hughes Springs, Texas, out in East Texas. Anybody know where Hughes Springs is? There's actually a couple of you. I'm not surprised.

Not really anywhere near our corner of Texas, but a small town, kind of like ours, and Joseph has been there, I believe, nine years, maybe coming up on 10 now, but God has done a powerful work through his ministry in that church, truly revitalized that church, and God is taking them to places they've never seen before.

And a lot of that can be laid at the feet of the cooperative program that we have a part of. If you come to business meeting tonight, you'll see that 10% of our giving is allotted to missions and the cooperative program, and the vast majority of that goes to Texas Baptists and the work that they do.

So you're going to hear a little bit about that in that video from my friend Joseph Adams, who actually currently is the second vice president of our Texas Baptists. If you'd like to learn more about that and how those elections happen and how those offices are chosen, then you can come talk to me, and I can even invite you to be a part of it.

All right? You have a voice in Texas Baptists. So let's go ahead and show that video, and when that's done, Dr. Guarneri, the pulpit is yours. My name is Joseph Adams. I'm the pastor here at First Baptist Church, Hughes Springs.

[ 2 : 58 ] One of the things that the Lord laid on my heart was that this town, this church, had purpose. It had relevance. It had lost its mark. It had kind of been wandering in the wilderness. And to see the growth, to see the salvations, the baptisms, the change on the inside out, seven years later, I'm just now beginning to understand what that purpose was that the Lord has come to Hughes Springs for.

When I came here, our church was already a Texas Baptist church, and I inherited that. And slowly, just getting to know and meeting people, I'm realizing my church can do way more with Texas Baptists than we can ever do on our own.

Here in Hughes Springs, we're 30 minutes to the closest doctor. People live here on isolation on purpose. We can't reach the world. But through Texas Baptists, we have a much better shot of going to all the world.

How can I reach China? How can I reach Alabama? How can I reach El Paso? Through the cooperative program. And so this is an avenue of where we get together and collectively give of our time and our prayers and our money to reach for Jesus Christ.

This is how we fulfill the Great Commission. This is how we evangelize the lost. This is how we equip the saints. And this is how we enlarge the kingdom of God. And arguably, the best proven process is the cooperative program.

[4:08] The resources that they have are top-notch, especially in a small church where you're the only staff member, maybe you, yourself, are bivocational. What you need is literally a phone call or an email away.

There are people there that are experts in this area that want to help you, whether it's revitalization, whether it's children's department, whether it's music. Texas Baptist has these people. They're trained. They're knowledgeable. And not only do they have the capability, they want to come and invest in your church.

They want your church to succeed probably just as much as you want your church to succeed. Well, we are so grateful for Pastor Joseph Adams and that great word.

And Pastor Sam, thank you for your invitation to come and share. What a privilege it is for my wife, Monica, and I to be with you as you worship on this Palm Sunday.

We think of the triumphal entry of Jesus to Jerusalem and how he was welcomed as king. Later on, the same crowd would turn around and say, crucify him.

[ 5 : 21 ] But I hope that we welcome Jesus today and then we celebrate next Sunday that he rose from the dead. And it's just a privilege to be with you today and to share with you what God is doing.

I forgot my little clicker. So can you? Clay Jacobson, our cooperative program director, also runs clickers for me.

Clay Jacobson, our cooperative program director, voy forbade, I want to bring you greetings from our Texas Baptist family, 5,300 churches, 24 institutions that do good work, including 10 of our Baptist universities.

And yeah, okay. There we go. Excellent. All right. So as we do that, we want to strengthen a movement of multiplying churches that live out the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

And so we are very excited about what God is doing in our midst. This last year, we were able to, because of your contributions to the cooperative program and Mary Hill Davis offering, we're able to start 26 new churches and restart six of them.

[ 7 : 12 ] So 32 congregations that are starting to reach new people. And we're excited about that. But this year, we want to double that. And so we're looking forward to what God is doing.

We're catching up at this first quarter already. And then you may not know this, but we have about 69 missionaries that Texas Baptist support through a program called the Missionary Adoption Program.

So we're in 17 countries where we partner with the National Baptist Convention to support a missionary that they have chosen. And we connect them to a church here in Texas that will adopt that missionary.

My wife and I were in Brazil in February for their National Baptist Convention meeting. And they assigned to us a young lady that would show us around, that would translate for us from English to Portuguese and back.

And just a sweet young lady. We learned that she is one of the missionary adoption program missionaries. She's from Brazil, but she's serving in Greece with women refugees from Syria and ministering to them.

[ 8 : 26 ] And so the National Baptist Convention of Brazil supports her. And then her income is matched by First Baptist Church Floyd data here in Texas.

So Brazil and Syria and Greece connected with First Floyd data. That's how we work. And we're just excited about what God is doing there.

You also may know, as you think about colleges and universities and what is happening in our time and our world, you also may know that we have something called Baptist Student Ministries or BSM.

Do you know that we're on 137 campuses here in Texas? That on 137 campuses we get to have a presence. Your church gets to have a presence so that students can hear the gospel.

They can be invited to follow Jesus. And then they can be encouraged to be on mission with him. We involve in our BSM ministry in Texas over 17,000 students, college students.

[ 9 : 26 ] My wife and I were just at South Piter Island on spring break. We weren't there to go to the beach. We were there to see something that we call Beach Reach. Our BSM offers rides to spring breakers.

And the city of South Padre loves us because we keep the streets safe from drunk drivers. And Texas Baptist men or Texas on mission make pancakes for them so that students can come and have conversations, whether they're riding in a van or whether they're eating pancakes.

And my wife and I got to be there with the students that were getting ready to go out. We saw them worship the Lord and pray. We were able to be at the prayer room.

It's about not quite this size, a little smaller than this. But students were there praying for those spring breakers who don't know Jesus yet. And they had screens all over the place.

And they had real-time transmission from social media with the hashtag BeachReachSPI2025. And what that means is that people that were riding in the vans were posting with that hashtag, we have Jerry here in our van and we're talking to him about Jesus.

[ 10 : 38 ] Or we have three young ladies that we're picking up from such and such university. And we're having a spiritual conversation with them. And so while that's going on in the vans, the students in the prayer room are praying for them.

And then all of a sudden you hear this roar of excitement and applause because one of the announcements said, Henry just gave his life to Jesus. And he rejoiced at the very moment that that student prayed to receive Christ.

So we gave 13,832 van rides. Our students had 10,014 spiritual conversations. And that resulted in 246 spring breakers praying to receive Jesus as Savior and Lord.

They came to South Padre to party. And they went back following Jesus. You know, Texas Baptist is meaningful because as a young person, I grew up in the context of Texas Baptist.

And when I was 16 years old, I went to a youth event called Congreso in Houston. My parents were in the ministry. And I had decided early on because of some things that I had experienced as a kid, I didn't know much.

[ 11 : 48 ] But I decided that I did not want to be a pastor. I was going to grow up to be an architect. And I would love the Lord. And I would serve the church with my profession. And that's what I would do.

But when I was 16 years old, I went to this event. And it was at Houston Baptist University. The gym was full of young people. There was worship and a preacher. And I was just there checking things out.

In fact, I was kind of in the very, very back. That's how you know I was Baptist. And the preacher said something that caught my attention. The preacher said, maybe I was 16 years old.

He said, maybe your generation will be the generation that finishes the Great Commission. In other words, maybe your generation will make sure that every nation gets to hear the gospel and has an opportunity to follow Jesus.

And that really caught my attention because I thought that would be really meaningful for my generation. And there's a lot of things that our young people get blamed for and criticized for.

[ 12 : 48 ] But to think that my generation could be a part of finishing the Great Commission. So he caught my attention. And then he said something very interesting. He said, maybe God is calling some of you to be pastors, to be missionaries, to be college ministers in order for the Great Commission to advance.

And I said, well, that's not me. I've already informed God that I'm not going to be a pastor. And so I was just like, let's move on, preacher. Let's get to the next point.

And as he kept speaking, the Holy Spirit was working in my heart. And I understood that God was calling me to full-time ministry. And as much as that was not my plan, I knew that if God was calling me, I needed to say yes.

So I got up from the very back bleachers in that gym. And I walked down that aisle up to the front. And I got on my knees. And I said, Lord, if you are calling me to full-time vocational ministry, that I'm saying yes today.

Just don't let it be a pastor. I mean, I could do youth. I could do something else. But you know what the wonderful thing is? Is that God in his sovereignty and in his goodness and his grace, he takes our imperfect surrender and he does something with that.

[ 14 : 05 ] That was over 40 years ago. And I'm so glad I walked up that aisle and said yes. Because God has been good to me. And I have been happy to be a part of what he has called me to do.

And I want you to know today, I came here to tell you that we all have a calling on our lives. That everyone here has been called. Not everyone is called to vocational ministry.

Not everyone is called to be a pastor. But we are all called by God. Jesus calls you to follow him. He came to call followers.

He didn't come to call church attendees. He didn't come to call church members. He came to call followers, disciples. There are those who maybe think of church as if they were consumers or customers of spiritual goods.

And then there are those who are genuine disciples of Jesus who have denied themselves, taken up their cross to follow him. We hear statistics that there are those who are nuns.

[ 15 : 14 ] Not N-U-N, but N-O-N-E-S. Nuns. And there are duns. And there are comes. And there are sums. Those are real categories, y'all. There are those who are deconstructing their faith, we hear.

Yet there are those who remain committed through thick and thin. They know in whom they have believed. And they are persuaded that he is able to keep until that day that which they have entrusted to him.

The Gospel of Luke records a story where Jesus called three persons to follow him. And as we think of this story, it informs our call to him as well.

The Bible says in Luke chapter 5 verse 1, One day as Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God.

He saw at the water's edge two boats left there by the fishermen who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore.

[ 16 : 18 ] Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, Put out into deep water and let down the nets for a catch. Simon answered, Master, we work hard all night and haven't caught anything.

But because you say so, I will let down the nets. When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them.

And they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, Go away from me, Lord. I am a sinful man.

For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken. So were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, Don't be afraid. From now on, you will fish for people.

So they pulled their boats on shore, left everything, and followed him. It's a familiar story. But I want you to, for a moment, think from Simon's perspective.

[ 17 : 21 ] What an unforgettable day this must have been for him. For James and John as well. It's the day when Jesus invites them to follow him. Simon and his friends were just living out their normal lives.

They were fishing not as a leisure activity. It wasn't a hobby. This was their livelihood. Simon, James, and John grew up as Jewish boys.

They probably went to the synagogue with their families and grew up learning the Torah and memorizing scriptures, the Shema, and other Hebrew prayers and sayings.

And then there came to be a point when young men had to choose what they were going to do. There were some of those Jewish boys who would be really smart in the scriptures, who would be very insightful in terms of God's word.

And there would be rabbis instead of colleges and universities. There would be rabbis who would pay attention to those really smart Jewish boys and would call them to follow him.

[ 18 : 29 ] You didn't apply to a rabbi. A rabbi called you. And then there were those who were the common guys who didn't measure up. They were not rabbi material.

They needed to go back and do the trade that the family did, whether it was carpentry or fishing. And that was the case for Simon, James, and John. It never occurred to them that one day a rabbi would call them to follow him.

But this day, a very well-known rabbi, a rabbi that had grown in popularity, showed up to where they were working and invited them to follow him, to enter his university, if you would.

And we pick up a few things from this passage about the call to follow Jesus. And the first thing I want to point out to you is that the call to follow Jesus is the call to be with Jesus.

Notice here that Jesus didn't ask Simon and his friends to sign a commitment card. He didn't ask them to agree to a faith statement. Here is a doctrinal statement that you guys need to read and study and make sure that you agree to.

[ 19 : 45 ] He didn't require them to take a course of Christianity. Those are good, but that's not what Jesus did on this particular occasion.

There's nothing wrong with commitment cards. There's nothing wrong with discipleship classes. But here, Jesus' initial call didn't include these things.

It was simply a call to be with him. And it's a reminder to us that the Christian life is more about knowing Jesus than knowing about Jesus.

The Christian life is more about knowing Jesus than knowing about Jesus. You heard Pastor Sam talk about my children. This is my youngest, Stephen, and his wife, Brooke.

I had the opportunity of officiating their wedding last March in McAllen. But they were high school sweethearts. And then she went to Baylor and he went to UT Austin.

[ 20 : 47 ] Don't ask me why. That's just how it happened. And we figured, let's see if their relationship lasts. And they kept... You know, it seems like that this is between Waco and Austin.

It's so short for them. So they kept dating and they finished college and graduated. And she went on to graduate school. And he went on to get a job and to graduate school.

And after about eight years of dating, my wife and I said, Hey, guys, we love you guys. You guys have been dating your high school sweethearts. Have you thought about getting married? And they said, Oh, yeah, that's a good idea.

And so we began to plan their wedding. And we had their wedding. And one of the joys of my life was to be able to officiate that. But you know what I knew when I was standing there as they exchanged vows?

You know what I knew? I knew as they were making a commitment to each other till death do you part. That before that commitment, they had grown to love each other.

[ 21 : 44 ] Before that commitment, they had grown to know each other. They had spent time together. And the commitment on that day was an easy thing. It came naturally because they already knew each other and loved each other.

And so when we think about the call to Jesus that Jesus gives us, is that above all, it's a call to know him. The right beliefs, the right convictions, the right practices, the right stances on ethical issues are all important.

But they will come as a result of knowing Jesus. Commitment is important. But Jesus invites you to experience him, to love him, and to be loved by him.

If you're not a believer yet, if you haven't taken that step that our friend in the baptism took, then today Jesus invites you, hey, I want to invite you to know me, to walk with me, to love me.

And if you're already a believer, you said, yeah, I made that commitment a long time ago, then the invitation of Jesus is keep growing in that love. Keep growing in that relationship. When I was in seminary, I had a professor by the name of Calvin Miller, and he wrote this little paperback book called The Table of Inwardness.

[ 23 : 05 ] It really impacted my life. And the idea here was he took Psalm 23, where the Scripture says, and he prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

He annoys my head with oil. My cup runs over. And he was saying that the invitation of God to us is to a table. You know what happens at a table?

It's fellowship. It's communion. We just moved from McAllen to the Dallas area, and all of our adult children decided to do the same thing.

They followed us. And while they're selling their homes in the valley and trying to buy homes in the Dallas area, you know how expensive homes are. It's crazy. But while they're doing that, they have moved in with us.

And so my wife and I, we have this large dinner table. And it gets full mostly every night. And it's just a happy time. At the end of the day, to be at a table full of children and grandchildren and break bread together.

[ 24 : 08 ] Okay, tortillas sometimes. But we eat together. We rejoice together. We laugh together. We encourage one another together after a rough day.

The table is a good place. And do you know that God calls you to the table? He says, come and sit with me. Let's have fellowship. Let's have communion. Do you remember that invitation that he makes in Revelation 3.20, which says, behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and we'll have a worship service. That's not what he says. He says, and we will dine together.

See, what Jesus wants you and invites you to do when he calls you to follow him, first and foremost is to have communion with him, to have fellowship with him. The call to Jesus is a call to be with him, a call to experience his love and to love him back.

And then the call to Jesus is also a call to be with others. Notice that Jesus directs his invitation to an individual, to Simon. But his call is a call to community.

[ 25 : 20 ] James and John would join and then there would be others that Jesus would invite. And the reminder for us today is that the Christian life is not meant to be lived alone, but to be lived in community.

The great commandment calls us to love God with everything we have and to love our neighbor as ourselves. And then Jesus commands his followers, a new commandment I give to you, love one another.

And do you know that loving one another can only be experienced when we live in community? You know, as you come to worship this morning, we sing songs, we rejoice, and we hear a message.

But it's possible to walk in here and not get to know anybody and no one to know you. It's only in the context of community where people know your name, where you spend time together, that you can learn to love each other.

And sometimes that's a hard thing. Sometimes living in community makes it challenging, but it helps us to grow in that. I've been a pastor for a long time, as has already been said. One of the things that I learned in my last pastorate in Calvary Macallan, in all of those Bible studies and groups and things that I did in the teaching and the preaching, one of the things that I realized, you know, I've never been part of a group where I'm not in charge of it at a church.

[ 26 : 41 ] I've been pastoring all my life. I'm a pastor's kid. My wife is a pastor's kid. We've always been used to being in front. And so my wife and I decided we're going to join a group where I'm not in charge.

And so we had some folks in our church that we had led to Christ, and we baptized them, and they had leadership potential. And so we said, could you host a group in your home?

And they said, yeah, they love hosting. They love cooking. She's from the U.K. She's from the Philippines. And they started inviting people. And we said, we want to be a part of this group, but we don't want to be in charge.

I'm not going to lead the Bible study. I'm not going to organize. We're just going to come. We'll bring food. And so on Sunday afternoons, we would go, and everybody would bring something to eat, and we'd eat together and laugh together.

And then we'd sit around the living room, and there were children, and there were youth, and there were college students, and there were senior adults, people from the U.K., from Japan, from the Philippines, from Texas even.

[ 27 : 41 ] And we would open the scriptures, and they would just together read and see what God was saying to them. And that group became a community to us.

And as we moved to Dallas, we missed that. We're still on the WhatsApp group. But that's our community. And it's a reminder that, you know, Jesus led the very first small group in the history of the church.

And it was about spending time together. It was about getting to know each other and for them to get to know Him. Are you part of such a group? Are you living the Christian life in community?

Is God calling you to join this church or a group where you can do that? The call to follow Jesus is a call to be with others.

It's a call to love people, to learn to love one another. And then the call to follow Jesus is also a call to be on mission. Jesus caught Simon, James, and John.

[ 28 : 41 ] He pulled them out of the water of their mundane and ordinary life. And He lifted them up to an extraordinary life, to be fishers of people.

That was a promotion, a huge one. The Christian life, it's a reminder to us, is about joining Jesus in His mission. You see, when your life has been transformed, then you can be an agent of transformation.

Following Jesus is a call to discipleship. It's a call to be a follower of Jesus. But it's also a call to be about disciple making.

So people say, well, is discipleship about a content that we need to study? Is it about a course that we complete? Is it about community only and fellowship? Is it about accountability for how we live our Christian life?

Is it about spiritual formation? And I would say, yes, it's about all those things. Discipleship includes all those things. But the one aspect that Jesus included from the very beginning here was the missional aspect.

[ 29 : 47 ] The ultimate objective of His calling Simon, James, and John to follow Him was so that they would become fishers of people. The ultimate objective for following Jesus is so that we join Him in His mission.

In other words, discipleship and missions are very closely related. To follow Jesus is to join Him in His redemptive mission to the world. The call to discipleship is a call to make disciples.

Someone said for Christians to be formed spiritually and grow in Christ-likeness, there are three fundamental acts that must be in tandem.



The contemplative act that's life with the triune God. The collective act that's life with others within the body of Christ. And a missional act that's life for the sake of the world.

The purpose of discipleship is so that Christ would be formed in us. In other words, the real test of a growing disciple is not how much they know.

[ 30 : 54 ] It is not how much they do. It is not how often they meet with others. But how much more they are like Christ. The real test of disciple making, when we're making disciples, is whether the people that we are discipling are Christ-like in both character and behavior.

So when Christ lived among us, He did these three things well. He had communion with the Father constantly. He had community with His disciples ongoing.

And He was touching the broken world, healing the sick, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom. These three things were part of His life. So to be Christ-like is to live this out well in our lives too.

When Christ gave us a great commission, He left us to continue what He started. He did it in Galilee. And then He calls us to do it to all the nations. Yes, the Christian life is about being forgiven.

It's about becoming holy. It's about relating to others in love. But the Christian life is also about being on mission. And that group that I told you about, my wife and I had been a part of, and we saw people come to Christ.

[ 32 : 08 ] One of the guys that came to Christ is a manager of several GM car dealerships in the McAllen area, doing well financially, but really coming from a rough background.

You could just look at him, and he knew he had a tough upbringing. And he had invested quite a bit in the ink industry. I'm not judgmental. I mean, you know, about tattoos and things like that.

But he invested quite a bit in that kind of thing. And he had very colorful language in our Bible studies. He'd ask good questions, but words would come out of his mouth that you don't expect to come out in a Sunday school class.

But he was sincere. He was trying to learn. He was struggling. Sometimes he'd get upset, and he'd disappear for a few weeks. And then he would come back, and we saw him grow in his faith.

It was really exciting. And one day he called me, and he said he had just built this huge mansion of a house, and had an incredible backyard with a swimming pool and an outdoor kitchen.

[ 33 : 11 ] It had a gas grill and a smoker and a charcoal grill and all kinds of just impressive stuff. And he said, Pastor, I've decided something.

And I said, What's that, Jacob? Jacob, he said, I'm going to throw a Great Commission barbecue. And I said, Okay, what does that mean, Jacob? He said, I'm going to invite all my lost friends to a barbecue, and then I'm going to tell them about Jesus.

And I said, That's a great idea. That's what it's all about. That's what it means to follow Jesus. Not that you have it all together, but that you know who does. That you can point them to the one that does.

And that's what Jesus calls you and me to do. He calls us to be fishers of people, to be on a redemptive mission. This is exciting right here, guys, that you get that, that your pastor gets that, that you're about that.

Because here's the thing. You don't have to wait until you're a super Christian to do it. You don't have to wait until you know more Bible or more theology or that you're more mature, that you get your act together.

[ 34 : 21 ] You know, they're loved people and tell them that God loves them. The Samaritan woman did it immediately. Do you remember that story? I mean, that lady, man, she had a rough life.

And the moment that she realized that Jesus was the Messiah, she went to her village and told everybody about it. And they came out. And that town had revival.

She hadn't even gone to seminary. The demon-possessed man who Jesus delivered in that graveyard wanted to go with Jesus because he had delivered him.

And Jesus says, no, go back to your family and tell them what God has done for you. Simon, James, and John were called to be fishers of people before they even understood what they were doing.

Training is important. I'm glad this church does that. Preparation is important. But notice that Jesus invites people to follow him and to be on mission with him before they fully understand.

[ 35 : 24 ] God can start using you right now, wherever you are in your journey. Discipleship is not about sitting in a classroom until you have perfect understanding and knowledge before you can be used by God.

Discipleship is about stepping out in faith. Stepping out in obedience. What's the next thing that God's calling you to do? Joining the Jesus movement. And trusting that God will guide and equip you.

And grow your knowledge and your understanding. Are you inviting others to be on mission with God? Are you a follower of Jesus who is inviting people to follow him?

Are you making disciples? Are you committed to the Great Commission? Here at First Baptist San Rieta. All believers are called to be with Jesus.

All believers are called to be with others in community. All believers are called to be on mission with God. It's not just for the few. It's for every believer. There are some who are called to be pastors and missionaries and chaplains.

[ 36 : 30 ] And if God is calling you to do that, then I hope you say yes. Whether you're a young person or you're in midlife or you're already retiring. God is calling you.

Say yes to him. Perhaps that's not your call today. Perhaps God's not calling you to be in vocational ministry. But you realize that every single believer is called to be with Jesus.

Called to be in community. And called to be in mission with him. We all do it differently. But we're all saved from sin. So that we can be on mission with God. Texas Baptist, we talk a lot about the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

It's a call to love God. A call to love people. And a call to make disciples. That's what we want to be about.

You know, it's been a long time since God called me at that gym, Houston Christian University. To surrender to ministry.

[ 37 : 34 ] It's been a long time since I heard the words of that preacher that said, Maybe your generation will be the one to finish the Great Commission. I just had a birthday this week. I turned 60.

I was 16 back then. I'm 60 now. But I want you to know this. I haven't given up on that vision of seeing every people group, every nation, have the opportunity to follow Jesus.

That's what I want to be about. That's why I joined Texas Baptist. That's what First Baptist Henrietta wants to be about. I know that's what Pastor Sam wants to be about.

What about you? Will you join that? Will you support? Are you answering the call? Are you saying yes to Jesus?

Yes. Bow your head with me for a moment. How is it that God is calling you today?

[ 38 : 41 ] What is that next step? That you need to take? Is it to trust Him as Savior and Lord? Is it to spend more time with Him and have fellowship with Him?

Is it to join a group where you can live in community, love one another? Is it to be on mission with Him?

To identify who is your one? To keep praying for opportunities to share? Is it to join this church? To be baptized?

What is God calling you to do? Is He calling you to ministry? Is He calling you to serve in the church? Will you say yes to Him right there where you are? God, if you're calling me, I want to say yes.

I want to be part of your great redemptive purpose. I want to be a fisher of people. Father, I thank you for your call on our lives.

[ 39 : 49 ] I thank you that you look to us and call us by name. And you have a specific role for us to play in your redemptive mission. Thank you for First Baptist Henrietta.

Thank you for every individual here. I pray that as you speak to our hearts, that we would say yes, that we would be obedient to your voice, that we would step out in faith and watch you be at work.

I pray these things in Christ's name. Amen. Pastor.