

Aaron Brockett

Hey Traders Point family, hope you've had a great week. It's hard to believe that fall is right around the corner. And with that in mind, I just want to encourage you with a couple of things. I'd love for you to jump in and serve somewhere around here on the weekends and somewhere during the week. You know, our spiritual growth is oftentimes connected when we develop a heart to serve other people just like Jesus did.

I also know that here in the coming weeks we're going to have more and more people returning to in person services because school is going to start up, people are getting back into their routines, and people are moving and relocating to Indianapolis. We want them to have a great experience and I want you to be a part of it.

So, to find all of the ways that you can serve, text the word SERVE to 87221.

Well, I have been really excited to introduce our next guest in our summer message series for quite a while now. Mike Breaux is the teaching pastor at six different churches across the country. He's also a well-known author and communicator. He and his wife, Debbie, have three grown children and nine grandkids. They live in Ventura, California.

You know, I first heard about Mike Breaux when I was a college student. He came on campus, spoke at one of the events and I was immediately taken by his communication style and his love for Jesus. And ever since then, Mike has mentored me, both at a distance and up close. He often is just such an encourager. He speaks such words of wisdom into my life.

And he is a phenomenal communicator. He's so good that I've invited him to be here for the next three weekends in a row. And you're going to love him. So at all of our campuses, would you please put your hands together and give a warm, Traders Point welcome to our friend, Mike Breaux.

Mike Breaux

Man, it's so great to be with you all. My name is Mike and I'm so honored to get to hang out with you all. You all are stuck with me for three weeks, sorry. But I get the privilege of being here. I've heard so much about Traders Point. Never been here, but I've known a lot about it through the years. You've got some former staff members here that grew up in our ministry down in Kentucky. So, I've always known a lot about Traders and Aaron is such a great guy.

Actually, Aaron is staying at my house today in Ventura, California while I'm here. So I'm glad that we could share that with he and his son. He's preaching at Mission Church, a church our kids started about 10 years ago. I'm so excited for them to get to hear Aaron today.

But thanks for walking with me for three weeks in a row. I'm super excited about getting to do this. So, I thought since I'm going to be here for three weeks, I'd do a series called the *Big Three*. It's super creative.

When you hear the word big three, I'm not talking about the three little pigs, I'm not talking about Alvin and the chipmunks, I'm not talking about the Jonas brothers, I'm not talking about your favorite NBA team that has the big three on its roster.

I'm not even talking about Peter, James, and John. I'm not talking about Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego. I'm not even talking about the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, although it's a given that we're going to be talking about them for three weeks.

Where I'm drawing this from is at the end of a chapter in the Bible, 1 Corinthians, chapter 13—it's known as the love chapter. And even if you're brand new to church and don't know anything about the Bible, you've probably been to a wedding and heard somebody quote this chapter: love is patient, love is kind, love keeps no record of wrong, love rejoices with the truth and on and on and on. That's how the chapter goes.

At the very end of the chapter it says:

"And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love." (NIV)

So, I thought that we'd spend some time for three weeks unpacking those big three things. Next week we're going to talk about hope, if you need some hope, you know some people who need some hope, come next week because we're going to talk all about hope. The third week we're going to talk about love.

But today I want to kick this off talking about how you and I can walk by faith through every season of our life. And to illustrate this, I just figured... This is the way my own mind works; I see life kind of illustrated by different modes of transportation. I think life is just a different season of transportation modes.

For instance, you start out here in this baby walker. Anybody got one of these in your house right now? Something like this in your house right now, you've got kids all over the place.

Sometimes they have a tray in the middle, and you put like Cheerios in the tray or those little puff things or whatever else you put on the tray for kids, SpaghettiOs. It's your first drive through experience. It really is. You'll be driving through the rest of your life, but you start here, and you're going all over the place learning how to walk and eating your food as you go.

And then, you kind of graduate to one of these. Anybody remember Big Wheels? Anybody got a Big Wheel in their house right now? Yeah. They are so awesome.

I watched a bunch of little boys the other day in my daughter's cul-de-sac. They're all on Big Wheels, like some biker gang. It was awesome. And they are all skidding out on the curves, and they were just having a blast on their Big Wheels. Big Wheels are pretty awesome.

I've got a good friend who is probably the most competitive guy I've ever known in my life. He would enter his kids, when they were toddlers, in Big Wheel races in our community. And he would train them. He would put concrete blocks on the back of their Big Wheels and have them ride up hills so that their legs would get strong. And they wiped out every other toddler in the city to win these Big Wheel races. I'm not making that up. It's true.

Then you graduate from the Big Wheel. You've got to get your first bike. And now they have those... have you seen these strider bikes without the pedals? Kids just kind of do their thing. They learn how to get their balance. I wish they had them when I was a kid. My dad just pushed me down the hill and said, "Good luck." And I'd try to pedal.

You've got training wheels on the bike and stuff. And when you get your bike and the training wheels go off, as a kid didn't it feel like freedom? You were riding that bike everywhere you could go.

You remember your first bike? One of my first bikes was one of these, it was called a Stingray bike. It had a banana seat. Had these big handlebars that came up like a Harley when you're riding this thing.

As a kid I played baseball in Little League. And I would collect baseball cards and I would take baseball cards, anybody else to this? I'd take these things called clothes pins—you ever seen a clothes pin? I'd take a wooden clothes pin and I would put the baseball cards on the spokes with these clothes pins so when I would ride around the neighborhood it sounded like I was on a Harley riding this thing.

I had this thing perfected where I would hang my glove over the handlebar going down to the park, and I would ride down to the field, and I would get off my bike with one leg and one foot on the pedal. And I had this thing perfected where I could grab my glove in the same motion as I landed, and I'd let the bike just fly right into the fence. It was like, "That's right. I'm here." A nine-year-old cool. That was what it was.

No, but when you're a kid and you can ride a bike, it does feel like freedom.

And then you kind of graduate to one of these. I don't if any of you all were any good on this, I'm sure some of you all are good at this thing. I'd kill myself on this skateboard right here. I chose this as a mode of transportation because that's the season of my life that felt the wobblest, it was when I was in between elementary and high school.

I was in junior high. Junior high just feels wobbly. It feels very insecure. You really don't know exactly what's happening. You know what's happening to your body. Your voice is changing all of the time. And you're four-foot-ten and your girlfriend is five-six. It's just a crazy season of life. And you're always worried about what people are saying and how you look and all of that. It's just a very insecure season of life.

And then you kind of graduate from one of these to your driver's license. And man, doesn't it feel good when you finally get your driver's license. Anybody here recently get their driver's license? Congratulations. You've got it. It feels so good to pass your test and you get in that car, man, you've got your hands at ten and two and you're doing everything just right. And when your parents need some milk from the store, you go, "I'll go get it," because you want to get in the car, and you want to drive everywhere, right?

And then things start changing. What was your first car? Shout out your first car. I guarantee you; you didn't have the first car that I had. Let me show you a picture of my first car. That was my first car. My dad worked in the Post Office and he's an eclectic kind of guy. And they had one for sale for \$250 and he bought me a mail truck. I drove on the right side. It has a door like this and a cage in the back. Girls loved the mail truck. I felt so uncool driving this thing around.

And then they gave me their old car. It was a 1970 Pontiac Catalina. It wasn't that nice. But man it was sweet. And you know what was really sweet about it? It had a bench seat. Some of you all don't know about bench seats. All you know is bucket seats. No, bench seats are where it's at.

I remember, man, I had this bench seat, and my hands are no longer at ten and two. I had one hand on the wheel and one hand around my girlfriend and she's sitting right next to me as we cruise around town. It was so awesome.

And then one day you get married she moves way over there [to the passenger side of the car], and you get one of these things. You get a minivan. You've got stuff everywhere, Gummy Bears all over the place and old McDonald's French fries on the floor and you've got car seats and kids kicking the back of your seat and, "Are we there yet?" It's just a crazy season of life.

Then, one day, they are all gone. And you look over and you find yourself driving around: some old woman with some old man, going out to eat at four o'clock so you can get home and watch Wheel of Fortune, right? I'm just saying that's kind of the way it goes.

And then you hit a point in your life when you say, "You know what? I will never ever drive another minivan as long as I live. So, you kind of go through this mid-life crisis thing and you go out and you buy one of these [a motorcycle]. And you get on that thing, and you go, "Yeah, that's what I'm talking about. Get your motor running... born to be wild. You're riding. The wind is blowing through your scalp, and you think you're something.

Your next mode of transportation is this [a wheelchair] because you had no business buying one of those [a motorcycle] for the first time when you were 50 years old.

While I'm sitting here, I just want to get serious for a moment because I know for some of you this is your mode of transportation every day. You know, all of the churches I'm a part of, there are so many great people. It takes such a huge effort just to get to church every week. And I just want to say on behalf of the whole Traders Point family at every campus, we see you and we applaud you and we love you. You are kind of like heroes to us.

I know so many people who face physical challenges and they just have hearts that are full of gratitude and such great folks. I think of, sitting in this chair, I think of Joni Erickson Toda. I don't know if you've heard of her or not, but she's an author and she's a song writer.

She had a diving accident when she was 16 that left her paralyzed from the neck down. She just turned 70 this year. She's a phenomenal woman. She started a ministry called Joni and Friends to help people with disabilities. She's just awesome. She paints pictures by holding a brush between her teeth. These pictures are as good as any artist you've ever seen. I mean, she's an incredible person.

I remember reading one of her books and in the book, she had a little poem that stuck in my heart. It's been stuck in my heart for a long time now. It's called Joni and the Waltz. And it says:

Though I spend my mortal lifetime in this chair,
I refuse to waste it living in despair.
And though others may receive gifts of healing,
I believe that He has given me a gift beyond compare.
For heaven is nearer to me and at times it is all I can see.
Sweet music I hear coming down on my ear
And I know it is playing for me.
For I am Christ's own bride, and I will stand by His side.
And He will say, "Shall we dance?"
And our endless romance will be worth all of the tears.

Then you kind of edge toward this season of life [needing a walker] and some of you may be there right now, or getting close. And things just don't work as well as they used to. You know, it's just like things are falling apart.

I love to play basketball. And I was playing not long ago and there was a loose ball, and I went, "Somebody needs to pick that up. I'm not getting on the floor after that." I mean it just happens. It just happens in your life.

Some of you may be in that season right now where you're caring for people, maybe your parents, who are in this season. It happened a little sooner for me than most of my peers. My

parents were older when they had me. So I became the primary caregiver for both of my parents. I'm an only kid.

It was a challenging, challenging season. I was leading a growing church. I had kids in almost every one of these seasons right here—teaching one how to drive, going through one coaching one in basketball in junior high, it was just a crazy season of life trying to parent two parents.

My dad, I told you he was an eclectic character, and my dad was diagnosed bi-polar and paranoid schizophrenia and so he was on meds. And when he was on meds, he was the most chill, calm, humble, kind guy you've ever met in your life. When he wasn't on his meds, he was an out-of-control manic.

And he decided when he was 82, "I'm tired of taking that medicine. I'm going out in a blaze of glory." And I chased him all over town cleaning up his messes. It was so challenging.

I'll never forget the day a buddy of mine called me and said, "Hey, Breaux." That's my name by the way. He goes, "Hey, Breaux. I just saw your dad. He passed me on New Circle road," it was in the city we lived in, "going 100 miles an hour-little over."

He was going 100 miles an hour. And he'd already had like three or four wrecks and stuff like that.

I said, "Okay, it's time." So I went over to the house, as I was over there, I made sure he started taking his medicine again. And I said, "Dad, you're going to have to hand me your keys. I'm sorry, you just can't drive anymore. You're going to kill somebody. What if it's one of your grandkids out there? You can't do this."

He looked at me with the saddest look ever and went, "Okay, what am I going to do?" I said, "I'll pick you up. You call me any time. I'll take you anywhere you need to go. I'll drop whatever I'm doing, and I'll come get you."

He said, "What are we going to do for food?"

"I'll take you to the grocery store."

"What are going to do for water?"

"You have water. Water comes out of that thing."

He was trying to get really dramatic, and he was so sad. He reached into his pocket, took out his keys and put them in my hand." And I thought I was going to lose it. I mean, this is the guy who taught me how to drive. My dad taught me to drive, by the way, in a cemetery. I remember he goes, "Pull in there, Mike. You can't kill nobody. That's where he taught me to drive.

So the guy who taught me how to drive is giving me his keys. I got in my truck and drove home, and I was just heartbroken. I got home. I felt so bad. So, I called back over to the house and said, "Mom, let me talk to dad." She said, "He's not here."

"What do you mean he's not there?"

"He went to the store."

My dad had five sets of keys. Totally, totally played me in the moment acting all sad, put them in my hand. As soon as I was gone, he was out the door going 100 miles an hour. So I had to get all of the cars and all of the keys. I had to sell them all. It was a challenging time. And at the very same time my mom was in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's.

It was just a very, very difficult season where I just learned to say, "God, help me. I'm so grateful I get to do this for them. Give me the strength. Help me to bring the joy. Help me bring the fun. Help me to show up and sometimes just go, 'So what?' And just love them." And it was challenging. Very challenging.

In fact, all of these seasons can be challenging. I think, in fact, if you look at life, it doesn't always go like this, but I think it can be summed up from the walker to the walker and everything in between.

Let me tell you a couple of things I've been learning through all of this. The first one is this:

LIFE IS SO SHORT

Do you realize that? All of this happens like the snap of a finger. When I was talking about riding my bike down to the Little League field, it felt like last week. It happens that quick. This goes so, so fast. Life is so short.

We live in Ventura, California. And in the morning, there is like a marine layer that comes out all over the ocean. And it's really foggy until about nine o'clock and then all of the fog burns off. Almost every day it's like this, then nine o'clock it's bright and blue and beautiful and sunny for the rest of the day. But we've got this morning fog that rolls in. And I always think of this verse from James, chapter 4, verse 14. This is Jesus' brother writing these words. He says:

"...Your life is like the morning fog—it's here a little while, then," by nine o'clock it burns off, "it's gone." (NLT)

There was an old guy named Moses, you might have heard of him from the Old Testament of the Bible. He's the guy who says, "Listen, don't blink because it goes fast. And he prayed this prayer. He said:

"Lord, Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should." (TLB)

I love the way Solomon approaches this. He wrote a journal in the Old Testament of the Bible called Ecclesiastes where he talked about all of his mistakes and screw ups and all of the things he wished he hadn't done and all the things he wished he had done. He gets to chapter 12 in Ecclesiastes, and he goes here's my conclusion:

"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth," he says to hook up with God now, during the bike and skateboard and driver's license years, hook up with God when you are young so you'll get to know Him, "before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them.'"

And then he poetically describes aging. He says, *"– before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain..."* he's talking about how we wrestle with bouts of depression and loneliness and even uselessness the older we get, *"...when the keepers of the house tremble,"* what do you think he is talking about there? When your hands start getting a little shaky.

"...and the strong men stoop," your back goes out and you go to the chiropractor all of the time, *"when the grinders cease because they are few,"* what do you think he's talking about there? Your teeth start breaking down and failing, *"and those looking through the windows grow dim;"* he's talking about those ten pair of reading glasses you have all over the house right now.

"...when the doors to the street are closed and the sound of grinding fades;" talking about when you're no longer able to go to work, or your able to but the opportunities are not afforded to you because you're past that age. *"...when men rise up at the sound of birds,"* the older you get the earlier you get up, *"but all their songs grow faint;"* the birds are chirping early in the morning, but you can't hear them anyway because you can't really hear anymore, *"when men are afraid of heights,"* I'm not getting up on that ladder, *"and of dangers in the streets;"* 13 deadbolts on the door and a Ring doorbell.

"...when the almond tree blossoms," your hair turns white, *"and the grasshopper drags himself alone,"* that's when you've got no house anymore, *"and desire no longer is stirred."* You can figure that one out. *"Then people go to their eternal home and mourners go about the streets."* (NIV)

And it all happens in a flash. So he says, "Connect with your Creator now. Connect with your Creator, the lover of your soul, get to know Him now so that you can spend your whole life experiencing His goodness and His grace and His peace."

Because the second thing I've been learning is life is so short but:

GOD IS SO FAITHFUL

He is so faithful in all of these things. Every one of these seasons are constantly shifting and changing but Jesus Christ doesn't do that. It says in Hebrews, chapter 13:

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (NIV)

In a constantly changing world, He is rock solid, never changing, consistent, immovable, faithful, and true like we sing around here all of the time. He is a Promise Keeper.

Numbers, chapter 23, verse 19 says:

"God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" (NIV)

That's a rhetorical question. He says, "Of course not." He has a perfect track record of keeping His promises. It's a claim that none of us—the best of us in this place can't lay claim to that.

Hebrews 10: 23 says:

"Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise." (NLT)

So, walk by faith.

Some of you may be in this season right now and you've got a house full of this stuff. It seems like every room is cluttered with toys and stuffed animals and diapers and all kinds of badges—I mean life is just hectic for you right now. Can I just say this to you? Cherish this time. Man, it goes so fast. It really does.

I used to think you know that's just something like old people said, "Cherish this time, son, because it goes so fast." I'd think, "Yeah, just old people say that stuff."

Now that I'm old people, can I say this to you? Cherish this time, it goes so fast. It's like all of a sudden, it's just gone. So cherish this time. Nourish those kids. Put them on your lap and sing to them and cuddle them and hold them and pray over them.

Debbie used to pray over our kids and our grandkids: May the Lord bless you and keep you, make His face to shine upon you and give you peace. Every single night she'd just pray that with our kids. Use this time in your life to pour into those kids so they can remember their Creator in the days of their youth.

Some of you look at stuff like this and you say, "I wish we had a house full of this. The desire of our heart has just not happened." Maybe you're like our son, Drew, and his wife who struggle with infertility and miscarriages and things like that. It's heartbreaking. It's heartbreaking.

But you know that God says, "I keep all of your tears in a bottle." God knows. He cares. And, I've seen it happen, God will make unexpected things happen to fulfill the desires of your heart in some other ways. Just trust Him. Walk by faith. He keeps His promises. He is faithful in this season with you.

And I don't know, maybe you are a kid in the room. And I just want to say to every kid, be a kid. Get on that bike and ride like the wind. Be a good friend. Be a good teammate. Stand up for the underdog. Just love life. Don't grow up too quick. And parents, don't make them grow up too fast. Let them be kids. Just let them experience the joy of just being a child.

And maybe you're in the season of your life, when you want to pop this thing up and you're like, "Yeah, that's me. My life is wobbly right now." And maybe you're in those junior high years. Right now I've got to say to you guys, God loves you so much. Don't let a mirror, don't let a scale, don't let a social media post define who you are. Know that you are accepted by the One who matters most.

The Creator of the universe is running around heaven with your picture on His phone, "Check out My kid. Isn't she awesome? I love her hair. I love her nose. This kid is the most amazing kid. She has the greatest heart." That's the way God sees you. See yourself the way God sees you. This doesn't last long. You'll get through it. Walk with Him through it. Walk by faith.

And maybe you're in high school now. You've got your license and you're experiencing a little bit of independence, a little bit of freedom. Keep walking with your Creator. Just know that everywhere you go, He's riding with you.

And not only is He with you, the Bible says He moves in you, so you take Him everywhere. Live and be aware of His presence in your life, when you're at school, when you go to work, when you go to practice just know that He's going with you.

And maybe you're a college student and you're getting ready to pack up the car and head out of here in a week or two. This has put a knot in your stomach, "I don't know if I'm ready for this." Just know that He's going with you. And just hear Him say, "I know the plans I have for you. Plans to give you a future and a hope."

Just know that what you do or where you go is not nearly as important as who you are becoming. So just let Him move into your life and shape you so your character is the right kind of person. And some day you'll be the right kind of person, in the right place, serving His right purposes. Just know that He is going to go with you.

And maybe right now you're a parent of one of those students. And it's about to kill you to think of him packing up that car and driving away. I talked to some in between services who were going, "Yeah, they're leaving in a couple of weeks." And it's hard to watch them drive away.

Maybe you had the privilege this summer of bringing your daughter down the aisle or you watched your son get married and they left and now you're feeling this, ah, empty nest thing. Can I tell you something about the empty nest thing? It's a myth.

They come back asking for money, bringing laundry, and then eventually they bring all of their ducklings with them. And now you've got a house full all over again with car seats and a minivan. That's just the way it is—enjoy!

That's the season we're in and it is the funnest season we've ever been in in our life. Just know that God is going to use you. Become that person that becomes a mentor and a coach and a

good friend instead of a parental authority figure. Just give advice, not unsolicited advice, just become a great, great friend and a great sounding board for those young adults in your life.

And instead of moving into the mid-life crisis, buy a Harley phase—not saying buying a Harley is going through a mid-life crisis, I just used that to illustrate that some guys don't know what to do. They are looking for significance. They are looking for some kind of thrill and adrenaline rush. Just pour your life into serving other people.

I'm telling you. If you live your life, the rest of your life just serving other people, you will experience an adrenaline rush like you've never experienced in your life.

Research shows that the happiest people on the planet are people who throw a towel over their arms and go serve somebody. I'm just telling you, that's the way God designed us. So do that.

Instead of seeing your life as a mid-life crisis, see where you are at in your life right now as half-time. What do good teams do at half-time? They come out smoking in the third and fourth quarter, right? In fact you've seen teams huddle up in the fourth quarter, four fingers up in the air. Fourth quarter man, fourth quarter, here we go.

And that's what I would challenge you to do, because some of you, honestly, you're in the fourth quarter. I look around and see, fourth quarter. Some of you are in overtime—just being honest. But hey, we're all sudden death, right? Every one of us. So move toward significance in your life in serving other people and be that person, "For the rest of my life I just want to pour my life out. I want to serve the way Jesus serves."

As you inch closer to this season of your life, you'll know that He's been faithful every season, man. It's been a thrill to walk by faith. I think of Fanny Hamilton. This was her mode of transportation [using a walker]. I met her at a church I served in Kentucky. And the first time I met her; I didn't know that she worked for the high school ministry. She was 85 and our students loved Fanny. She was so fun and so full of grace and wit and charm, just loved God with all of her heart. It just flowed out of her.

She had a stroke, and it paralyzed the right side of her body. And it would take her a long time to get ready for church, but she was there every week. And I remember being up on stage one time, in fact I wrote it in the margin of my Bible so I would never forget it. I was up on stage leading worship and I look out in the audience and our high school students were all sitting off in the section to my left. And Fanny was right in the middle of all of them.

And I watched her reach over with her good hand and pick up her bad arm and just raise it up to God just singing at the top of her lungs as if to say, "God, even in this I will praise You because You have been so, so faithful to me."

You know, there is something I've noticed. Most of my life I grew up in church and the church I grew up in, we didn't really have an amazing Kids' Ministry like we have here at Traders Point.

So, I would sit in what we called big church with my parents. And let's just say most of the time I was less than engaged. I was doodling, making paper airplanes, I was digging for candy in my mom's purse, I was counting the organ pipes in the old church—it was like 173, I still remember that.

But there is an old song that I watched people sing. We still sing it once and a while today. It's a song called:

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

You ever know this song? It's like an: *Amazing Grace, How Great Thou Art* kind of a classic old hymn. It's based upon the words of Lamentations, chapter 3. It says, "*Great is Your faithfulness...morning by morning your mercies are new.*"

You might have heard this song. Let me tell you something that I have observed over the years when people sing this song. If you look around the room when that song is being sung, the kids—just like me when I was a kid—they are eating candy, they are picking their nose, punching their brother not paying any attention at all.

Most teenagers and college age people will kind of mouth the words to this really unfamiliar, old-sounding kind of hymn. Some young adults and some even middle-aged people might sing it with a little bit more feeling and a little bit more meaning.

But I'm telling you, you look at the people who are getting up there later in their years, you'll see something you won't soon forget. One of the things I've noticed all of my life is when white-haired men and women sing that song, they sing it with passion and intensity, "All I have needed Thy hands have provided. Great is Thy faithfulness..."

And the crescendo builds to the end, the chorus, "Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy faithfulness," some soprano, "Great is Thy faith....." holds the note, you know. I mean major veins are like bulging out on her neck. Then they collapse breathlessly back into the seat when the song is over.

Now why is it that those who have been walking with God by faith for so many years sing that song with so much intensity? Here's why: it's because they know that God is faithful. They know that God is faithful. And I've just got to say those people inspire me.

And the reason I'm bringing this all up is because this church is full of hundreds and hundreds of young followers or relatively new followers of Jesus. A whole bunch can sing *Great is Thy Faithfulness*. You can sing it now, "The Lord has been so faithful to me over the past six months." "The Lord has been so faithful to me over the past three years, five years, it's been amazing."

Just wait 'til you get 45 years of God's faithfulness under your belt. It's going to blow you away. You're going to reflect back on decade's worth of storms you've been able to weather with the supernatural assistance of a faithful God.

I'm talking 45 years' worth of broken relationships put back together through the power of a faithful God. I'm talking 45 years of sobriety and sanity that was made possible by the One who reached down and rescued you. Forty-five years' worth of God providing for your needs when you didn't know where the next paycheck was coming from or the next meal was coming from. Forty-five years' worth of thousands of prayers that have been answered by a faithful God who answers prayer.

And someday you're going to be the one with wrinkles on your face and veins bulging out of your neck and your hands in the air singing: Great is Thy faithfulness Lord unto me.

In the margin of my Bible I have a little quote from Brennan Manning. It says this: "To trust is to be convinced of the reliability of God."

To trust is to be absolutely convinced of the reliability of God. Life is so short. God is so faithful. And gang, He has promised us so much. He has promised us a better place to live. He has promised us a heavenly homeland. He has promised us a city without pandemics and political chaos. No need for masks, no need for testing, no hospitals, no vaccines, no chemo—a perfect place without any hint of evil. A place where only goodness and love are present. A place where every tongue and tribe and nation will praise Jesus Christ who laid down His life so we could live forever.

And until that day He promises, He promises His presence and His peace. He promises to give us wisdom and direction. He promises to give us His Holy Spirit. He promises us to make a way to escape any temptation. He promises to finish the good, inside-out work He started in us.

He promises us to never leave us or forsake us. He promises. He promises that nothing will be able to separate us from His unfailing love. He promises us an inheritance in heaven. He promises that He's coming back some day to make all things new. That's God's promise. You can believe Him.

He will never lie to you, con you, or cheat you. He won't ghost you, mislead, or mistreat you. He won't tell you one thing and do another, scheme, coerce, or try to cover His tracks, because He's not like that. He's true to His word, never breaks it ever. His yes is a yes through every endeavor.

He doesn't have to swear to God to tell the whole truth because He is the whole truth. He won't breach a contract, surprise you with the fine print because in His character there is not a hint of deceit or malice or shadiness or guile. His word is His bond, and not for just a while but for ever and ever.

He remains the same. The faithful one. The Name above all Names. The Promise Keeper whose mercies are new every morning, all day long. He's thinking of you, and He calls you to believe His unshakeable love 'till you see Him face to face in heaven above. You can believe Him. Walk by faith from the walker to the walker.

So, here's how I want to wrap this all up at all of our campuses even if you're online. I'm going to ask you to all stand up together and I'm going to lead us in prayer and then our team is going to come out and we're just going to thank God for His faithfulness in our lives.

Father, I want to start by thanking you personally for Your faithfulness in my life. I look up here at all of this stuff on stage, I'm flooded with memories and really, really good times and really, really hard times. And good or hard, You've been right in the middle of all of it. Your presence and Your peace are just incredible.

I thank You for being a caring Father, being our Abba, our Daddy. I thank You for being all powerful, that You're in control even when things seem like they're out of control and that You really are working behind the scenes producing good stuff in our lives, even through suffering You accomplish good stuff in our character.

God, I pray for everybody here who has been listening, watching, I pray for those who are in that crazy, chaotic, kids everywhere kind of phase—God, I pray that they could see their calling as a high calling from You to just pour their love and their faith into those precious kids. God, I pray for those who are heartbroken. I pray for people who are struggling with disease, disabilities, and people who are struggling with relationships ending, relationships struggling.

I pray for every student in this place, that they can see themselves the way that You see them, a much-loved child, a much-loved son, a much-loved daughter. God, I pray for those of us who are kind of in those searching for significance years, maybe what we used to do we no longer do and now we're looking for something fresh and new and I pray that serving other people will be enough for us to love You with all of our heart and love people the same way.

Father, I thank You for Your faithfulness. And we want to worship You today because of that—so, so grateful. And I pray, God, today that we just sing with a little extra thank you in our hearts. And I pray all this in the name of Jesus and all who agree say: Amen.