

Ambitious Faith-Part 11
Embracing the Unconventional & the Unexpected
Pastor Mike Fabarez

For a number of years my family and I lived in a house with a homeowners association. You have one of those? Mine was persnickety. Is that too harsh? Fastidious, fussy, uptight, pain in the neck? I don't know how to describe them but that's what we had. And I thought it was bad until about seven months ago we moved into an apartment complex. And they have an apartment management team. I mean a whole group of apartment managers, and I realize that homeowners associations and apartment management teams, they're a lot like congress. They have all kinds of rules and they're like adding to them every other day. And it's easy to kind of feel a little frustrated with our team, especially because a few months back we got a notice from our apartment management team that they were going to come around and, I'm not lying, inspect our garages. Can you imagine that? I've got a little one car garage, that's all I've got, and I'm not making bombs in there, there's no slave trade going on in my garage, there's no drug blabs, its just junk, normal junk, right? And I'm thinking keep your long managerial noses out of my garage, right? It's my garage, right? I'm paying for it, stay out of my garage. It just lit me up when I got the notice; ask my wife, I was just miserable for weeks, growl growl growl. I was just picturing these guys with clipboards going through my garage, it just lit me up. Then I realized that no one had to train me to be irritated with authority figures with their briefcases full of rules. No one had to teach me that, its just kind of naturally that way. My kids all came through the birth canal with a real high competence in being irritated with rules. They just were born like that, right? All you've got to do is tell them there's a new rule, or don't do it this way, or don't do it that way, or your mom says you can't, and they just make these award winning faces of irritation. I could do a whole video, faces of irritation. They just don't like it, they chafe against it. And I realize that because there's kind of a universal distain for the concept of compliance, they love that in their letter, compliance and submission and obedience. We just, no one likes to be told what to do, we don't care for it. And then, add to that, you come to church and you get the guy preaching on the stage that the whole predicated problem of this irritation is a sin problem called pride. Because we don't like to think that they don't have the right to give us rules, because we think we're superior and we're better than those people. And I know that's totally true, because the first thing I thought of when I got the notice that my garage was going to be inspected, I wanted the inspector's addresses. That's what I wanted. And I want to go to Staples and find the biggest clipboard I can find, and just show up one day at their garage. Hey, open up your garage, let us see your garage for a little bit, do a little inspection today. What's in that box? Right? I was just irritated. Like who are you to tell me about my garage, right? And you naturally reach for that school yard retort, right? You're not the boss of me. That's just what I want to tell them, you're not the boss of me. But the problem is, when it comes to my garage, they are. Probably somewhere buried in that forty two pages that I signed when I moved into the apartment complex was some small print, you know 8 pt font that said, if you want to live here, guys with clipboards can show up and go through your junk in your garage. It was in there somewhere I'm sure. And so I know that that was just part of the deal. You want to live here; your garage is subject to inspection. I passed by the way. I got to stay, they came and they left, and I didn't have to get into any fights about the junk in my garage. You're saying, I understand that, it is frustrating, all that compliance and obedience that no one cares for. And yet, we open up our Bibles, and it seems like that's all over the place, right? I mean don't the words obedience, compliance, submission, seem to fit with the concept of this book that is delivered to us from this ultimate authority. You want to talk about the boss of me? Here's what the Bible is saying. God is saying, I am the boss of you, and here's the rules. And its not forty two pages, it's a big book and its got a lot to say about how I'm supposed to live. If I'm irritated by

someone telling me how I'm supposed to keep my garage, how irritated are we when we have some authority figure wanting to tell us how we're supposed to keep our lives or our thoughts? I mean there's a natural aversion to that; we're naturally irritated by that. And yet in the Scriptures we're supposed to see that, and it's somehow supposed to be different. I think we just have to be honest, if we look at it at face value, that's kind of a tough concept. We've got God here who's saying, by the way, I am the boss, and here are the rules, and I'd like you to keep them. As one pithy preacher once put it, you know what, if you want to make up your own rules, get your own universe. Then you can make up all the rules you want. Problem is, biblically we think theologically, we're stuck in his, and if we're going to live in his universe, he's got some rules for us, it's called the Bible. And we open up that book and we realize, God is saying that he's in charge. And we're going to learn in Hebrews 11 this week, as we continue our series on ambitious faith, that it's going to take ambitious faith to sometimes recognize that God is in charge and the rules need to be followed, even if the rules don't fit nicely into my mind as to why I should be keeping these rules. Because frankly, that's the first thing I thought, why do you need to see my garage, right? I'll keep the door closed; you don't need to go in it. What's the deal? It's not important is it? And sometimes the rules that we find in the pages of Scripture that way, we start to see when God says, hey, I'd like you to do this, we think why? That doesn't seem to make any sense to me. And we struggle with it. But what we need to realize, before we ever even talk about ambitious faith to obey God's rules, we should start with the foundational truth, and that is, when it comes to who's the boss of you, God wants to make it very clear, he is. He's the boss, he's in charge. As a matter of fact, if you're taking notes, I want you just to jot it down that way, let's just agree with that, that God is God. Number 1; and I know this is going to be the world's longest introduction, that's why I gave it its own point. As a matter of fact, you were scared when you saw next to point Number 1, Genesis number 1 through Revelation 22, did that freak you out? Oh man, I hope you ate breakfast, because here comes the longest sermon ever. We're not going to cover every verse, okay? Not even every chapter. All I'm trying to say is, is it not true that from the beginning of the Bible to the end, that God wants to make it clear, he is God. That's the point. And if you're thinking, oh that's a cute little phrase, where did you come up with that? Well, I'm glad you asked, jot it down, Deuteronomy chapter 7 verse number 9, and I didn't make this up, here's what Moses said when he's giving the rules to the people. He said, the Lord your God, is God, and that's a good place to start, right? This guy you're calling out to is the God of the universe. When you say, oh God, I need your help, just listen to what you're saying. God, by definition, means he is the one in charge. And I know that chafes against us. Partly because we have this pride problem that we think, well I don't like that. That gives you an advantage, and sometimes we think when you give absolute power, when we see that, that's just bad, it corrupts, it's not good, we see these dictators around the world, and we just struggle with that. But the rest, by the way, Deuteronomy 7:9 goes on to say, here's the good news, he's a faithful God and a God of love. And that starts to change everything. We have a benevolent dictator, see? We have someone who is in charge, and he is the absolute authority, and he is the boss of you, but here's the thing, he's a God who loves you, and is incredibly faithful. He's consistent and he cares for his creation. And that starts to change the perspective; I can start to say; okay, now that makes sense. But I'm still saying, I want to raise my hand and say, but why? Why all this stuff? I don't like the infringement on my autonomy and my freedom and do we need all these rules? Answer: Deuteronomy chapter 30, let's turn to this one because this one is a rather lengthy response from Moses at the end of the pentateuch. First five books Moses wrote, right? The last one, book number five is Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy means twice, Namas means law, it was the second reiteration of the law. They'd gone through it in Exodus, they had the moral law of God, we had the ceremonial law of God in Leviticus, and now, in the closing of Moses' life, he reiterates in writing the law of God. And when he's wrapping it all up and talking about the commands he's delivered, he started with, hey guys, God is God, he ends

making it very clear that God is not just trying to infringe or somehow mess up your party, he's not just trying to infringe on your freedom, or your autonomy, he's got good intentions behind all these rules. As a matter of fact, look at how its put here in Deuteronomy chapter 30 verse number 11; Moses said, what I'm commanding you today, its not too difficult for you, or beyond reach. These aren't unreasonable things. As a matter of fact, its not unknown either, its not up into heaven that you've got to ask, who's got to ascend up into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us that we can obey it. You know, its not up in heaven, God has revealed it, nor is it beyond the sea, its not out of reach, you don't have to ask, well, who's going to cross the sea and get it and proclaim it to us that we can obey it? No, as a matter of fact, the word is very near to you. This is like the third time we've been talking about it. You've understood it, we preached about it, its there, its in your mouth, you go home after these little public gatherings where Moses preaches about it, and you talk about it over lunch, and you know it, its in your mouth, and its there, its in your heart so that you may obey it. This is not unusual stuff. And I can say, by the way, just to step out here for a second, its true for us too, the things that God wants to say to you in the Scripture, unless its your first day at church, you know the things that God is asking you to do. Okay, there may be a few things you haven't gotten to yet in Scripture, but these are some pretty general and basic rules that you know about, you know it. And they are there for you for what purpose? Next verse, the whole point is this; you need to understand he says, see I set before you today life and prosperity. That's door number 1. Behind door number 1, you have life and prosperity. And behind door number 2, you get, the zonk, death and destruction. The zonk, do you remember the zonk? I'm going way back now, you young people are going, hey whats that? Ask your parents. Behind door number 1, what do you get? Life and prosperity. Behind number 2, what do you get? Death and destruction. Now what are we talking about? Well, here's the deal, verse 16; for I command you today to love Yahweh your God, to walk in his ways, to keep his commands, decrees and laws, that's a big 'ol stack of things that he's asking us to do, then you will get what's behind door number 1, you will live and you will increase and Yahweh your God will bless you in the land that you're entering to possess. And you will have this good thing that God has for you if you keep his rules. He's not a dictator just trying to flex his muscles, he cares about you, his rules for your life are for your good, that's what he's saying. Verse 17; but if, by the way, you turn away from his commands, your heart goes away, you're not obedient to what he says, you're drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, and don't think flannel graph with some guy in front of some totem pole somewhere, all that is, is saying I've got another authority figure in my life, and its no longer God and his Word. That's idolatry, right? And whether it manifests itself in bowing down to some golden statue, the bottom line is, its people who say well, I know that's what God says, but I kind of got some other source of authority here and whether its my reason or some sort of talk show, or some book I read, or my common sense, I mean its something else and I know God says that, but I've got this...that's idolatry. And he says, if you do that, the problem with that is, verse number 18; I'm just declaring to you this day, you will certainly be destroyed. On a variety of levels, by the way, right? I mean to the extent that you disregard his commands, there's a penalty to pay. And he says, middle of verse 18; you're not going to live long in the land that you're crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. This day, verse 19, note this carefully, I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you, okay? They've seen it, they've heard it, here we are, standing here, clearly setting before you two doors, two paths. I have set before you, door number 1, life and door number 2, death. You have two options, and behind door number 1, there's blessings, and behind door number 2, there's cursings. Now, I just want to tell you, this is good for you now, choose life. I love that, I mean this is not, obey God, obey God. Yeah, well it is obedience to God, but the good news is, he's saying, cant you see where this path takes you? Obey God, choose life, this is good for you. And you should do that so you and your children may live, and that you may love Yahweh your God and listen to his voice and hold fast to him for Yahweh is your life. I mean you want

prosperity, you want fulfillment, you want gratification, you want the satisfaction of being who you're supposed to be and all the blessings that come with that? Well just choose life, walk down this path, love God. You'll walk with him, and when you do, that's the place you're going to want to be. And he'll give you many years in the land that he swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now I know this has a historical context, and we're not entering land, and this is not about the conquest of Israel, but you and I, the principle applies. Following God's commands sometimes comes with consequences that the world throws at us, but the bottom line is, that's the place you want to live, isn't it? Don't you want to walk down the path and have God's blessing and not his opposition? We've been talking about that a lot in Hebrews chapter 11. Well, it comes with beginning and understanding that we're going to let God be God, and what we're talking about is he's a good God. He's a God that cares, he's a God that loves you and his rules for you are good. And at this point a lot of you are going, ohhhh, yeah I know all that, big deal, right? Church, we hear that every week, right? Yeah, I know you all agree with that, right? You all marked "true" on the scantron, I'm all for obedience, right? Here's the problem. Most of our obedience has a limit that we slap on it. We obey God as long as it makes sense for us to do so, and that's the problem. We're all into obedience, we'll keep his commandments, but we do it, most of us, with a limit. You know what? I'm going to do what God says, but right up to the point that it no longer makes sense to me. When it starts to be, well, that would be kind of foolish to do that there, and that all the sudden doesn't seem right for this situation, and that may have been right for those people back there in sandals and robes in the Bible, but now it's a different world so I can't see that God would want me to do that now, here and now in the 21st Century. We have limits to it, and here's the deal, we shouldn't. Why? Because God's commands are for our good. And when he says, listen, don't lie, he means that in your work, as a salesman, with your clients, tell the truth. Well, I don't go there, that might not work, see? Here's the thing... God says he wants from us a kind of obedience where we're going to say, because you're God, we keep your requirements, we keep your standards, we follow your precepts, we do what you say because you are God and we know that you love us and that your commands are good for us. And in the short term, it may seem like man, this doesn't make sense, but in the long term, it will always mean life for you. You want to choose that door; you want to choose that path. That's where we should go in our daily lives because that's how your Christian life started, wasn't it? I mean isn't that how the whole thing started? Didn't you come to Christ as 2 Corinthians 5:15 says, and you said no longer am I going to live for myself, I'm going to live for you who died for me and rose again. Didn't you come to Christ, I mean the basic, fundamental commitment of the Christian life was God, I repent of my sins, I put my trust in you, now I will follow you. Isn't that what it was all about? That's what Christianity is all about. Come and follow me, Jesus says. Here is God, the Word incarnate, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, right, John 1:14; and here was this person saying to us, now do what I do, live like I live, walk as I walk, follow my direction. And we see that lived out in the first generation of Christians as Jesus put his finger out there and said, this is what it's all about, if you want to come after me, here's what you've got to do. Does that sound familiar? Let's go to that passage, Luke chapter 9. It really is the summation of what it means to be a Christian, to follow Christ. I mean it is, in very simple terms, what Jesus is asking you to do the very first day that you said, hey, I'd like to be a Christian; I want to be right with God. Well, he's going to ask you to repent of your sins, put your trust in Christ, now there's the practical matter, what do I do? Well, you need to let God call the shots. Luke chapter 9:23; he said to them all, hey, if anyone would come after me, three things. If you're going to come after me, here's what you've got to do: Number 1, deny yourself. What does that mean? What deny yourself? Here's what deny yourself means. There will be times when you think that the path should go this way, and God's path is going to go that way, and you're going to have to make a decision. And what this is going to feel like is, I think this is right, we should go here, and you're going to have to say, no, I'm committed to

following Christ. You will have to deny yourself. And its practically lived out by the 1st Century disciples. Peter, James, and John, Andrew, they're mending their nets, Jesus says, hey, follow me...and they're thinking, well its not a good time, we've got nets here that we're mending, we're trying to get the business off the ground, just give us a few months, we'll follow you... But he says, no, leave your nets and follow me. And right now what you're going to have to do is deny yourself, deny your agenda, deny what seems to make sense to you and do what I say. And that's going to be hard. As a matter of fact, there may be a price tag attached to that. Next phrase in the verse, look at it, its going to be sometimes like taking up a cross. To do the right thing will be painful at times. Now Jesus had a path to walk that was right for him and it included a literal, physical cross that was stained with his blood. Now, for us, it may not be a literal piece of timber across my shoulders, but you know, sometimes walking the right path, the self denial is so serious and severe that it feels like, man this is really hurting, this is painful. But I'm denying myself and I'm willing to, last three words Jesus says, and follow me. But, then you're going to have to do what I say, just follow after me. And that my sound really really simple, but that is hard when the commands that he gives us seem to not really fit. Like you know, I did not understand why the management team of my apartment had to have my garage looked at, I don't get it, what are you talking about, why? It doesn't make sense to me. And there are often times that I say, I don't get it, and trust me, in the contract here, the Bible, where he's directing you how to live, there'll be so many times where you say, this just doesn't make sense. And here's why, by the way, just a little side bar, because God is smarter than you. And sometimes the path that he thinks is best, you're not going to think is best because he's smarter than you are. And I'm not making that up. Isaiah 55:9, you know that passage? His ways are higher than your ways, his thoughts are higher than your thoughts. You're kind of logging in at a 115 IQ and trust me, I'm at least at 122, that's not what he says. Here's what he says, he says, so far above you are am I in thoughts that its like the distance between earth and the heavens. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my thoughts. So here's the deal, your brain wont always be able to process why this is the right path for you, but this is the right path for you. And we're not talking about some esoteric body of information, we're talking about the Bible, right here, you don't have to go up to heaven to get it, we've got it. You don't have to go across the sea and find it, you have it in your lap. Its not something that you cant comprehend, its stuff you talk about at lunch today, and you know what God's word says. And the question is, is he really going to be your God, are you really going to do what he says, or are you going to say, well, you know what, there are some things that I just cant follow that path, because it will cost me too much of my life. And you know, the parts of my life I've got to make sure I retain and keep and place here, because I live in the real world. Look at the next verse, you still in Luke 9? He says, here's the problem, for those who want to save their own lives, be in charge of it, their own path, the problem is your going to lose it. Its not going to work. But here's the deal, whoever loses his life for me, guess what? He'll save it. On a variety of levels. I know that you think it would be best for you to finish mending your nets and work on the family business, but I'm telling you come with me and preach the kingdom of God. And they said, I'll do that, and you know what they had in that path? Prosperity and blessing from God, his favor, his protection, they found life, choose life, choose God as your life, follow him. Let God be God, God is good. Well, some things are embarrassing. Drop down to verse 26; if anyone is ashamed of me, because there are some things I'm not ashamed of. God is asking me to do some things I'm not ashamed of. He says have a strong marriage; I'm not ashamed of that, right? Let's just have a better marriage, honey, that would be good, let's work on that. But then there are some things he said, that I don't want my co-workers to know that I'm doing that, right? I don't want to wear a t-shirt to work; I don't mind wearing a t-shirt to work in the secular world that says, I'm working on a better marriage. Are you ashamed of that? I'm not ashamed of that. God wants that. But you wouldn't want to put a shirt on that says something like, I give a good percentage of my hard earned money to the church

work, right? Wear that one to work on Tuesday, right? You know, your co-workers will talk to you about that, you really do that, is the tax break really that good, I don't understand, why are you doing that, that doesn't seem right. He says, if you are ashamed, not just of me, look at the next phrase; if anyone is ashamed of me and my words, my commands, my instruction; the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and the Holy angels. There will be a day when we are vindicated for following Christ. The question is, are we going to do it, or are we just going to do it when it's convenient? That's too weak. Are we just going to do it so long it makes sense? If you're thinking, well he's teaching some kind of Methodism, perfectionism or something, reading books by Wesley, what are you talking about? I'm not talking about this. You and I will never follow Christ perfectly, I understand that. You will not obey Christ perfectly, I get that. We will fail. But you dare not obey Christ selectively. Get that? That's different. You and I may not obey Christ perfectly, but let's not obey Christ selectively. Because if you think it's about, well those work for me, I like those, those make sense, oh but God, those commands don't make sense, and that doesn't work for me now, and those are old commands and I'm sure that you would update them by now if you had a new version of the Bible out, but I'm not going to do those, because those are antiquated. If you're going to pick and choose, you've got a problem. Here's the problem, by the way, turn back to Luke 6. I told you this was the world's longest introduction, so long it got its own point. Luke chapter 6. And I quote this from time to time, I'm sure you've read it, but it would be good for us to look at it with our eyeballs this morning. Look at verse 46. Basically what we're saying is we're denying the lets God be God in our lives when we don't follow his instructions consistently across the board. Doesn't mean we have to do it perfectly, but when we don't do it selectively, we're doing the right thing. When we do it selectively, we've got a problem. Look at verse 46, he says; why do you call me Lord Lord, and not do what I say? Isn't that simple? I mean it's so simple. And here's the question for you, okay? Air gets thick, a little conviction now... is he really in charge of your life? Is he Lord for you? I mean Jesus Christ, you said, I'm going to follow you, do you really have that commitment to follow him? Or do you have a nice line drawn in the sand that says, well I'll do it up to here, or is he really Lord for you? Even when the command doesn't fit in your brain so well, even when you think, well, I don't know if that would really work well for me now, or that may cost me something, is he your Lord really? I mean we need to think about that. Because its all about getting back to the basics of the Christian life and the basics of the Christian life are, is he your God? Is he going to be God for you? If he is, then lets keep all of his commands, okay? Now we're not talking about Levitical law, we're not talking about the sacrificial system, we dealt with that in the book of Hebrews, those have been fulfilled. We're talking about the moral directives of God. And don't try and create some funky theology that gets you out of this, right? Oh and its called anti-nomianism, but a lot of people like to create theology that says, the rules don't apply anymore because I'm all about grace. Have we dealt with that enough here? You don't get a pass, the words obedience, submission and compliance still apply to the Christian life here and now. Does it earn our salvation? Oh, please help me with this. No, of course not. We don't get into the family of God by keeping the rules, we get into the family of God by repenting of our sins and putting our trust in Christ. But once you're in, you know what God does? He hands you the contract and he says, choose life, man. Here are the instructions, keep them. And he says this; don't be calling me Lord, Lord, if you're not committed to what I am saying. You should follow my commands. Are you going to follow them perfectly? No, just don't dare try to follow him selectively. His rules apply; do what he says, if for nothing else, because God is God. So, that was a pretty heavy way to start the sermon. We haven't even read Hebrews 11 yet, so let's do that now, because you'll see that you're never going to work your way through verse 30, unless we start with that foundational agreement. But Hebrews chapter 11 verse 30, takes us back into the biblical chronology, we've worked our way from the earliest chapters of Genesis in Hebrews 11, all the way through the

patriarchs lives. We've looked at Moses and Exodus and the Red Sea, and now as the baton is passed in the biblical chronology of the Old Testament to Joshua, we now get a picture of the most important battle that Joshua would fight as he goes as an arm of God's retribution on sinful people who are throwing their babies in the fire to conquer Canaan, the most important battle of all was the battle for Jericho, and the Bible reminds us in verse number 30, that by faith, the walls of Jericho fell after the people had just gotten the best ancient near-eastern big catapults and the big rod that rammed into the gates, they had this really great new weapon that they had just come up with in 1445, it shot these pellets, and after they got all that, is that what happened? No, what did they do to win this city? Marched around it. Now again, if you grew up in church, and if you've been around a while, then you're really handicapped and I'm sorry because all of us, we let it sit in our mind without really snickering at it. Because we think oh yeah, I know that flannel graph story; walls fell down, marched around, great. No, its not great, its really weird, right? Think about it. That's odd. That doesn't even make any sense. Why? I don't get it. God didn't tell them to do that. Yeah, absolutely. Because if they had it up to themselves the way they wanted to do it, they wouldn't have done it this way. As a matter of fact, look at it, Joshua chapter 6. And you've got to know these are some of the most bizarre instructions that God could give for a group of fighters that knew that they had to take this city. Now picture the Promised Land as California, it's certainly not, right? But just picture that, and its bigger than the Promised Land. But if you're going to take it, and they were really into this, and it was all about this, literally to divide and conquer. There was going to be a northern campaign, there was going to be a southern campaign, but we had to strike at the heart of the Promised Land. And to do that was to conquer the fortress of Jericho. You had to do this right in the center. And if you could conquer Jericho, then you could start, you could use that as a base, and you could start to take the northern part, and then you could start to take the southern part. So this was the most critical battle that we were going to fight. And you're out there sharpening your bows and arrows and your swords, you're ready to fight. And you know this is going to be hard, because they've heard about it, I mean there's some spies sent in and everything, and they were ready for you, the gates were barred, the shutters were closed, everybody... that's what it says, look at verse number 1 in Joshua 6. It was shut up tight because of the Israelites and they knew they were coming. So there was no surprise, they were in a defensive posture, no one went out of the city and no one came in, they were ready to dig in and like ancient warfare, you know sometimes that can take forever, right? Here they're going to go, and they're going to cut off the water supply, perhaps, and going to build some siege ramps, and maybe try and take these walls, and so they're there going, okay what do we do Joshua? What's God's instructions, because we're going to follow God's instructions. And the Lord said to Joshua, verse number 2, hey, see look, see that big gigantic fortress in the middle of the Promised Land? Hey, I've delivered Jericho into your hands. Hey, its like it's a done deal. And the King and all of his fighting men, they've already lost. And I'm going, okay, how, are they just going to hand over the keys to the...how is that going to work? Well here's what you're going to need to do, okay? Get ready for the military strategy of God, and here it comes. It's a marching band, okay? It is, look at verse 3; march around the city with all the armed men, now that sounds good, maybe that'll intimidate them, a little psychological warfare, that'll be good. Do it for six days, oh, and by the way, have the seminary grads carry trombones around and they can go toot-toot-toot-toot, as they march around the city. Have the priests carry trumpets and rams horns in front of the ark, you've got the religious box, right, carrying around the ark of the covenant, the tablets and all that, just carry that around, have the overweight pale and pasty guys with the books, the scrolls, have them take their little musical instruments out and they're going to blow the trumpet. Have them march around the city seven times on the seventh day, and with the priests trying to blow the trumpets, right, pastors playing trombones, picture that, I mean it's really an odd sight. When you hear them sound the long blast on the trumpets, have all the people go, whoo-hooo, just do that.

Have the people give a loud shout. Then the walls of the city will collapse and all the people will go up, every man straight in. You won't even need a door, they're will be doors everywhere because all the walls are going to come down. Now you're Joshua, you're in the war room, you're planning to take L.A., right? Get a band together of seminary grads and march. And then, when they play, yell. That'll be great, you'll win. What are you going to do at that point? I'm going to go, God, that's great advice, and I know you're really good at writing Scripture and all that, and thanks for the Sun and the Moon, but we'll handle this one, right? We're going to take care of our...we know ancient Mesopotamia and warfare, we know something about killing people and obviously you're not good at that, so we'll do it our way. Because I'm sure that worked in some other time, maybe in the Garden of Eden or something, but it ain't gonna work now, because we live in the real world, God. And we're not going to follow your instructions about some silly trumpet playing priest, that's not going to work for us, but thanks, okay? And we'll teach it to our kids in Sunday school, but we live in the real world, God, we're not going to do that stuff, but thanks for your advice, okay? But, no thanks. Yeah, you laughed at that, some of you did. I tried hard to get you all to laugh at that. But don't we do the same thing? I mean really? We pick up this book called the Bible, and we read it, and we teach it to our kids and we got our little bible store books, and that's really cool, that's great, keep us on the straight and narrow, and then we go to work and we roll up our sleeves and we say, okay, now how do we conquer this, right? I mean that's great advice, God, but what does God really know about business in Orange County? Does he know much about business strategy? Probably not. But thanks, that's great, I'm sure it worked in bible times with guys in sandals, but doesn't work for us. Or parenting, right? The precepts of bringing up children. Well that was good maybe in the olden days where everybody was like a shepherd boy and all that, but we're in the 21st Century now, right? I mean we have computer age kids, so I'm sure those were great principles back then, but we're kind of in a different age now. Oh, and kind of how you set up the church, that was cool, but not good for us. You know God, that's great advice and we'll teach it to our kids, but that's not how we live, it's kind of antiquated isn't it God? We do that to him don't we? Really, think about it. Because we think somehow God doesn't understand our world. Because when he gives instruction, sometimes we say that doesn't make sense. If I live that way at my office, God, I'll lose clients. I won't be one of the guys, they won't have my back, I'll never make partner there if I do those things. Come 'on God, you can't expect me to live like some Sunday school boy at work. Yeah, that's what he's asking you to do. That's what the Bible says. And if you're not willing to do it, he's got a question for you. It's found in Luke chapter 6; why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do what I say? Don't say that I'm your King if you're not going to obey me. This happens in subtle ways too, and we need to watch out for it. Let's jot down the principle though, because we kind of blew by it. You need to follow God's counter intuitive instructions. Because there are plenty that are, by the way. Let's just list a few, okay? That was all fun and games but how about some conviction now? Here comes. This will only affect 1/3rd of you, less than that, I hope. What are some counter-intuitive instructions? Instructions that just seem so archaic, antiquated, they don't really make much sense? Here's one, how about this? If you're a follower of Jesus Christ, get in your conservative bathing outfit and get into an inflatable blue pool, and get in front of people with a microphone and tell them how you're a follower of Christ and you'll have some overweight seminary grad dunk you in water, okay? How about that. Do that, okay? Well, can I be a Christian and not do that? I've learned a little bit that water baptism doesn't save you, so if that's not.. I don't see why that's important, it doesn't really make sense to me, see? Did Jesus command every follower of Christ to demonstrate that by getting dunked in water? Well can I just kind of do that, on my own, in the shower? My wife can do it in the backyard in the pool or something, right? Or you know, they sprinkled me as a kid, doesn't that count? No, not really, because the Bible says we're to go out and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them. Baptizing what? A disciple that has been made. You were not born a

disciple, you realize that, right? You became a disciple when you put your trust in Christ, when you said, I'll follow you. After that time, I'm talking about 1/3rd of you, I don't know, 1/4th of you, hopefully a smaller...1/16th of you, have you done that yet? Have you? And I know you're saying, I don't know, I don't see why its important, its not my ticket to heaven, and it seems embarrassing kind of and a pool...does that even count? I don't understand. How many of you got baptized in our blue inflatable pool? How many of you have done that? Wasn't that just a terrible, awful experience? Don't you regret it? Don't you wake up and go, what did I do that for? That was really a waste, so unnecessary. Is that how you felt after you got baptized? How'd you feel? It was like.. ohhh. Do you know why that felt so good? Its not because the water is like purified or anything, it had nothing to do with you know...here's the one reason it felt good to you, its because you were being obedient to Jesus Christ. That's why it felt good. That's why when you came out you said, oooh, that was great, best day of my...oh, it was wonderful to get baptized. In an inflatable pool in a business park, right? Yeah, you know why that felt good? It was obedience. And there's some of you right now that are not experiencing that blessing of obedience because you're saying, it doesn't make any sense to me. I'll obey God, but lets talk about things that are really necessary, and that one doesn't seem like it. Have I pounded you enough? You know who you are, right? Who say, I'm a follower of Christ, but you've never been baptized? Here's your assignment, okay. Go back after all this is over and talk to George Agowa (sp?), and give him your email address. We'll get all those together and we'll schedule our next one, and you know what I guarantee you are going to do the day you get dunked in front of people? You're not going to be saying, oh, how did I look, I must have looked really bad, and I'm all wet...you know what you're going to do? You're going to go, yes; I'm following Christ and doing what he says. And you follow that path, God says it will be a path of blessing; it will be a path of spiritual prosperity for you, okay? So let's be obedient to that. That's one that doesn't make sense, that's a counter-intuitive command. And a lot of us are writing it off and rationalizing it because well, I don't get it. How about this one? We mentioned this one earlier, how about giving money to God? Okay, let's talk about that one. See, Ethel, I told you he was going to do that. They said at that announcement boy said, they didn't care about our money, but here we go, they're going to pass the plate again. If your visiting, we're not interested in your money, we're just glad that you're here, that's fantastic. But you do know, if you claim to be a follower of Christ, God says that you're supposed to be giving proportional to your blessing and how God has been blessing you. We don't talk about it much, we're not hammer people, because people think we're trying to air-condition the dog house, I understand, okay. You had to be around in the 80's to get that one...but the point is this, people think, you know, we don't want to stress it because people think, people misunderstand this, but the bottom line is this, the Bible says, 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and 9; Galatians 6; we could go all over the Bible, that you are commanded to take your hard earned money and as an act of worship to God, put that in the bag. And there's a lot of you, that bag comes by every week and you go, well, pass it by, and you know what you're thinking? It's not a good time for me now, its not the season of my life, not now. And it wouldn't make sense for us, well maybe I'll find a few bucks somewhere, but you know, we're not going to write checks like a proportional to our income because that just doesn't make sense. Here's a verse for you if that's your thinking, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do what I say? Jesus has got a question for you, see? Is it about money? Its not about money, it's about your obedience to God. How about those of us that at work we life a different life, we live by a different set of rules, we don't live by Sunday school rules, because those rules, if you applied them at work, it wouldn't happen, and I've got to fit tin there, or I'm never going to be able to provide for my family. And so we say, I'll obey you, but it stops at the office door. Okay, a little conviction there. Hopefully you're not an un-baptized non-giving, compromising, business man. Because at this point, you're leaving, people are leaving, I see them. But, there's conviction here for all of us, because at some point, we look at scripture and we say,

that doesn't make sense. And the Bible would say, follow his counter-intuitive principles and instructions anyway. Is he not your God? And if he is your God, obey him. Why do you call me Lord, Lord and not do what I say? I said this creeps in, in subtle ways, I think of Naaman, remember Naaman in the Old Testament? He was this big military commander, and he was serving the King of Aram and let's look at this passage. 2 Kings chapter 5, here's an example of a guy that you think...and you might find yourself in his sandals, because when it comes down to it a lot of us have pre-conceived ideas about how Christian life is supposed to work. And when God doesn't take us down the path that we think he should, the expected Christian path, then we start to throw a flag on the play, and that's exactly what Naaman did, and what God is looking for is a real kind of humble, simple obedience to just say, I'll do whatever God's word says, even if its not what I expect. Look at verse number 1; Now Naaman was the commander of the army of the king of Aram, and he was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded because through him Yahweh had given victory to Aram. Now we don't think about that, that's a whole other sermon, I realize that even people outside of the covenant community of God, if they experience success, that's where it comes from. Different sermon, but interesting insight. He was a valiant soldier, but he had one problem. What was his problem? He had a health problem. He had leprosy. Now remember if you've been through my teachings on GT 1's and GT 2's, God thinks breaking of natural law, you need to understand, this is one of the three rashes of the miraculous in scripture. We had Joshua and Moses, that was one rash of the miraculous and from that came the writing of the early part of the Old Testament. You had Elisha and Elijah and miraculous supra-natural events, and by that I mean the suspension of natural law and out of that came the classical period of all the prophets. And then you had Jesus and the Apostles, and out of that you had the New Testament. And that's a whole other sermon, and hopefully you've heard it, if not you can get the CD. But the point is, we are right in the middle of the second rash of the breaking of natural law, to where you could go to someone, in this case Elijah or Elisha, and you could have something stupendous and miraculous take place. And that was happening, and they heard about it, and it says in verses 2 through 8 that they go through all this rigor-ma-roll because they heard about the miraculous things that were happening. Bottom line is, drop down to verse number 9, Naaman is convinced to go and to get help from the Prophet Elisha. So he goes with his horses and chariots, big important valiant mighty man, and he stops at the door of Elisha's house, hey Elisha, you the miracle man. I hear you're healing people with just the touch of your hand, I've got leprosy, help me out. And Elisha's busy doing something, right? Reading a magazine, writing something, I don't know, preparing a sermon, and he doesn't even get out of his desk chair. Look at verse 10; he sends a messenger. Now that's not very nice. The secretary goes down and says, oh yeah, you know Elisha has heard you, you've got leprosy, that's great, here's what Elisha says, he says go wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River, and your flesh will be restored to you and you'll be cleansed so okay, hope that helps, see you later. And Naaman's going, that aint what I expected. I mean, if God's going to do something, this is my expectation and you know what? You're not meeting it right now, Mr. Prophet Bible Man, I'm not liking this. And look at what the next verse says, Naaman, he went away angry and he was mad and he thought, surely he would come out to me, I mean at least I wouldn't get a secretary, and he would stand and we'd have this big flash of verbiage in the name of Yahweh, he would do something, maybe wave his hand over the spot on my body, I mean that's what I expect, and he would cure my leprosy. I'm not just going to go dunk in a river somewhere, I mean aren't Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, aren't they better than any of these lame rivers over here in Israel, come 'on, man, I could go wash...if its just about a bath, I can take a bath back home, right? He's torqued. So he turns, bottom of verse number 12, and he went off in a rage. He went off in a tiff, a little huff, he's mad, forget it then. See, if God's word isn't going to do the thing, or direct me to do the thing that I think is appropriate in this situation, I'm leaving. Now, thank God for Naaman's servants, or at least Naaman should be

thinking that, because one of his servants is scratching his head going, wasn't the goal to get healed here? Wasn't the goal to see God's blessing? Now if you wanted God's blessing, and the prophet came out and said, well lets go through this whole rigor-ma-roll, and we'll have this big event, we'll gather everybody together, and he makes you jump through hoops, wouldn't you have jumped through those hoops? I mean come 'on, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, you would have done it. How much more then, if he tells you a simple thing, something basic like, just go wash and be cleansed? Come 'on Naaman, think about it, isn't the goal here to be in step with whatever the prophet says? Stop putting your pre-conceived ideas about what you expect God's word should say, and just do what God's word says. And what God's word says is just go dunk in the Jordan River seven times. And somewhere between verse 13 and 14, Naaman goes, yeah, I guess the whole point was that, so okay. And he went down, and he dipped himself in the Jordan River seven times, and that takes faith, right, because number 4, I'm thinking, what am I doing, number 5, why am I here, number 6, is this going to work, right? Number seven he comes up, just as the man of God had told him, he kept God's word here, he did what God's prophet said, and his flesh was restored and he became clean like that of a young boy. Now what's the point? Do what God's word says. Do it. Well, it's not what I'm thinking it should say. If you and I were to write our own bible, right? Would it be different than this one? Yeah. But, remember what I said about God, he's smarter than you. He's got a reason for all this stuff. And I know some of the stuff doesn't seem to fit in the 21st Century, let's follow his word anyway. And then we'll get to heaven and we'll figure out whether we should have been smarter and done what we thought was right, or whether we should have stuck to the instructions. I want to stick to the instructions, don't you? Let's do it. That's why this is all about God's Word. That's why at Compass Bible Church, the Bible is central. Its about saying, this is his word, we're going to keep it. Why? Because God is God, and even when his rules seem odd to me, they don't fit in my little pea brain, I'm going to keep his commandments anyway. That should be our commitment. Are we going to keep them perfectly? No, we're going to stumble and fall, but lets not try and keep them selectively. Follow his counter-intuitive instructions. There are several. Whether they relate to your kids, your business, your giving, whatever it is, your service to the King, you're going to be to the place where you're going to be able to recall the fundamental memory verse of our childhood, which after John 3:16 is probably Proverbs 3, 5, and 6, am I right? What did that say? Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, remember this phrase, lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways, how many ways? Well not at work, in all your ways, acknowledge him, that means do what he says, and he will make your path straight. That's Proverbs 3, 5 and 6 and the key phrase in the first verse is, not on your own understanding, lean not on your own understanding. And most of us stop at verse 6, but if you were to quote verse 7, because I must have gone to extra credit school as a kid, but I had to learn verse 7. And verse 7 says, and don't be wise in your own eyes. Shun evil, do what is right. What's the point? The real stumbling block for me is thinking, well, God this one doesn't apply here. That's my own understanding. And it's being wise in my own eyes. God, don't I know better about 21st Century life than you? And the answer is no. His timeless word is applicable to your life and mine. Let's just do it, even when its counter-intuitive. Follow his counter-intuitive instructions. Bottom line, trust and obey, that's the bottom line. Even when you think, I don't know where this is going to take us, they walked around the city seven times, overweight, pasty white trombone playing seminary grads. And the walls came down. And God said, see? Just do what I say. Hebrews chapter 11 verse 31; there was an interesting little caveat in the story of the taking of Jericho, and it had to do with this lady in verse number 31. Now we've learned a lot about obedience and the 11th chapter of Hebrews, but now what is interesting about this is the person that becomes a template for our faith is a gal that is introduced to us in verse 31 as the prostitute Rahab. Now if you're looking for spiritual mentors, I'm thinking the business card should not read, prostitute, right? I've got a new disciple that's training me and what does

she do? She's a prostitute, right? Lady of the night, right? You don't want that, that doesn't fit. Matter of fact, look at the passage. Scan your eyes through Hebrews 11. She gets the last full verse in the chapter. She's the one on the list that we end with in terms of particular specific examples that give some explanation, Rahab the prostitute? Now you remember the story? She welcomed the spies, sent them out another way, and she was spared. Now we could look at how she did that, and that's a story, but we've seen a lot of those in Hebrews 11. What's interesting and earth shattering about this passage is that Rahab becomes an instructor of our faith. That's the amazing thing. And it was amazing even in that day. Turn back to Joshua 6 for just a second. Rahab is spared, she does what she's told, she keeps the command at great risk to her own well being, and now, she's spared by Joshua and his men. And look what it says about her in verse number 25; Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute with her family and all who belonged to her because she hid the men Joshua has sent as spies to Jericho. Now we know that part, now here's the amazing part that just stops us in our tracks, underline this; and she lives among the Israelites to this day. HmMMM, now at the end, when Joshua is writing the chronology of the conquest and this is years after it happened, he goes, oh yeah, and by the way, down the street here and around the corner, yeah this gal we just talked about, she's living right over there if you want to talk to her family, they live right over here. The prostitute lives with you guys? And wasn't she a Canaanite, an inhabitant and a citizen of Jericho? You mean the sinful person from the sinful city, from the sordid background, and she's living with you guys now, what are you doing? Here's the deal, what was important to us was that she was willing to do what God asked her to do, even if it was at great personal risk to herself, even if it was a bit counter-intuitive for the rest of the people who lived in Jericho. She just wanted to do the right thing. And here's the deal, if she's willing to do the right thing, she's with us. And she lives right over there; you want to go see her? You can talk to her, interesting story...God took her out of that past, and now she's living among us. It's an amazing thing. It's an amazing thing because it's so much like God, isn't it? That God keeps showing us that all he really cares about is whether you and I are going to let God be God and keep his instructions. That's what he cares about. Is that how we get saved? That's not what it's about, it's not about getting saved. It's about a path of obedience and sanctification. And God says, If you're going to let me be God, I don't care what your background is, I don't care what you've been through, I don't care who you are, I'm looking for someone who's heart is willing to obey me. And sometimes it's not the guys that you would expect. As a matter of fact, it's the most unexpected people. And you know, we have a problem with that. We struggle with that. I just want to ponder that for just a few minutes. Rahab the prostitute now, is our instructor in verse number 31. That's odd. How is that? Because God is not interested in her past, God is just interested in whether or not she's now willing to obey him, that's it, that's God's concern about her, that's it. You know even godly people can really stumble over this? You think Samuel was a godly man? Samuel was a godly guy. This guy he's walking with God, hearing God as a kid, just amazing guy. And when he was sent out to get the second king of Israel because the first king was a failure, why? Because the people of Israel chose the first king, they chose Saul, head and shoulders above everybody else. God says, great, you choose the first one; I'll choose the second one. Isn't that how it works? So he sends out Samuel to go get the second king. I'm going to pick this one; because your first one was an utter failure and you picked him, now let me pick the next one. So he sends out Samuel with his flask of oil. Now go anoint the second king of Israel. And so he goes and God directs him to the house of Jesse, and he's got all these big up and coming sons, right? All these very talented and very good looking sons, and he has them all out there, and he says, okay, I guess God's next anointed king is here and so I've got the oil, I'll anoint the next one. And so the first one stands up. Now you know, Jesse is going to send the most likely candidate first. And so he sends him, how about this one? Is this the one? And I don't know how, but Samuel is going to try to get the green light from God here, and he looks at him, do you remember what happened in that verse? Do you

know what Samuel said? Samuel said, surely the Lord's anointed stands before me. He thought that's the guy, that's him, clearly, that's the guy. First choice of Jesse and I'm thinking that looks like king material to me, this guys going to be a great leader, he's going to teach us a lot, he'll be a wonderful leader for us. And do you remember what God said in response to Samuels's excitement about the first son of Jesse? He said, hey Samuel, that's really great, I'm glad you like him, he's got his hair gelled, briefcase in his hand, he's looking good, he's ready to go be king, but you know what? Here's the deal, here's your problem, Mr. Godly man, you're constantly looking at the outward appearance, and that's not how I view people. You're looking at their resume, your looking at how they come off, you're looking at all the wrong things, because I look at the heart, that's what I'm looking at. Rahab the prostitute is going to teach us how to trust God? Absolutely, you know why? Because her heart changed, and her heart was not willing to obey God at great personal risk to her own safety. And God says, learn from that, see? You picture the scene, Samuel went through all the brothers, right? Jesse had them all, they were all gelled up and ready to go, and he was like, well, I got a green light on none of them. I mean they were done interviewing, right? Dad, now this does not speak highly for David. Dad didn't even bring David to the interview, right? Now Samuel says, do you have any other sons? I don't get it, he's supposed to be here, but none of these guys are supposed to be king. Well I've got another one, but I'm not thinking he's the guy, he's a little runt actually, and he's out watching the sheep, I don't, no, he didn't even shower today. No, not him. Well, is that the only other son you have? Yeah it is. Well, go get him. In comes the kid, think about it, all the other guys were decked out and here comes the kid. And God says, that's the one. Why? Because David was a man after Gods own heart. What's God interested in? Heart. But the resume? Ummmm...not going to fit your resume. As a matter of fact, you're not going to pick a former prostitute to be your Sunday school teacher, I'm just thinking that's not going to happen. But God says, no, you can learn a lot from that. I pluck these people out by my grace, and set them in positions to do things for me because I am the God of grace, and it's about me, not about you. Rahab, yeah. We need to learn to accept that. Number 3 on your outline, let us learn to humbly, and its going to take humility, accept God's unusual family. And it's unusual, just look around, right? There's some odd folks that make it into this thing. And I know you and I, we can do that, and we can think about yeah, God has chosen some interesting people. Oh, by the way, think about Jesus and who he chose. He's choosing twelve people to change the world and turn the world upside down, right? Who does he choose? Are those the twelve guys you're going to choose? I'm thinking if I'm going to choose twelve guys to turn the world upside down, it's going to kinda be like Trump and the Apprentice show, right? I want résumé's, I want stacks, I want video tapes, I want to pick the best, and then I want to get them in and test them, and see them in action and I'm going to pick the guys with just the right buttoned up kinds of profiles. Who did he choose? Well, it started with guys like the sons of thunder, remember those guys? Those aren't the kind of guys you want on your executive team to change the world. Sons of thunder, hair trigger, they're lighting up, they're weeee, they're not the guys you want, okay? Then you've got guys like, I don't know, Thomas, you want him on your team? For what, right? What's Thomas going to do? Thomas is not the guy you want. And then you've got a guy like Simon the zealot, I'm not talking about Simon Peter, the other Simon, Simon the zealot. I mean that's what they call him, here comes the zealot. And that was a particular political branding in Israel, and those were the nuts, those were the guys watching the Jerusalem news at night and they're throwing their sandals at the TV set every night. They just cant, they can't handle...they're just, ahhhhhh. Okay, take the zealot, that'll be good. And then you've got guys like, let's throw in a turn-coat IRS worker, right? Matthew Levi the tax collector, which is worse than an IRS worker because they really were selling out to the foreign occupying power. Oh yeah, Levi, come 'on Matthew, you're going to be on our team too. Peter, right? He's going to quarterback the team. You've read about Peter. Is this the team you're picking? It's not the team I'm picking.

That's the team that God picked. Oh, and by the way, when you're looking around thinking, yeah, I guess he does pick some pretty unlikely candidates to be on his team, be sure when you are really struggling with that, to bring a mirror to that session. Because he let you in this thing too, right? And I think if you think about it long enough and stare in the mirror long enough, you're going to go, well, I'm not quite sure why I got in. Its like Groucho Marx, I'd never join a club that would allow me as a member, right? That's a good line. And if you think about it long enough, its true, he brought you in with your past, and your propensities, think about that. Who did he choose, and I know Mathias and the casting lots, Acts 1, but really, the twelve apostleship was outstanding and God had picked that last one that would be younger and bring all that into the next generation, the second half of the book of Acts, and he chooses the Apostle Paul, who was named Saul, which is appropriate because its much like the first choice of Israel for king, the wrong choice. As a matter of fact in 1 Timothy chapter 1, he describes himself as the worst of all sinners. And I know you think, well, that's just a low point, maybe he was melancholy that day, and he's just hard on himself, its just hyperbole...you know what? It's not. Earlier in the passage he calls himself a blasphemer, that's a capital offense for an up and coming Pharisee, he calls himself one who is a violent man, right? And a persecutor of the fledgling church. I opposed God's work, I didn't even have the sense to see that this was God, I'm angry, I want to kill people, and I blaspheme God and I was the worst of all sinners, but God chose me, he says, as an example of his unlimited patience that he might be an example to those who would come later, like, that's us, and believe on him for eternal life. Why is the guy who wrote half of the New Testament, a guy who had really no reason to be part of the team? Because God wanted to show that you have a part in the team, and the guy across the way has a part in the team, and Rahab has a part of this thing called the Christian life. And by the way, sidebar your honor, have you read Matthew chapter 1? It's the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Guess who's name shows up in that list? The prostitute, Rahab the prostitute. Rahab, now I'm thinking, I don't want her in the genealogy of Jesus, please. And you know who else shows up? Bathsheba. Have you read Matthew chapter 1? Bathsheba, the gal who's having an adulteress affair with the king of Israel? Can we just... we need somebody else to be the eternal ancestor of Christ. Tamar? She's in the list too, by the way. Tamar? Having sex with her Dad, have you read that story? It's not good. And she is now honored with being a matriarch in the ancestry of Jesus Christ who you will bow down and worship one day. And you know who's going to stand in line saying, yeah, we were a part of that genealogy? Tamar, right? And Rahab the prostitute and people like Bathsheba. What's god trying to say to us? Here's what he's trying to say to us, turn to one last passage. 1 Corinthians chapter 1, here's what he's trying to say. He's trying to say this is all about grace. Which, by the way, if you were to turn to 1 Timothy 1, you'd see that was the focus of Paul saying that he poured out his grace abundantly on me, worst of sinners. But same theme in 1 Corinthians 1, he says, guys, just look around, I do some unexpected things when it comes to putting people in place. Verse 26; Brothers think of what you were when you were called, not many of you were wise by human standards; we didn't find the PhD's, right? Not many of you were influential; nobody was calling you to do an interview on Nova, right on PBS? Tell us, give us some insight here. Nobody asked you that, right? And not many of noble birth, right, you weren't of the royal family, no one chasing you, no paparazzi coming after you, just a normal person. And everybody else around you, just normal people, blue collar people, we're just normal folks. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. Because, by the way, across the page, all those wise men in their wisdom, they couldn't seem to find God earlier in the...all the philosophers of the age, they didn't get it. But he chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, he chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong, verse 28, he chose the lowly things of the world, the despised things, I'm getting the point God, alright? Oh, the things that are not, right? This is not helpful for your self-esteem, I get it, but it's true, you and I are nothing. We are not the brightest bulbs in the pack here. God chose us, he chose people like Rahab to be rich in

faith, to nullify the things that are, so that, purpose clause, verse 29, underline it, here's the reason, so that no one may boast before him. It isn't about you, okay? God is God, you're not. Obey him and look in the mirror and look across the aisle, and say, man, it's about grace, it's all about grace. God is so good to choose low-life's like us so no one can boast. It's because of him, verse 30, that you're in Christ Jesus. I mean that's what they're saying in verse 30, it's because of him. You think that's what they said to Rahab? It was easy to say about Rahab. Hey, you know what? It isn't really about you, you're not here because of you, you're here because of God's grace. Yeah, that's why he chooses the lowly, to remind us of that, because of him, you are in Christ, who has become for us, wisdom from God. That is our righteousness, our holiness and our redemption. We didn't get here because of our righteousness, not because of our holiness, we didn't produce our own redemption, God did all that. Therefore, here it is, bottom line, as it is written, let him who boasts, boast in the Lord. When it comes down to it, that's what this is all about. It takes ambitious faith sometimes to get ourselves off the pedestal, and to say, you know what? It's all about God. God is God, his instructions are to be followed, not selectively, but whole heartedly, you are our Lord, we'll do what you say. And you know what? When we look around and we say, God, who are we to be a part of this? Now you're thinking right, it's all about grace, the unexpected team, the unusual family that we're a part of. God is a great God; let's just obey him this week. Let's just...he's looking at your heart, he just wants you to follow him. Let's do that for his glory this week.