

# **Famous Last Pictures, Part 2**

**Series: Summer at Grace 2021**

**2 Timothy 2:20-26**

**Robert Morris --- August 1, 2021**

Well, good morning, people of Grace.

Whether it's William Wallace screaming, "Freedom!" at the end of his life, or Captain Miller telling Private Ryan under a bridge in France to "Earn this," or Mama Gump telling Forrest on her bed, "Life's like a box of chocolates, Forrest. You never know what you're going to get." Maybe it's Apollo Creed who says, "Don't stop this fight ... no matter what."

Or, maybe less famous, people who said something like this in their last moments on earth: "Watch this ..." Or, "Hold my beer."

Last words are important. They tell us something. And last week, if you joined us, whether you were here in person or online, we looked at the first of two famous last pictures from the Apostle Paul to his protégé Timothy. And today we're going to continue where we left off, and we're going to look at and eavesdrop in on this conversation that happened a couple of thousand years ago that is still as timely and applicable as it was then. And so, if you missed last week, no worries, you're going to be able to hop right in today.

But here's the framework of the passage. What would you say to one of your closest friends if you knew tomorrow was your last day? That's the kind of urgency with which the Apostle Paul speaks to his friend Timothy. And from a cold and lonely dark prison in Rome awaiting his execution, he sends some final instructions, these famous last pictures that we see in chapter 2 of the Book of 2 Timothy.

This passage does not only apply to Timothy or to spiritual leaders or pastors. Timothy is one of those, and it certainly does apply to those men and women. But I think it applies to each and every one of us, because the kind of character that we need from our spiritual leaders is the kind of character that exemplifies what it means to become like Christ in all of life, and that's every disciple's call and every believer's call.

## **Famous Last Picture from Last Week**

And so, last week we looked at 2 Timothy 2:14-19 and we discovered this kind of famous last picture, this desired vision or image of what life should look like. And we looked at how Paul wanted Timothy to be an approved worker, a no-shame worker. He wanted him to show up at the end of his life with no regrets, no reason to hang his head, not perfect, but approved. And he gave Timothy four things to avoid or do in his pursuit of that grand finish line. And today we're going to continue and pick up right where we left off in the Scripture and look at Paul's next metaphor or word picture to consider, another desired vision for his life and, I think, our life as well.

## **Vessels of Honor**

Now, when I would visit my grandmother as a kid, I distinctly remember this one part of her house. You need to understand, my grandparents were not wealthy at all by any stretch of the means, and it always seemed a little bit out of place to me that my grandmother had this grand case. It was this large, prominent china cabinet in what wasn't a very large house. And it was full of all these precious breakables, again, in a very modest, very narrow, small mobile home that was maybe 1,200 square feet, where she and my grandfather raised nine kids. You can imagine how out of place this seemed to me as a young child.

And there were a number of different antique sets of dishes and different sets of china that she had collected over the years from her family and friends and different situations. And here's the thing. As a Morris grandchild, you learned quickly—and I mean really quick—you only had to learn the lesson once that you did not horse around next to this china cabinet. Those things were honored. They were special. To my grandmother those things had incredible value. They had a special purpose and a special place in her heart. And if you asked her, she would light up and she would tell you about all the different characteristics of these different sets of dishes, what they were made of, their characteristics, and why they were important, and those types of things.

She never talked about her trash can like this. Not once. We get it. We understand. Every owner of a house has these things, these things that are valuable, precious, and have a special purpose and belong in a special place on a shelf somewhere. They're treated a bit differently.

We all know this. There's a big difference between that crystal vase your grandmother handed down to you and your little plastic trash can.

The Apostle Paul uses a very similar illustration today in our passage starting in verse 20. It reads like this:

**“Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.” 2 Timothy 2:20-21**

All right, did you catch it? Did you see the image? That phrase—“if you clean yourself from what is dishonorable you will be a vessel for honorable use.” Paul's second desired vision for Timothy's life is for him to be a vessel of honor, a clean, clean vessel. Other translations you might be reading in your Scriptures might say “an instrument for a special purpose” or “a special utensil.” But Paul uses this analogy of a house and the vessels in it. He's pointing to something that Timothy and every reader of that time would have known and that you and I know as well: that there are some utensils that are for honorable use and some for dishonorable use. There are some things that are used for eating and cooking and special occasions, and there are other things that are used for removing things from the house.

If Paul were living today, he might say it like this. Every house has toilets and drinking glasses. Every house has trash cans and your finest set of dishes. And what you put on them and what you put in them is very different. There's a purpose. There's a difference in the way we treat our trash can and toilet versus our finest set of dishes.

And Paul describes these honorable vessels this way. He says, *Look, they're clean.* There's a difference. You clean your dishes frequently; you might hose your trash can out a couple of times a year. They're set apart. They have a special place. There's that place on the mantel or in that cabinet or that place where you keep the special things away from danger. They're useful, they have a purpose, and they're ready for every good work. They're ready to fulfill the purpose for which they were created. *You know this, Timothy. Every house has special vessels that are clean, set apart, useful, and ready for every good work.*

And Paul says, *Look, Timothy, I want you to be this kind of special instrument, this kind of clean vessel. I want you to be a kind of instrument in the hands of maybe Jesus Christ himself*

*in the Lord's house, a minister, a vessel of honor. I want you to be a special instrument used for honorable and great purposes.*

I loved this image as I ran across it in my Bible reading a couple of months ago. I started thinking, *What would it be like to be a vessel of honor? What would it be like to have a prominent place in the Lord's house? What would it be like to have that honored and special place and purpose in the china cabinet of the Lord's house? Clean, useful, set apart, ready for every good work?* And I said, *I'm in. Sign me up.*

But then I kept reading. And Paul tells me what I'm going to have to do to be that. And it's striking.

So, in verse 22 we have: *Look, if you want to be that, in light of that vision, if you're going to do that, here's what you need to know.* Because this kind of vessel of honor does certain things and it looks a certain way. And Paul tells us the actions and the characteristics of this kind of vessel of honor, starting in verse 22. And so, in the next paragraph he's going to give us two applications or actions, four characteristics or traits of a vessel of honor, and he's going to give us the big overarching reason why. He's going to give us the purpose, so that, just in case we have this thought as we read this in the back of our heads whether or not it's going to be worth it, he's going to give us the why, because it's going to be difficult to live this way.

He could have just told us to do it. He could have played his apostle card and said, "Just do it," but he wants to give you a little peek behind the curtain and explain a little bit of the why so that you understand the purpose of these kinds of special instruments or vessels of honor.

And so, let's read the rest of our passage today in its entirety, and then we're going to work through it a little bit at a time, and we're going to see, again, the actions, the traits, and the "why," the big purpose.

So, you want to be a vessel of honor?

**"So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will." 2 Timothy 2:22-26**

Okay, so let's walk through that passage a little bit at a time. First, the actions and the applications. You want to be a vessel of honor? You want to be a special instrument of the Lord's house? You're going to need to do what verse 22 says, right? So, flee from youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

### **Action #1: Flee and Pursue**

The first thing a vessel of honor does is they flee and pursue. They flee and pursue. This is a common use of words for the Apostle Paul. He actually tells Timothy to do almost the exact same thing in his first letter in chapter 6. He's repeating himself for emphasis. He wants Timothy to have his life marked with this idea of fleeing some things and pursuing others.

When I read those words "flee" and "pursue," my mind instantly went to a time a few years back when I was coaching my son's tee-ball team. Now there are a number of things frustrating about coaching five- and six-year-old boys in tee-ball. But one of the things that was a little frustrating at one moment was teaching them how to base run and how to do it properly and how to run hard through the base and not slow down before they got there.

And so, as any good coach, I set out to try and fix this problem, and every practice we spent the last ten minutes working on base running. And it was fun, because what happened over time was there became two different kinds of motivations, or versions of motivation, that became our team's favorites. They were the ones they would always yell to each other. And it was interesting to see how different boys responded to different motivations.

So, one day, just on kind of a whim—there was one of our boys who wasn't giving very good effort and I was trying to motivate him any way I could to run hard all the way through the base. And I asked him, "Look, man." I took him aside and said, "Just once, would you run like the meanest, nastiest, dog is chasing you." Friends, you should have seen this kid get down the line. The *Chariots of Fire* music came on, it was a sight to behold for this coach's eyes. He must have had that image in his head, because he was moving.

And so, from time to time, the boys on our team would yell for each other and encourage each other, "The dog's behind you! Hurry! Hurry! Hurry!"

There were other times where I'd put them, in practice, on first or second base, and I'd say, "Look, you're the winning run. It's the last inning, the ball game is tied, and you've got to

get there fast.” And it was fun to see them respond to that. Instead of something that was behind them, they were running towards something, trying to attain it. And pretty sure you’d hear the boys yelling for each other and encouraging each other, “Come on, you’re the winning run! Hurry, hurry, hurry!”

Now, I’m not sure what motivates you best in your spiritual walk. Some of you may be more motivated some days to run fast out of concern of what’s behind you, what’s chasing you. I think that’s valid, especially considering all the verses we have in Scripture that talk about our enemy like a predator chasing prey, or the snares and the traps of this world, or the dangers of a life lived lazily and without purpose.

Some of you may be more motivated by the goal that’s out in front of you. You know the promises and the rewards for the folks with a life well lived, and you’re thinking, “Yeah, I want to chase that down. I want to pursue that.”

Here’s the thing, friends: I think they both work. It might be the reason that Paul put them together. Some days you’re going to need that image of a mean, nasty dog chasing you. And some days you’re going to need that glorious picture of that winning run, that better future you’re trying to obtain.

So, Paul tells Timothy, *Look, a vessel of honor is going to flee and pursue*. And that word “flee” is not a jog. The root word of that is where we get our word “fugitive” from. And fugitives are attempting to escape an imminent threat. And Paul says, *Look, a vessel of honor is going to flee. They’re going to run. They’re not going to jog, it’s not going to be a sundown stroll. You’re going to flee from all the wayward impulses and all the passions of youth*.

As I was reading this passage, I found it really interesting that Paul does not make a long list of what those are here. If you’ve read enough of Paul’s letters, you know that one of the things he often does is rattle off a big long list of all the things you’re trying to avoid. And he doesn’t do that here. I think he knows at this point that Timothy probably knows exactly what he’s talking about. And even us as readers, in this room, we probably know exactly what he’s talking about, these kinds of wayward impulses, these passions of the young that we need to flee.

He says, *Look, even if that doesn’t work—if the image of fleeing doesn’t work—would you pursue something? Would you run it down? Would you chase after it? Would you pursue it, like running through the airport or a chase scene in your favorite romantic comedy? Pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace like that. Because if you want to be a vessel of honor, an*

*instrument for a special purpose, you're going to need to flee spiritual danger in order to escape it, and you're going to need to pursue spiritual good in order to attain it. So, flee, pursue. While you're running from one thing, you are running towards another.*

## **Action #2: Avoid Foolish, Ignorant Controversies**

The second application he gives to the vessels of honor is found in verse 23. And it reads like this. He says to Timothy,

**“Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels.” 2 Timothy 2:23**

Now, I don't know about you, but if you were here last week, I'm beginning to get the impression that Timothy might have a problem with being quarrelsome. That's two weeks in a row now, Paul. But he's probably in good company. I know he's in good company with me, and I'm sure there are others in here that he's in good company with. But he says, *Look, a vessel of honor, a special instrument kind of vessel is going to avoid foolish and ignorant controversies. They breed quarrels. They're going to have nothing to do with it. They're going to avoid it.*

A special instrument has to learn how to develop a discerning mind about when to engage and when not to engage. And we talked a lot about that last week. But I found it interesting—this word “foolish” here in the original language is the word *moros*, which is where we get our word “moron” or “moronic.” Paul is not pulling any punches. He's coming right at us here.

He's not saying that there's not a time to debate or argue. He's already instructed Timothy numerous times to guard doctrinal issues that are important. But he's saying here, *Look, Timothy, you don't smear mud or something worse on a vessel of honor. That's not the way you treat it.*

And so, he tells him to avoid these foolish and ignorant arguments that breed quarrels. It's a vivid visual. He uses that word “breed” or “produce”, or other translations say “beget.” It's almost like he's saying, *Timothy, you, mixed with foolish, ignorant controversies—that baby is not pretty. The baby that is made from those two partners is fights and quarrels, and that's not what a vessel of honor looks like. We need to get some different genetics in the mix. The product of that relationship, Timothy, is not producing the right kinds of things in your life. We need to change it up a bit.*

So, Paul, again, after he inspires him to become a vessel of honor, he gives him two applications: flee and pursue. And then, avoid foolish and ignorant controversies.

Next, Paul goes on in verse 24 and 25 to give us four characteristics or traits of a vessel of honor, a vessel that's used by the king or the master of the house. It says this:

**“And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness...”  
2 Timothy 2:24-25**

Paul’s saying, *Let me give you a picture. Let me give you the characteristics to chase after. If you want to be a vessel of honor, these are the qualities. When you look at it up on a shelf, this is the shape of that kind of vessel.* And he rattles off these four things.

Instead of being quarrelsome, this vessel of honor is kind to everyone, able to teach, patient when wronged, and gentle in correction.

### **Trait #1: Kindness to Everyone**

Let’s look at the first of those—trait number one--kind to everyone. I don’t know about you, but I really wish Paul wouldn’t have said “everyone.” I’d like to apply for an exemption. I’ve got a few people—but I really have to be kind to everyone. Come on, Paul. But vessels of honor are kind to everyone. They’re not fighters. Special instruments aren’t trolls. They don’t poke the bear just to poke the bear. They aren’t looking for a fight—they’re peacemakers. They’re not trying to stir things up. And when you look at a vessel of honor, the trait that you see is kindness to everyone. You don’t see them being harsh or abusive or overbearing or unkind or thoughtless.

*Timothy, there’s a kindness to everyone. Even in authority, maybe as a Christian leader in your church, Timothy, there’s a kindness to everyone that marks the vessel of honor. Look, demonstrate the kind of kindness to everyone that stands in stark contrast to the world around you.*

### **Trait #2: Ability to Teach**

A vessel of honor is kind to everyone and also able to teach. I don’t think this necessarily means that you always have to be the smartest person in the room. But wherever you’re at, whatever you’ve been given, whatever you’ve learned, you have the ability, and maybe even the



desire to go with it, to communicate that effectively—what you do have—and pass it on to others and help them grow and learn and be shaped. Whatever spiritual knowledge you have, whatever insight you’ve been given by God, you want to pass that along to others.

And we know good teachers when we see them. Because good teachers, the best teachers, study their students, because they care. They want to craft that lesson however they can so that student can learn it in only the way that they can learn it. They care about those people. They think, *What would be the best way for them to hear this truth and make it take root in their lives?*

And so, a special instrument, a vessel of honor, has the ability and the desire to go with it, to help in the process of others growing and learning and spiritually shaping others.

### **Trait #3: Patience When Wronged**

A vessel of honor: kind to everyone, able to teach, and patient when wronged. Not just patient when things are going your way. My goodness, that’s hard enough as it is. I have a problem with that already. But “patiently enduring evil” is the phrase used there in Scripture.

Paul really implies here to Timothy, *Look, you’re going to be wronged. It’s not a matter of if, it’s when. These things are going to happen. And they’re not going to be just little misunderstandings or miscommunications. You’re going to be wronged, sinned against, treated evilly, maybe unfairly misrepresented. And when you are, a vessel of honor’s response is patience.*

Friends, this one’s not easy. I think one of the hardest things to do as a human is to take hits and to remain patient. This is the one to me that seems humanly impossible, to be patient when wronged. I’m going to need some kind of miracle here, supernatural help, God, to get me through this, because this goes against everything that I’m wired to do. It goes against all of my hard-wiring and bents and brokenness.

And yet, we have a great example of this in our Savior, Jesus. We can look at His example as we’re becoming like Him in all of life. When I read that phrase “patiently enduring evil,” the image that came to my mind was Jesus in His final days, that process of Him being betrayed, accused, tried, misrepresented, beaten. And I’m always struck by the incredible restraint and patience that He had to exhibit in those moments. Because I know my first and natural response when I feel like I’m wronged or that I’m right is the exact opposite. I want to

Speak out, I want to lash out, I want to fight back. I want to post about it, and I want to justify myself.

And our Savior models something so incredibly different. He teaches us a master class in that time from the garden to the tomb, about what it means to handle opposition and pain, and patiently endure evil.

And so, the vessel of honor, in contrast, maybe, to the world around us, is patient when wronged. They can begin to learn how to absorb the pain of this world without losing their temper or lashing back or returning evil for evil.

#### **Trait #4: Gentleness in Correction**

A vessel of honor—kind to everyone, able to teach, patient when wronged, and then gentle in correction. It isn't a "no" to correction—I appreciate that, Paul. But it's how it's done.

When I was reading this passage a couple of months ago, this is the one that struck me as maybe the most counterculture in our day and age. I don't know if you've found this to be true, but it seems as if these days it's the loudest voice, it's the angriest voice, it's maybe the one with the most followers, the harshest voice. It seems as if the goal these days is to dominate or embarrass your opponents. What's celebrated is not necessarily winning the argument or having the best idea, but it's doing it in such a way to embarrass or ridicule or mock those who need correction.

And the Lord's servant lives in different ways. The vessel of honor is different than the world around us, because the vessel of honor ... I think the reason is we don't care about whether we win now. We might not care so much about how we're being judged now. It doesn't matter whether we're winning in the court or winning or losing in the court of public opinion now, because we have a different day coming, a different day of judgment, a different court of opinion that matters more than the one now. And so, a vessel of honor can correct gently.

Now, I didn't have to look very far in my own life to have plenty of examples to share with you about how I am not good at correcting gently. I have a nine- and a seven-year old, and they're like every other kid. And when they do that thing, the same thing, every day for a week and a half, here comes dad the sledgehammer, or mom the tornado.

If you're married or have a significant other, there are times you have to have these conversations. You need to speak truth. But men, you do it in a very harsh way. Or women, you

do it in a way that's cruel or disrespectful, or pushes that button that you know is going to shut him down.

But a vessel of honor lives differently. It's not necessarily about expressing truth or convictions, but it's doing it in a way that isn't argumentative or quarrelsome or mean-spirited.

Paul might say, *Look, don't destroy the person in the process of doing the Lord's work.* Even opponents (if there is such a thing for a believer) need to be treated in a certain way.

And so, the servant of the Lord—that kind of vessel of honor-- is demonstrating these traits. When you look at it, when you see it up there on the shelf in the Lord's house, this is the shape of it. This is what you see. They're kind to everyone. They're able to teach. They're patient when wronged. And they're gentle in correction.

### **Our Motivation and Purpose**

Okay, take a deep breath. I don't know about you, but as I was reading this passage a few months ago, these things stirred me up. They caused me to have some immediate self-reflection and almost a confession to God. *God, I feel like I'm going 0-for-4 on this some days. What's the motivation for doing this? Because it's much easier to go along with the flow, and it's so much easier to do the exact opposite of what You just instructed me to do.*

It is so easy to be kind to those who are kind to you in return. It is so easy to not worry about having to teach others, to keep that to yourself, to hoard knowledge for your own advantage or benefit. It's so much easier to respond and retaliate when someone's wronged or when evil is done to you. And it is so much easier to be harsh when someone needs to be corrected.

*So, right, come on, Paul, this seems impossible. There's got to be a reason why you want me to live in such a way and alter my life in this way so I can look like a vessel of honor.*

And Paul does. He gives us the "why" in the remaining part of this passage today. Because in order to develop these things in our life, we're going to need some fortitude and some discipline and some endurance. And we're going to need to know the "why" so we can keep going on the days where this does not seem possible.

Verse 25 says it this way.

**“God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.” 2 Timothy 2:25-26**

There it is. Boom! What’s the purpose of a special instrument? What’s the purpose of a vessel of honor? Every instrument has its purpose. There’s a reason it was created. And these kinds of honorable and clean vessels exist, vessels that are going to be used by the King for a grand purpose. Here’s the goal. Here’s the “why.” If you live in such a way, if you strive to become that kind of vessel of honor, if that’s a desired image or vision for your life, the implication from the Apostle Paul is that you can do these things and you can exhibit these traits with the help of God himself. God may use you as a vessel of honor, a special instrument, to help grant repentance. God may show up and act and interrupt those quote/unquote “opponents” and heal spiritual blindness. And you’re part of that. You’re a minister. You get to be a part of that process, a vessel of honor for this grand and glorious purpose, that others might gain a knowledge of the truth, they might be won over. You might be able to help the process of helping others escape the trap and being captured live. Because our enemy—that’s his business. He traffics in captured and blinded souls.

*And God says, Look, move over. I’m going to use some vessels of honor. I’m going to use some special instruments, some men and women who flee and pursue, some men and women who fully avoid foolish and ignorant controversies that breed quarrels. And I’m going to use some men and women, who with the help with the Holy Spirit and with God’s supernatural help, are kind to everyone, able to teach, patient when wronged, and gentle in correction. And I’m going to use these kinds of men and women to help other men and women in their neighborhoods, in their workplaces, in their homes, and all over the world. And I’m going to use them to help grant repentance that leads to knowledge and truth so that others might escape the trap of the enemy instead of being captured.*

And friends, listen to me. If the Lord has done this for you—if God in His magnificent grace has seen fit to grant you repentance in the miracle of repentance and faith and led you to a knowledge of the truth and helped you escape the snare of the devil, then let’s work towards this goal of being vessels of honor so that if the Lord wills and grants it, there might be more people at the party.

## Summary

Here it is—here's the big picture for today. Paul gives Timothy another picture, a desired image for his life. I want you to be a vessel of honor, a clean vessel. And that kind of vessel does two things. It flees and pursues, and it avoids foolish and ignorant arguments. It has nothing to do with them, because they lead, they breed, they produce quarrels. That kind of vessel, the characteristics of its shape—when you look at it, the thing you see is that it's kind to everyone, able to teach, patient when wronged, and gentle in correction. That's what it looks like, all for that one big, important, huge “why,” this grand and noble purpose, the kind of purpose befitting a vessel of honor and a special instrument: that the great hope that God may perhaps do what only He can do and grant repentance and faith that lead to a knowledge of the truth so that they, others, might escape a fate from which you and I, my friends, are so incredibly grateful to be on the other side of.

What a passage. Men and women of Grace, I want to conclude today by summarizing the last two weeks for us. I think that would be a great way to end our time together. The Apostle Paul from a Roman prison, with all the energy he has left facing his impending and certain death, writes to his dear friend Timothy, and it serves as instructions for us as well. And he wants to give him a vision for the rest of his life, however many days he has left. And he doesn't know how many he has left, and he wants to give him a vision, showing up at the end of his life like an approved worker with no shame, no regrets. And he wants him to live like a vessel of honor, an instrument for a special purpose in the Lord's hands.

And friends, there's one more thing, one thing I want to make sure you know before you leave today. You are already those things. You are already those things, friends. I wish I had time to dig deeper into this—I just don't have the time today. You are already those things. There are all kinds of scripture all throughout the Bible where we are told, *You are this—now live as if it's true*. Friends, you are approved by God. Those of you who are His disciples, His children, that was settled on the cross a long time ago. When He looks at you He sees His Son's blood, His righteousness. You're approved. You're an approved worker, so live like an approved worker. And friends, you are set apart. You are a vessel of honor set apart for a special purpose by God.

Ephesians 2 says you are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works that the Lord prepared in advance for you to do. This spring in 1 Peter it said it this way: “You're

royal priests, a holy nation, God's special possession." So, live like a vessel of honor. Men and women of Grace, you are an approved worker and a vessel of honor. And so, let's live as if that's true. And we're going to need the Lord's help and His mercy and His grace to do that. And so, I'm just going to stop here and pray for that right now as we conclude today. Would you pray with me?

*God, we come before you with gladness and gratitude, knowing how much we've been given and how You love and care for us. And we are grateful for Your Word today, God, which instructs and helps us know how to live. Father, there are men and women in this room who want with all of their hearts to alter their lives in order to fulfill the purpose for which You created them. Help us, Father.*

*Father, more than anything today we want to live like a vessel of honor. We want to live like the special instruments and special possessions that we know we are.*

*And we're going to need Your Holy Spirit's help to do that. And so, God, we ask boldly in the name of Your Son Jesus Christ, would You supernaturally help the men and women in this room hear what they need to hear, apply what they need to apply, and surrender what they need to surrender in order to have our lives match this kind of glorious reality of being called Your children, Your approved workers, Your vessels of honor.*

*And we ask these things in the name of Your Son Jesus Christ, our example and great Savior. Amen.*