

“The Five Convictions of Those Who Transform the World” // Stephen, Acts 7:54–8:4

Acts 6 if you have your Bible...

Introduction

Years ago I heard a *true* story about a man named Larry Walters, who lived in Orange County, CA...

The story goes that one afternoon Larry went out to the Army-Navy surplus store, bought 42 used Army weather balloons, inflated them, and attached them to a lawn chair he had secured to the top of his house.

Then, **with the help of his fiancée and a few friends, he climbed into the lawnchair and settled in with** a peanut butter sandwich, **a six-pack of beer, and a fully-loaded BB air pistol.**

His idea was that when he untied the rope, he'd lazily saunter up to the right altitude, at which point he'd use his BB pistol to shoot out some of the balloons to stop his ascent; then he'd enjoy his snacks. When it was time to come down, he'd shoot some more balloons and float back down to earth. What could possibly go wrong with that?

Two and a half hours later, the Los Angeles International Airport reported an “unidentified flying object” in the skies above LAX at 16,247 feet. “Lawnchair Larry,” as he came to be known, was now three miles into the sky and over a hundred miles from his original launch site.

A 737 pilot who got a glimpse of Larry on his way into LAX said, “I’m not sure how to report this. I just passed a guy at 16,000 feet ... in a lawn chair. And I think he might have a gun.”

Rescue teams weren’t quite sure what to do. I mean, how could they bring him down without toppling the chair?

Eventually, Larry’s makeshift aircraft began to descend on its own, and the journey ended when his aircraft got tangled up in some power lines just east of the LAX airport. Larry was unconscious when rescue teams found him, but remarkably, he came out of the deal otherwise unharmed.

The only thing he hadn’t calculated correctly was how fast he would ascend when he untied the rope. Friends said he did not lazily saunter up into the sky as anticipated; they said it looked like he’d been fired out of a cannon.

After he crossed 10,000 feet, he took out his BB gun to start shooting the balloons, but his hands were shaking so badly that he dropped it. *At that point, all he had was the peanut butter and the beer, so he broke open the six-pack and chugged down four of the beers, and that’s what led to him passing out. At that point, Earth’s atmosphere and the laws of gravity made the rest of the decisions.*

On the ground, **after being revived back to consciousness**, Larry was issued a **\$4,000 ticket** by local police for “the obstruction of airport traffic” and just otherwise being a public nuisance. A **local journalist** then asked him three questions:

Larry, were you scared? Larry said, “Yes.”

Larry, would you do it again? Larry said, “No.” (That’s how we know, by the way, he wasn’t from Alamance County. Y’all’d have been like ... “I ain’t skeered. Let’s go...”)

Larry, why did you do it? And Larry said, “I just got tired of always sitting around.”¹

Now, you say, “Is that story true?” Of course—I read it on the internet. Listen, I imagine **some parts of that story have grown** with internet legend, but most everything I just shared with you is verified—in the transcript, I attached a BBC article if you want to see it.² But **I share it because I think it captures** how many of us feel coming into a week we call “Live Sent Week” here at Summit. There comes a point in life where we are **tired of sitting around**, wondering if we’re making any real difference in the world, leaving any kind of lasting legacy. Maybe you’re a college student trying to figure out what to do with your life. Or maybe you’re like me, in your mid 30s, trying to figure out what to do with the second half of your career. And, like Larry, because you don’t feel like you have any grand purpose, many of us turn **to entertainment or toys or golf** to fill up our time.

This is LIVE SENT weekend, and I want to talk about the purpose God has for YOU in his global mission. We’re also in the midst of our 40 Days of Prayer, and one of the things we’re praying for is that God, during this season, would raise up a new army of people to reach our community and at least 100 who will go out from our church to take the gospel to some of the least reached places on earth.

Today, I want to walk us through the story of the first gospel expansion in history and show you how God used an ordinary person like you as the tip of his gospel spear.

The man’s name is Stephen, and as I’ll show you in a minute, his story occurs at THE pivotal point of the book of Acts. It’s a very unique story, and I believe it is given to us as THE example of how God

intends to use so-called ordinary people to bring his power to the world.

(Acts 6)

Let me give you the context. Stephen was not an apostle—a lot of people get that wrong; Stephen was just an ordinary guy, but his story marks THE major turning point in the book of Acts.

You see, up until this moment, as far as we know, the gospel movement had yet to leave Jerusalem, even though Jesus had clearly told the apostles he wanted his gospel carried to the ends of the earth, from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria, and then to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The first five chapters of Acts have been an exciting ride, to be sure: With all the tongues and the **3,000 spontaneous baptisms in one day** and the room where they were praying being shaken by the Holy Spirit; people **getting struck dead** in the offering ... It’s been amazing. But the bottom line is that by Acts 6, all the Christians are still in Jerusalem, meeting in small groups, discussing Peter’s last sermon, holding hands and singing Kum-ba-yah.

That all changes with the story of Stephen, Acts 6. Stephen’s story starts with a conflict in the church, Acts 6:1: Some of the Hellenistic widows in the early church (that means Greek-culture widows) complained they were neglected in favor of the Jewish widows. And so the apostles appointed seven men to deal with this problem—the earliest version of deacons—so the apostles could focus on the more important tasks of vision and Word and prayer. Stephen was one of the men appointed.

- What you should hear from all that is Stephen’s job, in one sense, was not that important:
 - He was not considered to be one of the **theological leaders** in the early church.

¹ Some of the details of that story may have grown with internet legend, though the essence of Larry’s escapade is pretty soundly documented. <http://web.archive.org/web/20070710212757/http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/07/10/flying.lawn.chair.ap/index.html>

² <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-68811305>;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFFVVo9usFY>

- He didn't **write any books or get asked to preach any sermons.**
- He was just a table waiter; he was the "Meals on Wheels" of the early church.

And yet, **Acts 6:7** tells us that he executed that task so well and his service was so full of the Spirit **that it got the attention** of many in the community, including many of the Jewish priests, who began to turn in large numbers to Christ.

Well, that **got the attention of the Sanhedrin**, who began to try to discredit Stephen. "*Who is this guy? What does he know?*"

I love vs. 10: "**But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which** (this ordinary layman, who had never been to seminary) **he was speaking.**"

In **Acts 7**, they drug Stephen before the Jewish council, where Stephen proceeded to give the longest recorded sermon in Acts...

- It was basically an overview of Israel's history, accusing them of turning their religion into an idol. "You are super religious, and you love this temple" he says, "but you don't actually know God."
- **He ends** his sermon by saying, "**Your forefathers killed all the prophets**, and you killed the Son of God himself."
- **It was also**, I should note, **the least seeker-friendly sermon in the New Testament.**

[54] Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him.

[55] But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. [56] And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

[57] But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him.

[58] Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul (Saul, of course, who would one day become the Apostle Paul).

[59] And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." [60] And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Unfortunately, when the thirteenth-century Archbishop of Canterbury added the chapter divisions we see in our Bibles today (up until then, this was all one flowing text), he put in a chapter division here. I'd argue this is a terrible place for a chapter division, because the first few verses of chapter 8 are the **conclusion** to Stephen's story.

Acts 8:1: And there arose on that day (that is, the day of Stephen's martyrdom) a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles... (that's important, underline that) [4] And those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

The first time the gospel leaves the borders of Jerusalem, and not a single apostle is involved! You see, **let me explain something to you: Acts 1:8 is the key verse of the book of Acts.** It is the book's outline. It's where Jesus tells his disciples, as he's leaving, "**But you will receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.**" **That's the plotline of what is going to happen in Acts.**

- Luke's repetition of those places in **8:1** signals that Stephen's story marks the **pivotal moment** for when this plotline moves forward.
- AND, let this sink in: In that pivotal transition moment, where the gospel spreads around the world, **NOT A SINGLE APOSTLE IS INVOLVED.**

Stephen is an “ordinary Christian,” and he shows you what “ordinary Christians” are supposed to look like, and **what will happen in the world** when they do.³

So here’s what I’m going to give you today:

The Five Convictions of Those Who Transform the World

1. God wants to use ME

- It’s significant that the first time the gospel leaves Jerusalem, it’s because of the work of an ordinary person, not an apostle, because this establishes the pattern for how the gospel will advance through Christian history.
 - Stephen Neill, one of the previous generation’s most noted church historians, said in his classic book *The History of Christian Missions*, “The only thing more remarkable than the rapidity of the spread of the gospel in the 1st century was its anonymity.”⁴
 - By the end of the first century, he says, **three great church planting centers had been established in the ancient world: Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome.** What they have in common, he says, is we don’t know who planted the churches in any one of those places.
 - **Acts 11 records the story of the founding of the church in Antioch.** And all it says is (let me read it to you), vs. 19, **“Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled to Antioch. ... And the hand of the**

³ The book of Acts is often called “Acts of the Apostles.” It’s not a very good name. (And, by the way, when I say that, I’m not insulting Luke, the author, as if I could better name the book than he could. When he originally wrote the book, it didn’t have a title. The name “Acts of the Apostles” wasn’t assigned until the third century. But the book of Acts is not really about all the apostles. I mean, after the apostles get listed out in the first chapter, we don’t hear about most of them ever again. And we’ve got several chapters like the ones we’re looking at today, about Stephen, who wasn’t an apostle. No, this book is about the acts of the Holy Spirit, working through everybody in the church to advance the mission of the gospel.

⁴ My paraphrase

Lord was with *them*, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord” (Acts 11:19–21).

- THEM. I love that. THEM. Luke doesn’t even mention their names. You wanna know why? Because nobody knew who they were. They were nobodies, like Stephen. In a movie, these guys would have been “Bystanders #3, 4, and 5” in the credits.
- And yet these ordinary people, these unnamed “them,” planted a church that would one day send out the Apostle Paul as a missionary.

So here’s my question: What if you are part of this generation’s “THEM”? Just like God was sovereign in this persecution, what if he was sovereign in your skill, your job? What if God gave you that skill so that you could, like Stephen and “THEM,” make disciples wherever he takes you?

In his latter years, **Billy Graham** kept saying he was convinced the next **Great Awakening** would be in the marketplace. That’s you. You are placed into a situation, a job, a place, a school, a neighborhood, to make gospel impact.

I think of one of our elders, a noted medical doctor who is sent every year by the university he works for here locally to put on a training in Southeast Asia for Muslim and Buddhist doctors over there. He says, “I open up every class with my testimony of how I came to Jesus and an explanation of how the gospel now shapes my view of medicine.” I asked him, “Is your university ok with that? I mean, they’re not exactly ‘Christian.’ If anything, they are on the other team.” He smiled and said, with a twinkle in his eye, “Yeah, I’m really good at what I do, and I’ve been doing it a long time. They can’t stop me.” I think of that great verse, Proverbs 22:29: “Do you see a man skillful in what he does? He will stand before kings.” Yeah, and when you stand there, you can tell them about Jesus.

That is the future of missions. So here’s the question: What if you stopped thinking of me as the one in ministry that you support and

started to see yourselves as the one in ministry that *I support*? Ephesians 4:11 says that God put pastors in the church to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. That means you do the ministry, I do the equipping.

The second conviction goes hand in hand with this first one...

2. The Holy Spirit fills ME

The most significant quality Luke points out about Stephen is that **he's filled with the Spirit**. It's not his talent or his intelligence or even his Bible knowledge that creates this situation. He simply yields himself to be filled with the Spirit.

Success in ministry is not talented people doing great things for God; it's ordinary people like Stephen following the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

So I'll say it again: Success in ministry is not talented people doing great things for God; it's ordinary people like Stephen, and Laura Beth, following the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

And that means you have to learn to listen to him. **Listen to this: The Holy Spirit shows up 59 times in the book of Acts. In 36 of those, he is SPEAKING.**

- And I get it, Acts is a unique moment in Christian history. The apostles were a one-of-a-kind class, and they were writing the Bible.
- But seriously: You can't convince me that the only book we have in the New Testament that shows us what it looks like to walk in the Spirit is filled with a bunch of stories of people with whom we have nothing in common.
- John Newton (a Puritan, not some over-the-top Pentecostal) said, "How could it be that the leading of the Spirit, which was so essential to the success of the early church, has become irrelevant in ours?"

- Honest question: When is the last time you really felt led by the Spirit to do something?
- Have you asked the Holy Spirit, high school and college student—what he wants you to do on your campus? Have you asked him what he wants you to do with your life in the world?
- Have you asked him, retiree, what he wants you to do with your retirement?

That leads me to...

3. I'll start with the needs right in front of me

That's where Stephen started. It was nothing glorious. Just ministering to the needs of some widows in his community. And there's something instructive there for us. You want to know where to start? Start with the needs God has placed right in front of you!

"Missions" is not something we go on trips to do. It's an extension of what we do here. We always say, "There's no transformation by aviation." In other words, if you're not winning people to Jesus here, why would we spend several thousand dollars to send you over there to not do there what you're not doing here?

Instead, we say, **"The light that shines the farthest also shines the brightest at home."**

Start with the needs in front of you. I heard a story from our church recently that I love so much. At our Brier Creek campus, one of the volunteers in our women's discipleship ministry reached out to Bethesda Elementary to see if there was anything she could do to help. Literally one person named Renee Hill; she's 73 years old. She heard that 90 percent or so of that school population, which is right near our Brier Creek campus, are on free or reduced lunch. And basically, she said to the principal, "How can we help?" The principal said, "Well, you could come sub for some of our classes over lunch so

the teachers could get a break." So she did. And she invited other women to do the same.

From there, it just kept building. They started hosting lunches for the staff several times a year. They began coordinating donations for things the school needed. They were given more and more opportunities to serve the teachers and the kids there. The ministry has grown so much that the superintendent of Durham Public Schools (the superintendent for the whole thing) invited her to speak at a leadership conference for all Durham public schools about how to support schools and what healthy partnerships look like. And of course, what she tells them is, the reason we do any of this stuff all starts with Jesus. **Start with the needs in front of you.**

OK, conviction: **4. As Jesus was to me, so I will be to others**

Verse 59 may be my favorite part of this whole story, because it gives us a window into Stephen's soul, showing us what Stephen was thinking about at the very moment of his death.

[59] And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." [60] And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

*Question: Where have you **heard these phrases** before?*

They sound **almost identical** to what Jesus said when he died:

- "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit."
- And, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

*It seems that **in Stephen's dying moments he was thinking about what Jesus had said on the cross—things that Jesus had prayed for Stephen, and now he is saying those very things for others.***

Get that: In Stephen's dying moments, he is **attempting to do for others** what Jesus had done for him.

- **Because, see, that's what it means to follow Jesus:** to look at your life as a sacrifice for others, like Jesus sacrificed himself for you.
- **Let me ask you a question: Where would you be without Jesus? Where would you be had Jesus not come to die for you?**
- Here's one answer: You'd be at the **exact same place** that millions are without you.
- You see, people have to hear about Jesus to be saved by him. It's like Martin Luther said: "It wouldn't matter if Jesus died 1,000 times, if nobody ever heard about it!" Or like the theologian Carl F. H. Henry always said: "'Gospel' means 'good news,' but it's only good news for *somebody* if it gets to them in time."

That demands something of us, Summit Church. Let me ask: Have you wrestled with the obligations you owe to the gospel? (PIC OF UNREACHED WORLD SYMBOLIZED BY LIGHT) This is a map depicting where the gospel is preached around the world, with places of gospel access lit up. **What does this map mean for us?**

- 2.8 billion that have no access to the gospel. And please **don't turn that number into a statistic...**
- **Joseph Stalin (whom I typically don't quote in sermons)** said, "The death of one is a tragedy, the death of a million is just a statistic." That's a chilling statement coming from him.
- But think about it in terms of the gospel: Think about someone you love—a parent, a child, a friend. That person is an individual to you, not a state. An individual with individual hurts and needs and fears. I couldn't bear the thought of one of my kids spending eternity apart from God.
- Every person around the world is a person just like each of my kids: each made in the image of God just like one of my kids, each who knows what it's like to feel afraid or lonely, for whom going to hell will be every bit the tragedy it would be for one of my kids.

That demands something of us, Summit Church. If Jesus sacrificed himself to save us, we should sacrifice ourselves to save them.

(I'm thinking of places like **northern Yemen**, which has a population of nearly 10 million—the population of all of NC. Guess how many believers in that whole nation? 20 or 30.)

- Let me say something to high school and college students: **Yours is a cause-driven generation. It's one of the best things about your generation.** You go into your adult lives with a desire for justice. You want to extend human rights and end suffering and eradicate poverty and save the world from plastic straws, and most of those are good and worthy. **But you understand the worst kind of suffering is eternal, right?** John Piper says that believers should give their lives to end all suffering; most of all, eternal suffering. The greatest injustice is so many Christians with so much who do so little for those who know nothing at all.
- **Make no mistake about it: The Bible presents** the fact that so many people don't have access to the gospel as a matter of *justice* for Christians. Paul said in **Romans 1:14**, "*I am under obligation* (in other words, it is a matter of justice) *to (get the gospel to those who haven't heard).*" It's not fair," he says, "for me to have received the grace of the gospel and not do everything I can to get it to those who haven't heard it yet." Why did I get to hear the gospel? Was it because I was more worthy than others? No. God gave it to me and my family as a gift of grace, and with that gift comes the obligation to get it to those who haven't heard it yet.
- **So many Christians feel called to stay ...** and I'm not your judge. But answer me this:
- If we're all listening to the Holy Spirit, why would God leave so many of us HERE in a place of so much access when there are so many over there with no access at all?
 - o Think, for a minute, of **all the ways someone here can access the gospel.** You can hear it in podcasts, on radio stations, TV programs, books, magazines; there are churches on every corner; Christians in almost every neighborhood.
 - o In these "unreached" people groups, none of that exists.

- So again: Why would God leave so many of us HERE in a place of so much access when there are so many over there with no access at all? Is God that bad at math?
- Why would he keep so many in a place where there is so much and send so few to places where there's so little?
- It can't be that he's not calling. It has to be we're not listening.

So, conviction 4 is "As Jesus was to me, so I will be to others..."

5. Jesus is worth it

Let's return one final time to Acts 7. As they began to hurl stones at Stephen, he says: [56] "**Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.**"

- o **Scholars point out that Jesus' standing here is odd,** because everywhere else we see Jesus at the right hand of God, we see him sitting. It's actually an important salvation symbol: He's seated at the right hand of God, showing his work in salvation is done.
- o **So why is he standing here?**
- o It's obvious, isn't it? He's standing to receive home his son.
- o **You see, the world has risen up against Stephen,** calling him a fool, a traitor, telling him that his life is a waste ... and it's almost as if **he can't contain himself. As they rise up to stone him, he stands up at that very moment** to say, "*Well done, good and faithful servant. They call you heretic. I call you son. They kill you with stones; I welcome you home.*"

At some point, you are going to have to decide what matters most to you in life, what you live for.

- We **often talk about coming to Jesus as bringing peace** in our lives, and fulfillment, and all that is true. But **at some point, if you're really serious about following Jesus, obedience to him** is going to cost you, maybe dearly—obedience to Jesus is going to take you 180 degrees opposite of where you think you want to go—and **in that moment the only thing** that will compel you

forward is the belief that Jesus is worth more than everything else in the world.

- Stephen saw what every person in Hebrews 11, which we just studied, saw—that one day, we’re going to be gathered around that throne, and all that matters in that moment is Jesus, where we stood for him, and what we did for him.

I’ve told you my dad taught me two phrases when I was young that shaped my life, **two phrases he and my mom drilled into me**: *“Only one life to live, ‘twill soon be past.”* **Only two things in life really last forever**: the Word of God and the souls of people, so make sure your life is built on both of them.

One day, I’m going to pass into eternity like Stephen, and you know who is going to be standing there waiting on me? It’s not going to be somebody with a list of my accomplishments. It’s not going to be my fans, or my friends, or my critics. It’s just gonna be Jesus.

And I know that, in that moment, like Stephen, I’m going to know that everything I did in Jesus’ name, every sacrifice I made, every person I told, was worth it. And there I’ll join with Stephen to say, **“JESUS, you’re WORTHY of it all!** You’re worthy of it all. For from you are all things, and to you are all things, and you deserve the glory!” FOR BY HIS WILL ALL THINGS WERE CREATED, and BY HIS BLOOD they were redeemed, and FOR HIS GLORY they now exist.

Five convictions that shape those that change the world; may they be true of us:

- God wants to use me
- The Holy Spirit fills me
- I’ll start with the needs right in front of me
- As Jesus was to me, so I will be to others
- Jesus is worth it

I have **two applications**:

- The first is, I want you to ask God how he wants to use you with the people around you. What needs is he calling you to meet? Who is he directing you to share Christ with? No matter how weak and small you feel, you can just say, “Lord, here am I, send me.”

Y’all might know I spoke at student camp this summer. Loved it. My first calling was as a youth pastor. A few years ago, I did a middle school camp, and the last night of camp I preached on David and Goliath. My final challenge to the students was to obey God in whatever he called them to do when they got home, and if they did, they’d be a champion like David. A few days after I got home, I got this letter in the mail from a middle schooler named Laura Beth. She told me how much my last message impacted her, and she believed the Holy Spirit was leading her to tell the kids in her neighborhood about Jesus, and she asked me to pray for her. I wrote her right back and told her I would surely do that and I was so proud of her, and that God would go with her. A few days later, this letter came in the mail...

([Laura Beth Letters](#)). So, application 1: Obey God with what he’s telling you today.

Application 2: Maybe God is calling you to go overseas. Like I said at the beginning, we’re praying that God is calling at least 100 of you to take your life overseas. There’re close to 300 Summit members overseas now; we’re praying for 100 more. And so, to that end, I have two very special guests with me. They are the first two missionaries that went out after I was at this church. Kurt and Janna Holiday. They’ve served in S. Africa for 25 years. We actually showed a longer video of them earlier this year. So, **Kurt and Janna**, come on out here, if you will. Summit, put your hands together for them.

[INTERVIEW with the HOLIDAYS](#)

***How did the Lord initially call you from Summit/Homestead Heights?**

***How would you advise us (the audience/congregation) to consider God's call?**

***What would you say to someone in this audience who is feeling a nudge to become a missionary but has fears or doubts?**

How do you view the future of missions, and what role do you think the next generation has in continuing the work?

Closing:

Put your hands together again for them. Summit, when you came in today, you got a handout. On it, you will find a QR code that has four main ways you can get involved:

1. Some of you have never been overseas. I want you to **consider going on a short-term trip** to visit and encourage our missionaries. Just a week. Think of it like tithing your year. There's a box there on that website where you can indicate your interest in that and they can let you know what's available.
2. Others may have been asking **how to use your professional experience to advance the gospel like I talked about today**. We're actually going to be hosting a conference here in November to help explore what those possibilities could be. You can check out the details on it there.
3. Some of you need to get involved **serving the community around you**. Next Saturday, every campus will be hosting events to help get you plugged in to serving your neighbors. Sign up!

But here's the last one ... For some of you, the Lord may be calling you to **put your "yes" on the table and truly let him put it somewhere on the map**. Look, I'm incredibly grateful for the Holidays and all they saw God do in South Africa. But they've come home! Who will replace them?

We are praying something incredibly bold—that God would raise up 100 people from the Summit to be sent overseas, joining one of our teams to make disciples and plant churches. Who are the next 100? Who will follow in the Holidays' footsteps, in Stephen's footsteps, in getting the gospel to the unreached places in the world?

And some of you might sense that you might be in that number. And here's what we're going to do: I'm going to ask you to come down here and pray about that with somebody. We do "stand and step" for baptism, salvation, prayer; this weekend, I want it to be for those who might be considering long-term missions. You may not be sure, but you are saying, "God, I'm willing." Middle or high school student, college student, family, single mom, retiree.

Come forward and tell this to one of our elders or our prayer team, who will pray over you. Bring your card with you and give it to them! They are getting into position at each campus.

The rest of you, pray: "Here am I, send me." And ask God what he wants you to do, like my friend Laura Beth.