

*The title of this sermon is “The Call” which is about God calling us. We are called out. We are the **ekklesia**. We are the church that has been called out to be set apart. There are no labels in the Bible. It doesn’t matter what you are called as long as you are called by God and you answer.*

We are reading Matthew 16:18 from the New Testament.

If you have a Bible, find Matthew 16:18, and if you want, you can look ahead and find these additional verses that we will be referring to also. They are: Numbers 23:19, Isaiah 52:11, John 6:37, John 10:27, Acts 2:21, Acts 2:38-39, Acts 2:47, Acts 4:4, Acts 5:14, Acts 6:1 and 7, Acts 10:43, Acts 12:24, Acts 19:32,39 and 41, Romans 1:7, 16, Romans 8:28, Romans 8:30, Romans 10:13, 2 Corinthians 6:16-17, 1 Corinthians 16:19, Ephesians 4:1, 1 Timothy 3:15, Hebrews 12:23, Revelation 2:17

Pastor Tom is reading this chapter using the New American Standard Bible version. He also teaches us that the church is not a name or denomination. It is a place where verbiage is exchanged to make sure the people know Jesus and the Word. And you have to have repentance to have Christ in your heart.

Matthew 16:18

I pray that this message will be powerful and that it will encourage our hearts. Help our hearts to be straightened up, Lord, if it needs to be. I pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of your Spirit that it will lead every one of us into a deeper understanding of what the church really is, Lord. And I thank you in Jesus’ name. Amen

I was browsing thought the internet to look up different names of different churches. I found some pretty interesting names that you might find funny or weird. Some of their names are The Church of The I am that I am, The Flippin Church of God, The Boring United Methodist Church, Half way Baptist Church, The Cowboy Church, the Run for Your Life International Chapel, Satan in Trouble Ministries, Trigger Happy Ministries. For those of you who like guns, there is a church for you. The Calhoun Baptist Church in Hot Coffee. Now Hot Coffee is the name of the rural community in which this church is. There’s like 2 stores and one church in Hot Coffee. Coolville United Methodist in Coolville, Ohio; Gypsy United Methodist; Tornado Humphries United Methodist; Loonies Creek United Methodist in Whitewell, Tennessee; There’s Blackjack United Methodist in Oklahoma; Steve’s Church of Christ in Franklin, Ohio; Gary’s United Methodist in Pittsburgh, Virginia. Just for the fun of it we could do Tom’s Tabernacle in Lafayette or Steve’s Village in Linden, Indiana. I don’t know if you guys are getting this. But I thought they’re funny. There’s Fakes Chapel in Arkansas; Aerosmith United Methodist in Aerosmith, Illinois. That would be a great place to go if you’re a rock and roll fan. Hey there’s a Bono United Methodist Church in Dana, Indiana! That’s right here in Indiana. If you are a Sears and Roebuck fan there’s a Sears United Methodist in Sears, Missouri. Here’s a long named church. It’s called the Holy Spirit Congregation Hospice Anglican -Catholic Byzantine Orthodox Church in Nevada. And if you’re full of pride there’s Pride Bethel Church. So you see there are all kinds of churches that we can pick from. They are all over the place. There’s a church for everybody.

Now the first mention of the church is in **Matthew Chapter 16:18**. Jesus mentions the church 3 times in Matthew. He says, **“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”** Upon this rock I will build my church. That is the beginning of the

word “church.” The Greek word for “church” is “**ekklesia**”. It’s a compound word of “Ekk” meaning “out of” and “lesia” which is a calling. So if we read that verse like the Greek meaning we would read, “Upon this rock I will build my those set apart ones.” So that’s what that means. We are called out, set apart. Not set apart like AWAY but set apart like TO. Sometimes we think that we are set apart FROM the world, which we are. But automatically we are set apart TO God which would really exclude a lot of things in this world we deem sacred to us.

Also in **2 Corinthians 6:16-17** he says, ... ***"I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAR; And I will welcome you."*** **Isaiah 52:11** ***"Depart, depart, go out from there, Touch nothing unclean; Go out of the midst of her, purify yourselves, You who carry the vessels of the LORD."*** So you see church is for those who are called apart. Set apart. Called out ones. I like that “called out ones.”

Romans 8:28 ***"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."*** Now the Greek word there still has **ekklesia** in the root form is **κλητός** or **kletos** (pronounced klay-tos) which means called or invited. We are called out or invited like as to a banquet. **Romans 8:30** is the big one. I like this one, ***"and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified."*** The Greek word for “called” is to cry out, cry aloud, to invite or to give a name. So he called us, he invited us, he gave us a name. As you know the Bible says in **Revelation 2:17** ***"...to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it."*** **Romans 1:7** ***"to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."*** That “called” is the Greek word **kletos** like we saw in Romans 8:28. Again it means to cry aloud, invite, to give a name. The Lord had cried aloud to us. He invited us, if you will, into his Kingdom.

In **Ephesians 4:1** Paul said, ***"Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,"*** That word “calling” here is **klēseōs** which is a form of **ekklesia** which is the church. So we are to walk according to the **ekklesia** or as the King James says, ***"...ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."*** I kind of like that word...a vocation.

Christianity is a full time job. Not in the sense of work, but full time in being aware that we are on call all the time, aren’t we? We are on call to give witness to Jesus Christ. We are on “call” continually... **κλήση** pronounced **“kletos”** like in Romans 8:28. The other word there “calling” when it reads “Walk in a manner worthy of the calling” is **klēseōs**, and then past tense of call is “called” and that is **“eklēthēte.”** Same thing. It’s an invitation to a feast. So these words are all intermingling ...called, **kletos**, **ekklesia**. I want you to get the idea of what we are looking at. God is calling or **klēseōs** us. He invites us or gives us a new name. Aren’t you glad for that?

I am so glad that Jesus called me. I am so glad that his power is what sustains me. I’m so glad that when I made the choice to follow Jesus he took all heaven and the power of heaven behind me to help me walk out my call or to walk my call for me, if you will. The root word of **Ekklesia** which is church, if you

remember is “lesia” which is calling. We have been called out, separate. We have been called out. We are different. “Upon this rock I will build My called out ones...”.

Everybody has a name for their church, so if I was going to rename Harvest Chapel I would call it Cool or Koo. When you say, “Cool” and your trying to sound cool you say it like this, “Koo.” With a little attitude. So I would call us “Koo.” Because we are koo. Got it? Now play along with me. Entertain me with this. Now we are a bunch of believers so we are a lot of koo people together so we are BOB. Which stands for Bunch of Believers. So if I was going to rename Harvest Chapel we would be called koo bobs. We are a bunch of believers that are koo!

We are called out. You are called out. You are special. The Call. God calls. We call back. God calls, we call back. He calls out in the form of a cry and we cry back. We respond. There are two calls in the works of salvation. **Acts 2:39**, “... *as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.*” The Greek word for “call” there is **proskalesētai**. He called us to himself. Himself is “**Prosk.**” And “will call” is “**alesētai**”. He is calling us, but then we respond by calling to him. **Romans 10:13** tells us, “*for “WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.*” Will call upon is **epikalesētai**. Do you get it? They all have the connotation of “call.” “To cry out upon or against one” and “To be named after someone” is **epikaleo**.

Hey, guess what? We were named after Jesus in Antioch. That’s where Christians got their name of Christians. Because they were the “Christ like” ones. Really it was a mockery. “Look at those Christ like ones. They think they’re like Jesus.” Halleluia! I’m glad I’m like Jesus! Or at least in his righteousness. I’m not always acting like him like I should. So he gave us a new name. Peter got a new name. **Acts 2:21**, “*AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.*” This word here “calls” is **epikalesētai**. It has the root word of call in it. Notice here that it says, “Everyone” and in the King James Version it is “Whosoever”. The Greek word there is “**pas.**” I don’t want to make this whole thing a Greek lesson, but this is important. The Greek word means everyone, everything, anything, all and the whole. The whole! So it is saying, “And it shall be that everyone, everything, all, the whole of everything who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” **Acts 10:43** says the same thing “*Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.*”

Now let’s skip to John. He has the same idea. **John 6:37** “*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.*” So when God calls us, and we come to Him, we call back, He said He will not cast us out. So how do I know if I’m called?” The Bible says, “*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.*” So if you come to him he won’t cast you out. He’s not going to say, “Nope, you’re not one of those that I pick.” You just come. We see that God’s divine election and free will is made so well together. It’s a mystery in some ways, but there is the call.

The word “all” in that passage has the same Greek connotation as “everyone.” **Pas** again in Greek is all, whole, everything and everyone. This word “all” is “**pan.**” It means individually, collectively, some of all types. “All that the Father gives me will come.” Notice that we come from a different place. When we come to the Lord we are coming from sin and separation. We come to a new place when we come to

him. We come out of sin, out of bondage and He calls us to come. We appear and say, “Here I am Lord. I am responding to your call.”

Now we’ve got some hoot owls at my house. You can hear them. The male gives a “kletos”. He calls to invite. He does a Romans 8:30 call. Hoot owls have a certain call. It’s their mating call (*in a masculine voice*), “Hoo, hoo, HOO!” Then you hear the female. She says, “Oh, that sparks my interest” and she calls back (*in a more feminine voice*), “Hoo, hoo, HOO.” Then all of a sudden they are hoo, hooing together. When the female talks back they are getting an **epikalesētai** going on. I’m just kind of playing on these words. Notice that the hoot owl do mate and they do have mating calls. I saw that on the web it shows all kinds of owls, like barn owls, screech owls, hoot owls. And if you ever look at all the different owls, I tell you that you will see the glory of God in the owl. I know that sounds weird, but there are so many beautiful owls.



We have little hoot owls around our house. They call one another, and the female responds and they go out and they have a hoot, I guess. Or instead of going out to have a hoot, let’s say they get together and preserve their own kind. That’s a nice way of saying they are romancing. There’s the call and there’s a response. Not all female owls respond to the male, “Hoo.” When I heard the hooting going on little hooties were flying around. We saw them. Little bitty hoot owls were around my yard. Around my house. They had to know a certain voice. That male call.

Jesus said in **John 10:27**, **“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”** There is a certain call of the Master. A sheep will not just follow any shepherd. I don’t know how they do it. I don’t know if they yell, “Hey, sheep, sheep, sheep.” But I know they hear the certain voice of their shepherd. And the sheep definitely know, “Hey, that’s MY shepherd. I KNOW that.” And they won’t follow any body that’s not of their persuasion.

Now also, when I thought about it, when you deer hunt you have these calls. I’ve always been wanting to do a deer hunt call here at church. I thought that would be ediserving. This is a first at Harvest Chapel. Now what happens with the female calls, she’s in estrus. She’s in heat. She’s wanting to preserve the race. This is what she sounds like (*Tom blows his deer heat call. It’s called an estrus bleat. This is the*

sound that the doe makes when her breeding time is near. It sounds like one loud, long bleat) And the buck will respond. You've got to put this rubber band on up. (it sounds like soft, short grunts. "grunt, grunt....grunt, grunt") And they are calling to one another. And they've got to respond somehow.

Now girls, if you were to hear this one as a female doe in estrus (*grunt, grunt*) or (*Sounds like an older buck. Because the older the buck, the deeper the tone. It's a low long grunt*). You'd say, "THAT'S the one I'm going after!" haha.

The Lord calls us and we know his voice. We know he has called us. There is a knowing. This is what God wants us to know....We are the church. "How do I know?" Many reasons. I have a changed life. I heard the voice of Jesus. I heard it clear. Like a female doe in estrus and the buck calling back, Lord God, I'm coming.

There are all kinds of churches like I said. Now the word "church" is mentioned 56 times in the book of Acts, 115 times in the New Testament. But there is another reference to the church. It's "the body," or "the body of Christ," or "Christ's body" which is mentioned 50 times in the Bible. The church is also referred to as "the way" 7 times in the Bible in the book of Luke and Acts. By the way, I'm laying the groundwork for the book of Acts because the book of Acts was about the first church. Let's have a good idea before we go into that what the church is about. It's called "the flock" 4 times in Acts 20 and in 1 Peter 5:2 and 3. The church is called "the family of God" or "the house of God." In **1 Timothy 3:15** It's **"...the church of the living God..."** I like this one, **Hebrews 12:23** **"...church of the firstborn..."** I like that. I'm in the church of the firstborn!"

There's the "Church of the Saints" and "the assembly" which are translated from **"ekklesia."** **Acts 19:32,39 and 41** we see it referred to as **".....the assembly...."**. Notice here that there are no denominations mentions in the Bible. I have yet to find the Baptist or the Methodist there. Maybe close. There is "baptism". All of the first churches were described by geographical descriptions like the Church at Corinth. As a matter of fact in **1 Corinthians 16:19** it reads, **"The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house."** Some of you read "Priscila" depending on which version you are reading. So the church was referred to in a geographical location. And the first century church had no buildings per se. They met in houses. Even the early church fathers. Like Bill Monroe who was the father of bluegrass. The early church didn't have buildings or names. They didn't have buildings to meet in. They had house churches. If you had a church or a house that would hold 40-50 people you were very, very wealthy in that culture. They didn't have mega buildings or anything like that. So most of the churches were small house churches which were governed by a singular elder. In my study I found out that there weren't large churches when church government was set up.

We will hit a lot of the topics like church growth, evangelism, the Holy Spirit, church government and the gifts of the Holy Spirit when we get into Acts. Stick around because we're going to have a GREAT time in the book of Acts.

There's a lot of churches now. There's the church of Satan, eww; the church of Wicca, weird; the church Scientology, and I'm telling you they're not studying science. And we have a lot of denominations that

are around now. We have the First Assembly of God, The Apostolic Assembly, The Church of God, oh *in Christ*. You've got to get that in there. The Pentecostal flavor; The word of Faith, kind of Charismatic; Vineyard; there's a Presbyterian church, There's a First Baptist Church, Second Baptist Church, Third Baptist Church, fourth Baptist – ok, not really. The GARB Baptist, Southern Baptist, the German Baptist, There's Nazarene, there's Methodist. And of course there's the FREE Methodist, implying that the other Methodists are in bondage so they got free from bondage, I guess. I don't know. There's the Missionary Alliance, the church of the Brethren, the Amish. The Danish, The British, no, just kidding. The Amish, Old Order, New Order, whatever. Lutheran, Missouri Senate, Wisconsin Senate, Episcopalian. Me, I'm a sojourner, and an alien, but I'm not an Episcopalian. There's the Mennonite. And they all could be maybe Pentecostal, Charismatic....Oh Lord! Who's right?

Me, I just say that I'm a deer hunting, motorcycle riding, bapticostal with armenias slant. Give me a bowtech bow and a Harley soft tail and I'll save the world one deer stand at a time. Let's just make it easy, BOB. You Bunch of Believers. You can be reformed or Dutch Reformed, Hillbilly Reformed, Drug Reformed, Alcohol Reformed of which I am all of the above. Whether Pentecostal, bapticostal, reformed, deformed, armenias or Calvinist it really doesn't matter. There are no labels in the Bible. The church at large is always going to be people that are saved in the church and people that are not saved in the church.

Kid yourself not, there are people in Harvest Chapel who don't know Jesus. And you will sit here for maybe 10 years and maybe the rapture will happen and I guarantee you if in fact we are going to go over and lay some bombs down over there in Syria, you watch Russia and China. You think we're not close? Because if Iran goes over and slaps on Israel because of what we do with Syria, you can bet that we're going home really fast. Now, I'm not predicting a day, but I'm going to tell you that Biblically we are so close.

There are some major doctrinal beliefs that we adhere to as believers. You can read out doctrinal statement on our website. There are some things that are essential, but I do believe there is unity too. There's new church names and movements. There's an emergent movement. The church of Elevation. One commentary said, "They sing YouTube songs ever bloody Sunday." There's the Church of Journey. They probably have, "Don't stop believing" as their theme song. I don't know. There's the Salvage yard, the Scum of the earth church. I like the Liquid church where the meat of the word is processed, blended and is a delicious, nutritious, shake for the busy Christian on the go. The Urban Refuge AKA the Suburbs, I guess. High Tension Ministries. Go and tell Ahab that Elijah is here Ministries. United Free Will Baptist. All these names can be confusing and I'm hoping you're catching what I'm trying to say here.

There is one church. Those of you who believe in Jesus...oh I don't want to oversimplify it....there is a doctrinal position that we take. We don't hold unity with just anybody, but I do believe we need to hold unity with our brothers and sisters who are laboring and believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, he died for the sins of mankind, he died on the cross for our sins, he's coming to take us home. One day we'll live with him forever in heaven. We need salvation. We're unregenerate. The whole world is lost. If you believe in tulip or turnip it doesn't matter. You're a futurist or preterist it doesn't matter. What

matters is what you believe about Jesus and has he changed your life? He IS the Son of God. God in the flesh. He died in the flesh for our sins.

So if I were to rename Harvest again maybe we would call ourselves the kooBOB hangout. I don't know. We are called out ones and we are just a bunch of believers. Let's face it. Trying to get all of the believers in one form or style of worship is nearly impossible. I do know that. Numbers wise it is impossible to get every believer in one church in Lafayette. There are backgrounds of people and social strata, cultural differences, hobbies that we have, music that we listen to. These all come into play as to where we find our fellowship. We all have different sheep pens. I call them sheep pens. This is the Harvest pen, there's the Faith pen and Assemblies of God pen and there are sheep that will gravitate and feel comfortable in that pen. Are they BOB? A Bunch of Believers? Yeah, you bet. Are there some in there who don't know Jesus? Yeah. Hopefully the majority do believe. Like here at Harvest Chapel.

But we try to get them all together. Some people wear suits, sports jackets, slacks, sweaters, suit and tie, polo shirt, some people wear shorts, T-shirts and jeans, flannel shirts, some wear camo even out of the tree stand. They put their camo on. Some have body piercings. Different hair styles, long hair, short hair, no hair, facial hair, spiked hair. Some like hymns, some like worship, some like country, some like classic, some like rock, some like blues, some like eclectic, folk. You've got all these sheep, but not everybody has the same interest, but we have the same Lord.

I hope that when you find a church and you're coming here to Harvest. There are a lot of factors that come into it, but the one unifying factor that we have is the Word of God. And we believe the Word of God. Because that's the biggest attack on the church today. Their attacking the Word of God. Satan loves to attack the Word of God, and he does. Yet it's mentioned 56 times in the book of Acts.

The church REALLY should grow. Six verses tells us that the church should grow. If you don't evangelize you fossilize. Tomorrow is our labor day picnic and we are going to go out. Our whole goal is to not only eat and have fun, we pray that people will come and get to know Jesus. We'll disciple them and we're going to undermine all the work of Satan. Why? Because we have the Truth. And I'm unashamed of the Truth. Paul says in **Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."** I'm not ashamed of the Gospel.

We are going to see addition to the church. In the book of Acts 2:47 there was an initial saving of the people where 3,000 people get saved. Then in Acts 4:4 there were 5,000 saved. In Acts 5:14 there were "added" verbiage. Acts 6:1 they "multiplied greatly". Interesting in **Acts 12:24 "But the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied."** The bottom line of the church is that we teach the Word of God. It said the Word of God multiplied. Guys, whose word was it? So what multiplied in the first church? The words of the disciples? Yes. The teachings of the disciples were beginning to be written down. Yes. I believe that when the Word grew it was the teachings of Jesus and the pure gospel. They didn't have to banter over a lot of theological things although we do banter now and we come together, and reason and it's great to do that. But what about Jesus and him crucifying and THAT would bring us together and that we would learn His word.

I'm not indicating that we should be at unity with everybody at any cost. Not at all. But I do believe there is a lack of unity for those who DO know the Word and love Jesus which we've got to overcome one day. Everybody's talking, "Yeah. Let's have unity." Everybody's talking smack. Are you going to put your money where your mouth is? Are we going to try and unify them? Because we're going to need each other. Let's say, you know we bomb over Syria, hypothetically then Iran goes over and spanks Israel. Then Israel is going to come back and spank everybody. Then we've got China and Russia not helping us. Guys, it's going to get tough. We need each other.

We're not going to ask, "Are you Baptist?" "No? Oh well I can't work with you." As we've got gun fire flying over our heads. And we're under heavy persecution. "You've got to be Calvinist. You've got to be Ameniast." No. It doesn't matter. Do you know Jesus Christ? Now I get it that there is some theology that we are very, very concerned with which we deal with. And I pray that when we get done with the book of Acts that we're going to see what real unity looks like. Like in John 17 when Jesus prayed about it. Because I don't think we're seeing it. Don't think I'm advocating it at any cost at all, but I think that God wants to speak with us, the church. There was no book of Acts, no Pauline Epistles, no first, second or third John, no book of Revelation.

The Greek word for the Word is **Λόγος**, or **logos**. It's doctrine, it's teaching, it's matter under discussion. The root word is **lego**, to lay forth. What we're doing is we're talking. Still we're learning. We're discussing. If you read our website you will know what we believe. We stand on our doctrinal statement of what we believe. Learn about what we believe about the second coming of Jesus, what we believe about Jesus being God, about salvation. It's very orthodox. It goes along with most of our brothers in Christ. They view all the words of the teachings of Jesus, I believe, as the Word. That's what they saw multiplying. No canonized scripture, no KJB, no NIV, no 4 spiritual laws, no sinner's prayer, no Sunday morning church services, no evangelical crusades. They just got out there and did it. They got 'er done. They went out and told people about Jesus. They didn't fight over denominations.

Now again, there are sheep pens where we feel comfortable in. And I feel it's very healthy to have different churches. They maybe have a little bit of different persuasion and doctrines. But we have major things we hold on to. They said in **Acts 2:38** ***"Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins....'"*** The call was this...when the church was birthed in Acts Chapter 2, Peter gave this powerful sermon. The first sermon ever given and they said, "What shall we do?" And Peter's response was, "Repent and be baptized." "What does THAT mean?" I have a little struggle with people who dog the alter call. I understand that the "alter call" is not in the Bible. The "invitation." I don't care what you call it. But when those people got saved they didn't say, "Hey, listen, you know. I don't know really what it all means yet." But I believe they dialoged with those new believers. I know the "sinner's prayer" was not in the Bible. They didn't have the Bible then. No. "Asking Jesus Christ into your heart" is not a biblical term "in your heart." Maybe we won't use those. But when people come out against the alter call I have a little struggle with that.

There's nothing wrong with calling people publically. Jesus called everybody publically to make a profession of faith. And there is nothing wrong with calling people publically. I've heard some teachers believe that the alter call is misleading to people. Well if you trump it up and yell, "Hey! We're going to

play "Just as I am" for the 50th time. You can't leave." And you get all their emotions going, yeah. But if you simply say, "Hey, would you want to know Jesus? Would you like to know more about him and have forgiveness of sins? Well come forward, and we'll talk to you about it." There is absolutely nothing wrong with that. And we will continue to do that.

We will talk more about the alter call in the book of Acts and also the church government and why we have the type of church government we have. It's because it's the most clear, Biblical model there is. There are many different kinds and ways to run the church, but we believe that this is the one that is more along the Biblical line than just having a degree of success. So there was this place where the call out happened and these people got saved. There was a place. They didn't just say, "Well, if there is a God ..." There were things being done and said and verbiage being exchanged to make sure those people knew Jesus. There was a change of heart and life when the church was born in Acts Chapter 2.

It is both our human will and His choice. Now He calls us to repent in Acts 2:38. I thought about that. Now we are the only ones who can repent. God can't repent. ***Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"*** Of course not. He can't repent. He has nothing to repent from. All mankind has to repent. There has to be repentance in your life to have Christ in your heart. That's why it's important that the first church knows and also us here at Harvest Chapel, that we preach repentance. You just can't come to Jesus with a little prayer and they just say, "You're saved." There has to be a change of life afterwards, a proof in that. But it can only be done of the human. Something that God could not accept or be a part of. He could not repent. He could not do that.

Is God in control of all things? Does He control our sin? Because if He's sovereign and our sin separates us so we can't be a part of the church ...well, I'm going to ask, does He have that power or does He allow sin? Now, I believe that God created man with the choice between good and evil and allows man to choose evil. And that being sovereign over the whole matter God is still sovereign over our free choice and our free will. So put that in your pipe and smoke it. It's hard, and it's very difficult, and I think it borderlines sometimes "hard to swallow" when people are dogmatic one way or the other. We're not trying to be non-decisive, but we have a free will. We have a responsibility, and God is sovereign. And if you don't understand this kind of language it means this...you can do nothing without Jesus. He picked you before the foundation of the world. Yeah, He said "whosoever WILL," there is something about the will that we're not fully clear on, but there's a decision that we make. So He loved you, He saw you, He created you and picked you before you were even born, but yet He still allows us to pick things.

I believe the biggest attack on the church today is this...it's on the Bible and the Word of God. It's inerrancy, it's inaccuracy, it's inspiration and infallibility. It's being challenged to the max. And I believe that the Word of God is being verbally plenary, meaning every jot and tittle written in this book of God is inspired by God. The scribe might have put an "is" or "the" in there. But there is nothing doctrinally in this book that is wrong. It has no mistakes.

We have a whole movement trying to dissect the Word of God and say, "Really it's not all true." The writer of the Renovare bible says that the first few chapters in Genesis are mythical. That they are not

true and they are symbolic. Where did they get that!? From their own little pea brains. They see the scriptures as subjective not objective. There is an absolute truth. And the church, we believers, you bunch of kooBOBS are believing that the Bible is true...ABSOLUTE truth.

And God defines and set parameters of sin and He judges those things which are not of him. So we will learn about church government, church growth, gifts of the Spirit, alters, invitation, evangelism, church life, the body of Christ, missions, statewide and local! We're going to hit all those. Aren't you excited? I hope you are. Some of you are like, "Well...I don't know if it's going to be good." It's going to be good because it's the Word of God. I'm just a pastor and He's the Master. When we come here I'm just going to tell you what the Word of God says, hopefully under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Pray for me.

The church is the most powerful institution on the planet Earth. Not the legislative branch of government, not the IRS, not the NRA, not the congress or senate, not Wall Street nor Madison Avenue nor any big marketing firms, none of the banks. The church is the most powerful institution on the planet. Even with its flaws and its faults it STILL remains the most powerful institution on the planet. That is my passion! The church. When I speak to you, I speak to you from a passion. I LOVE the church. I love what John Wesley said, "I look on all the world as my parish." And I believe that. And when I hear things coming in and filtering through the church, I don't only want to warn you, my family, but I want to warn those who are listening to weird stuff out there. There's a lot of weird stuff.

The church with all its flaws and shortcomings sets the moral pace of any country. When it's not the pacesetter, what happens is the church is its evil suppressor. Basically its stating off total chaos. If the church doesn't have a great influence in its city, then one thing it is doing,...its stating off total chaos because right now the restrainer is restraining the evil one, the antichrist from coming in. If the church is taken out of here reality as we know it will be all relative. You don't know what will happen when the church is taken out of here. It's going to get insane and crazy. That's why I have such a passion to preach the gospel and to disciple men and women because I don't want anybody behind especially to see demonic grasshoppers, Jeez. It's bad enough that they're grasshoppers, but they're demon possessed ones! Lord, help us all.

Vance Havner said, "We are not going to change the world by criticism of it nor conformity to it but only by being combustoned being ignited in it by the power of the Holy Spirit within our lives." I can say all kinds of critical things about the world. I didn't see it all, but I did see some highlights of the MTV awards. I saw some pretty heinous, lewd, pornographic acts on TV which our teenage girls and boys are watching. It was pornography. We can bark out against that and all the different things that are wrong. And that is fine. We should have a voice, but ignite me with the Holy Spirit. Ignite me with the Word of God and Jesus. Give me a bowtech bow and a Harley soft tail and I'll win the world a deer stand at a time. I believe my spirit influence has a certain group of people that I can really talk to. Some of them are you. Some of them can really relate to me. Some have backstraps like last night. I was in heaven eating backstrap shish kabobs. So we have that in common, right?

We are, as a church, called out of the world and we are called into God's house, His presence. We are His family. It just so happens that our living room, the church, the place where we "do life" is in view of

the world. Where we “do life.” It’s not in this sanctuary or this auditorium. That is not the church. We just come to get fed and get out there and tell people. That’s your goal. Don’t be a fatso Christian. Get out there and work it off.... spiritually. You all get fed great. We have a lot of teaching that goes on here, and you’re being taught the Word of God so you should be out. We live right in the backyard of the world. It’s not just in a room which we call a sanctuary, it’s in the factory that we work in, the office we oversee, in the grocery store where we buy our groceries, etcetera, etcetera.

We are to live with respect and reverence in our Father’s house, Guys. As we live and we love Jesus the world sees how we treat and love our heavenly Father and how he treats us, and by that the world will say, “This is the living God.” They see the way we act and how we act in the living room. We live in a glass house, and the whole world is watching. As we are called or invited **kletos** to this banqueting table where we are at, we need to be mindful that we are living for Jesus.

I just want to close with this... regarding the church, I’m not against denominations but I’m not for unity at any cost. And I think for those of you who know me and you are here and you don’t know much about Harvest Chapel you will find out that we are a family that loves one another, and we want you to be a part of it. You are my family, and I’m so glad that Jesus is our shepherd, and God is my dad and your dad. He is the head of this church. If you want to join in we’re going to see and we’re going to march and we’re going to kick down the gates of H*%%. God has commanded us to and we want as many to come with us as possible. If you want to be a part, get into a Bible study. This is preliminary stuff here on Sundays. You need to come on Sundays, but you also need to get into a Bible study. You need to know people. We need to lock arms together, Guys. We are the church. And it’s not a name. But if you want to call us anything call us kooBOBS. We are called out ones. And when you get us all together we are a Bunch of Believers. I do believe that different churches have different feels for certain things and I’m all for that. We will never ever get everybody in one building and all like the same kind of music, all like the same kind of preaching. It just won’t happen. Let’s be real. But we can unify on what? The Word of God.

I believe this is true. D.L. Moody said that the next revival will be around the Word of God. And the people will come. I can’t wait to see people sitting outside the auditorium here at Sunnyside waiting to get a seat. Not because they want to hear the band or want to hear Tom Camp preach but because they want to hear the Bible. Wouldn’t that be cool? They stand outside to see the MTV awards and they have sales at Christmas time where they’re selling some new video game and they will sit outside all night. We think it’s weird because we’re happy to hear the Word of God. Why NOT flock around God’s word.

Peter Marshall, chaplain to the senate saw a revival. I remember watching this move. What happened was when he took over this church they had to put speakers outside of the church. People were standing outside in the rain with umbrellas wanting to hear Peter Marshall teach because he taught the Word of God. I think THAT’S where we need to be. Be excited about the Word of God. I can’t trump that up. I refuse to try to make it an emotional thing to appeal to you today. But I will tell you Jesus is coming back and you’ve got to get ready and we’ve got to quit talking smack.

Believe what we need to believe. Lock our arms and tell people about Jesus because he’s coming. And if he doesn’t come in my lifetime then GREAT we’ll get some more people saved. But I believe he’s

coming. You watch what's happening overseas and around Israel. Guys, it's a powder keg and at any given moment it could change fast, so fast. I think the church is asleep, "WAKE UP!" I pray that we wake up.

Let's all stand up so you don't fall asleep and if you're (*reading this*) and you want to know Jesus, somehow this message resonated with your heart and you don't know him in a personal way we would LOVE to tell you more about him and introduce you to him. If you would bow your head. Everybody bow your head. There's a reason why we do this. It's not traditional. I'll tell you why we bow our heads. You bow your head, especially for those of you who know Jesus, you're praying for someone in here that may not know him and sometimes when people either lift their hand and come forward they're a little embarrassed, so we want to make it easy but yet again challenging to make this commitment in public. So if you're here, bow your head with me and pray for that person who may not know Jesus. Come up to the left hand side of the stage here and we'll have a word with you to lead you to Jesus to know him in a personal way. – *In His grip, Tom Camp*

This is what Harvest Chapel believes. You can find this on their website. www.hclafayette.org

What We Believe

Harvest Chapel has been formed as a fellowship of believers in the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Our supreme desire is to know Christ and to be conformed into His image by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We are not a denominational church, nor are we opposed to denominations as such; only their over-emphasis of the doctrinal differences that have led to the division of the body of Christ.

We believe that there is one living and true GOD, eternally existing in three persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory; that this triune God created all, upholds all, and governs all things. (***Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:8 and 48:16; Matthew 28:19-20; John 10:30; Hebrews 1:3***).

We believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, fully inspired without error and the infallible rule of faith and practice. The Word of God is the foundation upon which this church operates and is the basis for which this church is governed. We believe that the Word of God supersedes any earthly law that is contrary to the Holy Scriptures. (***Isaiah 28:13; Nehemiah 8:8; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 1:23-25; 2 Peter 1:3-4 and 1:21***).

We believe in the person of God the Father, an infinite, eternal, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love; that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men; that He hears and answers prayer; and that He saves from sin and death all those who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (***Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalms 90:2; Psalms 102:27; John 3:16 and 4:24; 1 Timothy 1:17; Titus 1:3***).

We believe in the person of Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings, his substitutionary atoning death, bodily

resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people and personal, visible return to earth. (*Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:23; Mark 16:19; Luke 1:34-35; John 1:1-2, 8:58 and 11:25; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 1:2; Revelation 1:8*).

We believe in the person of the Holy Spirit, Who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify and empower for ministry all who believe in Christ; (*Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 3:18; John 16:8-11; Romans 8:26 and 15:13,16; Hebrews 9:14*).

We believe the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Jesus Christ and that He is an abiding helper, teacher, and guide. (*John 6:13, 14:16-17 and 16:8-11; Romans 8:26*).

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit and in the exercise of all Biblical gifts of the Spirit according to the instructions given to us (*1 Corinthians 12-14*).

We believe that all people are sinners by nature and, therefore, are under condemnation; that God saves and regenerates based upon faith by the Holy Spirit, those who repent of their sins and confess Jesus Christ as Lord. (*Acts 8:15-17; Ephesians 2:1-3 and 8-9; Romans 3:23 and 5:8; Titus 3:5*).

We believe in the universal church, the living spiritual body, of which Christ is the head and all who are born again are a part of the Body of Christ. (*1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:15-16*).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ instituted two ordinances for the church: (a) full immersion water baptism of believers, and (b) the Lord's Supper. (*Matthew 28:19; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*) **We also believe** that the Lord Jesus Christ validated the ordinance of marriage. (*Matthew 19:4-5 and John 2:1-11*).

We believe in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ which is His personal, visible return to earth and the establishment of His millennial kingdom, in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment and eternal blessing of the righteous and endless separation of the wicked. (*Matthew 16:27; Acts 1:11; Revelation 19:11-16, 20:11-15*).

We believe in the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church where all believers will meet the Lord in the air and be taken out of this world prior to the Tribulation that will come upon the earth. (*Isaiah 26:20; Matthew 24:29-31; Luke 21:36; Romans 1:18, 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13-16 and 5:9; 2 Peter 2:7-9; Revelation 3:10, 5:7-10 and 7:13-14*).

We believe in a literal Heaven and a literal Hell and that all those who place their faith, hope and trust in Jesus Christ will spend eternity in Heaven with the Lord, while those who reject Jesus' free gift of salvation will spend eternity separated from the Lord. (*Psalms 9:17; Matthew 5:3, 5:22, 18:9 and 25:31-34; Mark 9:42-49; Luke 12:5; John 3:18; Hebrews 12:23; 1 Peter 1:4; Revelation 14:10-11 and 20:11-15*).



PASTOR TOM AND TERI



A HARLEY SOFT TAIL



A DEER STAND