



Theme: Becoming Better and Not Bitter

"By Getting Outside Of Yourself (GOOY)"

Sermon preached by Jeff Huber, August 2-3, 2025, at Summit Church, Durango

Weekly Memory Verse:

²⁶ But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. – Matthew 20:26-27

VIDEO Sermon Starter

SLIDE "Getting Outside of Yourself"

Have any of you ever paid for something and felt like you didn't get what you paid for? How did that make you feel? I know for myself that I tend to get upset, and that always makes things better, right! Have you ever been in a relationship that hasn't worked out the way you hoped? Did you feel bitter about that? I did some research this week and found that one of the leading causes of heart disease and stroke is people getting upset over things they had no control over, and it most often has to do with money or relationships. Today, we are going to talk another antidote given to us by Jesus for that kind of stress and anxiety, something that will help us be better and not bitter, which is an issue for many of us.

I found myself thinking about one of the first times I remember being bitter about life and it had to do with the first girl I asked out on a date. I think I was in 8th or 9th grade when I asked Ann Chow if she wanted to go to the movies with me. I met Ann at youth group at Lafayette United Methodist Church I went to in CA. She was a bit taller than me, but she was willing, and she was cute and funny. My mother had to give me a ride and take us to the movies and so she dropped me off at Ann's house and I went to the front door. Her dad opened the door and gave me a polite hello, and I said it was good to see you, Mr. Chow, and I was here to pick up Ann for our date at the movies.

He looked at me sternly which was a bit unusual because at church he was always very friendly, and said, "What are your intentions with my daughter young man?"

I was not prepared for this question. I was just thinking it would be a good date if I managed to put my arm around her shoulder at some point during the movie, but I didn't dare share that with him. I figured if I got a kiss on the cheek at the end, that would be a bonus, but I certainly wasn't saying that out loud. Instead, I just said that my plan was for us to go to the movies and be back by a certain time and that my mother was driving and she was a good driver.

He then looked at me and said very seriously, "Jeff, I need you to know that my daughter will not be marrying a white man but will be marrying someone who is Chinese." I just about turned around and left because marriage had never entered my mind as someone who was 13 and just hoping to hold hands if I was lucky. Fortunately, Ann came bounding around the corner with her usual effervescence and told her dad to knock it off and she closed the door and off we went.

That was our first and only date because Ann informed me it was best if we stayed friends, and it had nothing to do with me not being Chinese. The irony is that neither Ann nor her sister married someone who was Chinese!

I was devastated for a while because when you're that age and you get what feels like a rejection it can feel overwhelming, and we start to wonder if anyone will ever love us. It didn't help that it was at this point in life that my stepfather's drinking became more severe and his alcoholism led to fits of rage and abuse. I remember feeling very bitter and wondering if God was even around or paying attention. Has that ever happened to you? Have you ever had difficult moments that have caused your heart to be bitter, and you wondered if things would ever get better? We get angry and we blame God and who can blame us? We are only human after all and sometimes our anxiety and fear get the best of us.

What pulled me out of that bitterness was something we did as a youth group a few weeks later. We went to glide memorial United Methodist Church in downtown San Francisco, which is the church featured in the Will Smith movie, "The Pursuit of Happiness." They had a large soup kitchen which served people living on the streets as well as an apartment building, they had converted into a shelter for people who were struggling on the streets. They also had just opened an AIDS clinic and purchased another hotel which was a Hospice for patients with HIV/AIDS in the last stages of life.

We served mostly in the kitchen and did some cleaning, but before we set out to serve, are you the director read us these words from Jesus in Matthew 25 (The Message).

BIBLE

31-33 "When he finally arrives, blazing in beauty and all his angels with him, the Son of Man will take his place on his glorious throne. Then all the nations will be arranged before him and he will sort the people out, much as a shepherd sorts out sheep and goats, putting sheep to his right and goats to his left.

34-36 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what's coming to you in this

kingdom. It's been ready for you since the world's foundation.
And here's why:

I was hungry and you fed me,
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,
I was homeless and you gave me a room,
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,
I was sick and you stopped to visit,
I was in prison and you came to me.'

³⁷⁻⁴⁰ "Then those 'sheep' are going to say, 'Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?' Then the King will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.'

⁴¹⁻⁴³ "Then he will turn to the 'goats,' the ones on his left, and say, 'Get out, worthless goats! You're good for nothing but the fires of hell. And why? Because—

I was hungry and you gave me no meal,
I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,
I was homeless and you gave me no bed,
I was shivering and you gave me no clothes,
Sick and in prison, and you never visited.'

⁴⁴ "Then those 'goats' are going to say, 'Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or homeless or shivering or sick or in prison and didn't help?'

⁴⁵ "He will answer them, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you failed to do one of these things to someone who was being overlooked or ignored, that was me—you failed to do it to me.'

⁴⁶ "Then those 'goats' will be herded to their eternal doom, but the 'sheep' to their eternal reward."

This parable messes with our understanding of faith and works as Protestants because we recognize that we are not saved by anything that we do but by the grace of God. We are being told by Jesus in this parable that our actions do play a big role. It's not that we do enough actions and then we win God's salvation. It's not about earning salvation. We still are saved by grace and faith and not by what we do, but instead Jesus is reminding us that our actions are a demonstration of what is going on inside of our hearts. **If we truly have been saved by grace and we are loving God and loving others, then we share the Good News by responding and living our lives differently.**

Notice that both sides are surprised. The righteous and the unrighteous don't remember seeing Jesus. Jesus is teaching us clearly in this parable how we will find meaning and purpose in our lives, and that greatness is about serving others. How well do we pay attention to people who need us? How well did we offer ourselves to God and others? Do we understand that being willing to get outside of ourselves and serving others can help us be better and not bitter, not just now, but for eternity? Do we understand that this life is practice?

After my youth pastor read us that text, he then gave us another assignment. Towards the end of our shift serving meals, he wanted us to get a meal and sit down with people and get to know them and listen to them. It was very uncomfortable for a bunch of suburban kids to sit and have conversations with people that seemed 1,000,000 miles away. But during those conversations we met people who were not that different from us. Some were well educated and some had families and some just hard luck. Some were dealing with addiction, and many were dealing with mental illness because we don't really have facilities anymore in our country that help those who fall between the cracks and have no family to care for them.

Selfishly, what I remember mostly is that I forgot all about my

problems and I realized as I look back that I don't always get to choose what happens to me, but I can choose how to respond and that response will determine whether I get better or become more bitter.

Most of us end up living in our own little world where we are concerned about a relationship that fell apart or the family members that we can't seem to get along with, neither of whom will do what we want them to do! Today, we worry about our sleep score or how many steps we've taken or how the stock market is doing or how some other world issue is going to impact us, but we have no control over. We believe that if we could just have power over others or we can simply control others or control the world around us, then we would be happy and we would be better and not better.

Jesus is going to give us a radical idea for today's world, both in this parable we read, and, in another teaching, we are going to look at today. Society tries to tell us that our value, worth, and happiness is about the amount of power that we yield. We sometimes say that this person is on a "power trip." We talk about "power lunches," or "power ties and suits." Merriam-Webster talks about power in this way.

SLIDE The ability or right to control people or things

We sometimes talk about money, sex, and power which is about influence and control over things that we deem most important. At the very least we want to have power and control over our own lives and destinies. If we are honest, we don't want anybody else to tell us who we should be or what we should do. We don't really like to be under someone else's control because we want to be self-sufficient and have autonomy. The truth is we are willing to fight and die for that here in America. That's not necessarily a bad thing, but when power becomes what we worship, we can start to get into trouble, and we can easily feel bitter.

The more power we have in our lives and the more control we have over others, the harder we find it when people tell us, "No, you

can't do that." The more power we get, the harder it is for us to have our power restricted by someone else.

When I was just starting out in seminary and working at a local church, I went out to lunch with a senior pastor of a very large church who I had a great deal of respect for and who I wanted to learn from. I will never forget how demanding he was of our waiter and waitress and how rude he was when he couldn't get a special that was not on the menu for that day. He berated the server until she gave in and arranged to have that meal made available. The entire lunch was very uncomfortable, watching someone who was a pastor I respected berating people because he wanted a particular kind of dish. I have to say that I was a bit nervous about eating the food that day which came out of the kitchen!

I remember being at a store in town my first year here in Durango and watching a church member who didn't know I could see them trying to return an item to the store without a receipt. I'm sure it was none of you because it was many years ago, but they were told they had to take store credit, and this person became angry and irritated with the store clerk over a \$20 shirt that I was confident wouldn't make a dent in their budget. You could feel the bitterness come out of their pores.

There are times that I find myself having entitlement welling up inside of me. I still get that way on the softball field when something doesn't go my way and I find myself having to apologize to the ump for my behavior! It's in those moments I must ask what the price of my soul is. Is it \$20? It is an out or a run in a Rec 5 softball game! For \$20, am I really willing to tear down another person and make them feel small just so I can get my way? Is it worth having that certain meal? Can you see how power begins to affect us over time and causes us to be bitter?

GRAPHIC Lord Acton on Power

Lord Acton, the 18th century British historian, famously said, ***“All power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”***

Almost every single one of the horrible acts committed against humanity in our history has been committed by tyrants who had absolute power and committed Holocaust and genocides against millions of people. I have watched with a sinking and angry heart the past three years as infrastructure that provides heat, water, and food for civilians in Ukraine have been destroyed as we approach severe winter months and this quote kept coming to my mind. No matter how we feel about Israel, Hamas, and Gaza, our hearts break when we see people without food and water because of the power that is abused by leaders on both sides.

Power that controls and destroys cannot define our lives. How many people work for us? How many people can we boss around? Did we get our way most of the time in life? Several months ago, a Forbes magazine cover noted the richest families and the richest Americans and the billionaires of our world. Many of the richest Americans and billionaires are CEOs of large companies with massive portfolios. Here's a quote from one of the articles in Forbes magazine about those that are deemed financially successful.

SLIDE ***“Some of the most famous and effective CEOs have been, let's face it, complete jerks. In fact, jerkiness, seems to correlate well with strategic boldness.”***

How interesting, that we must boss people around and put people in their place and make them feel small and be total jerks, to be strategically effective. Sometimes people can be complete jerks and get a lot done. They are clear about what they're doing and if you don't measure up then you are made to feel small. While it might be easy to pick on tyrants or CEOs that seem to be cruel, the reality is that this quest for power is part of our **human condition**.

I remember watching a one-year-old and a two-year-old playing

together and the youngest one pulling toys out of her toy box. The one-year-old would settle on a particular toy and begin to play, and the two-year-old would rip it out of her hands. I saw it happen once and figured it was just kids at play and then I noticed when the one-year-old picked up a second toy the two-year-old dropped the first toy they had taken and then proceeded to rip that one out of the younger child's hand!

This happened repeatedly, and I found it interesting to note that even before we are old enough to talk, we know that when someone else has something that we want, we will often try to take it. We might not even want it until we see that someone else has it and they are enjoying it and suddenly, it becomes the thing that we **MUST** have. The fact is that the two-year-old had power over the one-year-old and exercised it to meet her own needs.

We continue to see this in elementary school and then in middle school and high school with the development of bullies. We exercise our power over others because we are more popular or more athletic or we look better or we are smarter, according to society's standards. We label differences as better than or worse than instead of just seeing variety. This is how we exercise power in those moments.

We are not the first generation to wrestle with these problems about power because we see it in the followers of Jesus in the first century, even the ones who were closest to Jesus. I find this fascinating as the disciples argue with each other at least three times in the Gospels over a question. We read about this interaction in Matthew's gospel.

BIBLE

²⁰ Then the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus with her sons. She knelt respectfully to ask a favor. ²¹ "What is your request?" he asked.

She replied, "In your Kingdom, please let my two sons sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on

your left.”

BIBLE

²⁴ When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. ²⁵ But Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. ²⁶ But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. ²⁸ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

SLIDE Which one of us is the greatest?

Can you imagine that? These are the people that Jesus hand-picked to be his followers. They watched Jesus as he ministered to the last and the least and the lost. They watched Jesus as he loved those that no one else would love. They were there when Jesus sat down and break bread with nobodies and criminals, yet they argue amongst themselves about which one of them is the greatest. Not only that, but they also send their MOTHER to do the dirty work and ask the question!

You would think they would get it, which is why I often call them the DUH-sciples, because the sometimes just didn't pick up on the obvious clues and message of Jesus! So, what did they mean by that question: Who is the greatest? They wanted to know who was going to be in charge if Jesus went missing or was gone suddenly or left them all together but without him.

By this time in their relationship with Jesus, the disciples believed that Jesus is going towards Jerusalem so he can finally claim the Jewish throne and he will become king of a new Israel. They believe he will forcibly cast the Romans out of Palestine and suddenly he will lead Israel into a new golden era. That was the basic concept of Messiah in the first century. Those disciples wanted to know who was going to be

on his right and left. Who are going to be his main generals or top dogs, after Jesus of course, who get to order everybody else around.

Three times they had this debate. The first time was in Mark's gospel in chapter 9 when they are walking towards Jerusalem and after they asked the question he turns and says, **"Are you guys kidding me? Have you not been paying attention?"**

He then picks up a child and puts the child on his lap and says, "Okay, pay attention. Greatness in the kingdom of God looks something like this. You must be humble and **trust like this child**. It's not about power over that you can use to control others."

The final time that they asked him this question is at the Last Supper in John's gospel. He had broken the bread and given it to them as his body. Jesus then blessed the cup and gave it to them as a cup of a new covenant, poured out for all of us for the forgiveness of sins. He said, **"Whenever you eat and drink, remember me."**

As they have finished eating, several of them are arguing at the table about who should be in charge. In John's gospel, we are told that Jesus then goes to the doorway of that upper room. He grabbed a basin of water and a towel and wrapped the towel around his waist. Normally it was the household servant who would do this and wash people's feet because they had gotten sweaty and dusty from wearing sandals on the dirt roads. It was refreshing to gather around a table for a meal and have clean feet, but there had been no servants to wash their feet when they came into that room.

So, Jesus took that role upon himself. We are meant to recognize that the basin of **water and the towel had been there** the entire time but not one of the disciples had picked them up before the meal to wash people's feet. They called Jesus Master and Rabbi but did not even offer to wash HIS feet! It was beneath them to pick up the towel and take that role. If they did do that it might be a recognition that they were servants which then would mean they couldn't claim to be the

first, or the next in line to oversee this rag tag group of DUH-sciples.

It's in the middle of this argument about who would be the greatest that Jesus shocks them all. What does he do? He takes the basin of water and a towel, and he gets down on his knees and one by one he washes each of their feet. They were horrified by this action. Jesus looks at them, with stunned looks on their faces, and says, **“Do you get it now? This is what greatness looks like in the kingdom of God. This is what power looks like in the kingdom of God. Our power will be the power to serve, and, in this way, we influence others, and we change the world. This is what I’m looking for.”**

In Mark's gospel, the disciples are on their way towards Jerusalem with the crowd and two of the disciples get Jesus off to themselves. James and John say to Jesus, **“We were just thinking, it might be good for you to let everyone else know that we should be on your left and on your right when you come in the power.”**

Remember that James and John's father was Zebedee who lived in a big house in Durango upon a hill with great views. He had a second home in Phoenix, and he ran a successful business. James and John were being primed to take over the business and they had workers who worked for them, like Peter and Andrew who were also followers of Jesus. It was very appropriate that James and John would volunteer themselves, out of the kindness of their hearts, to be number two and number three in Jesus' organization when he takes power.

Jesus stops and motions to the other disciples and says, “Hey guys, everyone come over here for little bit.” He's going to “out” James and John, but not to embarrass them but rather to teach an important and profound truth to all the disciples and those who would follow Jesus and claim him as their King. Jesus says to all of them as they are gathered, “James and John think they want to be on my right and on my left when we get to Jerusalem, and I want to share with you a few words about that idea.”

Understandably, the remaining disciples now get angry with James and John. Why did they get angry? **They got angry because they wanted to be in charge.** James and John shouldn't be in charge. I should be in charge! I'm Peter and I'm his favorite! I'm Matthew and I used to be a tax collector so I know business and the Romans so I should be in charge! We then have the same words recorded by Mark that we read in Matthew's gospel.

BIBLE

²⁶ But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave.

Long before Robert Greenleaf wrote his important essay in the 20th century on servant leadership, Jesus talked about what leadership really means. It's not about being the boss of everyone else or getting your own way. Jesus doesn't want us to be like tyrants and rulers that we see everywhere else. Jesus is asking something different if we are going to follow him and be a part of his kingdom.

Jesus turns the idea of greatness upside down and teaches something radically counter cultural. What does greatness mean? It doesn't mean we're at the top of the ladder. We could be at the top of the ladder but instead we choose to be at the bottom, serving. We intentionally choose to serve which is why Jesus says repeatedly things like,

BIBLE

"The first will be last and the last will be first."

Jesus says to his disciples on one occasion, **"When you go to a wedding banquet, don't assume you get the best seat. Instead, take the lowest seat, the farthest from the host and then maybe the guest of honor will invite you to come and sit in a higher seat. If you take the highest seat, it's likely the guest of honor might tell you to move down**

a seat or two because someone else more important shows up.”

Jesus tells us we are always to pursue the role of a servant and ask what it is that we can do today to serve others. God is the source of our power and the one we entrust our lives to and so to call Jesus “Lord” means we recognize him as master and ruler. Every day we are to simply say, **“Here I am Lord, send me.”** We wake up every morning and we get on our knees, and we ask what it is that God wants us to do that day.

SLIDE Greatness and real power is found in serving

Jesus, the most influential and powerful human being who ever walked the face of this planet, who had the power to command legions of angels and could bring the dead back to life, washed the feet of his disciples. We who claim to be his followers are called to do the same. This is how our lives are blessed and become better, and how we move away from being bitter. I found multiple studies this week which discovered that our willingness to serve others changes our brain chemistry and our outlook on life.

GRAPHIC Book Wonder Drug

I recently read *Wonder Drug: 7 Scientifically Proven Ways That Serving Others Is the Best Medicine for Yourself* by Dr. Stephen Trzeciak and Dr. Anthony Mazzeilli. The authors note that our modern world suffers from an epidemic of self-serving behaviors, and the cure lies in serving others. Their seven-step prescription shows that helping those around us not only transforms the lives of others but also our own — scientifically proven to reduce stress, boost health, foster happiness, and enhance our sense of purpose. The preacher and author Booker T. Washington may have said it best. ***“If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else.”***

GRAPHIC Booker T. Washington Quote

In a world often marked by stress and disconnection, the act of

serving others emerges as a powerful remedy. Research reveals that acts of service go beyond simple gestures of kindness; they create profound, measurable changes in the brain and body. Serving others has been shown to even drive personal and professional success. By understanding these benefits, we can see that helping others is not just a moral choice but a scientifically supported path to a more fulfilling, healthier life. Let's explore the evidence behind how service impacts our brains, bodies, and overall well-being, revealing why giving back is one of the most transformative actions we can take.

SLIDE Serving others activates “the fantastic four” hormones

- **Endorphins:** These “helper’s high” hormones create feelings of euphoria and reduce pain.
- **Dopamine:** The “feel-good” hormone that boosts motivation and pleasure.
- **Oxytocin:** Known as the “bonding hormone,” it strengthens social connections and builds trust.
- **Serotonin:** The “pride hormone” enhances mood, self-esteem, and a sense of accomplishment.

Together, these hormones counteract stress, promote emotional resilience, and create a profound sense of well-being.

SLIDE Improved Physical Health

Volunteering doesn’t just uplift the spirit—it boosts physical health too. Volunteering can benefit people in the following ways:

- **Live Longer:** Volunteers have a lower mortality rate and reduced risk of physical limitations.
- **Pain Reduction:** Serving others helps manage chronic pain by redirecting focus and releasing endorphins.
- **Lower Blood Pressure:** Volunteers are 40% less likely to develop high blood pressure compared to non-volunteers.

- **Enhanced Cognitive Function:** Volunteering preserves mental sharpness and reduces the risk of cognitive decline.
- **Combat Loneliness:** Serving others builds connections, reducing risks of heart disease, stroke, and everyday life-function decline.

SLIDE Mental Health Benefits

Service has profound mental health benefits:

- **Reduces Depression and Anxiety:** Acts of service protect against and alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- **Eases Grief:** Helping others can lighten the burden of personal grief and loss.
- **Prevents Burnout:** Pouring love into others' lives can replenish your emotional reserves, reducing burnout.
- **Supports Addiction Recovery:** The 12th step of Alcoholics Anonymous emphasizes service, underscoring its healing power.
- **Relieves Personal Worries:** Assisting someone else in distress can help you gain perspective and temporarily forget your own troubles.

SLIDE True Happiness is rooted in giving

- **Fulfillment and Joy:** Serving others radiates your inner light and fosters lasting joy.
- **More Fulfilling than Money:** For high-income earners, research shows that spending money on others increases happiness more than spending on oneself.
- **Global Impact:** Across all regions and income levels, charitable givers report higher happiness.
- **Psychological Flourishing:** Engaging in kind acts for others boosts mental health, fostering a state of "psychological flourishing."

SLIDE Service fuels personal and professional success:

- **Early Predictors of Success:** Studies show that children who exhibit kindness achieve better academically, are more socially connected, and even earn higher incomes later in life.
- **Career Advancement:** Generous individuals are more likely to be promoted compared to those displaying selfish or manipulative behavior.
- **Positive Outlook:** People with a “people are awesome” mindset tend to earn more and experience greater life satisfaction.
- **Ethical Companies Thrive:** Organizations prioritizing employee well-being and service are more profitable, with loyal, motivated, and productive employees.

SLIDE The transformative power of service depends on your intentions

- **Genuine Altruism:** The benefits of serving others arise only when motivated by sincere care and the desire to help.
- **Authentic Impact:** Volunteering “to look good” or “to get something in return” doesn’t yield the same benefits. True service comes from the heart and fosters genuine connections and personal growth.

Each week we have been giving cards like this one to help us be better and not bitter. This week I want to use that acronym for getting outside of yourself, or GOOY, to make you laugh a little bit and make you think about how you might do these things in the next week.

GRAPHIC GOOY Card (Get Outside Of Yourself)

1. Go somewhere new or uncomfortable (**Summit Volunteer Page**)
2. Open your heart to listen
3. Offer to serve with humility
4. Yield your life to Jesus by asking, “What do you want for me?”

While I was in seminary in Denver I served as the youth pastor at Smoky Hill United Methodist Church in Aurora. There was a gentleman by the name of Jim who volunteered in one of the shelters in downtown Denver where I had worked the year before. He began to meet some of the men who lived there, and he decided it was hard for them to figure out how to start a new life in downtown Denver, so he picked four of them to live in the basement of his home in a nice suburb not far from the church. He made four bedrooms in his basement, and they all shared a bathroom.

They ate meals together and did Bible study, and he made sure that all of them got training for new jobs. He helped them make sure they had appropriate medical care because some of them had mental health issues. Even though he had a wife and two children they literally adopted these four men who came to church with them every week. You could see them become transformed before our very eyes as a congregation.

After about four months of working with these gentlemen, the homeowners Association came calling to Jim's house and they told him he could no longer house these unrelated men in his home. So, he sold his house and moved to an unincorporated part of the county about 2 miles away. Over the course of the next two years Jim and his family helped seven men move out of homelessness and poverty and become self-sufficient. They helped them get jobs and even buy homes.

Just before I left that church, Jim had a massive heart attack, and I was asked to officiate at his funeral. We had to have the funeral in the high school auditorium because so many people wanted to come. He had literally given his life to serve others. I have done funerals for wealthy and powerful people who didn't have nearly as many come to their funerals because the truth is the measure of our lives is not about how much power we have or how much wealth we have. The measure of our lives is about love and generosity in serving.

I have shared this image with you before, but I like to believe that when we die, we sit in front of a large video screen, and a movie of our life plays before us. We get to see the lives of people that we have touched and how we bless them and how the seeds that we have planted have taken root and grown. Do we see that the script for our life's movie which is played back before us will be based on the acts of sacrificial love that we practiced? Do we understand that we have been given so that we might give back and that God holds us accountable for everything we have been given? Do we understand that we are called to be the servants of God and help lead people to the kingdom of God by serving them? Have we helped make the world better or have we wallowed in bitterness? What will people say about you at your funeral? Let me ask you this question.

SLIDE Will your life be bitter or better?

Will we be remembered as someone who was blessed to be a blessing, being willing to serve and giving ourselves away? Or will we be remembered as someone who held on tightly and misused our power, demanding our way and asking if we could be first? This meal that we celebrate is a physical reminder to live into a better life with Jesus where this is forgiveness, grace, and mercy offered in place of bitterness, anger, and disappointment. The bread and the cup remind us that the one we call Lord and Savior came to serve and give his life for us so that our lives would be full and rich.

GRAPHIC Communion

(Communion instructions give here, then the elements will be blessed, and prayer for the Holy Spirit offered.)

August 2-3 Order

1. Ely welcomes people and says, **“Today we talk about blessing others by serving and how we find meaning and purpose as we give our lives for others, blessing them because we have been blessed.”**
2. “Battle Belongs” David Jergenson
3. Jeff welcomes people:
 - a. QR Code and Connect Card
 - b. Communion is open to all
 - c. (5:30 only) Get elements ready if you are at home
 - d. Invite people to greet each other, however comfortable and be seated.
4. Announcement Video
5. Sermon
6. Communion Instructions
7. Prayer
8. “Holy Forever”
9. “Build My Life”
10. Prayer and Lord’s Prayer
11. Offering SLIDE and Focus (Raft for Hope)
12. Med Moments and GOOY Cards
13. Care Ministers
14. Prayer Quilt for Keith Osborne, Kyle’s father, who is in at home hospice care from dementia and diabetes
15. Connect with Us
16. Closing Prayer