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## JOHN 1:6-18

John Series: Get a Life in Jesus

[PRAYER] Lord, I thank you that we could come and enjoy friendship together and just that connectedness of our lives and growing in you and knowing how to encourage each other and bless each other in the midst of that growth experience. Thank you for what you're doing in our lives. And we thank you for what you're doing in and through this church. Lord, we thank you for the privilege that we have to serve you in this community. Continue to grow us and knit us together and strengthen our mission as we reach out to those around us. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

For those who were with us last week, I made this statement and I want to clarify it. Last week I said when I look at God's word today then I get something different. It's an experience that I have with God that's different than I had last year when I studied the same passage of scripture or even last week. So God uses that in some great ways in my life to help me experience the fact that God's word is living and active. Okay, that's what it says. Living and active. So when I open it up and read it, I get something from it that's powerful.

But I don't want you to misunderstand that statement and somehow think that the Bible is somehow a mystical book. There's some people who just flop the Bible open, start reading it, get an impression, and they go away saying, "The Bible told me this." I think that sometimes they're missing something because they take the Bible out of context. So there is a balance here between experiencing this message from God's word that's relevant for me today and knowing how to study it.

So let me explain to you basically what I mean by that. When I say study it, what I mean is we look at the gospel of John and we want to understand what God meant through John in that moment to those people at that time. There's only one interpretation of any passage in the Bible. There's only one. Now we may disagree about which one it is, but there's only one and we're in search of that one message, whatever that message is. There's one interpretation, but out of that comes a number of principles. Principles are timeless truths that apply to any culture at any time in history, at any place, young or old. The principles apply to everyone. The principles are timeless truths.

Now those principles we're going to take out of our passage today. We're going to interpret it and I'm going to take the exact words and help you understand what they mean. Then we're going to take some principles out of that and come over here to applications and the applications are many. And this is where the Lord speaks to us each individually.

When I'm talking about the ability to receive God's word today in a different way than last week or last year, that's what I'm speaking of. It's the application. I go, "I'm in a different place today than I was last week." So as I read that same passage, I get something different that God wants to apply to my life. So that's what I mean when we're talking about this.

If you emphasize just the experiential side of God's word, sometimes you find yourself in error because you're missing the context that the word was spoken in. But if you only emphasize the context in the study, then you might look at the book as another academic book. We don't do that. We look at it as an academic, we may approach it in a structured way, but we're gathering information that applies to our hearts. So the Bible is relevant and practical to our lives. Whether we're old people, whether we're young people, whether we're children, whether we're married or single, the Bible is applicable in all of those situations.

Now we're studying a particular book of the Bible now going verse by verse through the gospel of John. This is our second week in the gospel of John, so if you missed last week's sermon you can go back and listen to it online. In order to understand where we're going today, we first want to read the passage of scripture because we're going to draw from the actual text that we have in order to find things that can apply to our lives.

So to that end, I'm going to ask you to stand with me as I read God's word. You have a Bible, I trust, and you can read in your own Bible the passage of scripture as I'm reading it. You may have a different translation and that's okay. Use whatever translation you have. You ask me what's the best translation? I'd say as many as you can get. So if you really want to understand a passage, put the NIV and the ESV and all these different translations out there and you'll get a glimpse of what God is really saying in the passage. I happen to be reading here from the New International Version.

*It says – There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light (that light referring to last week Jesus being the light of the world), so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.*

*The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him (they did not recognize Him, they did not receive Him), to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.*

That's God's word. You may be seated.

Now I want to look at some principles. I'm going to give you an overview of the message today. These are the principles I took right out of the passage. We're going to go back and I'll show you where we got them from the passage. I think that's important for credibility, for you to see they came right out of the passage because it's within that idea that you're going to get the applications you're going to walk away from today. You want the applications to come, not from Scott's words or illustrations; you want them to come from God's word.

These are the principles we're going to see and I've organized them in a structure – the challenge, the solution, and the result. The challenge is people don't recognize Jesus as the light and people don't receive Him. We'll go back to the verse. I'll show you where we get that in a moment.

Right now do you see how that's a timeless truth? It's timeless in the sense that it applies to all of us. A young person can take that passage when he or she is going to school and can understand that idea. It's timeless, whether it's in this culture or another culture. Cultures are very different, but every culture experiences God's word and the principles that are in it. It's very relevant.

Secondly, the solution. God uses people who put themselves out there as a testimony to the true light. John's our example. We're going to take some ideas from his example for our lives as well. But the principle (that's the application) here is God uses people who put themselves out there as a testimony to the true light. Do you see how that can be applied anywhere? It's a principle. The result people receive Jesus and become children of God. We'll see that in the passage and we'll see again that's a principle that applies in any culture, any time of history, and is relevant for us.

Now let's go back into the passage and take it apart. We'll go to the first few verses that we saw in the passage.

It says – *There was a man sent from God whose name was John.* Let's start there. Let me explain to you who John is because he's not the author of this book. The book is John. But this John that John is referring to is John the Baptist. He was the forerunner of Jesus, someone who pointed the way. "Hey, this one's coming. He is the Lamb of God. He is the Messiah," is what John would say. That was his message. He had a mission.

But John the Baptist was kind of an interesting guy. We have noted in scripture that he had a unique style of dress and his diet was very restricted. It sounds like some of us around here, right? Unique style of dress, restricted diet. It says in the scriptures that he wore an outfit made out of camel's hair. Now most of the people wore tunics, this cloth kind of underwear, and then they wore a robe on the outside. That's what most people wore, but not John. John wore something that was different. He wore this camel skin outfit. That's one thing we know about him.

The other thing we know about him is he ate locusts and wild honey. Have any of you had the privilege of eating locusts? I don't mean the ones that accidentally fly in your mouth. You

actually eat them. Some of you would say that's really gross. And it is for me too. I really can't imagine it. Except that when I lived in Kenya they eat the insects there. So I was intrigued by that because even the Americans that are there, they would eat the insects as well.

So I called my son-in-law this week. His name is Peter and he grew up in Africa as a missionary's son. I said, "Tell me the story about the insects again and how you guys ate them."

He says, "Well they weren't really locusts. They were termites and when the rains come then these termites get activated and they swarm. So the termites go around and they're big long termites. Four wings, pretty long, and they go up by the lights. So you can just grab them and scoop them up if you want. You can take them, pop the wings off, and just eat them like that. They're not too bad that way. But the best way to cook these things is you gather a bunch of them, take all the wings off, put them in a frying pan with some butter and salt, cook them all up, and they taste like popcorn with a little bit of bacon bits flavor to them."

Doesn't that sound very appetizing? It's not appetizing to me either, but he says they would do it all the time. He says, "I would even eat them today. They're a lot better than you might imagine given our culture." So it's a different culture, different experience. He says that one guy even took a bunch of them, packed them all together, and made a protein bar out of them because these do have a lot more protein than your average diet. So apparently they're good for you. I have no idea about the scientific benefits of all that.

All I'm just suggesting is this guy John the Baptist wasn't so out of it as we might imagine, but his diet was eating these locusts and wild honey. But the thing that's most important for us today and that I think John wants to bring out in the passage is that he is a man on a mission.

Now I believe that all of us need to recognize that we have a mission in life and when we recognize the mission that we have in life, everything else starts to fall into place more effectively. One of the things I try to help young people understand (because I meet with young people regularly) and I say, "You know what my job is in my life, right? My job is to help young people be successful. I love doing that." So I say to thirteen, fourteen year olds (which I think is the most important years of your teenage life), "If you can develop a mission-oriented view of life then it will help you deal with the contemporary thinking." And this is what most teenagers believe. "You have to understand that my goal in life as a teenager is to have fun." If you believe that pleasure is your ultimate goal, then you put off responsibility. You don't do the things you need to do. If you have a mission-oriented view of life, then things go much better for you.

Well John had a mission. In his mission it says that *he came as a witness*. This word *witness* I think is helpful for us. I spent some time meditating on this word after I understood what it meant. I'm going to take you through my path of thinking this week and what the Lord did with me in this so that it might help you in your own meditation and application today.

But the word *witness* comes from the word *martureo*, which of course is where we get our English word 'martyr' from. A witness is someone who has a story. They share their story in order to persuade someone. Usually that's what it is. So if you have a testimony about a certain product that's on an advertisement, the testimony is designed to persuade you to purchase the

product. If you have a witness who comes into a courtroom, they're telling their story and the jury wants to listen to their story because the story is designed to persuade them to a particular kind of verdict. So this idea of a witness is very appropriate for us as Christians because we all have a testimony.

I hope you can articulate your testimony. How did you come to Jesus? Why is Jesus important to you? Because when you have that testimony, you can share with others and other people will be persuaded by your testimony. You don't have to have one of those testimonies that say I was a mass murderer and I was in prison for years and then I got saved. You don't have to have one of those dramatic testimonies.

I got saved when I was three years old. I grew up in a Christian home and my parents nurtured my faith. But my testimony is really about my life now. Not so much how I became a Christian, but what God is doing in my life now that I recognize the power of God. I see Him working in people's lives, I see Him working in my life, and I recognize there's meaning and significance and that God lifts a person out of the mire of their lives. It's so exciting for me to watch that in my own life and other people's lives. That's a testimony of what God is doing in me and it's designed to persuade. That's what a testimony is for.

Now John was a witness. But let me take you to another place where the word *witness* is used in God's word. Go to this one in Hebrews 11. Here's just a background to this illustration, Hebrews 11. There's all these people of faith. You have Moses and you have Abraham and you have Jacob and you have Daniel, Elijah. You have all these in Hebrews 11. All these great stories from Bible stories that we know as we look at the Old Testament.

But the picture of these guys is that they are witnesses to us, you and me together. Because Hebrew 12, the very next chapter, starts this way. It says – *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses* (the witness of Daniel, the witness of Abraham, the witness of Moses), *let us also lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely. And let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.*

You and I are in a race. The tendency in our race is to get bogged down. The tendency in our race is to give up. The tendency in our race is to feel like this is too hard. So what does he say in the passage? What he says is go to the Old Testament, read the witnesses, read the stories of those great men of faith, and learn from Daniel and how he hung in there. Learn from Abraham and his experience. And as you learn from those different people, they are witnesses designed to persuade you to keep running the race with perseverance.

If you're getting weary today, where are you going to go? Go back and study the people from Hebrews 11. Go back into the Bible. See those great people of faith and what God did in their lives. And then say, "God, do that in my life. I want to run with perseverance." That's what a witness is. So this little tangent I took about a witness just reminded me about how important it is for us to have a message that we use to persuade.

Now what is John's? John had a unique message that he's trying to persuade in a unique way. And here's what it says about him. *He came as a witness to do this: to testify concerning that*

*light* and to be *a witness to the light*. This is the light. This is the thing. It's actually a person, not a thing. This is the idea. It's not just an idea, it's a person. But this is what will guide you in your thinking about life. This will illuminate life for you is what John's message is. So he wants to proclaim that message to everyone who will hear.

What a great example John is. I think we need examples like John in our lives because we have a similar mission. God has given us a task to share our faith, to be a witness. So we can look at John and he's a witness to the light.

So I ask myself this question. What does it mean for me, what does it mean for you to be a witness to the light? What does that mean? Now in order to answer that question, I go to the Bible and I look at the times that the word *light* is used in reference to us as Christians in order to draw some ideas about being a witness to the light. What does that mean? What does it look like? Let me give you some ideas of what I think the Bible is saying to us about being this witness.

How can we be a witness or become a witness to the light? The first thing I would suggest is to be counterculture. Counterculture. Notice the verse in Romans 13:11-12. *And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The word salvation there being used as the coming of Christ. Not the initial salvation to get saved. But the coming of Christ is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So here's what you do: let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.*

There is a contrast between the world's pattern of thinking... Romans 10 calls it a pattern that the world has, wants to conform us to that pattern. There's a pattern that the world has. You can expect what's going to happen that people are going to think a particular way. It exists. That structure is there and he's saying put aside the deeds of darkness and put on this other armor, this armor of light.

We are living a counterculture lifestyle. When you stand up and you do a particular thing that you know is right even though it is distasteful to others or not acceptable to others, you're doing the right thing. There's armor on you. It's the armor of light that you can stand with the sense of confidence. That's what the idea is. This sense of confidence that you can do the right thing even though other people won't like it. That's the message here about being a light. So being counter cultured. That's one way you could be a witness to the light.

A second way that we can be a witness to the light is by being edifying. Now here's a verse I use with young people as I'm trying to help them be successful in life. Because it talks about grumbling and arguing. There's some people who are characterized by grumblers. They're complaining, arguing, and so on. He says – *Do everything without grumbling and arguing. Why? Watch this. So you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.* Notice there's a contrast made between the warped and crooked generation. That's where grumbling and arguing fits in really well.

You know you see people, whether it's Facebook or around the community, and there's a lot of people just complaining, complaining, complaining. But Christians are different. We are children of God.

And notice what it says there. *Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.* The idea of shining like stars gives the impression of flourishing. This is another one of the thrive passages, Ed, that I think would be really great for us. *Shine among them like stars in the sky.*

Psalm 1, of course, is like the big flourishing passage where it talks about how we want to be *like trees planted by streams of water, that bring forth fruit in its season and all he does prospers.* That person then is a flourishing person in Psalm 1. That's what God wants for all of us. I'm trying to help young people thrive and flourish in their lives. How are they going to do that? They're going to be counter cultured. They're going to be edifying. They're not going to be grumblers. And then they're going to be the people who shine like the stars. They're not just a little dot in the sky. They shine beautifully. They're flourishing in their lives. That's the idea here as they hold firmly to the word of life. So being edifying is the second way that we can become a witness to the light, according to that passage.

A third idea about this idea of the light is to put yourself out there. Let it shine. Here's Jesus' words. Isn't this what He's saying? Put yourself out here. He says – *Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on a stand.* They put it out there. You put yourself out there. If your religion is a private matter for you, then you're missing something that Jesus wants you to know. He's saying don't hide it under a bushel. Put it out there. *And He gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*

So you're putting yourself out there. Thus the song *This Little Light of Mine.* We're out there sharing who we are. We're putting ourselves out there and saying, "Yes, I am a Christian. Ask me a question about the faith. I might not have the answer, but I know where I can go to get it." So we don't have all the answers, but we're just saying, "Yes. I'm going to let my light shine."

So in this idea of being a witness, notice that there's several ways that you and I can be a witness to the light. John had a particular mission. He was a man on a mission and that's how we know him predominantly because he was *a witness to testify concerning that light* and he also was *a witness to the light.* Great example model for us.

We could stop right there and go home, but I want to go a little bit further into this passage because I think there's more that we can glean this week.

So let's start looking at verse 9. *The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.* Notice He is the creator, but they don't recognize who He is. That's what he's saying here. The whole world was made by Him, but they didn't know who He was.

Now this is a problem in our world today. I would suggest that people don't recognize Jesus. He's right in front of them. They don't recognize it. They're drowning in their own problems and Jesus will help them in the midst of those problems. A lot of people view Jesus as someone you see on Sunday. And then they have to live their life the rest of the week. That's not what's happening. What we need to do is allow God to be revealed so that people can recognize Him in the midst of the struggle.

When I go to the doctor, I want to know what's wrong with me and fix it. But the doctor says, "Okay look. Before we do that, we have to have an MRI and we have to do this test and take some blood work and all these different things." Why? Because the doctor wants to get to the root of the problem.

Today people are focusing on some of the exteriors, some of the things that are not roots. Trouble in my marriage or I'm feeling depressed or I have an anger problem. And they're focusing on symptoms. What we need to do is recognize that Jesus goes to the root. Jesus deals with the depth. And we're not just trying to make people look good on the outside. We're trying to get to the root of the issues in our lives.

It says that the world did not recognize Him. That's why we need these testimonies. We need people like you and me to be able to share the word with them. See, there's a certain sphere of people that I can relate to and minister to that's different than the group of people that you're with.

You might ask the question why does God allow suffering in the world? Why do Christians suffer? Why do you not have the job that you'd like? Why do you have a physical pain that you have? Why are you struggling with an emotional challenge? Why? Well often it's so that you can allow God to work in that and you have a testimony because you know there's a lot of people in our world today who have all kinds of job problems, physical problems, emotional challenges. And you share about your story and you share about your challenge with your difficult child or you share your challenge with a struggling marriage and how God is working in the midst of that. And somebody else goes, "Wow, I really need that."

So God, I believe, allows that pain many times in our lives so that He can demonstrate His grace and we can then reveal that to a world that doesn't recognize Him. They don't see Him because they don't see God as relevant to their problems today. You ask children five, six years old, "Does God understand computers?" And many of those children say no. Why? Because they don't relate God to something like technology. Well does God understand computers? I hope you would say yes. Right? God not only understands them, He can work in our lives in the midst of all of those challenges. We just need to recognize God in the midst. God made them, *but the world did not recognize him.*

*He came to them which was his own (the Jewish people), but his own did not receive him.* We're going to take off with this word *receive* in a minute. But the idea of accept Him as King of the Jews, as the Lord. They didn't accept Him as that, did not recognize Him, and did not receive Him.

Those are the two things there and that's what comes into our chart or our structure that I created from the principles as I was doing this study. People don't recognize Jesus as a light and people don't receive Him. That's the challenge. So what is God's solution? God's solution is that He uses people. What a privilege. He uses people like you and me. So we have this sense of mission like John had to share a message with a waiting world that can't see Him. They don't get it. They don't even know they need Jesus because they don't recognize that He's there. So our job is to reveal that and to show that. So God uses people who put themselves out there as a testimony to the true light.

I'm willing to say I'm different. Yes, I'm a Christian and I live as a Christian. And the result is that people receive Jesus and become children of God. What a great thing to be part of a plan that God has laid out. We get to watch that grace take place and this person get saved and this person get saved. And we go, "Whoa! Look at what God is doing to bring about this salvation in people's lives."

So let's go to the passage to scripture that comes next starting in verse 12. Now we're going to take off on this idea of receive because this is going to be one of the keys to understanding this life. So John's whole message that he's trying to share with the people through this book is that Jesus is the life and you want to get this life. You need this life for yourself and you're going to get that through receiving him. Receiving Him. That means embracing Him as the Lord of your life, making Him the boss, taking on everything that Christ represents on yourself. You're receiving Him. And everybody who receives Him, here's the result. *Everybody who receives him, to those who believe in his name*, so it gives us some definition about receiving. Receiving means to believe in Jesus and all He represents in His name. Everything that Jesus represents when you do that and you receive Him into your life, He gives you the right to become children of God.

And then in verse 13 he explains what it means to be a child of God. He amplifies this one idea. Because I want you to know what a child of God means. It's really important, he says. This is *not children born of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God*.

Now in a couple of chapters he's going to talk about being born again. But this idea here is that you're born again. You're born of God. You're adopted into His family. You know what that does for you? It changes your identity. You're going to have a hard time being a light for the world if your identity is not in Christ. If you're trying to be a light for the world, but your identity is in the world, then you will always feel embarrassed or you'll feel "oh no" or you're going to feel like I don't want to get criticized or I'm concerned about other people's opinions of me.

There comes a very important transition in a person's life whether they're a young person in high school or in middle school or in college or as adults. There's an important transition where you say, "I'm not worried about what people think. I am worried about what God thinks and my identity is in God. I am a child of God. And because of that, I'm just going to put it out there and let people see." That's a transition that has to take place.

If it doesn't take place you're going to be frustrated. You're going to wonder what people will think of you. "You really go to church on Sunday? Wow. Every Sunday you go to church? Wow. What's wrong with you? Are you fanatical or something?" And so people will have opinions of you, but that's not going to bother you if you recognize that you are a child of God.

Because here's what happens when you're getting adopted into a new family, you get a new name. Right? When you're adopted into a family, you get a new identity. When you're adopted into a family, you get new brothers and sisters. You get new inheritance. You get new rules. This family does it different than the other family.

So if you're in a family and you've got young people, sometimes the young people will say, "Well I don't know why we have to do it this way. They do it differently over at my friend's." There's some Christians who do that too. "I don't know why we have to do this in God's family. In the other family..." We're not in the other family. We're in this family, the family of God, and God gives us a plan that He knows provides us with what we need in order to be successful, experience meaning and joy, and all these things we need in our hearts. That's what it means to be a child of God.

That identity that we have then allows us to be a light. If you're just trying to be a light without the identity, it's going to keep going out and it's going to be hard for you. You're going to be frustrated internally. But if you come to that place and you make that transition in your life where you say, "God, I am sold out to you." I'm not going to be worried about what people think. I'm just going to go out there and I'm going to go ahead and tell this person, "I just got to tell you there's a better way to live than what you're doing." Or you're going to say to this person, "Can I just tell you about Jesus Christ?" Or you're going to say to this person, "Can I pray for you?" or "how can I pray for you in your life?" You're not going to be embarrassed by that.

If you love a particular sports team, you're not embarrassed. Right? You just want to tell people about it. You don't care if somebody else likes the other team. When you're a Christian, you're not worried about what other people think. You're able to shine the light because you are a child of God. Your identity is packed in that and that's what it means in your life.

So we have an outline that I created from the passage that goes like this. The challenge is that people don't recognize Jesus as the light and people don't receive Him. The solution is that God uses people who put themselves out there as a testimony to the true light. And the result is that people receive Jesus and become children of God.

Now as I'm done putting this all together and I'm looking at that and I'm saying, "Okay, what's God saying to me?" I want you to do that yourself now for a moment. What's the application? What is God saying to you that you're going to walk out of here with? Because we want to take Jesus home, not just leave Him here. We want to take Him home and apply what He's teaching us in our lives, each one of us.

As I started looking at these, I could find myself in all three of these because there are sometimes when I don't recognize Jesus right around me and I just need to ask God to reveal Himself more

in the day to day situations. I need to put myself out there as this testimony to the true light and I also need to look at this *become a children of God*. I've received Jesus Christ into my heart, into my life. I committed to serving God in my heart and my life. I love Jesus. I want to serve Him. That's not the question. The question for me has more to do with continually making Christ more my identity. Every day in my life I need to make Him more of my identity and I need to recognize that I'm a child of God, which means I think differently, I act differently, I respond differently, I make choices differently, and I need to grow in that in my life.

I don't know where God has you right now, but I trust that as you allow the Holy Spirit to work, He's going to put a finger on your heart in a particular area that says you know, you need to trust me in this area some more. And when you do, then God will bless you. You work where the Holy Spirit is working in your life. Take that and run with it and allow God to do something significant in your heart.

I do want to say that if you have not yet received Jesus Christ as your Lord and your Savior, that you've come at a great week. Right? You've come at a great week where we're talking about how you actually do that. This idea of receiving is not just an idea of coming to church. Coming to church is not what it means.

Young people, I just want to say this to you. Sometimes young people when they're nine, ten, eleven years old and they're kind of doing things and they're serving the Lord, and they're in a Christian family, and good things are happening. Then they can get to be teenagers and they start questioning their faith. They get into high school and they start questioning I don't know if I want to be a Christian or not.

Here's what happens. If you think that your Christianity is coming to church, if that's what it means or living in a Christian family, you've missed something very important. Young people, you must take Him in each stage of your development. Otherwise you'll feel like you've grown out of Him. You must take Christ from twelve years old to thirteen years old, from thirteen years old into sixteen years old. You've got to take Him into the next stage of your life. You've got to live your life with Christ in that stage, or you're going to feel like this is just kid's stuff. These are just Bible stories I learned when I was a child. I've grown out of that now. And I think we miss something very important.

But obviously that's not just for kids, right? As adults we can also find ourselves easily feeling like we're growing out of our faith unless we make it alive now and allow God to apply it. So I'm asking you to do this: Think about what God is saying to you right now. Take whatever conviction He's giving you, from something that maybe I've said or you've read in the scriptures today. Take it down in your heart, apply it this week, and it will become alive, living and active, in your own life today. God will do some powerful things in your life and you'll go, "Yes. This is what I need." It's taking the objective truth of God's word and making an experiential truth inside of your own heart. That's transformation that God wants for us in our lives every day.

Would you stand with me and let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we ask that you'd show us what it means to be a testimony for you to take the truths that you're sharing with us today. We know that if we do that, we know that if we take these truths and start applying them, you're going to answer our prayers, good things are going to happen, and we're going to have a message to share with people at work tomorrow, in our family tomorrow, and with our friends tomorrow. We'll have something to share because you're working. So we're asking now that you'll do that in our lives so that we can be this light. We know, Lord, that it starts with our own hearts, so we're asking you to do that deeper work right now. Use your Spirit to convict us of an area of our life that we need to change. Do that deeply within our hearts, Lord. We want to surrender our lives to you. We know that you save people. We ask that you would provide us with the opportunities to be a light for you so that you would bring salvation into their lives. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.