GCW Ministry Update | April 2, 2023

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 02 April 2023

[0:00] Thank you, Father, for the joy of our salvation, dear Lord. Thank you that every day we get up, we know exactly who we are.

We know what we're about. We know what we're to do. We're to serve Jesus. Whatever situation or circumstance we find ourselves in, we know that you have grounded us and centered us in being God worshipers and bringing and heralding the message of Jesus to the people around us.
And, Lord, it does our hearts good to get up every day and know that we know exactly what we're about and what we're supposed to be doing in our service to you. It grounds us and helps us, and we're grateful for it.
And now as we extend that commission from our individual lives into the life of our church family, our body here as Grace Church Williamsburg, Lord, please help us to one another, each other. Please help us to be encouraging toward each other. And also we pray that you would help us to grasp the bigger picture of what we're going to talk about tonight because every single bit of it really is about you and about what you've been doing.
[1:18] And we're just trying to keep up. It's a wonderful place to be. Thank you for blessing Grace Church Williamsburg and bringing us to the place where we are. We continue to hope in you.

In Jesus' name, amen. All right, I'm going to take you to a couple of places as we begin this. And what I'd like to do is serve this up in the way of a reminder to all of our members, for those of you who have joined the church, you know that when you meet with Greg and I, we're trying to help you in our meeting about membership.
We're trying to help you think about your involvement. I'm like, has he got a pickaxe out there? What in the world? When Greg and I meet with you for membership, we try to help you think through with us and look at who we are to think about how you can be involved as we move forward.
So we take that into now more of a macro view and talk about how we're bringing all that together as a church family. So let me start with this one.
[2:33] For those of you who are not members, this will be a little bit of a refresher about how we view ourselves and what we believe the main thing is. I know you hear it every Sunday, but it helps to go over it.

Uh-oh. Did you refresh me? Refresh me, please. I did not touch anything, I promise. Is it ready now? Oh, yes.
I pushed a button earlier, and so she had to fix it. See what I'm saying about this morning? I'm not allowed. What is this? What is this?
Our website. This is our homepage, right? For our church. And what I'm going to zero in on is that little bitty writing down there toward the bottom, and I want to talk to you about what that is and what it means.
So there it is. Him we proclaim, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ.
[3:29] Now, I want you to zero in on several items here because this is a critical verse. It's why we chose it to be the verse that kind of captures how we express to people in our church and interested in our church family, how we express to them what we believe the main thing is.

And I will show you more about this in just a moment. Him, we start with that. That's Jesus, right? Jesus, we. We are a we.
So it's not just a you. It's a we thing. Proclaim. We're all heralds. I'm not the only preacher in our church. We're all heralding and proclaiming the message of the Lord Jesus Christ.
And that proclaiming involves warning and teaching. So this is admonishment. This is us helping people understand what's at stake in the way of their souls.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

And then teaching. We teach. It's about being a disciple and helping other people understand what being a disciple is. Now notice this. Who?
[4:35] Everyone. Everyone. Anyone. Anyone who will listen. Wherever they live. Whatever language they speak. Wherever they are. With all wisdom is the wisdom of God.

All wisdom that that is the wisdom of the Lord. Not our wisdom. Not what we're wanting them to hear. What God says they need to hear. And the reason, the purpose in all that, that we again, we, as a church family, may present everyone, all the people that we're responsible for and that we're trying to interact with, mature.
We want to present each one of them mature or complete or perfect in Christ. We want them to be able to grow in Christ likeness and then be presented before the Lord upon their death, complete in him.
That's their hope. So that captures everything that we try to help others understand about the focus of our, of our gathering, our little local assembly.
And I want to take you to several passages of scripture before we get into some of this other stuff to show you where we get all of this and why it's so important. So the first place I'll take you is Matthew 28.
[5:53] I'll be turning to these in my Bible so I can read them. Beginning in verse 18, And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

Now here's what he tells us. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them.
There it is from Colossians again. Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.
So this is what we understand to be the Great Commission. The Great Commission. And we have been praying for four and a half years.
Now we were actually praying it before that, but at the four and a half year mark is when we constituted as Grace Church Williamsburg. Y'all remember that? For some of y'all who were here. We were in this spot right here.
[6:51] We had been meeting in Waller Mill Bible Church on Sunday evenings because we didn't have any other place to meet. We didn't have any other place to go. So we met there on Sunday evenings for about six months and that little group of people decided that we wanted to make a go of it.

So we all signed our names in blood and pledged that we would work together and we changed the name of the church and we launched and we never looked back. Now we've had all kinds of bumps in the road as we went through.
That's another story. I'm not talking about bad drama between people. I'm just talking about the difficulty of getting a church started. It has not been an easy task. And so four and a half years later, here we are.
Now I'll share this with you. It's not nice, but it's the truth. We actually had people in the Christian community from other churches that were saying we wouldn't last six months when we started this. They did. And that came to us. And all we did was say, well, that's not even up to us. If the Lord wants us here, we'll be here.
[8:00] We're just going to keep ministering and doing what we know to do. So that's been our emphasis. The next place I want to take you is Matthew 22. And this is going to deal, verse 37, this is going to deal with what we call the great commandment.

The great commandment. And he said to them, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.
This is the great and foremost commandment. And the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets.
Everything that's been taught in scripture hinges on and is founded on these two commandments. Love God and love each other.
That's where we start. That's where we proceed. And one of the reasons that I'm sharing these with you is because I want the prospective members to understand this is how we understand who we are and what's supposed to define what we do.
[9:13] Whatever the kinds of ministries in our church become, we want all of those ministries to be based on the great commission, the great commandment, and then this next one.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

It's also in Matthew. All three of these can be found in Matthew. This is in Matthew 16, verse 13. And we call this one the great confession.
Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he was asking his disciples, who do people say that the Son of Man is? And they said, well, some say John the Baptist and others Elijah, but still others Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.
Well, Jesus said to them, but who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered, you are the Christ, you are the Son of the living God.
And Jesus said to him, and Jesus said to him, blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.
[10:26] Now that is the great confession. So we have the great commission, the great commandment, and the great confession. And in all of those, along with the truths of scripture that we walk in, like in Colossians that I shared with you, those become the foundational truths or elements that we measure our ministries by.

Well, how do we go about understanding what kind of ministries will grow up in Grace Church? Well, that's where shepherding comes in. That's why you have elders. A lot of that is determined by who you are, what you bring to the table.
A lot of that is dependent on how God and who God brings into our midst so that Greg and I meet you, you become part of our church, you join our church, you become members, and now you're in a position to begin serving.
We don't allow people in our church to begin using their gifts in our church until you join and commit. There's reasons for that. We can talk about that another time. But as you join and commit to our church and get under the eldership, get under the authority of the shepherding in this church, then we start evaluating, all right, who are these people?
What are their gifts? What are their abilities? What are their interests? How does that dovetail into the mainstream idea of where we're taking our church and what God's doing?
[11:50] You see? So Greg and I aren't sitting back here trying to create programs to keep you busy so that you think being busy is being spiritual. We don't want that. I've been in those churches.

What we want is to help you understand how you can get in on the mainstream of who we are, plug into that, and use your giftedness. Now, that may mean that if you have the gift of teaching, you will not be able to use that gift right away.
If we don't have any need for new teachers and new teaching in our church, new venues for teaching, then you'll have to shelve that for a little while. That doesn't mean you can't serve. Doesn't mean you can't help.
Doesn't mean you can't be effective. There's lots of things to do around here. We'll talk about that toward the end. I'm just trying to help us see that one of the ways that we think about and form Christian ministry in our church has everything to do with who is God bringing to us and what can Greg and I begin to discern about the common threads of who you are?
Where does that begin to help us look in the way of, all right, how do we leverage this for ministry? What might this look like as we begin to get something off the ground? Do you see how that's different from us just trying to create programs?
[13:04] So what we do grows out of who we are, who God's bringing us. It's stewardship, isn't it? We're just trying to be good stewards. Again, I'm not responsible for how other churches do it.

And I'm not at all concerned or worried about what other churches are doing and how we rate compared to them. None, no interest at all. I'm shepherding this church and my concern is how can we help us be who God wants us to be?
So this will bring it into a nutshell for us then. Grace Church Williamsburg exists to exalt Christ and glorify God by our commission to go into our community, culture, and world to make disciples by the gospel and to gather together those disciples to equip and build up the body of Christ in the gospel. people. Now, what we're going to do is I need to let Greg look at this with me and we're going to talk more about it, but that statement or a statement very similar to it is going to end up on our homepage right above that verse that I read you from Colossians 128 because that helps define in a nutshell how we understand our mission and who we're supposed to be as we seek to serve the Lord.
Okay? That's where we're starting. Hopefully that's zeroing in on what you guys are thinking about. Well, who are these people and how do they understand who they are and what they're supposed to be doing?

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[14:41] Now, for a long time, we've been praying about ways God would use our church in Great Commission ministry.

Lord, how can we show faithfulness to the Great Commission about reaching the nations, this little bitty group of people? I mean, you realize when we first started for the first couple of years, I think it was, we didn't know if we'd have enough money to continue to pay my salary and keep functioning as a church.
We had enough money in the bank that we were able to sign a lease and commit to two years to pay on this place. We had enough money in the bank to do that.
So we knew whatever happened, if we weren't able to pay me, we would have enough to meet our commitments, what we signed on. We would never want to welch on anything like that.
And so things got really super tight and Greg came to us and said, hey, you guys might want to think about another plan because it's not looking like this thing's going to fly like we hoped.
[15:49] And we prayed and we said, Lord, we'll give it two years and in that two-year period, if you bless and we're able to keep going, that's fantastic. We'll just keep going until your blessing is not here anymore.

And so let us know. Well, so Suzanne and I started looking into the mission field because that was our heart. And lo and behold, I'm sparing you a lot of details.
Right around that same time as Suzanne and I are reaching out to all these different friends and people we know around the world that we've been in contact with through this time in ministry, getting the feel for the mission field, we thought, okay, it's about time now we're going to start raising our own support to get on the field.
And the church started to grow. And that was great. Why was that great? Because we were never looking to leave. It was never about the grass is greener for us.
It was about my fellow elders telling me I need to think about our next place of service. And that was hard. And then COVID hit.
[16:55] Was that our death knell? Listen, not only was it not our death knell, but we grew during COVID. COVID. And what I mean is we grew together.

We grew in the Lord. We didn't have a lot of what many other churches. I mean, I know pastors that have been friends of mine. They're not in the ministry anymore. COVID put them out of the ministry. We know churches that pastors have talked to us about who shut down and never opened again. We also have heard of churches that started infighting.
Some of them split during COVID because on one side of the equation were people who said masks and vaccinations are of the devil. And on the other side way over here we had people who were saying masks and vaccinations will help save my life because I'm susceptible.
I have health issues, whatever. And we had all people all in between. You know what this church did? They loved each other through that because we had people in our church that were on different ends of the spectrum of looking at that whole situation.
[18:07] But y'all loved each other and came together. You reached across the aisles. You supported each other. We didn't have any of that nonsense here at Grace. Now who do we give the credit for that to?

Absolutely, God. Why? Because we prayed. We made it a matter of talking about it from the pulpit and we prayed together about it and that kept us together.
And so now God's brought us through that and we're continuing to see new faces in our congregation. And we're not the church and there are churches in town. We're not the church in town with all the flash and cash.
We don't have all these things going on everywhere. And people come here and they want to come here because of you. I know they get the word and they get loved on and they feel a sense of genuineness.
Now let me brag on you before I go to these next slides. Greg and I met with, am I going to cover that, Suzanne? Do I cover Dan, Dan Davey? If I forget it, say you were going to brag on them.
[19:12] I'll wait and do that because somebody was bragging on you in a meeting that Greg and I had recently. So I'll save it for that. All right? Let me move on and show you now some things we've been praying about for over four years and how just in the last four to six months they've been exploding.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

I don't even know how to tell you how many hours of meetings, phone calls, emails I have been involved in for the last four months or so. If I added it up, I have no idea.
It's just been wonderful in a way. All right, here we go. Community ministry. That's where we want to start. What's going on in community ministry with Grace Church?
Soul care. This is the name of our counseling ministry. Grace Church Soul Care. That's what we're going to call it. That's what we are calling it.
And we have been very, very involved with Grace Church Soul Care, our counseling ministry, your counseling ministry. You help make this possible. We have been very involved in that since we launched it in January.
[20:25] Is that about when it was? Sometime in January when we actually started really getting involved in this. The Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, ACBC.

You'll hear that mentioned around here from time to time. This is huge for us. ACBC is the certifying agency that I went through to get my counseling certification for what I do.
It was part of the master's degree that I got over the, that I finished and graduated in over the summer. ACBC certification is a training program that it's hefty.
It's significant commitment. And we're going to require anybody and everybody who wants to be part of the counseling ministry of Grace Church is going to have to get certified through ACBC.
Do you have to be a pastor? No, you don't have to be a pastor or a clergy. Just us regular folk can get ACBC certification. This morning when I held up the flyer about the training that's going to be happening down in Virginia Beach then a couple of weekends in April.
[21:39] That's for this. It's part, they have three stages in their training program. And it's, again, it's, it's, it's a weighty, hefty thing.

But we're going to require that certification for people to minister out of our Grace Church soul care counseling ministry. Suzanne right now, well, let me get to that one.
Well, that's me. I'm the only, currently, I'm the only ACBC certified biblical counselor in our church, but that's changing. And we hope it will continue to change and progress.
But look what we have. We have four people from our church right now pursuing certification. Did you know that? Four. And we hope to add two or three more within the next couple of months.
I'll be talking to you. We have our eye on you kind of thing. Now, look at this. As far as community, right now, 47 hours of counseling just since sometime in mid-January or so since we started.
[22:48] Now, I don't know what 47 hours sounds like to you, but I know what it is. And I know how many hours you have to do behind the scenes to make that work responsibly. Because right now, we only have one person doing that.

And we've done 47 hours since we started in our community. So, Jeff, how many of the people that we're seeing right now are from our church? One.
All the rest of that, they're people from the community. And now look at this next one. Since we started, we've had two professions of faith. We've led two people to Christ.
Already. That's just me. Imagine. Let your imagination go right now. When we started this church, your two pastors had a heart for this ministry.
We knew together when we started eldering almost eight years ago together, we knew that we wanted to be involved in biblical counseling together, Greg and I. We both had a passion for it.
[23:54] I started pursuing a degree in it, got my certification. Greg started the process of certification and he and I began praying over four years ago that God would help us through this church ministry raise up a counseling center in this town so that we could reach people with the gospel.

It provides crisis counseling for people who are in crisis, but more than that, it's an arm of our ministry of discipleship, of making disciples and helping them grow up in the Lord.
The two people that we led to Christ, they thought they were Christians, at least one of them did. One of them said they weren't, but had kind of lived like they were for a while.
And then the other one thought that she was a Christian and had been living like that for almost 20 years. And here's how it shook out.
In much conversation, this person finally came to realize, I have never made the gospel personal to me. It's always been about Christ died to forgive people for their sins.
[25:04] You mean to tell me he died for me? Now, that sounds like that's unbelievable, isn't it? Right here in our town. Yes. And this person was struggling at that point with the idea of, I don't

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

know, and this is what cued us up for this, I just don't know that God has forgiven me for all the sins that I've done, especially some of them.

And we went, let's talk more about the gospel. And that's how that led to that point. And when the light bulb came on, I wish you could have been in the room to see the change that came over her when she realized, because we read her several passages and she went, this can be me?
And we said, yes. Yes, this can be you and it can be you right now. And we said, why don't you pray and tell God what's in your heart right now based on what the word of God has revealed to you about who you are and who God is and your relationship to him.
And she said, I've never prayed in front of anybody before. And I said, that's okay, just pray to Jesus. And she did. Suzanne, what was that like?
It was beautiful. And we just sat there trying to get ourselves together over it all. Folks, that's what you're making possible. Everybody that comes into our counseling ministry so far within the first session or two, we cover some administrative details.
[26:38] One of them is, how much does this cost? And they're always flabbergasted when we look across the table and say, it won't cost you anything in the way of money.

And the reason that it won't cost you anything in the way of money is because the people of this church make this ministry possible for you. they've never met you and they don't even know your name.
They don't even know you're coming, but they're already praying for you. We've been praying for you for four years. For four years, we've been asking God to make these moments possible for you. And we didn't even know your name. That's the people of the church I pastor. They pay me a salary so that we can do this and offer it to you free of charge.
And we will never charge forgiving people Jesus. And they just, really? Really? That's what we do here.
[27:37] All right. A new soul care page has been added to the website. If you haven't gone on the website recently, you can go and look at this. It's just a single page document that we include in all of our new packets for people who want counseling.

We send them a packet of material with this page in it, along with some other things that they have to do before we'll schedule the first appointment with them. And this explains who we are and what we aren't in terms of counseling.
We tell them we're not professional counselors in terms of the way you think of. We're not psychologists, sociologists. We're not psychiatrists. We're just regular people who've been trained in the scripture to come alongside people and help them walk in the Lord through their issues, through their problems of life, something like that.
Anyway, that's what this page says about us and it explained it would be good for y'all to know this so that you can talk about this to other people in the community. From the very beginning, we wanted to establish Grace Church Soul Care as an evangelistic arm for reaching people in our community and we're doing that.
That's happening. We're involved in that. Remember, as we go through this, we can't do everything, but we can drill down and do a few things really well.
[29:00] This is one of them. This one's here to stay. One of the reasons that we do this is because we understand the Great Commission about discipleship. Grace Church Soul Care and Counseling Ministry, that's not something that we've added to our church ministry.

It is our church ministry. Making disciples is what we do because that's who we are, disciples. That's why we do this. So counseling isn't something that's added.
It's who we are and it's what we're offering and it's the lifeblood of our church. All right, let me give you a few more. This is another one that was big on our hearts, Greg and I.
I'm former military. We have military in our church. We have military all around us. I grew up as an Air Force brat following my dad and mom all over the world. That was my whole growing up.
That's all I knew. I thought, doesn't everybody live like this? I didn't know that not everybody goes in and out of gates to get on the base. And, you know, I does everybody live like this?
[30:03] And then I started meeting people and they're like, no, what, you do what? Yeah, never mind. I guess you have to be there to understand it. This is an organization that recently accepted me that I joined.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

It's an organization that offers biblical counseling to people. I'll show you their label in just a minute. Fallen Soldiers March. Suzanne and I went to a conference a couple of months ago that they offered a few hours from here and it was outstanding.
We're really excited. This isn't the only organization that's trying to reach people for Christ within the military, but this is a really good one. We love what we see so far and we love the guy.
We went down and met the president. I'd had a number of conversations with him on the phone and so now they have accepted me as a certified biblical counselor with their organization. I told Jim, the president on the phone when he interviewed me for this, I said, listen, my interest isn't to provide virtual counseling all over the world for these guys.
I can do a limited amount of that in the future, not right now, but my interest is help me network to reach the military where I live. We've got bases all around me.
[31:14] Ringing me in and we have been banging our heads against the door, praying and trying to get make inroads into these military families to help them. We can talk their language.

We can understand some of the issues that they face. So anyway, this is one of the ways that we're trying to reach the military. This is the statement from Fallen Soldiers March.
It exists to glorify God by providing hope, comfort and healing to the men, women and families of the U.S. Armed Forces, whether active duty or veterans. This is accomplished through a volunteer network of certified biblical counselors.
The people who work in this organization are local church people. They get the local church, they believe in it and they want to see it strengthened. That's why they started this ministry and they want to find ways to help military families plug in to good churches.
So we got on the list as fast as we could and now we're networking. One of the things that's come out of this already. I have an appointment to meet with the chaplain with the Cheatham.
[32:19] What is it called? Yes. Thank you, brother. The Cheatham Annex, the chaplain through through the Cheatham Annex. He and I are meeting hopefully in two weeks and I'll sit down and show this to him and we'll talk all about this together and hopefully he will begin to maybe funnel people to us who are looking for a good church or who are in need of counseling, marital counseling, whatever it is.

And then I've got a couple of other inroads as well. Matt is helping me network to the chaplain on Eustace. He's already in the process of doing that. So we have a number of different things that are in the works to help us to try to network to the military around us.
That that's always been a big concern and goal for us as a church family. How do we reach the military around us? All right. Let me give you a few more here.
This is the one where I want to brag on you. Two weeks ago, Greg and I went down to Virginia Beach and met with the president of Virginia Beach Theological Seminary, Dan Davey.
You guys know him from being in the pulpit. He filled the pulpit for me a couple months ago. We met with Dan. We met with Eric Lenner. Eric is the dean of the seminary.
[33:44] And then we met with Scott. And Scott is the registrar for the seminary. And we had several hours with those men. And we met with them at our request and they were very gracious to sit down with us.

And we said we would like to have more of a relationship with this seminary right here in our backyard and the seminary students that you guys are educating. We want to open our church to have them come and intern with us.
If you've got any of them that want to come up and see what real trench life and pastoring is all about, we'll let them see it. Right? Come to our church and we'll get you involved, etc.
So what's come out of that now is when I tell you in a few minutes what Suzanne and I are about to do at the end of the month, we'll be away for a couple of weeks. The seminary is going to fill the pulpit for us.
Scott, the registrar, is going to preach the first Sunday I'm out and the second Sunday, after he gets a feel for you guys, he's going to pick one of the seminary students that he feels like is a good fit and have them come and fill the pulpit.
[34:53] So we're giving these young men an opportunity to come and stand in the pulpit and put into practice what they're learning at a good seminary. These people are teaching expository preaching and teaching.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Now, you're gracious people, so when the second guy comes in, remember, he's trying. He'll probably do a really good job, he'll probably do a really good job or they wouldn't let him come do it, but love on him and encourage him.
Try to find several things that you can tell him, good job, and come up and shake his hand and hug his neck and encourage him. I wish I could tell you how nerve-wracking it is to be a young preacher boy.
It's really super hard to do that. You feel the weight of it all on you. Now, in the way of bragging about you, as we sat in that meeting with Dan Davey and those other two men, Dan began to talk about his visit with you.
And I'm not going to tell you all the things he said about you. You don't need a big old head about it and all that. No, I'll tell you everything. Dan glowed about y'all. He said, Jeff, your church, I just hope you hope they know how unique.
[36:05] He said, the energy in that church, the love, the enthusiasm. Wow. I said, man, you don't have to tell me I get to do that every Sunday.

I look into those eager faces every Sunday. It's why I preach as long as they do. It's their fault. They want it. They want it. So he went on and on about you guys and he talked about how Williamsburg needs us.
This is his estimation. This is him. You know, he's got no skin in the game. He's just he's being kind and encouraging us. And as I listened to him, it was like B vitamins in my veins.
And have another man of that caliber and that experience, a learned man saying this about what God's doing here. So I want to pass that on to you and I want to challenge you with something.
I hope that you guys will realize truly how unique this is. When I looked across the table in response and I said, I have been in the ministry 30 years.
[37:11] I have never had a more delightful group of people to shepherd and I have never had a stretch this long drama free. And he said, do they realize do they realize how special that is?

He said, man, you're he just shook his head. Eric, he hadn't said much the dean of that he sat there and shook his head and he said, wow. I said, man, I'm not exaggerating.
We have our problems. We're not perfect, starting with the pastor. But really, these people are really trying to love each other, man. And there's just there's no none of this yak, yak, yakking going on in our church.
It's just not happening. Thank God. Praise the Lord. It's all due to him, she said. Amen. And that's look when you preach Jesus and hold him up and call everybody to love Jesus and then turn to love each other.
It's just not rocket science, is it? We're either going to do that or we're not. And that's basically what it comes down to. That's just a few of the things that are going on right now in terms of a local community thing.
[38:27] Now, I hesitate to say this and I'm going to say it real quick and then jump out. You guys know several years ago as we were just getting out of Waller Mill and coming here.

We might have still been at Waller Mill. We went through English as a second language training. We had about, what, 10 from our church attend that. That was all in preparation for us to begin reaching out to the Hispanic community.
You remember that? And that's one of the things that we did to get prepared to do that. We wanted to offer ESL to the Hispanic community in the hopes that we could recruit some people and bring them in and put our arms around them and see God begin to give us inroads into that.
Well, we have some people visiting our church who are fluent in the language and and have a heart for this kind of ministry. So they're in the process of joining our church.
So this is what I'm talking about. You can raise your hands. Yes. This is what I'm talking about. Now, that doesn't mean that we get Hispanic ministry off the ground in the next month.
[39:32] What it means is we continue to pray and ask God, is this part of the answer to our prayer about our heart to reach these people? people. We don't speak their language.

We don't understand their culture as well as other people who come out of that culture. How can you help us, Lord, network our way so that we can share the love of Jesus with them? That's what we want.
Pray about that. Pray about what that might look like and how that might develop. That's just one more thing we're looking at. Suzanne and I went around and you probably didn't even know we did

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

this. We went around not too long ago and visited a number of schools and our question to the schools was this.
How can our church get involved in helping support what you guys are as a school? And none of it worked out. Not a single thing worked out.
They all wanted us to do whatever we did from a distance and said we said no we're not interested in that. We're not interested in just throwing stuff at you. We want to be involved and get to know people.
[40:34] People to people. We think they said no because of COVID. We're not sure. So we may circle around and try that again. But we're trying. We're trying to see how these things might operate.

All right now let me shift gears. I'm just going to give you all this information. I told you we were going to brag on the Lord here. So now we'll move to international ministry. This is where some of the fruit is starting to take shape and bloom from when Suzanne and I were doing all of our research thinking we were going on the field and it turned out to be well maybe maybe this is going to be a grace church thing instead of a Jeff and Suzanne thing and that that's what it's developed into.
Thank God. This is the organization that Suzanne and I are a part of. It's a mission organization specifically designed to provide instruction in biblical counseling to nationals to national pastors in different countries around the world.
That's what this is. Let me see if I've got there. Yeah here's their thing. Their definition oversees instruction and counseling strives to bring the word of truth across cultures by training men and women in biblically based soul restoration soul care so they can train others.
That's the basic idea. All of these people that are involved are local church people. We are not aligning ourselves with any mission agency organization or anything else any pair of ministry that is not local church driven and supportive.
[42:06] If they're not supporting the local church we're not going to be involved. The local church is where this kind of ministry needs to be done. Most of the people that are involved in OIC are local church pastors.

And OIC has developed a model because the guy who started it was a local church pastor. He saw a need and he began to do this. OIC is a unique organization.
Let me show you this. All the OIC instructors are ACBC certified. Every one of them. You can't be part of this if you're not certified. OIC oversees instruction and counseling has 86 volunteer team members.
We're the two of us are part of that. OIC provided 22 modules of training in 2022 with around 500 total attendees. OIC has provided training in 28 countries with future work being scheduled in 23 others.
This is for biblical counseling. This is for discipleship. This is us going into countries around the world where they don't have the resources or the understanding but they've expressed an interest and we go in and we begin to train these national pastors.
[43:22] These are pastors and church leaders in their own countries and we train them in biblical soul care so that they can do that soul care and train others in their churches.

And then the last thing that we do before we leave is we help them establish a certifying agency in their country in their language in their culture. This is not American people trying to make American stuff happen in other countries.
We're going in and offering them biblical training and then they do with it as they are led by the Lord to do. That's that's what we're doing. 22 modules means they have four modules that they teach over a two-year period.
This is quite a commitment people have to make. They get involved for two years and every six months we go back over there and teach them the next module. So the first module then we wait six months and do number two six months to three and then four.
That's how it works within each one of those modules. There's I don't even know how many sessions 20 20 hours of instruction in each module at least.
[44:31] I don't I don't even remember. OIC church leadership training. That's CLT module one fundamentals of biblical counseling to key elements of biblical counseling.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Module three is issues and module for biblical counseling in the church and module four is when we sit down with them and say all right this is what it would look like for you guys to join together as like-minded churches and start a certifying agency in your country so that you can provide training and keep an eye on who's doing what.
So you're not just turning people loose and saying you're a biblical counselor if they've not been properly trained in using the scripture. Right. That's that's a lot of what OIC is trying to do.
You recognize those two. So we joined OIC in August of 2021 and we are if you go to the OIC website and look under team members or whatever about three months ago or so they accepted us and it bumped our status up to coordinators.
The only issue is and coordinators are people who oversee all the works being done in a country. So the only problem is we ain't got no country yet.
[45:48] We're working on it. We're working on it. So another thing that we're doing is is partnering Mark and Barbara Mann. He's a local pastor in a church about the size of ours actually a little smaller.

They're 15 years old. So they're they're quite a bit older than we are. These folks have been part of counseling in Nashville for quite some time.
He's an OIC instructor since 18. Currently, he's the OIC Western European Training Coordinator. So technically, the countries that Suzanne and I are currently exploring fall under Mark's leadership in OIC.
That's how we met Mark. And Barbara. Let's see if this thing will advance. There it is. So we are joining Mark and Barbara Mann on a two week mission trip with OIC at the end of April and the first week in May.
This will be our first experience with OIC doing doing this kind of work. Mark and Barbara have been doing it for a while. In Germany, we're going to do module one.
[46:58] And that's those are the dates. That's what we'll be involved with. In Germany, Suzanne and I are just spectators. Typically, what OIC does is they send the couple who's going to be doing the major part of the teaching.

They send another couple who's in training and they'll do a few of the modules themselves, a few of the sessions in the module. And then they usually have a third couple who comes along to just watch it all happen and kind of get a feel for what they're doing.
That's us in Germany. That was supposed to be us in France the next week. And that changed while we were seeing my mom. This is the place in Germany that we're going.
It's on the Danube between Munich and Nuremberg. And those are the dates, again, that we'll be looking at it. This is the picture of the church that we'll be doing it in.
I can't. Baptist. Baptist. In a Gemeinde. Were you in Germany? Did that sound about right? Ingolstadt.
[48:05] Ingolstadt. Anyway. There you go. That's where we'll be in the first week. The second week that we'll be there will be in France. We'll hop over to France and we'll be teaching module three in France.

The second teacher that was supposed to go with Mark and Barbara for this trip had to back out on them due to health reasons for the wife.
And so Mark called me up while we were visiting my mom and said, hey, change of plan. I need you to teach this many sessions. And I said, whoa, man, I've gone from spectator to I'm supposed to teach this stuff.
I've never even seen it done before. Ah, you'll be fine. That's Mark. Ah, you'll be fine. So he sent me all the stuff and I got to wade through all that and get ready to teach it in France.
We'll try to get some pictures or whatever. This is the place that we're going. Ries-en-Gis. That's how he says it. Ries-en-Gis. I don't know how many kilometers.
[49:02] What's the how far is it from? How many miles is that? Is it on my paper? Oh, 14 miles.

14 miles south of the center of Paris. This is the church. It's a pretty little thing, isn't it? And this is an inside view. So this was Mark and Barbara teaching at this church last year.
And that's so that's where we'll be. These people are going to come back now for module three and then they'll have one more module before they'll actually become certified. And then and then we'll see what the Lord does with all of it.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

That's one of the international ministries that you're making possible in terms of great commission work. Folks, we never even thought that this could get off the ground.
This is amazing. That we can do this. Now, here's one of the neat things about this. When Suzanne and I. Get to the place where they release us, which will happen right after this trip.
[50:09] Mark's already said you guys are already ready to be coordinators. Let's just get this under your belt and then you can take off. We get to bring whoever we want. Whoever we want.

So if you're interested, because I'm fixing to show you some other opportunities, if you're interested, seriously. This is a church wide thing.
So we get together with you beforehand. And I say, all right, you can teach these and I'll sit down with you and I'll show you what to go over and I'll help you learn this.
And then you come over and help us. We can take you as spectators. We can take you as people. And we can say, hey, I've got five other people that want to come with me to do this thing. So you guys got room for them?
Because here's the way OIC works. We pay all the costs to get us there and back. That's on us. That's on me. They take care of everything else.
[51:05] They put us up room and board. They feed us. They transport us wherever we need to go. They provide the place for us to teach. We provide the teacher and the material. Everything else they take care of.

So seriously, it's a really, really cool idea. Let me keep going and show you some more things. Poland. Yes, Poland. To teach biblical counseling at a multi-church family camp in August.
This just came through. I get so excited about this. I want to lift off the planet. I can't tell you how incredible this is, you guys. This doesn't happen.
This is just an amazing opportunity. Let me show you what this is. You guys will remember Kyle and Christine Reisdorf.
We piped them into our living room. Remember last year? And introduced you to them. Kyle and I have been talking for four years together about all this.
[52:05] He and I have been praying about this for four years. And now look. They're missionaries through Grace Community Church. That's John MacArthur's church. They're sent out by Grace Ministries International.

That's the ministry arm, the missions arm of Grace Community Church. So they're missionaries from Grace Community. Kyle's a co-pastor of good luck with that. Yeah, I don't know.
Poziendami. I don't know what it is. He has two Polish TMS, the Master Seminary grads, with him. Those two Master Seminary graduates are Polish nationals.
They left Poland to come to California to get their MDiv degrees, and then they went back to Poland to pastor. And they're pastoring this church. They're very like-minded.
So we have been invited by Kyle and Christine and the pastors of that church to come over and join them in a, they call it a family camp.
[53:08] And apparently this is a big thing in Poland. Several like-minded churches will get together each year, and they'll find a place in Poland where they have actually created these camps for these churches to do this.

They're cool venues. And you show up there, and then they provide you everything that you need, and you recreate, and then you teach. And so this is what they've done. They have invited us to come and design the entire week around giving us the opportunity to do nine sessions, one hour each, in four days, teaching them biblical counseling and discipleship.
So we get to talk to them about the issues that make biblical counseling and soul care important in the life of a local church. We get to talk to them about the heart, the issues of the heart, what soul care involves, why the scriptures are critical to that, all that.
And they've kicked the door wide open and said, whatever you want to bring. You develop it, you bring it, we'll give you nine hours to teach it through the week. How many churches are going to be there?
Four. And who's going to be there? Oh, there'll be about a hundred and something people, and all their pastors and their staff members will be there as well. So I called who I see, shaking.
[54:32] Hey, hey, hey. And so now we're looking at Poland, and we're looking at how that might develop into an ongoing relationship between Grace Church Williamsburg and however you say their name in Poland, that church.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

They want it. They're asking for it. So I said, okay, let's talk about that and see what that might look like. They're getting ready to start a training center in the fall through Grace Community Church. And that training center will be in existence to take local pastors from Poland and around Poland, countries connected to Poland, and bring them in and offer them a seminary-level education for doing pastoral ministry.
And they want us to come back and do more biblical counseling in the training program for the seminary. And they're trying to figure out how to make all that work. That's Poland. You see that this one's up there.
It's not Poland, is it? It's Norway. Norway just opened up. We got an all-points bulletin put out about going to Norway.
[55:40] We have some believers, brothers and sisters in Christ in Norway, who are just now coming together and expressing interest in having us come over and help teach them about discipleship.

Do you know why they want all this? Because they don't have the resources that we have. They don't have all these books that are written by these great people in their language to help them understand all this. It's just the way it is.
So we want to help. Scotland. It's an opportunity in Scotland. We've been talking with some missionaries in Scotland through another organization, and he's expressed interest in having us come over and help them do the same thing.
Now, there are other organizations that are working in Scotland, but he's shown an interest in ACBC. Why? Because his wife just got certified in ACBC over in Scotland.
And so he's already sold on the whole deal. And he and I are talking. They're in the States right now. He and his wife are in the States right now, about four hours away, or four and a half hours away.
[56:41] And he said that he would come down and meet us. So we're hoping to do that within the next maybe month and a half and just see what develops from there. This is our new resources page.

You might be checking this out on the website as well. And the reason is, Suzanne, what's the reason they need to go check out the resources page? Because there are links to ACBC, following soldiers, and among other good sites.
Yep. So you can go and click on that on our website now, and you can go to their homepages and read all about them and see what they're doing and who's there and who's not and all that kind of thing. All right. Now, in all of this, how can you pray?
Because all of this that we're sharing with you, as Greg and I have seen it, is just God answering years of prayer about how can this little church begin to network its way into being Great Commission workers, doing Great Commission ministry.
How can we do that? One way that you can pray is thank God for his blessings on our church. Please don't overlook that. Pray for your pastors. Continue to pray for Greg and I in terms of our discernment, our energy in all of this, our ability to be wise in our decisions.
[58:02] Pray for someone, maybe a couple, to lead the singing in our church. As we have grown and as things have taken on and you see all this other stuff going on, I really, really need some help up here.

And we need a man that will lead worship. It needs to be a guy. It can be a couple. And we're asking God. We've been praying about this for almost a year now. Lord, I know you have someone in mind that could do some ministry like this for us.
Would you bring that person to our church? Yes, sir. You can put you on that list, he says. Put me on that list. All right. We got you covered, brother. All right.
Here's another one. Here's another one. Pray about a larger space for us to meet in. Not this Sunday, but last Sunday, we had 70-something people in here and Jeremy and Matt were out there putting chairs in the back to pack them in here.
It's a good problem to have. I'm not saying that we've already outgrown this place, but we need to be thinking in terms of and planning strategically ahead for more space as people come in and see us getting more crowded.
[59:11] It's hard to get past that. And then your preacher preaches for at least an hour. That's another thing that's hard to get past. So, you know, make it comfortable for them. All right.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Pray for evangelistic opportunities to share the gospel in keeping with the local ministries that we've outlined for you. For our military, the Hispanic community. These are just a few of the ways that we feel like God may be opening up doors for us to minister to people.
Pray for open hearts and those coming for counseling. More and more of this is happening. We haven't had to turn anybody away yet, but we're at that point now.
If anybody else calls right now, if they call tomorrow and ask for counseling, we have to tell them no. And I hate that, you guys, but that's just the reality. We can do what we can do.
So we're trying to catch up and get people trained so that we can do more with this. And then pray for wisdom for those providing counseling. Pray for wisdom for those who are providing counseling to these people.
[60:14] And then finally, pray about becoming equipped to become a counselor. Say, boy, Jeff, I don't know if I'm gifted in this or not or whatever. Look, everybody needs to learn how to use God's word to help other people.

That's all you're doing. Now, is it involved? Yes. Is it a commitment? Absolutely. But I can't tell you how much you're going to grow by getting involved in doing this. In fact, Greg and I are so committed to this that our next Wednesday night midweek meeting is going to be, Greg and I are going to try somehow to pull together all of the different theology questions that ACBC requires you to write.
You've got to write a page and a half on all these questions they give you. And then they're graded. Well, I had to do all that when I went through my training. What Greg and I are going to do is take each of those questions on a Wednesday night most of them are about doctrine.
Explain the doctrine of regeneration. What is the doctrine of common grace? Blah, blah, blah. We're going to take each one of those on Wednesday nights and walk you through them and talk to you about what they mean.
Because whether you get certified or not, you need to be better voiced in these doctrines. Then it transitions into, all right, now that you've worked on these doctrines, how do these doctrines help Eric in his issue with?
[61:39] And you start thinking through, what does it look like for me to take the Bible and make the Bible helpful and useful in the life of someone who's struggling or suffering? Now, how important is that?

That's what we're going to do on Wednesday night. That's the plan right now. And we need you to pray for us. And then finally, how can GCW members, members be involved? Because only members can get involved in what we're talking about right now.
That's the price of membership. That's the price of being under your eldership and pledging yourself to be accountable to the eldership. How can we do that? The first one is be here.
Now, I don't mean that if you've been away for vacation or whatever, don't worry about that. Look, that's, Greg's out right now. You see that, right? And his family. Be here.
Commit to being here for this reason, to stimulate one another to love and good deeds. Encourage. Edify one another. It's hard for you to do that if you're not here. So you support our ministries by attending our ministries.
[62:37] You understand that? You support our ministries by attending our ministries. Be here on Wednesday night. If you can be here, be here. Come, show up. Support by being here. That's first.

That's first. Be engaged. Join. Join the church. And join in. Commit to practicing or living out the one another's. Bear with one another.
Rejoice with one another. Weep with one another. Confront one another. Share with one another.
Participate in upcoming biblical counseling training. That's how you can be better engaged in our church.
Get involved in some of this training that we're offering, even if you're not sure that you would ever use it in a formal counseling situation in our counseling center. You don't have to get the training and then go to the counseling center to do it.
You can get the training. You can come and just get equipped. Learn how to use the Bible. Learn how to think about helping other people as you use the scripture.
[63:36] What a great exercise. That's being offered at your church. You don't have to drive across the town to get that. Begin formal ACBC certification process.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Melanie, you're hot into that right now, aren't you? And we've got a couple of more people that we're going to target for that as well. Personal sanctification, that's another way you can engage.
Read books from the ACBC list. Suzanne, do we have that list available? Okay, we have a few copies of the ACBC book list. It's the books they've approved that they require people in their certification process to read.
And then be faithful in giving. You can understand that one. Be faithful in giving, which as far as I know, you guys are faithful in giving. We're doing better financially than we've ever done before. That doesn't mean we're rolling in money. We have what we need to do what we're doing and be responsible in it. What helps GCW function week to week? These are overlapping.
[64:40] Be involved. Be engaged. Be invested. In other words, listen to this, please. Realize what's going on here and what God's doing here. Thank him for it and be engaged and invested and involved in it in a way that says this.

I own this ministry. I'm invested. I want to take ownership of what's going on here. A quick story. Suzanne and I were involved in a church plant, a church start, and we did that church start for about nine years and the economic downturn hit our little bitty church and it hit us financially and we lost everything.
We lost our home and everything in the financial downturn and it decimated our county and many of the people in our church and as a result of all of that, it was the death knell to our little group and so our church had to fold.
I've never cried so hard in my life. I've never gone through such a funk in my life. For months, I just felt like I'd failed them all but this came out of this. I remember, I'll never forget it, one of the couples in the church that had been very involved from its inception, when all of that ended and several months had gone by, this person came to me and talked to me and he said this, Jeff, I don't think any of us realized what we had.
I don't think we realized what we had. I don't want that to be this. Don't let yourself be the person who doesn't realize how special this is in the sight of the Lord and how wonderful this is that you guys are loving the Lord and loving each other and making things like what we've been talking about possible.
[66:25] I want to say that to you over and over. As a pastor who does this vocationally, I'm telling you, if you think this kind of thing is going on everywhere, think again, it's not.

And I don't think it's anything because we're special and we're all that or me or Greg. I think it's because we've devoted ourselves to love Jesus. I know that sounds so basic.
Don't all churches do that? Will you tell me? It's not about programs here at our church. It's about a person. It's about Jesus. Encourage one another throughout the week.
You don't have to have Greg and I program how you take care of each other and invest your lives in each other. If we have to do that, we're missing it. This is what you guys do because you care.
You call each other. You reach out to each other. You involve yourself in the lives of the people of this family. Helping in the nursery. I know that's very practical, but we wanted to think of things like that.
[67:25] Again, members only. If you're a member in our church, we'd like for you to volunteer to help in the nursery, especially as people come and have visitors. They have kids that'll go in there. Helping provide a welcoming environment for worship, discipleship, counseling by joining a cleaning team.

How practical is that? Our members clean this church and they rotate. They take turns doing it. I don't know why I'm fizzing. It's probably telling me it's time to quit.
It's probably God, right? And more. More and more. Well, that's the update that we had for you guys. We left some stuff out, but we didn't want to be here for an hour and a half with you listening to me drone on about this stuff.
Are there any questions that are burning in your mind about this or any fresh comments that you want to make public before we break to eat and let you talk about it together?
Anything? Mitch? The seminary that you mentioned, seminaries can be good or bad.
[68:34] I don't know if you're a lot of people or if you're a lot of people or if you're a lot of people feel comfortable that having a really concern with that that you can say.

Yeah, thank you. That's a great question, Mitch, and a good concern, my friend. We do. We do. And it's, there are actually, oh, to repeat on the, we're actually taping this, to repeat Mitch's question, do

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

we, do the elders believe that Virginia Baptist Theological Seminary is a like-minded seminary with us?
And we do. They actually have some professors on staff there that graduated from the Master's Seminary and they've brought them in. That was a good connection for me.
I'm going, oh wow, if they're looking for that caliber of person at that level, the level of a professorship to come out there, that speaks volumes to me. But also, we know Dan.
Greg's had a relationship with Dan Davey. Dan married Greg and Marievy. That goes back a long way. So we have personal ties to this church and they practice many of the same things that we do as a church community, like church discipline.
[69:44] They've had to, they've had to perform church discipline before and they're faithful in it. That's a huge sign. But the seminary itself, it is pastored and run by those men.

They're doing a good job. Now they are taking seminary students from around Virginia and other areas that come into the seminary who aren't like-minded and they're helping them change their theology.
That's what Grace Church did for us. We had a horrible theology when we got there and they taught us our theology and helped us get it corrected. Thank the Lord they were very patient with us.
Thank you, brother. Good question. Any other burning question you have? Ron? I want to thank God for being here and the vision and dream of this church. You're going to be a member of this church.
Oh, praise the Lord. So thank God for you sharing all with us. Oh, you're welcome. And really open our eyes and see what we're supposed to be doing and what the church is currently doing right now as well. So thank God for what you're doing and thank God for the church.
[70:42] Amen. Thank you, Ron. Thank you for that encouragement, brother. Hey, we've been praying for him and didn't even know his name, right? We've been praying for these folks like this for four years that God would bring this kind of folks and them.

Yes, I know. All you new faces that have joined us. Lynn, how did you find out about us? Oh, my goodness. Just real quick. Just tell me the connection. Now listen to this.
Now listen to this. That's an expository teacher who teaches the church. My mother was in the hospital with COVID and someone passed away. And I was on Facebook just belligerent with not like awful, but just raging about the system because no visitors and they were not trying all sorts of medications, blah, blah, blah.
And this woman from this church in Indiana reached out to me and said, are you a Christian? And I'm like, yes, I was baptized so many years ago and yes, I'm a Christian. And I am a Christian.
I just wasn't living like a Christian necessarily. I didn't have the guidance of anyone. But this church has changed that.
[71:56] And so she connected you to us. She connected. She was one of me. She was pastoring to me. She would be great with all of us up here. You didn't get here on the radio yet.

But anyway, she encouraged me to join a church. And I didn't know anything about expository teaching. I mean, I was a Methodist, right? And so I went online and I found this and I found one in the book.
And a friend of mine and I went to the month in the book and it kind of gave me a big, large church deal again while we were one of those quite honestly. And then I came here all on myself the first time I was like, this is what I mean.
Amen. It's a combination for me as a, as it was just as a baby Christian. It's great for me to have the teaching behind that. Yeah. As well as the mentorship.
I feel completely safe in that. Oh, praise the Lord. Amen. Amen. God bless you. Amen.
[73:17] Praise the Lord. Those are sweet stories. Who would have thought a lady in Indiana. This little church. This is what God's doing, y'all. People all over the place are talking about this.

I was on, you guys know who Stuart Scott is? Stuart Scott? The writer, well, in counseling circles, he's the man. We were on the phone with Stuart last week and talking about our church and telling him about what's going on and again, he was like, wow, Jeff.
Yeah, I know. I know. It's just wonderful what God's doing. Well, thank you guys for being here tonight and giving me some extra time to talk with you about what the Lord's doing and how things are developing.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Again, we didn't share everything. We shared most of what we thought were the major developments that God's been pulling together for quite some time now. Many of these things are open-ended.
If not, most of them are open-ended. We don't know what's going to happen, where they're going to lead, how they're going to develop, but all of us are involved and there's plenty of room for all of us to be involved as we serve the Lord together.
[74:22] If there are other questions or comments or anything like that, please feel free. We're going to bring it in here or keep it out there. We're going to bring the food in here. Okay, and we'll take care of all that.

Yeah. So, what's the time he does with the tears to the edges and the surface and the surface and the surface and the surface and the surface and the surface and the surface and the surface and the surface and the surface and the surface

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host