

- Speaker 1: I couldn't even begin to express the difference that LifeChurch has made to the global church around the world.
- Speaker 2: This community started in Oklahoma has now changed the landscape of church around the world.
- Speaker 3: You guys have left a mark for a lifetime.
- Speaker 4: When they write the history of the church in America, when they talk about the spread of the word of God in the modern age, when they talk about multi-site church, when they talk about reaching people others weren't reaching, they'll have to start the article with LifeChurch, Pastor Craig and Amy Groeschel.
- Speaker 5: A massive rescue and recovery operation is underway in Ecuador, with the category four winds reaching 140 miles an hour.
- Speaker 6: I just want to say thank you to everyone at LifeChurch for your support of Samaritan's Purse.
- Speaker 7: I think Church Online is a big step for Saudi Arabia, there are so many people there that don't know about Christ.
- Speaker 8: By working with the local church here in Uganda and across the world in poor communities.
- Speaker 9: We feel like the resources that are given to us are some of the best resources around.
- Speaker 10: Thank you for being a part of that church that launched one of the most powerful communication tools ever built.
- Speaker 11: I have to think that staff saved my life (singing).
- Speaker 12: It'll continue to launch churches, because we believe that God works in this church, through His church to reach people (singing).
- Speaker 13: [inaudible 00:01:36].
- Speaker 14: Love Jesus is the one, because Satan couldn't stop. We're called to live according to the purposes of God. We don't just go to church, we are the church. Our mission unites us. We stand together to lead people to become fully devoted followers of Christ.
- Craig Groeschel: Get a little excited and celebrate. Can you believe we get to be a part of something so special. We're not just praying for revival, we're living in the middle of one right now. I want to wish you all a very merry Christmas. All 26 LifeChurches, all the Open Network churches all over the world, those of you on

the other side of computer screens at Church Online, you are a part of our family. What I want to do today is quite honestly tell you what I've been praying for. I've been praying very specifically that this time together would really, really minister to those of you who maybe have had a change of plans. Let me talk about this.

What I want to do today is real, real simple. I'm going to read a few verses and kind of expand your thinking on these verses from Matthew chapter, then I'm going to give you one big thought, just one simple and big thought that I hope that you will remember. As I said, I'm dedicating this message to those of you who may be facing something that you didn't plan, something's gone a little bit different than maybe you thought it would and you've had, what I call, a change of plans.

I'm curious, all of our churches, how many of you are naturally planners? Raise your hands up. You're kind of a planner, right? If you had your Christmas shopping done by the end of summer time you are officially a planner, right? I mean you're in there. If you have not started your Christmas shopping yet not only are you not a planner, but you shouldn't even be in church right now. You are so in trouble, it's almost too late to get anything done about it. Whether you're a planner or not, whenever life goes in a different direction than you had planned it can be a little bit rattling at times.

I know, beyond a shadow of doubt, that simply based on the number of people that I'm talking to there are many of you right now that you're facing something that you didn't plan. It hurts me how many people I know that are now job hunting that never planned to be job hunting at this time in their life. I know so many people that are close to me, and I know that you do as well, you might be one of them, who say, "I didn't plan on having a medical battle at this point in my life." There are some of you that unfortunately as you go into the Christmas time, it's supposed to be like the best time of the year and you're thinking, I didn't plan on being separated at this time. This wasn't what I thought would happen.

We could even say like symbolically, I call it the empty chair, whether there's a real empty chair at your table or not, but there are many of you that thought somebody would be there with you this Christmas time and they're not here and you'll have the symbolic empty chair and you're thinking this isn't what I had planned. Again, whenever we face things that we didn't plan, for some it can really kind of jar your, rattle your faith and you're wondering, okay, God, where are you? Why are you allowing this to happen, God? This isn't what I had planned, God. What's going on? This isn't what I had planned.

Like I said, what I want to do today is look at some verses from Matthew chapter 1 and I want to talk about the mother and father of Jesus. They're physical parents on earth. They're names are Mary and Joseph, and if you're not real familiar with the Bible you may want to read a little more about the birth of

Jesus. You can read in Matthew chapter 1 or in Luke chapter 1 and Luke 2. Matthew 1, Luke 1 and Luke 2. What you'll find is there are several paragraphs describing what took place over months and months. If you think about it we know a little bit, but there are so many things that happened in the story that we don't know about, right?

For example if you summarized the last year, 2016, in your life with the three paragraphs you'd hit the high points, but there'd be detail after detail after detail after detail after detail that were not in the high points. What I want to do is kind of just imagine together about some of the details that we don't have access to, but something like this probably happened. Does that make sense to you? For example, how did Mary and Joseph meet? We don't have that recorded in the Gospels, but they met somehow and so I want to kind of make up and read between the lines, and certainly this isn't exactly what happened, but if you use your imagination something like this happened.

How did they meet? How did Mary and Joseph meet? Let's just pretend it's Wednesday night and Mary goes to the synagogue for youth group, because she's a teenage girl and that's what she would've done, because she loves God. There was a youth leader teaching that night named Joey. You with me? Okay. Joey is charismatic, he's passionate, he's teaching from the Book of Isaiah about the coming of the messiah, and Mary and her friends are kind of looking on, they're trying to focus on God, but they kind of can't help but notice he's really, really cute, you know? When he teaches his face does this kind of funny thing and he's really, really into it. She's like, "Oh, he's amazing. I wonder what he's like."

Well after he's through teaching they're kind of hanging out in a group and Joey walks over to her group and the next thing you know they're talking and she kind of thinks she might be interested but there's no way. I mean she's a couple of years younger, you know? He starts asking her questions and she finds out a little bit about him and, oh my gosh, he's a got a job. This guy, he makes furniture. The last guy she liked was unemployed, still lived with his parents, and was addicted his PS4, but Joey, this guy's got potential, you know? The evenings over and she kind of is thinking about him and she wonders, is he interested? Probably not.

Well, he was interested. In fact all week long he's praying and thinking about it and the next week he gets his nerve up, he puts on an extra couple squirts of cologne and afterwards he asked her out for coffee. She's like, "Oh, is this like a friend coffee thing or is this like a something else coffee thing?" They agreed to meet at the Nazareth coffee shop, because they're going to keep it local, you know? They're sitting across from each other and they're hitting it off and they're enjoying it all. They go and do something again and before long she meets his parents and he meets her parents and they like each other and they're spending more time together.

Then one day every love song on the radio starts to make sense. She can tell this going somewhere. When he buys her a stuffed walrus she knows he's totally lost it, he's into her. She has no idea he's saving up his furniture money and he eventually goes and puts down a bunch of change on a nice rock and he takes her on a walk one night out on this ... The sun is setting and they walk across this bridge and she's thinking, could this be? Oh, I don't know. The next thing you know he's got his photographer with a distance lens hiding to catch the Instagram moment, you know? He kneels down on one knee and he says, "Will you marry me?"

She kind of acts surprised, but she's beside herself with excitement and she cries and says, "Yes. Yes. Of course, I will." They tell the parents. Her mom starts planning the wedding. Her mom makes everybody crazy. Her mom is a control freak. Can you see this happening? Just imagine with me. We don't know exactly what happened, but something like this certainly happened. Something like this. Then what did they do? They're a young couple. They are crazy about each other, in love. They did the exact same thing that you would do, that Amy and I did, and that is they started to plan their future. You know they did this. Everybody does this. We don't know the details of their plan, but we do know that they decided to wait before sharing intimacy until they were married. We do know that about them.

I'm kind of reading into it. Maybe they're planning to buy a house one day. They're going to go through financial peace university, because they don't want to be in debt, you know? Maybe Mary could stay at home with the kids if she wanted to. They've decided they're going to have children one day. They want to have a boy first and then a girl. They're going to name the boy, Blade, and the girl, [Ladasha 00:10:15]. Ladasha. If you're not laughing you just told us you weren't here at church last week, because if you were here at church you know what Ladasha is. If you miss a week of church you miss a lot. I'm just saying, "Ladasha."

They're making plans, then one day Mary's off by herself and she has the most special and holy encounter with God of her whole life. An angel appears to Mary. She loves God. She cannot believe this and the angel tells her, "You've been chosen. You're going to give birth to a son." She was like, "Ah, haven't you heard, Joey and I aren't, we're not married yet and we're not" ... The angel says, "No, no, no, you will conceive this child by the Holy Spirit." You can only imagine this little girl loves God, is in love with Joseph, she's getting married and her God has chosen them to be a part of history. She's thinking to herself, I can't wait to tell Joseph, he's going to be beside himself with excitement. God has chosen us. She goes and tells Joseph she's pregnant. Let's take a vote. Is Joseph excited or is he freaking out? Excited? Freaking out?

Audience : Freaking out.

Craig Groeschel:

You're right, he's freaking out. He's being a regular guy. Pregnant by the Holy Ghost? I'll kill him. Show me where this guy is? These are real people and we don't know how it came about, but we know that between verse 18 and 19, the polite way to say it is that everything hit the fan. Let's just look at this and we're reading between the lines because we don't know exactly what happened, but we can kind of imagine. Verse 18 of Matthew 1 says this, "This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about. His mother, Mary, was pledged to be married to Joseph," but all of our churches say, "But he was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together they had a plan, but before they came together she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit."

She goes off and tells Joseph, "Hey, I'm pregnant, it was the Holy Spirit." We don't know how he responds, but we know he gets really, really hurt and upset and we see the result in verse 19, because Joseph, her husband, was faithful to the law and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace. He had in mind to divorce her quietly. What do we know? The dude is devastated. He's crushed. He's humiliated. He's brokenhearted. Read between the lines. He's already put down a nonrefundable deposit on the Garden Chapel Inn, right? The wedding invitations maybe have already gone out. Somehow he's got to tell his mom and his dad, he's got to tell his friends.

He's going to be so publicly humiliated, but worse than public humiliation is the fact that he loved her, he trusted her, he told her things that he never told anybody before. He believed that God had brought them together. He was saving himself for her and now she's done this, she's cheated. He's like, he's half mad, half torn. He cannot believe this. If you'll notice in the text it said, "He planned to divorce her quietly." If you were paying real careful attention you might say, "Wait a minute they weren't married yet, why divorce?" Well at this time in history if you were engaged the only way you could break off an engagement was to get an official divorce and culturally then a divorce was much more serious and frowned upon.

If you're divorced you're kind of like almost pushed out completely and Joseph's like, "I'm trying to serve God, now I'm going to be divorced." Think about Mary's perspective. Think about her. When the angel of the Lord appeared to her, according to Luke 1:38 this is what Mary said, she said this, she said to the angel, "May it be done unto me according to your word." That's what she said. If she were living today she would've said something like, "I love God with all my heart and I will do whatever He wants me to do." She said yes to what God asked.

Now her life is totally over. She's pregnant without a husband, she's going to be a divorced single mom in a culture where she can't get any type of a real job to support herself. She's going to be begging for the rest of her life, trying to raise this kid. You can only imagine the rumors. Oh, Mary, Mary, Mary, Mary, Mary. Joseph hates her. Her life is over and you know what she's thinking? God, this isn't what I had planned. God, I said yes to you, I did everything you wanted me

to do, God why are you allowing this to happen? God, I only tried to do what you asked. This isn't fair, God. This isn't what I had planned. Right?

This is exactly where some of you are right now. This isn't what I had planned and I don't know what it may be for you, but you were finally getting ahead financially and we're going to have a great Christmas for our kids and then the car breaks down and it's hundreds of dollars. Like, no, this isn't what I had planned. You poured your life into your kids, they were your life, everything you did was for your kids and now they're making decisions, you're looking and going, "What are you doing? This isn't what I had planned."

You took a job and you did for your family, you knew it would be a better job, a chance for promotion, a chance to move up and you were moving up and then the economy kind of turned and your company downsized and you were last in, first out. You were one of the casualties. This isn't what I had planned. There's so many of you, too many of you, and I hurt with every single one of you who thought you would live happily ever after with him or with her and the happily's not there and neither is the ever after and you're thinking, this isn't what I had planned. God where are you?

The list could go on and on. I didn't plan on having migraines. I didn't plan on battling depression. I didn't plan on fighting cancer. I didn't plan on losing my scholarship. God, what are you doing? This isn't what I had planned. I told you are the beginning of the message that I was going to give you one thought, one big thought, one truth to embrace, and this is for every one of you who've had a change of plans. If you're taking notes I hope you'll write this down, and, more importantly, you'll plant this truth in your heart, and that is this: if you had a change of plans and you don't have to understand, embrace this truth. You don't have to understand the plan to trust God has a purpose.

Let me say it again. I want you to feel this and believe this. You don't have to understand the plan to trust God has a purpose. In fact, proverbs 19 and 21 is one of the first verses that I memorized years and years ago and it goes like this, many are the what? Let's say it aloud at all of our churches. Many are the plan? Say it again. All of our churches, somebody in Florida, somebody in Arkansas, somebody in Texas, say it aloud, many are the plans in a person's heart, but even though we have so many plans what happens? It is the Lord's purpose that prevails. Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it's the Lord's purpose that prevails. You don't have to understand the plan to trust God has a purpose.

Mary and Joseph's plans were wrecked, shattered. Joseph determines I have no choice but to divorce her, so he considers that and then in verse 20 we read this: "But after Joseph had considered this an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.'" Wait. Wait. Wait. Everything she said is true? The angel says, "Yes," in the dream. Verse 21 shows us the purpose. Verse 21, she will give birth to a son and you're to give

him the name, Jesus. Why? Why? Because he will save his people from their sins.

You could almost imagine Joseph going, "Wait. Wait. Wait. You're telling me God is in on this? You're telling me the last thing that I ever wanted is exactly what God wanted to happen? You mean there is a purpose in the middle of my pain?" You can almost hear God whispering to him, "My thoughts are so much different than your thoughts and my ways are higher than your ways and even though you may not feel that I'm working in all things to bring about good to those who love me and are called according to my purpose." Sometimes God may even redirect our plans when he has a different purpose. You don't have to understand the plan to trust that God has a purpose.

Let me unpack this for just a minute and tell you a few times in my own life that things didn't turn out as I had planned, and maybe you can see and think about how this would be true in your life as well. My dad played professional baseball and so I was born and bred to be a professional baseball player. Everything was baseball from the time I was born and I'm not going to say that I was guaranteed to go to the pros at all, but I will say that I had good genes and a lot of good coaching and things did look decent. I was the starting pitcher in the championship game in the eighth grade. Big time, eighth grade, you know?

The night before I was going to pitch we went out to the batting cage to take a few cuts and normally we'd get in the age appropriate one, but we got in the fastest one, kind of at the college level, because I thought I could handle it. The first pitch jammed me on the inside and crushed my pitching hand up against the bat, broke it and shattered it into all sorts of pieces and I was out for a long, long, long time. Not that big of deal. I hear you, like, yeah, what's the big deal? When you're in the eighth grade and your life is baseball and your pitching hand is crushed, the world is falling apart. God, where are you and why did this happen?

At the time we moved from Beaumont, Texas to Ardmore, Oklahoma. I actually loved being in Ardmore, Oklahoma. Those of you around the world you've never heard of Ardmore, Oklahoma, let me tell you what Ardmore's known for. If you're driving from Dallas, Texas to Oklahoma City, Ardmore's where you stop to go to the bathroom. That's where I lived, in the bathroom place. I loved this little town, but that's what it is known for, you know? Back then we didn't play sports year around like kids do. Then we played a bunch of different sports. I played football and I ran track and I played baseball and I played soccer.

Well I came there and it wasn't baseball season and there was this cute girl that was on the tennis team, so I thought, hey, I'm off for a semester, let's play some tennis, you know? I didn't like tennis. Well I ended up making the team. I was the last guy on the team and baseball season came and I thought, I'm not ready. I still feel much pressure. I'm going to take a year off, it'll be good for me. I'm going to play tennis. We ended up taking second in state that year. The next

year when the season started again a couple of guys graduated and I actually ended up playing number one on the team the second year and I thought maybe I should give this a go.

We ended up winning the state championship the second year and because I played a different sport I got a full ride to go to a school I never would've gone to otherwise, which is exactly where I fell deep into sin and met Jesus in a life-changing way, which lead people to make fun of me. One day a girl said, "You are so weird for Jesus. There's a girl at another school that's weird for Jesus like you. Her name is Amy, you guy's should meet and get married." Boom. That's exactly how we met. We just got really, really weird together and ended up starting LifeChurch 21 years ago. The fact that I'm teaching today at this moment is a reflection of a time when life didn't go according to my plan and God had a different purpose.

We had plans when we met. We decided we were going to have two kids. We're going to have a boy first and then a girl. We were going to have a Josh and a Joy. Well instead we had a Katie, a Mandy, and Anna, a Sam, a Steve and a Joy. We got the Joy in. Who knows what happened to Josh. We were drunk with six kids, didn't know how to get through it, you know? We didn't have cable. Couldn't afford cable, so we had six kids and it's what we did. Whenever Sam was born I was supposed to preach Saturday night and Sunday morning. Amy was pregnant with Sam. At 5:00 a.m., before Sunday services, Sam came out. Well I obviously couldn't preach and so we're like, "What are we going to do? The plan was for me to preach. We can't get anybody ready fast enough."

We said, "Let's just run the video from Saturday night and hope they forgive us, they'll understand we just had a baby." We ran the video and people didn't even notice that I wasn't there. There were more people that came to Christ. I'm scratching my head, going, "I wonder if this would actually work in other places." Then I'm actually preaching in a building that the vast majority of you cannot see, which doesn't upset me at all, because I don't love this building and the reason is because this wasn't supposed to be the building that I'm preaching for the rest of my life, but it is, okay?

This is a double gymnasium. It's long, narrow, it's boxy and it was simply a middle phase before we built the big permanent phase with the raisers and the balcony and all that kind of stuff and then this would become a gym later on, but somewhere along the way, even though we had a plan, God had a purpose, and we thought if we did video teaching, instead of building bigger, what if we built more in more places and tried to reach more people that way? I want to declare and tell you that I'm incredibly excited about this, that at 26 LifeChurch locations in eight different states this week alone there will be 186 Christmas worship services, 186 Christmas worship services.

You would be sitting in one and there will be 185 more than the one that you're in. Think about the lives that will be impacted because things didn't go

according to my plan. I'm glad that every now and then God interrupts my plans to bring about a different purpose, even in those times where I may not understand it and don't like it and confused by it, am hurting in the middle of it. Years later you can almost always look back and you might say, "I'd never choose it or I'd never want to go through it again, but I can see how God used it." You don't have to understand the plan to trust that God has a purpose. This would've been so true of Mary and Joseph.

Think about this, Mary's pregnant with the son of God. If I'm like, in this I'm Joseph, I'm thinking, well, we're doing this for God, we got connections. This is going to be smooth, right? Heavenly epidural, no pain, totally free. She sneezes, baby comes out. We've got a baby. This thing's easy. No. No. No. No. No. Instead she's in labor and guess where she is? Ladies, on the back of a donkey. On a donkey. She's in labor. Joseph is so dead. He's pulling that donkey through red lights, come on donkey. Come on. Come on. Running red lights. They get to the town and guess what? He's even deader. He didn't make reservations. There's no hotel there.

Where does she give birth? Ladies, in your dream place, in a cave next to farm animals, that's where she gives birth to the son of God. If you kind of go through it eventually she's, no epidural, no soft music, just ... And she's got a baby. They're going to live happily ever after, right? Guess what she finds out? This is true. King Herod wants to kill her son. Think about that. Internalize it. This is a real mom, this is a real dad. The ruler of your universe wants your kid dead. How does that feel? What do you think she's thinking? But God, I said yes to you and they're on the run. They're hooking it to Egypt. They're hiding out in houses. Don't tell anybody we're here. Like in the movies, they're on the run.

Fast forward 33 years. Mary, the mom who said "Yes, may it be done unto me according to your word. God you know I love you, I'll do whatever you ask me to do." She's standing on, looking at her son, her son stripped down naked, hanging on a cross only supported by spikes through his wrists and through his heels. His back is so cut open by being whipped again and again it's likely his vital organs are exposed. The only way that he can breathe is to push up as the spikes drive through his feet and pull up on his hands to get a breath. On his brow is a crown of thorns. His face is so bruised and bloodied that he doesn't even look like a human being.

The mother who said, "Yes," looks on and it's not recorded but you know what she's thinking. God, this isn't fair. He didn't do anything wrong. He did everything right. We did everything you asked us to do. Make it stop. No mom should ever have to see that. What did Jesus do? They're spitting on him. They are spitting on him. Hail. Hail, King of the Jews, you call yourself that. You've saved others, save yourself. Jesus looks up to heaven and prays, "Father, please forgive them, they don't even know what they're doing." She looks on, her son is righteous in every way and the Jesus declares with faith and with passion, through the pain, through the agony he says, "It is finished."

Then he breathes one last breath and says, "Into your hands I commit my spirit." Boom and the earth goes dark and everything shakes. This is not recorded in scripture, but let me tell you this did happen, Mary's legs could not contain the weight of her grief and she falls to the ground and she wails and sobs, "No, my baby!" Right? Put yourself there. Real people. Real agony. This isn't what I had planned. Mary and Joseph had a plan, God had a purpose. Mary and Joseph had a plan, God had a purpose. Mary and Joseph had a plan, God had a purpose. What was that purpose you ask? What was the purpose? Let me tell you what the purpose was.

The purpose was you. The purpose was you. Mary and Joseph had a plan. God had a purpose. People say all the time Jesus is the reason for the season. Jesus is the reason for the season. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Jesus is the reason for the season, but if you ask God what the reason for the season was in His heart, it was you. That was the reason for the season. That was the reason Jesus came. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son. For God so loved you that He became one of us. You couldn't make up the Christmas story. Man had a plan of how the messiah would come. God had a purpose that he would be stripped of His righteousness in heaven and become a person in Jesus, who was born of a virgin.

Why did a virgin matter? Because he didn't inherit the sin nature from an earthly father, but instead the divine nature from a heavenly father, therefore he could be perfect in every way, never sinning. Dying on the cross for who? For you, for me, for us. We were the purpose. Mary and Joseph had plan, but God had a purpose and you were that purpose. It was right there in scripture, and yet so many people missed it. Verse 21, Mary will give birth to a son and you're to give him the name, Jesus. Why? Here's the purpose: Mary and Joseph had a plan, but God had a purpose. What His purpose? You were that purpose because Jesus will save his people from their sins.

If you are one of those who've had a change in plans, and maybe right now things are really difficult and I'm not going to tell you for a moment that your pain's not real, because sometimes it just hurts and sometimes you just don't understand and sometimes you ache and you just want to cry out, "God, what's going on?" I'm going to tell you right now, because of the goodness of God, because of His sovereignty, because of who He is you don't have to understand the plan to trust God has a purpose. Many of the plans in a man's heart, but it's the Lord's purpose that prevails. On this Christmas, as we talk about the birth of Jesus, please understand Mary and Joseph were people just like you and me, who had a plan, but I thank God that He had a purpose and His purpose was you.

Father, today I pray especially for those who are hurting, confused and grieving, that we'll put our faith in you and recognize, God, you have a greater purpose than anything that we could ever imagine. We trust in you. At all of our churches, as you continue praying, nobody looking around, there are many of

you right now if I simply asked you, maybe just we're sitting down over a cup of coffee and I say, "Hey, how are you doing spiritually," what a lot of you would do is say what I've heard a million times over and again, you say, "Hey, I don't know. I'm doing okay." I'd say, "Well tell me about it" and you'd say one version or another of some conversation I've had too many times to count.

You'd say, "Well, I try to be a good person and I'm better than some and maybe not as good as others. Sure, I've done some things wrong, but I go to church at Christmas time and I gave money to help some guy out and I try to be a nice person. I'm doing the best I can. I hope that's good enough." If we knew each other well enough what I would do is just look at you squarely and say, "You know what? Sorry, but that's not good enough. It's simply not." No matter how hard you try you can't try hard enough to be good enough for God. If we were talking openly you would admit, as I have to, you've done some things wrong and I've done some things wrong, and let's call it what it is, we've sinned.

We've done some horrible things and the truth is that our sins separates us from God. Our sins separates us from God and that's why this Christmas story matters. The story of Jesus is called the gospel and gospel means good news. This is the good news, God had a purpose. God loved you so much that He sent His son, Jesus, who was born and lived without sin so that he could become the perfect sacrifice on the cross for us. He died for our sins. On the third day the stone was rolled away, it wasn't there. Why? Because Jesus rose from the dead. Why? Because God had a purpose so that anyone, and this includes you, no matter who you are, no matter what you've done, no matter how dark your life has been, anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved and forgiven.

At all of churches there are many of you, you had a plan, I'll do the little church thing, I'll watch this deal on the computer. You had a plan, but you recognize, oh my goodness, I think I may be a part of a bigger purpose. I'm supposed to be here because God wants me, He wants all of me. You have a choice, just like Mary, she said, "Yes, may it be done and to be according to your work. Yes, I give you my life. Yes, I want your will." At all of our churches there are those of you, you recognize you need His grace, you need His salvation, you need His forgiveness.

Simply say, "Yes, Jesus, I turn from my sins. I turn toward you." That's my prayer today. All of our churches, those who say, "Yes, I recognize I'm part of a bigger purpose." I'm here to say, Yes, Jesus, I need your grace. I give my life to you. That's your prayer. Left your hands high right now, all over the place and say, "Yes." Back over there, God bless you. Others of you, way back here toward the back, say, "Yes." Both of you right here, lift them up high. Both of you over here, third person over here, say, "Yes, Jesus, I surrender to you." Church Online, you click right below me, we're all going to pray together, pray aloud. Pray heavenly father.

Audience : Heavenly father.

Craig Groeschel: Today I trust you.
Audience : Today I trust you.
Craig Groeschel: To save me.
Audience : To save me.
Craig Groeschel: To make me new.
Audience : To make me new.
Craig Groeschel: Jesus, be first in my life.
Audience : Jesus, be first in my life.
Craig Groeschel: Fill me with your spirit.
Audience : Fill me with your spirit.
Craig Groeschel: So I could follow you.
Audience : So I could follow you.
Craig Groeschel: For the rest of my life.
Audience : For the rest of my life.
Craig Groeschel: My life is not my own.
Audience : My life is not my own.
Craig Groeschel: I give it to you.
Audience : I give it to you.
Craig Groeschel: Thank you for new life.
Audience : Thank you for new life.
Craig Groeschel: Now you have mine.
Audience : Now you have mine.
Craig Groeschel: In Jesus' name I pray.

Audience : In Jesus' name I pray.

Craig Groeschel: All of our churches, would you worship big, worship loud, welcome those born into God's family today.