



## #5: Leave Boldly, Pastor Joe Wittwer

January 25, 2009

### A. Fellowship Time (10-15 minutes)

1. Chitchat. Perhaps offer coffee, tea, or a cold drink with some snacks.
2. Pray (or invite someone to pray) to open the discussion.

### B. Review Time (Read the summary below to the group: 5-10 minutes)

When people are asked what they would do if they had one month to live, some respond that they would leave boldly. They might not use those words, but they say things like they want to leave a legacy, to know that they've made a lasting difference and be able to leave with confidence. Wouldn't you want to leave knowing that you had done what God wanted you to do and you were ready to meet Him? Jesus set the example for leaving boldly, so we're going to look at four things He did that are worth doing right now, whether you've got 30 days or 80 years left to live.

#### 1. Know where you're going.

Jesus knew where He was going in His last days, and so should we. **John 31:1** records, *"It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father."* **John 8:14, 13:3, 14:12 & 28, and 16:10 & 28** all record that same confidence. Being sure about where we're headed relieves fear and provides peace and confidence. That peace and confidence will allow us to leave boldly. **1 John 5:11-13** gives us as followers of Jesus confidence in where we are going: *"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup> He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. <sup>13</sup> I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."* God wants you to know that you have eternal life. How do you know? If you have the Son, Jesus, you have eternal life.

#### 2. Build to last.

Everyone wants to leave a legacy, to make some kind of a lasting difference in the world. But some of us are building sandcastle lives: here today, washed away tomorrow with no trace. Jesus talked about this dynamic in **Matthew 7:24-27** *"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. <sup>26</sup> But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."* You can build on the rock and leave a legacy that will stand; or you can build on the sand, and it all gets washed away. Build to last! The apostle Paul put it this way in **1 Corinthians 3:12-15**: *"If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, <sup>13</sup> his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. <sup>14</sup> If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. <sup>15</sup> If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames."* The only way to build a lasting legacy is to invest your resources into what lasts forever: God and people. Jesus said that the most important thing in life is loving God and loving people. Paul reveals that he understands this legacy in **2 Corinthians 3:1-3**. [Read it together.] Paul's legacy was people whom he had helped to find and follow Jesus, and he was going to see them again in heaven. If you are going to leave boldly, you want to build to last. You want a legacy that won't wash away.

### **3. Finish what God gave you to do.**

If you were going to leave boldly, you'd need to finish what God gave you to do. If you had any unfinished business, you'd want to take care of it. We see this factor all the time when people are dying. And we can see it clearly in Jesus. On the last night of Jesus' life, He prays in **John 17:4**, *"I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do."* That's why **John 19:30** can record that while hanging on the cross the next day, "Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." It is finished. John isn't talking about Jesus' life, but about what God sent Jesus to do. He finished the work God gave Him to do. You might wonder if anyone other than Jesus could say that. Apparently so. The apostle Paul said in **Acts 20:24**, *"However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace."* Paul was determined to finish the race and complete the task Jesus gave him. Near the end of his life, he wrote **2 Timothy 4:7**: *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."* Leaving boldly is being able to reach the end of your life and say, "I did it. I fought the fight. I finished the race. I kept the faith. I finished what God gave me to do." You must figure out who you are in order to figure out what you are to finish.

### **4. Prepare others to carry on.**

Finally, if you want to leave boldly, you need to prepare others to carry on. This is part of that unfinished business that needs to be taken care of. There are areas in our lives which are not finished when we die; we need to pass the baton. Jesus showed an example of this practical concern: He made sure that His mother would be cared for when He was gone. **John 19:25-27**: *"Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup> When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, 'Dear woman, here is your son,' <sup>27</sup> and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home."* Jesus finished His work—and He didn't, because His work didn't end with Him; it only started. In many ways, His life and death were only the beginning of His work. That's why Luke starts the book of **Acts** in **1:1-2** by saying, *"In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach <sup>2</sup> until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen."* Luke viewed his gospel as the beginning of the teaching and work of Jesus, which would be carried on by His apostles. The gospels reveal Jesus teaching them, praying for them, and promising to send the Holy Spirit to empower them and live in them. It was all preparatory so He could leave boldly, confidently, because *you* will carry on the work.

### **C. Life Group Questions** (select, revise, and add as desired: 20-40 minutes)

1. Do you know where you're going after you die? What gives you confidence in the face of death?
2. What do you want as your legacy? How do you want to be remembered? What are some things you can do this week to invest in eternity?
3. What is your assignment? What has God given you to do? What is unfinished? If you had one month to live, what would you try to finish?
4. If you had one month to live, who would you need to prepare for your departure? What would you need to do so that others could carry on?

### **D. Personal Application** (1-3 Minutes)

- As a part of leaving boldly, invest in God and people. Work diligently at doing and completing the things God has given you to do. Leave a legacy now.
- Read **John 13-17** this week and see what Jesus was preparing His followers, including you, to carry on.

### **E. Prayer Time** (As a whole group or subgroups of 3-4: 10-15 Minutes)

- Ask God to help you know where you're going, build to last, finish what He has given you to do, and prepare others to carry on.
- Pray that God will give you the confidence to invite people to know and follow Him.
- Bring other praises and requests before the Lord that arose through your discussion.