

“Youth Service”
By Brother Andy Giebler
Sunday, August 27th, 2017

It's a privilege to be here this morning. I'm humbled to stand here. Humbled, because I know the group of people that Parrish and I are privileged to work with. And every time I open this book, the Bible, I'm humbled at the things that God shows me. And, as I work with other ministers here, as other men labor in this pulpit, and teach Bible studies, and things that I've learned. And the humbling responsibility that's behind this. I know that's one thing that I know, none of us could stand up here and take lightly. Unless we be something??. And, even though this is our youth service, still, we're talking about God's Word. And I was humbled at the things that I saw and I heard shared, and I will tie some of that in through the message this morning. I am humbled when I see people come together, we have a youth picnic, and our congregation comes together to support our youth, to come together to have times of fellowship, we sit down to have Bible studies, we share encouraging words, because that's what our youth needs. We say our youth needs Jesus, but if they don't see it in us, where are they going to see it? And that's what's going on here. Those are the things that I am privileged to see: people taking the time to share with our youth encouraging words. It would be easy to say “Aw, run along; you're just the young ones. Go back in your classrooms.” The world even makes a big deal about out of kids right now. You look at this time of year and they have a back to school parade in Chicago. And that's just back to school they're celebrating in the realm of our country, in the realm of our city of Chicago what our youth are about. But, we have something good to celebrate, because we have youth that are seeking something.

And this message is going to be twofold. And I know we haven't dismissed the kids to their classrooms. We're going to talk about two things, some for the adults and some for the youth. But it's all centered around our youth. I'm going to go back and bring up a few points that Pastor Ulysse shared last Sunday. I talking about our bodies. He made, he brought up a point in relation to the letters written to Thessalonians. These two books were written to a young church, and he brought up the point, you know some of us have been around for a while, and he used the time frame that Jesus was around for thirty-three years. And some of us have been a part of this ministry for longer than that. Some of us were around when Pastor Ulysse was baptized. And as he was exhorting us and lifting us up, talking about this gospel, talking about the letters that were written to the young church, and we're not a young church, not in some aspects. But, yet, we're kind of a mixed bag, as all churches are going to be. Those of us that have been around for a while, we've got a responsibility, a responsibility in the Scriptures. I'm going to say this in front of our youth, because you guys are coming up behind us, and you need to know what happened to us. A lot of us were raised in this ministry in lots of different ways. We sat around. I remember sitting in Bible studies from day one. I'd get off the navy base and I would come in. I was privileged that there were people around this ministry around the clock, that were ready to minister to someone. I went to my first school in the navy when I was eighteen; I was going to school at night. Somebody would come and pick me up from the base in the morning to go to the church when most of the guys were coming to the church in the evening and getting off at the normal time of work—that's when everyone was off work—but there were still people available to me. And I was eighteen. I was out of the house, but I was still young. I still needed teaching then. There were people that would come to the base—Pastor Paine even came and picked me up one time. Picked me up and took me to the church and we sat down in Bible study. I went to Virginia and we had this small church on 16th Bay and Ocean View, with this house right behind it. There was a house, right behind it, where Joe Ramirez and a lot of the guys did the cooking. But, Joe did more than cooking over there, there was a table with a bunch of

Bibles on it, you were sent over there to sit down in Bible study. And that's when the church wasn't open. When the church was open, there were things going on there. When we moved into 21st Bay, we got this big fellowship hall about the size of this room. And there was always someone sitting there, breaking the Word, breaking open the Word. And this is where we are today as adults. We've had that foundation of those that have been here a while. And I'm getting back to the youth, I haven't forgotten about that. But we have a foundation that we started on. And it's our responsibility to our youth to keep building on that foundation. There are things that I learned to back then, and if I just rested on those things, and said, "Oh, I know enough," what do I have to teach someone else? What do I have to offer these young ones that are coming up behind us? Who is the youngest one we've got in here, that's sitting in this room? Probably one of Kirk's kids. And who do we have that's eighteen? Who do we have that's in high school now? We have a wide range of people that we have a responsibility to teach. That's not just the parents, the parents of these children, yeah, they have responsibility to teach them. And we have our teachers in our children's church which were thankful for. But it's not just their responsibility. It's our responsibility to be an example. An example out on the street. If I'm out walking around doing work for my company, I'm not a church, I'm not in Bible study, I'm out and about; who's going to see me? I'm walking by the high school and all of a sudden I see Jailed. What if I didn't see her and I'm doing something I'm not supposed to? What if I'm not holding up my testimony? What if I'm not doing that? So that's my quick delve into that, on responsibility. And I'm don't say that to preach at you, I'm saying us, I'm part of it. We have responsibility in our youth, in that regard.

Back to some things that Pastor Ulyse was talking about; he talked about our callings. He made reference to a book called America, because he's not a natural citizen. He wasn't born in America, he had to learn some of the things about this country. And the book talks about our social classes and where we are. And how people come to America with a dream and looking at this, to take from this class to go to this class, to go from making this money to making this money. And, the stats say that if this is where you are, this is probably where you are going to die. And, sometimes we have to be content where we're at. Nothing wrong with trying to, you know, better ourselves, in being better, but, there's a difference between striving for something, and being so discontented that that's your only focus. And he referenced that to us, and our callings in God. God has given us what we have to do right now. We have callings. We have things that God placed in us. And there are other things that we need to seek for. And it doesn't mean that you're stuck here, but we have to be content where we are. Sometimes we ask God for things—in the Scripture in James, it says, you ask, and you receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts. We've got to be content with where we are. Not content to the point where we don't ask and seek. Parrish, you've said it, several times, people talk to you about their dreams and their aspirations. And, they say, "I prayed for this, and I didn't get it," and you asked them, "Well, why'd you stop?" And that's our answer. It's not about giving up. But it's about asking until you get an answer. And, sometimes, this can be young or old, we ask for things, we ask for things from our parents. If mom or dad doesn't give you what you want, what happens? You keep asking, don't you? Standing in the checkout line, you want that toy, or you want that snack, you say, "Mommy, mommy, mommy, mommy," until either the hammer comes down, "No, you're not getting it," or mommy gives in. But you keep going until you get that final answer. And, that's the example for all of us today. If you've got something in God you want, or you don't even know what it is you need, you just know you need something. Some of you, as you were growing up—Savanna, you talked about how you watched your parents. And, I'm sure there were times where you had to look and say, what are they doing and what should I be doing? And all of us that have looked up at our parents, at one point in time, can ask that question, and that question is what are we seeking for? How are we seeking? This prayer thing. We had a couple of young people come up and pray today. We've had young people come up and share their heart and their testimony. This thing of coming before God isn't just for us old people. It isn't just for those that are parents, just those that are out there and have jobs. The God that's real to me is not a

respector of age. The God that's real to me doesn't care how old I am. And, each and every one of us can come to God, and look to God for the things that he has for us. Sam, you talked about how your parents don't let you do different things. And, I could hear it in your voice that you are thankful for it now, because you see the things that go on. You hear the things on the news about what happened at that party that your dad said you couldn't go to. Violence that they had where people have gotten arrested, or even hurt or even killed. And the older we get the more we respect what our parents did for us. I remember growing up, you know, and I wanted to go do some things, and they said, "No, that's not for you." And, they taught me right from wrong. And, because of that I was able to listen to God's spirit. So when it came time to be on my own, I knew what my parents had taught me. But, I also knew the godliness they taught me, and I knew that there was more than just my parents teaching; there was a reason why they were teaching me that. Because my parents knew the right from wrong. They knew then that that was not a godly way of living. And one more Scripture on this before I move on to another topic. Matthew six, verse thirty-three:

Matthew 6:33 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

We've been talking about these letters, First and Second Thessalonians. I want to address the spirit in which they were written; there's a lot of things that were taught in there. But they were written to a young church. They were written to people that Paul wanted to encourage. In First Thessalonians, one, verse two, it says:

1 Thessalonians 1:2-6 *We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:*

In First Thessalonians, chapter two, verse three, it says:

2 Thessalonians 1:3 *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;*

So every last one of us can look at someone else and say, "Oh, you're doing something wrong." But, with this letter—and there were some letters that were very pointed to different churches, but this one shows a labor of love and giving thanks to God for all the good things that this church was doing. He gave thanks to God and recognized their work of faith, their labor of love. He was giving thanks to God for their patience, hope. He was giving thanks to God for all the wonderful things that he saw in that church, the things that he heard of, even not being there. The reports he got, the things that he knew were going on. He was giving thanks to God, and telling them about it. So, when we look at the records, yes, this was a young church. Some of us have been around for a while and we should know things, but what about the young in faith, and our young in this church? How do we treat them? It would be easy, and I catch myself doing it, when someone is running around here, "Just stop it right now." You see something that's wrong and you just want to tell them it's wrong. But do we take the time to lift them up and see the things? Sometimes it's about our own vision. It's about seeing what's going on with our kids. And, being able to take the time to be able to look them in the eye and to ask them questions and to actually hear their answers. And, when we do that, it's a blessing to hear things back, and this is from

my point of view, from the adult point of view to our young people. When you hear things back from them, when you hear about the blessings of God when you take the time to communicate back to us. That's when the real blessings can take place, that's when growth takes place, that's when we learn about each other, and see things about each other. And parents, I know we've all seen it because their times when we talk to our kids, and it's like they're on another planet. But, I want to ask the other question, ask it in a different way, our young folks here, eighteen and under: How many of you have gone to talk to your mom or dad or an adult and you say something and ask something and the answer you get is like, "Wait a minute, did you hear what I just said? My dad's not even on the same wavelength with me, here. Dad didn't hear what I said," because dad's got one thing in mind and you've got something else in mind. Or, "Mom wants me to do this, but I'm really trying to get this across." Anybody ever experienced that with their parents? There we go, I knew we had a few honest ones. And, parents on the other side, you're coming down with something, "I know this is right, I need to get this across, you need to be doing this." And, our son or daughter is already somewhere else. I'm talking about communication. Taking a step back. And, this could be just the things of life that need to be taught about, or the Scriptures. We have to be able to find ways to get each other's attention, in a good way. We need to make sure that we have their attention. And I know that I've talked about my daughter, when she was younger, and even now when she's older, I have to take a second to stop and look see where she's at, what's going on? When she was younger, I had to stop and hear what's going on in school for a minute, hear what her day's been like. And, then I can address my daughter the way I need to address her. And, even now, when I talk to her as an adult, if I walk in the house and I want to tell her, "Hey, this that or the other." She's got two twins and two older daughters that, she that she's already had a crazy day. If I walk in and talk to her without paying any attention to that, all I'm getting is hair flopping around and eyeballs rolling, and, "What are you talking about dad?" And that relates to a lot of different things in life. And this is about how we talk to each other here in the church, too. Because we've talked a lot about growth. And we've talked a lot about doing different things in the ministry as a ministry. There's a lot of things that we desire to do, a lot of things that our youth leaders desire to do, and as we strive to do those things, those are the kind of things that we're going to have to do, how to find the good in each other, how to communicate with each other, how to have the right perspective. And we're going to take some time here in a couple of minutes, I'm giving you heads up now. If you're eighteen or younger, why don't you come up to the altar? And, I know this may have been a short service, but there's been a whole lot preached today, a lot of perspective given. And, I really want to capitalize on that. Today is the day we want to talk to our youth, just here in the altar, right up front. Actually, if you could turn around and face me. I want to say something to you guys, very specifically. Because, one, I'm proud that you're here in this ministry; I know sometimes it feels like you don't have a choice, sometimes you feel like you're being drug, and sometimes I know you really want to be here because there is something here. It's more than just a program on Sunday morning. I've watched a lot of you over the years come and go from the ministry. And, one thing I want to commit to you guys is we're not trying to make you like us. We're not trying to get you guys to do exactly what we're doing. What we're committed to—you know what? I'm going to ask if you would join with me, and stand, as we commit some things to our youth. We're going to make an opportunity for you guys to learn the gospel, to learn the right ways of the Lord. Not to pressure you, to say, "Oh well, this is a slot that's got to be filled." I want you guys to have a burden. If we as leaders, Parrish, myself, worship leaders, children's church teachers, try to say this is what you are supposed to be, to stamp you in a mold. I can't expect you to willingly want to do that, just because we're trying to stamp you in a mold. But we're committing to providing an atmosphere that you want, where you can feel comfortable to come and ask us questions. And if you have questions about things in the Bible that you kind of wonder about, that you hear preached on Sundays, and you say, "I don't know about that," that's normal. And sometimes I felt that way, I'll be honest, but we want to provide an atmosphere. I know I've got people that I can go to, I

can ask about Scriptures to I don't understand it. And we want to provide this atmosphere that you can ask those questions, and you can feel comfortable being yourself. Sometimes you've just got to ask something, and I get it. Adults want to say "No, you can't." But I want to provide that atmosphere. We're going to pray that as we grow our ministry, that we're growing those things that provide a place for you, and a place where you are proud to bring your friends. To bring your friends to see something that, maybe you can't communicate the way you want to. Savanna, you said that there was no doubt in your friends' minds that, when your friends came to your house, there were things of God, and that's the way things should be.

So, if we could just step back a little bit? We want to take the time to anoint each of you with oil; we want to pray over our you, as you go back to your classes, we know we can't have you in this sanctuary all the time. You can't be in the sanctuary, on your phones all the time. You have to follow the Lord, you have to go out and be a blessing. You have to go to school, you have to learn things. You've got to be around people that don't necessarily share this mindset. And we're praying that you will have the strength. Listen to God, and you will gain your own convictions on how you deal with them. The older you get—you're right, they'll want to take you to parties, they'll want to take you... And they'll put on the pressure, say, "What's wrong with you?" We pray that you'll have the strength to stand up when God gives you opportunity.