

(SLIDE #1) Good morning Church, / Online.

We are going to jump right into our weekly prayer time today. We are at our fourth church-wide prayer request for the year and it's this: **(SLIDE #2)** Church Renewal.

I've told you before, as a lead pastor in a church before coming to Southland, I was involved in both the mentoring program and in teaching many of the principles and practices which we hold dear here. It all made a huge impact in my life and the life of the church so let's pray that others the world over will experience that as well.

The list is before you. Let's join together in unison prayer lifting CR. Pastor Ray and churches up to our Lord.

I'd like to do a quick little interactive exercise with you I'm going to say a word to you and you are going to give me the opposite word. Like I will say top and you will say bottom. Got it?

Early /late
Good/bad
Hot / cold
Fishing?
Full / Empty
Love /hate?

OK – I want to mess with your thoughts on that for a moment. I think we get that on the surface – love and hate can be opposites. But what about when God says he hates sin – Is that the opposite of love? Or is it rather a reflection of the fact that God loves us so much that he also hates what sins does to us.

Let me give you an example of where I'm going with this. When a couple come in to talk to me about some troubles they are experiencing in their marriages – of course the best thing I hope to hear is how much they love each other but the worst is not that they hate each other! – The worst is when one or the other or both say they don't care anymore.

Here is the reality. In relationships, the opposite of Love is not hate...they are both consuming forces of emotion – No the opposite of Love is apathy. The decision to not care.

Moses called it the hardened heart. In a marriage there is a break and a divorce not so much when someone hated but when someone decided to not love – to not care anymore.

I don't have to remind you that our world is a world of hurt. 35,000 children die every day of starvation and diseases caused by malnutrition. There's 1.5 billion people who live at the subsistence level with regard to food, clothing and shelter. There's 100 million street children under the age of 15 in our large cities around the world. The heartbreaking statistics go on and on.

And that's the problem – the barrage can ambush us into an attitude that is so contrary to the way we were designed that it can steal our very identity away. There is a very real danger that we will fall for one of the tactics of enemy - the "who cares?" conclusion. We can be ambushed by apathy.

A teacher once asked on a test "What does the word apathetic mean?" And one student wrote, "I don't know and I don't care!" **(SLIDE #4)** Aced it! Apathy is a pathetic choice for your one and only life.

Apathy is a deadly serious condition. People just don't care about much anymore unless and until it directly affects their own comfort.

An apathetic heart is one that is indifferent to God and to other people. It has a slow, weak pulse that is barely detectable at all, and nothing causes it to beat fast. No injustice or unfairness makes it race with moral outrage.

I can't think of an attitude much more insidious, or more destructive to our identity than apathy. It stifles our creativity, stunts our spiritual growth, and drains our energy. It can take hold in every area of life where we allow it to grow, and completely immobilize us.

We don't feel disappointment, we don't feel hurt, we don't feel anger, we don't feel anything anymore. It's apathy.

As just one example, when Apathy infects a marriage, life becomes boring and routine, and the couple loses the joy they had when they first wed. The marriage relationship is robbed of passion and meaning.

The husband becomes indifferent to the needs and desires of his wife, and vice-versa, communication breaks down, and living is reduced to the mundane with no direction, no celebration of life.

Apathy is insidious because it feeds on itself. Selfishness becomes the norm. Soon the couple starts to wonder what it's all for...and then, those words are uttered, the ones that I hear much too often, "I just don't care anymore."

Apathy can ambush us all, no matter our age, education or income level. Kids stop caring about their school work, or their parents rules. Teens throw the "Whatever!" word at everything.

Employees get indifferent about the quality of their work, volunteers at the level of their service. Wealthy are unconcerned about the poor, and the poor are indifferent toward the wealthy.

Apathy can affect all areas of a person's life, from the value placed on health, nutrition and exercise, to time spent with family, to finances, to cleanliness, to ones responsibility to their fellow man *and to God*.

The early symptoms of an apathetic heart show up in little ways at first. If we forget to make a donation or help someone in need, it used to be that we would say, "Oh man," and feel a twinge of regret.

But this fades away over the years to the point where we could walk right past all the opportunities to give to the food and clothing drive, to join the pick up and walk, to serve at camp, right past all the appeals, past the sign-ups asking for help and not feel a thing.

We might say, "It looks like there was a good turnout. I'm glad people came through on that. What I would have added wouldn't make much more. I'm glad other people did that."

And the nudges in life that tug us to make a difference get less frequent over the years. Then one day we think back and realize that we can't remember the last time we felt moved to rescue or serve another human being. And it gets worse because apathy toward others always degenerates into apathy toward God.

We like to point out our good intentions and say, "I'm going to start spending time with God every day as soon as things get quieter at work. I'm going settle down probably this summer and start learning and memorizing the Bible."

But good intentions only go so far. After we fail to act on them again and again, a sense of spiritual stagnation sets in. At first, it's frustrating. We chafe at the dryness in our spiritual life. But after a while, it becomes usual.

We look at the Bible and say, "This is such a big book," and so it stays on the shelf. We think about the benefits of a cell group but say, "It's best to wait until I can really make a long term commitment."

We say, "Learning how to Hear God could have been good, but who's got time for that or to take a night and day out for Set Free?"

Over time, amazing grace becomes just interesting grace then simply grace and eventually grace at a meal and finally just a race. Your spiritual life gradually gets reduced to 75 minutes a week sitting in church listening to other people talk and sing about the spiritual adventure.

When you think about it, the words 'apathetic heart' should be an oxymoron for a believer, right? The words contradict each other. Some people who say that they are Christ followers don't see the contradiction.

But friends, I have to tell you this straight out. I can't sugar coat it. God hates apathy. When people claim to follow him but their hearts are indifferent and uncaring toward him and toward others, **God hates it.**

We see God's attitude played out in the story of a first century church in a city called Laodicea. It was a wealthy church full of affluent people, bankers and merchants.

In fact, it was their affluence that initially opened the door for indifference to set in. They didn't need anything, and they didn't have any hardships that were threatening their comfort level. Everything was going well and on an even keel.

They attributed their success to their business savvy, so there was no great need to get all excited about worshiping God for what they had. As for the beggars and homeless in the community, they were more pests than people. You don't want to let in anybody off the street, right? Cuz then the church gets dirty. (broken)

This church degenerated into a social club made of self-satisfied people who were apathetic toward all outsiders, including God. Jesus uses the word "lukewarm" to describe the condition of their hearts.

Do you know how unappetizing it is on a hot day when you take a big swig of water and it turns out to be lukewarm? You want to spit it out. That's exactly how God felt about this lukewarm country club that was masquerading as a church.

God told this church, **(SLIDE #5)** "I know you well, and you are neither hot nor cold. I wish you were one or the other. But since you are merely lukewarm, I will spit (spew - vomit) you out of my mouth." That is a graphic reaction, isn't it?

Now if you are still warm and breathing hearing this but have an uncaring or indifferent heart toward God or toward others, warning bells ought to be wailing.

Let me go a step further. **(SLIDE #6)** If you don't have an increasing desire to worship God, to follow him and to extend his compassion to other people and if there is no outward evidence of Jesus Christ and His spirit influencing your heart, then the Bible cautions that you have been ambushed by apathy because it's unconscionable that a child of His would act that way.

See - real faith produces real change and always involves action. It isn't just good intentions, and it certainly isn't apathy.

We went back in time last week and so we go again this time to a man named **(SLIDE #7)** Amos who lived and ministered around 750 B.C.

Amos is a farmer. He takes care of a few sheep and has a few fig trees in Tekoa near Bethlehem in the Southern kingdom of Judah. One day, God calls Amos to leave his sheep and go proclaim God's word. **(SLIDE #8)** God tells Amos to preach for him not in Judah, where he lives, but God tells him to go up to the Northern kingdom, to Israel and preach there.

Now, the Northern kingdom, at this time, is enjoying political success and economic prosperity unknown since the days of Solomon. And people who have money are real happy with the way their lives are. Amos is sent to Samaria, the capital city. It's the center of wealth and power. Amos goes there and begins to preach.

I'm going to walk through the first chapter and a half with you, because it's a brilliant set up. 1:3. This is Amos now, preaching to the people in the Northern kingdom, in the capital city of Samaria: **(SLIDE #9)** "This is what the Lord says: 'For three sins of Damascus...' Damascus is the capital of Syria—one of their enemies.

"For three sins of Damascus," God says, "even for four, I will not turn back my wrath." In English we say, "That was the straw that broke the camel's back"? This is a Hebrew way of saying, "The camel is in a full-body cast." The people have gone too far. They hear these words and they know this is bad news for Syria. And then he goes on to describe the sin that God says was the last straw.

(SLIDE #10) "Because she threshed Gilead with sledges having iron teeth." That is, Syria invaded Gilead with acts of

unspeakable cruelty. It was barbaric. Amos starts his message by announcing that the judgment of God is going to fall on Israel's enemy, Syria, because they've been cruel and violent to Israel.

Now, let me ask you a question. Take a guess. Do you think that the people in Israel were glad to hear him preach like that? I think so. These were their enemies.

They were glad to hear about this. Their enemies are going to get judged by God. Next, 6, it's the same formula for Gaza. **(SLIDE #11)** "This is what the Lord says: 'For three sins of Gaza,'"—Gaza is one of the Philistine cities. "For three sins of Gaza, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath." And then he lists what they did: "Because she took captive whole communities and sold them to Edom." They were slave traders.

Amos says, "God's judgment is coming on the Philistines." **(SLIDE #12)** And the people are glad to hear this. And his message keeps going like this. The judgment of God is going to fall on Israel's most hated enemies. It's coming to Phoenicia. It's coming to Edom. It's coming to Ammon. It's coming to Moab.

In every case, he recounts the last straw that pushed God over the edge, and the people are cheering. Then 2:4 he does a surprising thing. He starts in on the Southern kingdom, on Judah. **(SLIDE #13)** "This is what the Lord says: 'For three sins of Judah, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath.'" The people in the Northern kingdom who are listening think, "This is amazing. He's going after the people in his own native land." "Bold move, Amos."

And they're applauding and cheering, because they don't get along well with the Southern kingdom anymore. All of this is leading up to 2:6. a moment of great drama. Now, you might have some inkling of what's going to happen here, but you've got to remember that his audience doesn't have a clue. They think that Amos is going to say God is doing all this because God loves the people of Israel so much, because he's taking care of them, because he's on their side.

Look at what he says. **(SLIDE #14)** "This is what the Lord says: 'For three sins of Israel, even for four...'" When he says that, you could hear a pin drop. "They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals." 7. What's going on in the Northern kingdom? **(SLIDE #15)** "They trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed."...nobody's cheering now. There's just sullen silence.

It sounds to them like Amos is talking about Israel like they're one of God's enemies. That's exactly what he's doing. He is charging Israel with living as if they were God's enemies. What's the last straw? It's the way that people who have resources and claim to follow God treat the poor." It's the way they treat the poor.

He doesn't say it's that they don't worship enough. He doesn't say it's that they don't know the Torah enough. He doesn't say a whole lot of things we might have expected him to say. He says, "It's the way that people who have resources and claim to know, follow and love God treat the poor." Now, it is terribly important that you and I understand why Amos says this troubles God so deeply.

For a moment we have to go back almost to the beginning of the Old Testament—Deuteronomy 24. Now, what's happening here in Deuteronomy is Moses is telling the people of Israel what God expects his community to look like, how God wants things to work, what God wants life to look like for people in his nation.

There are 3 groups of people who keep being repeated. 24:17 God says, **(SLIDE #16)** "Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this.

(SLIDE #17) When you're harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. "Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

(SLIDE #18) When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow.

The three groups? First, aliens. Those are people that have immigrated in. They were not ethnic Israelites. They were other folks. Second group, the fatherless – the orphans. They had no one to look out for them. Who else? The third

category is the widows—those without power, without economic means.

God says, “Take care of these groups. They’re likely to be mistreated. They are what in our day would be called marginalized people—the forgotten, mistreated, oppressed and miserable.

They may be the indigenous, persons of color, maybe senior citizens, maybe people with physical or mental disabilities, maybe minorities, but every society that’s ever existed has them—every one. It’s so important that we understand this about the heart of God. The widow, the alien, the fatherless each receive over three dozen verses in the Old Testament demanding God’s people show them justice and compassion.

God says he will judge society by the way it treats marginalized people. God makes it unmistakably clear that he takes it on himself to be the protector of the weak. He makes it unmistakably clear that anybody who neglects them neglects him. Anybody who oppresses them oppresses him. Let’s look at just two statements in this regard.

(SLIDE #19) “He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord.” God says, “It’s like giving your money to me when you give to the poor.” The second statement is from the Psalms— “A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.” God says he’s a father to the fatherless.

God says that the protectiveness and fierce love that a father feels for his child is just an echo—a dim reflection of how deeply and passionately God cares for the people who live at the margins of society. God says, “This goes right to the core of what I value.” That’s what our God says. That’s the kind of God we serve.

Now, here’s Amos’ challenge. How do you confront a society that’s so addicted to its comfort and convenience and affluence and stuff—just stuff—that it doesn’t care about what God cares about?

In chapter 3, God is talking about this kind of lack of justice and compassion in the hearts of his people and he says judgment is coming. Look at 3:15. He’s talking here about the lifestyle of a certain segment in this society. **(SLIDE #20)** “I will tear down the winter house along with the summer house; the houses adorned with ivory will be destroyed and the mansions will be demolished.”

Amos was a prophet about 750 B.C. He’s saying there’s this shocking disparity between the rich and the poor, and archeologists have confirmed this. You might remember when Canaan was first populated, God gave equal property to all the tribes. Everybody lived pretty much alike. And even in houses from the 10th century B.C. that archeologists have dug up—they’re all fairly similar.

By the time you get to Amos’ day—the 8th century—there are enormous mansions for the rich, and other areas where there are miserable hovels for the poor. That’s exactly what Amos is talking about. There is a theme that runs throughout Amos that people who have power are increasingly callous to those who don’t.

(SLIDE #21) “You trample on the poor,” he says in 5:11, “and force them to give you grain. You deprive the poor of justice in the courts.” Power goes to people’s heads. Now, we all understand something about this. We are no different. Every political system has to wrestle with clout. The weak are at the mercy of those who hold power.

(SLIDE #22 - Blank) Power gets misused. One of my favourite politician stories is about a former mayor of Chicago.

He was approached one time by a guy who wrote his speeches who said, “Mayor Daley, I’m not making enough money.” And Daley’s response was, “I’m not going to give you any more money. It ought to be enough that you work for a great American hero like me.” End of discussion.

Several weeks later, he was on his way to give a speech and as usual didn’t feel he needed to read his speech beforehand. So he gets up to give this speech before a large group of veterans on Remembrance Day. It’s getting national press coverage.

It’s quite an eloquent and passionate speech. He talks about how everybody has forgotten the veterans nowadays. Nobody remembers them. “But I remember,” he says. “I care. And today, I am proposing a 17-point program, national, state and city-wide to take care of the veterans of this country.”

Now, by this time, they're all on the edge of their seat. They want to find out what he's going to say next. He's pretty interested himself to find out what he's going to say next.

So he turns the page over and all it says is, "You're on your own now, you great American hero." Now, we love stories like that when someone who has no power gets a little justice... Amos is looking at a whole part of society that had the resources that had the power.

And all they felt like was that they were entitled to get all the money and power they could. Do you understand? They completely betrayed God's vision for a just, compassionate society. And so Amos says to them, "Do you think God was just joking when he gave the Law? Do you think God doesn't see what's going on?"

Do you think God doesn't care anymore about these people that over and over and over and over, he says he's the defender of and the fatherless to? "Do you think he doesn't care anymore?"

Do you really think that you can take your resources, which all come from God's hand, and use them in whatever way you choose to just enrich your own self, and then get mad at God if he doesn't keep sending you more and more and more and more to satisfy an insatiable appetite? Is that what you really think?"

This is unbelievably bold. Amos will use any tool he can to try to wake people up from complacency. 4:1, Think about somebody saying this to folks that had the money and the power. **(SLIDE #23)** "Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria, you women who oppress the poor and crush the needy and say to your husbands, 'Bring us some drinks!'"

He calls the wives of the wealthy and powerful "cows of Bashan." You think they'd feel complimented by this? Bashan was a very fertile area. The cows there were famous for being well fed. That's why he calls them cows of Bashan.

You need to understand that this is not just idle name calling here. Think, for a moment, about the nature of a cow. Cows are not notable for their good works, are they? You know, dogs sometimes— Saint Bernards—they go out and rescue people.

Cows—a cow is just a walking appetite, OK? That's all a cow is—a walking appetite but they are still better than a cat. A cow just asks one question. Do you know what the question is? "Where can I get more?" That's the only question a cow ever asks. Human beings live like cows sometimes.

Just walking appetites for money, food, pleasure. "How can I get a bigger house?" "How can I get a larger income?" "How can I drive a newer car?" "How can I have greater pleasure?" "How can I be more attractive?" You understand, that's the kind of person our society produces—cows of Bashan.

The deeper problem here is these people make no connection between their treatment of the poor and their relationship with the God who cares so very much about these people. They still worship. They still sacrifice. And they're under the illusion that because their lives are going well, God must be blessing them. God must be pleased with them. So again, Amos boldly thunders.

5:21 **(SLIDE #24)** "I hate all your show and pretense--the hypocrisy of your religious festivals and solemn assemblies...Now, you have to imagine the shock waves going through the crowd.

(SLIDE #25) "I will not accept your burnt offerings and grain offerings. I won't even notice all your choice peace offerings. Away with your hymns of praise! They are only noise to my ears. I will not listen to your music, no matter how lovely it is."

And in this magnificent verse, 5:24, is one of the great statements of the Bible. **(SLIDE #26)** "Instead, I want to see a mighty flood of justice, an endless river of righteous living." God says,

"Let that happen. "Let that flow out of your lives, but don't sit there eating vast amounts of food at a religious feast with the poor starving to death outside your door, congratulating yourselves on how much you love me. Don't do

that." People failed to make the connection between their treatment of the poor and their relationship with God—their own spiritual bankruptcy.

Jesus told a most memorable parable in a way that pushes this point home. It's the famous story **(SLIDE #27)** of a Jewish traveler who's traveling inside Jewish territory and he gets robbed and beaten and left half dead alongside of a well traveled road.

But as bad as all that is, good news is coming down the road. There's a religious leader just a half-mile away, and behind him is a staff member of a local place of worship. So help is on the way for this beaten up traveler, right?

I mean, if you could arrange the traffic that you would want to come down this road, given this man's condition, you'd arrange it just like this: two religious leaders on the road, on the way, about ready to come across this man.

But as Jesus tells the story, the plot twists **(SLIDE #28)** because the religious leader sees the beaten up countryman, and for whatever reason, we don't know for sure, he doesn't even break stride. He veers to pass on the far shoulder of the road.

No reason to panic, you know, this other guy's coming too, and he's a religious leader **(SLIDE #29)** but shockingly - he does the same thing--makes the adjustment, doesn't break stride, and passes by too. Well, now, all bets are off, right?

Then Jesus says there's one more guy approaching, but he's a long shot. He's just a businessman, a regular guy on his way to a meeting that he can't miss. And to top it off he's from an ethnic group that hates Jews and vice versa.

So given what the first two leaders did with respect to their wounded countryman, what are the odds that this outsider, outcast business guy is going to stop and do anything for this wounded Jewish man?

But Jesus completes this story by saying **(SLIDE #30)** that this Samaritan man felt something in his heart and he did something. He stopped and he bound up the wounds. He loaded him onto his donkey,

And checked him into a hotel and **(SLIDE #31)** told the clerk, "Here's some money. "You take care of him on me."

(SLIDE #32) Then Jesus turned to his listeners and he said, "I want all of you to be more like this guy. He's modelling the identity. He's the one I want you to emulate.? I want you to have hearts that work like his heart worked. I want you to have minds that work like his mind worked that day.

I want you to have hands that know how to get dirty and bloody from time-to-time in the bandaging up of wounded, hurting folks. Do I make myself clear? Be like this guy."** Not the two apathetic religious men who saw such an obvious need and had such cold hearts and such cloudy minds and kept their hands in their pockets.

As Jesus crafts this parable... He knows exactly what he's doing. This parable has some nuances that are just captivating. For example, Jesus tells the story in a way that exposes all of his listeners to a truth they'd rather deny.

Namely, it's quite possible to be very religious and have a pathetic apathetic attitude - no compassion.

Some people "do" religion as a self-improvement plan--no compassion or grace associated with it. Some people "do" religion for power and control reasons. They feel big and strong. Some people "do" it for guilt and shame reasons.

Much that goes on in churches around the world has very little to do with being moved and personally melted by the tender love and forgiving grace of Jesus Christ.

And the point that Jesus is really making is that for a human heart to be deeply touched by human suffering of some kind, **(SLIDE #33)**, it must first be opened up and filled up by the love of Jesus Christ. It's a deeply personal and necessary transforming experience that must happen.

Which is why the Bible says "We love because He first loved us." We can touch the lives of people who are suffering because we've been touched by Jesus Christ first. Jesus is the answer." In the ultimate of senses, He is.

We love because He first loved us. The Scriptures teach us that we are capable of experiencing feelings of deep compassion because we've become familiar with the divine compassion that comes our way.

We're capable of wanting to address the needs and the hurts of our world because God so faithfully addresses the needs and the hurts of our lives. We simply want after awhile to do for others what we feel Christ is doing continually for us.

But for some of us – you've never felt or it has been so long since you felt the flow of the love of God into your heart, so long since you've felt a fresh wave of grace, so long since you've felt God's tenderness or his comfort in a deeply personal way that your heart has shriveled up over time. It's become cold and unresponsive.

You may yawn at the plight of the poor, be pretty chilly in your relating patterns with people in your life, be pretty stingy with your words of encouragement and affirmation even with your worship and a little mechanical in your prayers.

It's a problem that goes right to who you are. And until that gets addressed, it won't just be the poor and suffering people around you that get blank stares. Everybody in your life will know that you've succumbed to a tactic of the enemy and you have heart trouble. Your heart isn't beating softly and tenderly enough to keep compassion alive.

You're going to have to find some new ways to throw open the doors of your life to the love of Christ.

Others of us know we're pathetically apathetic and we don't particularly like it, but we don't know what to do about it.

You need to **(SLIDE #34)**, move intentionally toward some folks in need.

This parable turns on this short little phrase when this Samaritan did more than just see the man in need he took pity on him and he went to him." He got up next to him. You might say that this statistic, this guy fallen by the road, became a human being with a name and a face and a story when he got close enough.

And beyond that, **(SLIDE #35)**, he got personally involved. He took care of him

I don't have a neat and tidy plan for you to follow to get you to open your heart up and get it growing again.

But I can point you to do what King David did in Psalm 139 when he said this prayer, **(SLIDE #36)**, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends You..In other words, "God, help me diagnose the defect in my motivations, attitudes and actions."

However, David didn't stop just with the diagnostics. He continues **(SLIDE #37)**, " and lead me along the path of everlasting life."."

David trusted God enough to hand Him the scalpel, lay himself open and to say, "I am going to cooperate with you because I trust you. I trust the surgery that you are going to do to repair the defects in my heart. Show me how to change it, and I will follow you wherever you lead me."

When you are willing to do that and have an apathetic heart, you find out that God can cure it and rejuvenate your spiritual life.

Some of us need to come before God with the sincerity of David and to say, "I want my heart to pound again. I am tired of being stuck in neutral. I want to feel the exhilaration of being a difference maker for Christ. I don't want to feel indifferent. It's dry and boring.

So I'd like each of you to take a moment **(SLIDE #38)** to pray this prayer and then listen and take note of what God lays open to you and then at the end pray "lead me"

Break

All throughout history, people who've had growing, caring hearts have always engaged in certain spiritual practices. They've always put themselves near where the activity of God is strong and powerful. **(SLIDE #39 Blank)**

They've been in worship settings and learning settings. They've learned certain practices. They've opened themselves up to the activity of God with certain spiritual rigors and practices. They've gotten involved in certain relationships that keep them alive and loving and growing.

And they have intentionally inserted themselves into certain experiences where they will actually be doing something for God, His Kingdom, His children, so that their heart can be moved yet again.

Is there a personal cost in this – absolutely. Is it worth it – a thousand times yes. Is it hard – without question but a soft heart is the result.

Are you willing now to affirm that before God? Let's sing it together.

SONG

Closing Comments