

Taking Care and Kindness Home

So, we're going to have a little parting piece here, but I want to thank you for being here. By being here, you are showing that God is alive in your hearts, that you are a growing, stretching, becoming, caring person, or you wouldn't even be here. So thank you.

And I know that some of you have caught it. I think the most, most exciting, and I haven't talked to many people, but the most exciting contact I made, and I don't see them, the Navajos—we had three Navajos here, They had to leave. But one is an ordained minister, and he said, "We've gone to different conferences all over the place about what to do with our church, how to make our church good and right and grow. And these other conferences all say, *'You got to have this project, or this project.'*" And he said, *"What you're talking about here is living it. And we found it. This is what we need."* And I am so excited about what he said—that he said, *"We found it. This is what not . . . we don't need projects. We got to find ways to live it."*

And that really, really blessed me. So, what a wonderful assignment we have, you have. And Jesus made it clear first: 'You are the light of the world.' That is so incredibly important, because I think he was saying, if the world is getting better, if it's going to be better, it's because of individuals . . . individuals taking all of what Steve was talking about, all of what we've been talking about these three days, It's individuals, and each one of us needs to take ownership of this world, ownership of our neighborhoods, ownership of our environment.

Yesterday in the disability convocation, one of our members stepped out of the crowd, stepped up to the platform and raised the mic for one of the speakers. And I said to him later, *"That was such an example of ownership."* You know, we all knew that mic should have been raised. So we all sit there and go, "No, it's not ready." Then he stepped out of the crowd. He took ownership of it. Just one of the crowd. That's what it's all about—taking ownership of our environment, of our neighborhood, of the people we meet, of the customers and the people who wait on us. This is our assignment. We have jobs to do.

And the wonderful thing is, it's so good for us. It's not like, 'Boy, go do something that is going to be just draining and tiring, and we're worrying.' It is the key to blessing ourselves. It is so wonderful. I don't think I, in my own life, I've never seen Christianity in such an exciting way. And the world needs us. The world needs it; the world needs a God of love, and we are here to express love, to show love, to show that God is love, and every one of us can do it.

So let's ratchet it up. And even if we just ratchet it up 10%, but we can do a lot better than that—10%, 20%, we can all ratchet it up some. And what a difference that's going to make in this world. And you know, I love that little tiny example that somebody passed around a few years ago, real or imaginary, that a butterfly, flapping its wings, sets up turbulence that can lead to a hurricane. And that's what is like for us. No matter how small you may think you are, your a little action can start something flowing and growing, and going, they can become enormous and so wonderful. So don't ever discount yourself. Your little acts just have so much potential.

I invite you to turn to the litany that we have here. And a litany is really a prayer. Y'all have it? I invite you to join in it with me, and you read the people part.

We thank you, Lord, for bringing us together this week. New friends and old, fresh and vital insights, passionate speakers, they have revived our energy, strengthened, motivated and inspired us.

We thank you, Lord, for all this and so much more.

Your presence is with us as we part and travel to places near and far.

We thank you, Lord, for your unfailing presence and never-ending love.

Use us, Lord, in small ways and in major challenges, to bring love, kindness and compassion to friends, to neighbors, to strangers.

Help us, Lord, to speak, to smile, to encourage; to show up.

Nudge and challenge us into spreading, speaking and splashing loving kindness everyday; everywhere.

Plant in us, Lord, ideas, insights, fresh words of cheer and appreciation.

Give us courage to enter hard places, and sensitive times of need. Help us to see Jesus in every human being. Help us to humbly take risks and not worry about ourselves.

Encourage us, Lord, so we don't lose our confidence.

Open our listening ears, use our carefully chosen words, our tears and hugs, to heal and lift the hurt and discouraged.

Use us, Lord, everyday, everywhere, with everybody.

Lord, nourish us with the courage, wisdom, and the determination we depend on to be what you want us to be in a world hungry for love.

Thank you, Lord, for using us to bring hope, peace and well-being.

This is our prayer. And all God's people shouted—Yes!! Yes!! Yes!!

Yes!! Yes!! Yes!!

(May the Lord bless you every day with daring and adventurous attitudes, benevolent and generous spirits, and sensitive hearts, as you give birth to Jesus' love everywhere you go. Amen.