As we move further into 2016 I want to spend the next few weeks talking about “Making a Difference in our World.” History teaches over and over that it doesn’t take a lot of people to change the world. It just takes a committed few. It doesn’t take a lot. It takes a fully committed few. I don’t make any apology in saying that I think our nation needs a change. I believe that our culture, our American culture, needs a Cultural Revolution. In a place and time when the government is paralyzed by scandals, and kids are killing each other week after week at school, and the nations continue to mock spineless political leaders, something is terribly wrong. I believe that we also need a Cultural Revolution in our culture.

Having said that, I must also say I deeply believe the answer is not political. You don’t legislate people into being good. I don’t believe that the answer is educational. I believe the answer is spiritual. Because change takes place in the heart and you change society one life at a time. The heart of the problem is a problem of the heart.

Listen very carefully to this statement: Nothing happens without commitment. Commitment is what gets the ball rolling. Commitment is what turns dreams into reality. There are a lot of great dreamers in the world, but nothing happens until you wake up from your dream and go to work. That is called commitment.

Your commitments define your life. You are the sum total of your commitments. Tell me what you are committed to and I will tell you the direction you are headed and I will tell you where you are going to end up. Weak people are controlled and dominated and directed by their circumstances. But strong people are directed and determined by their commitments. So you had better choose what you are going to be committed to because that is what you are going to end up being.

The Bible says a lot about commitment. The Bible says that God is looking for people to use. God is looking for people who can make a difference in this world, who can make the world a better place. The Bible tells us in 2 Chronicles 16:9 that if you want to be used by God there is one requirement, “The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.” Notice the words “fully committed.” God is looking for people to use, but you have to be fully committed.
What does it mean to be fully committed to Christ? Is there a difference between being partially committed, half-committed, casually committed and fully committed? Of course there is. In fact there are five aspects of being fully committed to Christ. God has put each of us on this earth for a purpose. And if you miss any of these five reasons, then you miss the reason why you are here. God has these purposes for your life but He does not force them on you. He gives you a choice. When you make these commitments, you become all God wants you to be. If you do not commit to all of them, then your life will be limited and you will be less than God intended for your life to be.

What are the five commitments that will change my life and change the world around me?

First of all, I must commit my life to Christ. That is the foundational commitment of my life. Before anything else can happen, you have got to get to know God. You were put on this earth to know God. He made you with the capacity to know Him. So the first thing I have to commit is my life to Christ. This is the most important issue in your life. There are other important issues. Most of us know the career issue, “What am I going to live on?” And you are not out of school very long until you realize, “I’m going to have to support myself. Life isn’t free. I have to figure out a way to make some money, bring in some income.” Most people eventually figure that out. They get some kind of job or career.

Then there is the question of marriage. “Am I going to get married or am I going to stay single? And if I marry, who is right for me? What is God saying to me about marriage?”

You can mess up on those two questions and eventually get them corrected. But if you miss the most important question, “Who am I going to live for?” that has eternal implications. Heaven and hell are in the balance. This is the question of purpose.

It is a fact of life that you are going to live for someone. You are going to live for the approval of the world or the approval of your boss or the approval of a spouse or someone else or for yourself. Or you are going to live for God who made you and made you for a reason.

Therefore, the place to start is committing your life to Christ.

What does it mean to commit my life to Christ? Romans 10:9 puts it this way, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart
that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” God has made it so simple that nobody could say it was too hard to understand. The Bible says, “Here’s what you do if you want to be saved and commit your life to Jesus. You first believe God raised Christ from the dead and then confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord.” The word “Lord” here is an Old English word for “the guy in charge, the CEO, the boss, the manager, the director.” God wants to be the director of your life. He wants to be the manager of your life. He has a plan for it.

Every commitment you make in your life has a cost, a price tag. It has a benefit and a cost. And you have to look at that commitment and say, “Is the benefit worth the cost?” Every time you make and keep a commitment, you are growing in maturity. You are growing character. You are building your life.

What is the cost of following Christ? You give up control of your life and put Jesus Christ in charge. You say, “No longer am I going to go out for my plans but I’m going to say ‘God, I want to fulfill the plan You put me on earth for. I want to be the person You want me to be. I want to do the things You want me to do.’” That is the cost and it is very clear and it is very up front.

What are the benefits? In the first place, you get all your sins forgiven. Second, you get power for living. Third, you get a purpose in life. Fourth, you get heaven when you die. That, my friend, is a pretty good deal.

You have got to settle this first issue. Most of you in this service have already made this first commitment. You have committed your life to Christ. But, if you have not made this commitment yet, do it today. Pray this prayer right now, “Lord Jesus Christ, I need you, I open my heart to You. I want You to come into my life, forgive me of my sins, and make me a Christian.”

Secondly, you must make a commitment to the local church. 1 Peter 1:3 says, “God has given us the privilege of being born again so that we are now members of God’s own family.” Child of God, God does not expect you to go through life without support. He never meant for you to handle all your problems on your own. He wants to put support, encouragement, and other Christians around you, so He created a family and that family is called the church.

The Bible says it is a privilege to be a part of the church. We take that for granted here in America. You can freely come and go. In many countries it is still against the law to be a believer in Jesus Christ.
In spite of the fact the church is made up of imperfect people and no church is perfect, it is still a privilege to be a part of a local church family. Just like a child without a family is an orphan, a Christian without a church family is a spiritual orphan. And the Christian life involves more than just believing. It involves belonging. You say, “I believe in Jesus.” That’s good. You are half way there. You also need to be committed to the local church.

Thirdly, I must commit to being a model of the life of Christ. Philippians 2:5 says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." As you grow, God wants you to learn to act the way Jesus acted. He wants you to think the way He thought. Feel the way about life the way He felt. God wants you to learn to make decisions the way Jesus made decisions. God wants you to treat people the way He treated people. My belief and my behavior, my attitudes and my actions have to come under the Lordship of Christ.

This is the goal of spiritual maturity. God wants you to grow up and be like Jesus. Be like Christ in every area of your life. And I must tell you that it is a long, hard process. It will take the rest of your life.

The fourth commitment is to be a minister of His grace. I am not talking about being a pastor. I am talking about being a minister. This is an important issue.

God put you on this earth and gave you certain gifts and talents on purpose. He expects you to use those talents and abilities to help others to make the world a better place. Whenever you use your talents and abilities unselfishly to help other people, without thought of reward or recognition that is called ministry. And every Christian is called to be a minister.

God does not ask you to do everything in the world, but He does ask you to do something. 1 Peter 4:10 says, “God has given each of you some special abilities. Be sure to use them to help each other…” Find out what God has gifted you to do and do it!

Last of all, I must commit myself to being a messenger of His love. This is ultimately what is going to change the world: sharing one-on-one the good news of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:19-20 says, “For God was in Christ, restoring the world to Himself. This is the wonderful message He has given us to tell others. We are Christ’s ambassadors. God is using us to speak to others.” Did you know you are an ambassador? What is an ambassador? And ambassador is somebody who represents somebody else, your country, whatever. The Bible says when you become a believer; you become an ambassador for Jesus Christ. You are the only Bible some people will ever read. For some people, you may be the
only Christian they will ever know, the only Christian they are ever close to and talk to. We are to share the wonderful message He’s given us to tell others.

**What is the best news you have ever heard?** The best news I have ever heard is this: that everything I have ever done wrong could be completely forgiven and that I didn’t have to earn my way to heaven but it was a free gift and all I had to do was accept it by faith when I opened my life up to Christ.

**My friend, the world is dying to hear that message!** The world is far more ready to receive that news than we are ready to share it. Jesus Christ is the best news in the world. People need to know that their sins can be forgiven, that God loves them and has a plan for their life and that heaven is a free gift when we open up and accept God’s gift in faith based on Christ. Everybody needs to hear that message.

**These are the five commitments that God has put in our hearts in order for us to fulfill His purpose in our lives.** These are five purposes define what it means to be a fully committed Christian. This is what it means to be totally committed.

**So, my question to you today is this: How committed are you?** Are you committed to one or two of these? Are you committed to three or four of these? Or are you committed to all five? Are you half committed, casually committed, or are you totally committed? God is looking for people to use in this world. He will use you to make a difference if you will make a total commitment of your life.

If you are not saved, why not today?

**Please stand for prayer.**

Father,

I know You want what is best for my life. Give me the faith and the courage to trust You with my commitments. Make me a world changer for your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.