

Sunday, August 16, 2026

Pastor Jimmy Jones – ‘The Options Play’

Pray first!

The end of summer is upon us, and as we look to what is ahead this fall, as a church we can be praying for a ‘dream season’ – a ministry year that is full of opportunities to fulfill our purpose, share the gospel, and glorify God! Like a football team preparing for their competitive season and practicing the infamous ‘options play’ where a quarterback makes a split-second decision on what to do, we can look into our own arsenal of plays and determine what move is best for the people God places in our path as a church and as individuals this year. The message today challenges us to check ourselves and determine if we are ready, willing, and prepared to encounter those that God has for us this year.

What are you looking forward to most as you wrap up summer and move into the fall season?

Discussion Questions

Read Mark 12:31.

- How does Jesus command you to respond to someone who is different than you are?
- Does he make any exceptions to this command?
- What are some prejudices or biases that could interfere with someone’s ability to love like Jesus commands?

Read Matthew 7:3.

- What are some ‘planks’ you have had to address in yourself?

Read Acts 10:9-35. Peter was forced to confront his own prejudices, specifically his attitude as a Jew toward Gentiles.

- What did God reveal to him in this vision that helped him break down these walls he had built?
- If Peter listened to God and allowed himself, as a Jew, to break some of these Jewish customs, what might it have cost him?
- Are there any boundaries you are keeping out of tradition that are keeping you from connecting with other believers?

In vs. 35, Peter says “**I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right.**” We will encounter many types of people this year, and how we respond to those encounters matters greatly. Will our responses, especially to those who view the world differently than we do, be something that builds a bridge or something that builds a wall? As we get back into our ministry year/school year rhythms, meeting in small groups, serving on Sunday mornings, or going into our workplaces or schools, we have thousands of opportunities to love like Jesus, and we can encourage one another to take those opportunities and use them for the glory of God – like Pastor Jimmy’s story about Maggie who “just met a whole bunch of people who were like Jesus to me.” Let’s not allow

anything to interfere with our witness for Jesus Christ this year, and, like Peter and Cornelius, let's link arms with fellow believers and make an even bigger impact than we ever could on our own.

Close in Prayer