

“It doesn’t take many to turn the tide, but it does take one.” More than thirty years ago I was sitting in a marketing course at Purdue University, and I heard a bizarre story. A French bottled water company for decades had attempted to sell their effervescent spring water in the United States, but really it just never had caught on. So they hired a marketing/advertising firm. After much study, the Madison Avenue gurus came back to the French water-sellers and said—here was their report: “Double, triple your price!” The water company execs couldn’t believe it. “We can’t sell hardly any water now, what makes you think Americans will buy it if we make it three times more expensive?” But they gave it a try, and a product that had been around for years became an overnight success, and created an entirely new market---Perrier was born, and paying a lot of money for water, became a sales & marketing bonanza. It doesn’t take many to turn the tide, but it does take one.

Some years ago, Malcolm Gladwell’s bestseller, *The Tipping Point*, nearly made this same point. It does take many to turn the tide, but it does take one. The Tipping Point tells us that little changes persisted, can have huge effects, that changes can happen in a hurry, yet we don’t really know it until we are beyond the tipping point. It doesn’t take many to turn the tide, but it does take one.

Have you ever heard this historical truth?

- He failed in business in 1831.
- He was defeated for Legislature in 1832.
- His second failure in business was in 1833.
- He suffered a nervous breakdown in 1836.
- He was defeated for Speaker in 1838.
- He was defeated for Elector in 1840.
- He was defeated for Congress in 1843.
- Again, he was defeated for Congress in 1848.
- He was defeated for Senate in 1855.
- He was defeated for Vice President in 1856.
- He was defeated for Senate in 1858.
- He was elected as President in 1860.

Abraham Lincoln came along and he and his leadership not only changed this nation, but changed the world for millions. To be sure, maybe someone else could have done the same, but they didn’t. It doesn’t take many to turn the tide, but it does take one.

Two thousand years ago, one person entered this world—seldom has there been more of a nobody, born to two nobody’s in a nobody world, from a nobody people. And he called alongside him twelve others... That ragtag band of nobodies is changing the world, and they bring us together this afternoon. It doesn’t take many to turn the tide, but it does take one.

I’m here to invite you to be part of an elite team—a team that will not be many, but we are charged to change the world, to create our own tipping point.

But it will require something called faith. And if we don't have it, we'll never make it, we'll never make it to the tipping point.

Might you be interested? Well hear these words:

^{NRS} **Hebrews 10:23** Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

^{NRS} **Hebrews 10:32** But recall those earlier days when, after you had been enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, ³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to abuse and persecution, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ For you had compassion for those who were in prison, and you cheerfully accepted the plundering of your possessions, knowing that you yourselves possessed something better and more lasting. ³⁵ Do not, therefore, abandon that confidence of yours; it brings a great reward. ³⁶ For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. ³⁷ For yet "in a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay; ³⁸ but my righteous one will live by faith. My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back." ³⁹ But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved.

Good intentions will not get it done, will not deliver us to the tipping point. But faith will. But it's a very specific faith—faith, not some vapid feeling stirring in one's chest, but faith in the faithfulness of God, trusting the leadership of our lives to the person named Jesus the Christ.

We have heard stories of faith. And this is a day marked by a faithful hope...but we have also been asked to define our faith—we are given a disclaimer up front, before we sign up for the team—what may we expect? If it doesn't take many to turn the tide, but it does take one—and what of that one? Let me highlight just a couple from these words spoken just prior to the great Hall of Faith chapter in Hebrews 11.

Hold fast to the confession—there's no departing from Jesus Christ as the center of our lives—he must be the center for us to live in this world 2010.

Provoke one another—good deeds—we'll need constant reminders from one another to live the values of our Lord—to remember that we are his people, and not the people of this world.

Not neglecting to meet together—community—though we are not many, we don't stand a chance as individuals—we must be tightly knit in the community of faith—the waters of baptism must be even stronger than most of us know today.

The challenge will not be self-fulfillment, but Christ-affirming.

Endurance, no waffling, no “shrinking back” but pressing forward...salvation, not behind us, not in the fears of what may happen, but salvation is forward, future is forward, not back in the concerns

It doesn't take many to turn the tide, but it does take one. We're not selling bottled water. Nor are we trying to save a nation for its own sins. We are invited to be on the team of Christ, and to

live and love the world into a whole new world—the Kingdom of God. It doesn't take many to turn the tide, but it does take one. So...I don't know why you're here today, but I'm here on a recruiting mission. It doesn't take many to turn the tide, but it does take one. You on board?