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# news release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Rick Warren's 'Sermon on the Mound' at Angel Stadium challenges nearly 50,000 with Easter message of hope: Saddleback Church 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration features Jonas Brothers, Kari Jobe, Marcos Witt and collects money, food for local and Haiti relief**

Anaheim, Calif., April 4, 2010 – Exactly 30 years to the day Saddleback Valley Community Church held its first public service with 205 people, nearly 50,000 members and guests joined Rick Warren for two special Easter weekend services at Angel Stadium and video extension at two Saddleback Church campuses to launch the next “Decade of Destiny,” which will continue to extend the church’s influence across Southern California and beyond.



“Last year was a tough year, as many people here got the hope kicked out of you, by the economy, or the loss of a job, a loved one or your health,” said Pastor Warren. “We look around and see broken hope everywhere – broken lives, broken marriages, broken dreams – where do we find the answers?”

“You can live a month without food, a day without water and seconds without air, but you can’t live two seconds without hope,” Pastor Warren continued. “Hope is what keeps your soul alive; it’s how you cope. Lots of you think hope is wishful thinking for the future, but you don’t need hope for the future. You need hope now – not because you’re going to die tonight but because you have to live tomorrow.”

Pastor Warren recognized that many of those attending the service were currently feeling hopeless, with more than 10 percent of Orange County residents having lost their job last year and many others who lost loved ones, marriages, dreams – even their health.

“We tend to be hopeless because we look for hope in all the wrong places,” said Pastor Warren. “We think that success, status, sex, salary or all these other things are going to make us happy or give us hope, and then we’re severely disappointed. I see a lot of people living with constant disappointment -- not just in the economy, the government, the weather or their job but in themselves -- because they find their dreams have not been all they wanted them to be. We’re made by God and we’re made for God. And until we understand that, life just isn’t going to make sense.”

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## Pastor Rick Warren 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service, page 2

Pastor Warren shared the account of three biblical characters – all with very different reasons for feeling hopeless – whom Jesus knew well and with whom He spoke after his resurrection. Mary Magdalene had pain and grief from relationships; Thomas had doubt and fear from disbelief; and Simon Peter had guilt and shame from failure – all issues many still face today.

“It’s never too late for a miracle; it’s never too late to start believing; and it’s never too late to start over,” Pastor Warren said. “Jesus sees and cares for you.”

As he wrapped up his message, Pastor Warren used the baseball diamond to illustrate the parallels between the game and life. “Baseball is a game of numbers in which every player falls short of perfection – nobody bats a thousand. Similarly, in life, while we have all had a few hits or scored a few runs, we strike out a lot. Remember, God isn’t mad at you, He’s mad about you; whatever you’ve done, He doesn’t want to rub it in, He wants to rub it out.”

Intermingled between Pastor Warren’s message points, Saddleback music minister Rick Muchow and 2010 Dove Award nominated New Artist of the Year Kari Jobe led the crowd in worship. Both services concluded with music and brief testimony from other special guests, including Latin Grammy-winning worship leader Marcos Witt on Saturday evening and Hollywood Records multi-platinum album-selling artists, Jonas Brothers, on Sunday morning.

The Jonas Brothers carried on the theme of the event, beginning with “Hold On,” introduced by Joe Jonas as a song of hope. The group ended with “Gotta Find You,” a song co-written by Saddleback member Adam Watts. During the second song, “A Little Bit Longer,” Nick Jonas paused to share a personal testimony and challenge to those attending.

“About four and a half years ago I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes,” said Nick Jonas. “It happened quickly, but on my way to the hospital that night, I made a commitment to myself that I wouldn’t let it slow me down. And I asked myself the question, “Why me?” But I do believe there was a turning point when I realized, “Why not me?”

“Now I’ve been able to share my story and encourage other young people who are dealing with some of the same things. And I know we’re all going through some hard things in our lives but it’s how we persevere, how we get through those hard moments in our lives. I encourage you when those moments come to make that commitment I made and don’t let it slow you down.”

Attendees at both services were encouraged to bring a bag of groceries with them to the stadium. More than 65,000 pounds of food – over three and one-half semi trailer-loads – were collected to serve the physical needs of individuals across Southern California through the Saddleback food pantry. A portion of the free-will offering will go towards Haiti relief, which was supplemented by text donations from the stadium crowd and extended audiences participating via local and national radio broadcasts and Internet live stream.

Audiences arriving early were also challenged to text their responses to Saddleback trivia questions related to ministry milestones, such as the number of church locations in the first 15 years, local outreach through the years and the PEACE Plan, posted on the stadium scoreboard. Associate pastor Tom Holladay encouraged everyone listening to tweet throughout the service.

In addition, Don Dale, Saddleback’s first member was introduced, followed by video highlights of Pastor Warren’s first sermon outlining his original dream and vision for the church, which have since become a reality. Today, Saddleback Church is one of the five largest churches in America, with an average weekly attendance of 22,000.

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**Pastor Rick Warren 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service, page 3**

The church's legacy membership became complete over the weekend when nearly 1,200 attended Saddleback's Class 101. In addition, nearly 500 people were baptized at the main Lake Forest campus and the stadium, following services. For additional information about the Saddleback and its ministries, visit [www.saddleback.com](http://www.saddleback.com).