

# More Action, Less Talk

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning. My name is Ray Sweet from First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana. If you'd like to know more about First Christian Church, you can check us out at FCCGreensburg.com or you can go to the FCC Greensburg Facebook page.

But hey, thank you for tuning in today. Our heart is always to get into the Word, but most of all, let that Word get into us and transform these hearts more and more into the image of Christ. Now, several years ago, a 33-year-old man named Larry Walters decided that he wanted to see his neighborhood from a new perspective. Of course, this was before the days of drones. So he went down to the local army surplus store. He bought 45 used weather balloons that he and some friends filled with helium. That afternoon, he strapped himself into a lawn chair that had those balloons tied to it.

He ran with him, figuring that he could shoot down the balloons one at a time when he was ready to land. Now, I can't help but think of that famous Disney and Pixar movie called Up, but we're talking real life here.

[ 1 : 11 ] Now, assuming the balloons would lift him maybe 100, 150 feet in the air, he was a little caught off guard when he just kept going and going and going, soaring to more than 11,000 feet in the sky, which meant he was smack dab in the middle of the air traffic pattern of the Los Angeles International Airport.

Too frightened to move and shoot any of the balloons, he stayed airborne for more than two hours, forcing LAX to shut down its runways for most of the afternoon, which caused all kinds of flight delays across the entire nation.

Well, soon after he was safely grounded and even cited and fined by the police, a reporter asked him three questions. Number one, were you scared?

To which he said, oh yeah, absolutely. Number two, would you do it again? To which he adamantly yelled, no way, man. And then number three, why did you do it?

And that's when he said these words, because in life, you can't just sit there. More action, more action, and less talk. Oh, and one more detail.

[ 2 : 25 ] Besides the BB gun, he also took with him a six-pack of beer and a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Man, that was one special redneck right there. But hey, welcome back here to the second week of our Christmas series called More and Less.

Because to truly have more of what matters, you must have less of what doesn't. If you remember last week, we kicked off this series in Luke chapter 2, and we looked at Joseph and Mary and their journey to Bethlehem.

We also visited the story of the shepherds and their journey to see Jesus. And in all of it, we talked about choosing more praise and less panic.

Because let's just be real. There's a lot of things in this life that can cause us to panic. That's true for the loud, bold personality that expresses their panic publicly for the whole world to hear.

And it's even true for the quiet person who kind of bottles up their panic and just lets it create chaos internally. And we learned that we don't have to be a people of panic.

[ 3 : 30 ] It may come naturally for you. It may be easy in this crazy world that we live in. But instead, we can choose to praise.

Choose to magnify our awesome God as we know that He has you and me under control. So this Christmas season and beyond, we choose more praise and less panic.

Today, we're jumping into the Gospel of Mark. Remember, we're going to look at each of the four Gospels throughout this series. So the Gospel of Mark, chapter 1. And if you want to go ahead and turn there with us to Mark 1.

And we're going to chat about more action and less talk. And I'm not talking about the guy who strapped himself to a lawn chair and shut down the airport. I'm talking about having a faith in Christ that's more than lip service.

And that leads to a life of action for the glory of God. Because if I can pick on us Christians for a second here, sometimes we do a lot of talking and little doing for the glory of God.

[ 4 : 29 ] In fact, before we study here in Mark, let me show you what God's Word says in James 1, starting in verse 22. James says, In fact, I went to Facebook last week to ask my friends this question.

What's one area in your life where you'd like to see more action and less talk? And here's a few responses we got. One person said they'd love to display more Christ-like kindness. A few others said less talking about sharing the Gospel and more doing it. One even shared that their goal is to make heaven crowded. Another said they truly want to care for and spend time with other believers.

While a young lady in her kind of early to mid-20s said, More slowing down to enjoy God's blessings, more rest. Now, if you've already turned to Mark 1, you may be wondering if we're in the right spot for our Christmas series.

Because Mark doesn't even tell the Christmas story. And yet, that's kind of the whole point. See, if the Holy Spirit's leading, probably because Matthew and Luke focus in on the birth of Jesus so well, Mark actually jumps right over the early years of Jesus' life.

[ 6 : 11 ] And you could say it this way. He gets right to the action. He wanted to talk about Jesus' ministry and what that looked like in this world. And while we may not be looking at the traditional Christmas story today, We are going to talk about the importance of more action and less talk this Christmas season.

So, if you're a note-taker, here's one way you can access our sermon outline. You can go to the YouVersion, Y-O-U version Bible app.

Download that. It's absolutely free. It's an amazing resource that a great church puts on, the YouVersion Bible app. And if you go to events and then go to First Christian Church of Greensburg, you'll be able to see our outline.

But here's the first thing. As we talk about a life of more action and less talk, that means more of my commitment to follow. My commitment to follow.

And today, we're going to look at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry as we jump around Mark chapter 1 a little bit. So, let's start in Mark 1, verse 16, as we see Jesus call a couple of His disciples to follow Him.

[ 7 : 22 ] Here's what it says. As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. Come follow me, Jesus said, and I will send you out to fish for people.

At once, they left their nets and followed Him. Now, just a little context to understand this first century Jewish world. These men were not being pursued by other rabbis to be a disciple because in their culture's eyes, they weren't qualified.

See, it was common that these well-respected rabbis, these men of God, these teachers of Israel, that people just admired and listened to and followed, they would often have a few younger men they would pour into called disciples.

But Peter and Andrew didn't quite fit the bill. See, you had to be from the quote-unquote right family. You had to be among the brightest, the sharpest, the most well-educated young men of society, the best of the best.

And there arose this blessing that other rabbis would speak over these men training to be future leaders, of the religious leaders. And they would say this over them.

[ 8 : 38 ] May you be covered in the dust of your rabbi. In other words, may you be so close to him that you become just like him. And can you imagine how overwhelming it would have been with this Jesus guy that some are...

You've got to put yourself in the disciples' shoes here, okay? So some are saying he may be the Messiah, right? And he comes up to you and he says, Come, follow me.

And you've never heard those words before because you weren't qualified in the religious leader's eyes. Come, follow me. Maybe you can't imagine that today. Because if you know the Word of God, he has and he is saying that to you as well.

See, you and I, much like Peter and Andrew, may not be the elite of society. Maybe we even have a lot of baggage. Maybe we've done some things that we're not proud of.

Maybe we've been given up on by certain family or certain friends. And yet, in his eternal grace, Jesus loved us so much that he went to the cross to pay the price that my and our sins deserve.

[ 9 : 45 ] To show that ultimate act of love to restore our brokenness so that we can walk in true freedom. But listen, we have to come by faith, surrendering all that we are to his Lordship.

And you know what? That's a daily choice. It's not just a one-time trip into the baptistry. It is a daily choice that we see here in verse 18.

Because it says, At once, they left their nets and they followed him. Do you realize what that simple sentence is really saying? For what would end up being around three years, although they had no idea when they signed up.

But what would be three years, everything changes. An adventure that you had no control over. They would leave their families behind, their businesses, their plans, their desires.

They would go wherever their teacher went, completely committed to being like him. In other words, they're all in. That's what it meant to be a disciple. And listen, that's still what it means for you and I as we choose to be Christians, Christ followers.

[ 10 : 53 ] And this Christmas season, it's a fantastic time to kind of get reflective and ask, Okay, am I really all in? Maybe I was 10 years ago, but what about now?

Am I fully committed to Jesus and becoming like him? Did I walk down the aisle and say those words to the preacher just because I didn't want to go to hell? Or because grandma was nagging me about it?

Or was I sincere? Am I still sincere? Did I walk into the baptism waters just because it's a family tradition when we turn 10? Or did I really grieve over my sin that put Jesus on the cross?

Am I willing to leave behind the ways of this world to be his disciple? Am I truly committed to follow? See, Andrew Murray once said it like this.

There are many who have accepted Christ as their Lord, but have never yet come to the final absolute surrender of everything. As someone who didn't grow up in the church, and I like to think that I'm very conscientious of how the world can often perceive us as the church.

[ 12 : 02 ] I want our church to be different, to be set apart. The Bible calls that to be holy. Not to be better than anyone, but to truly make an impact in this world. I want our co-workers, the cashiers that we encounter, the waiter at El Reparo, tax people, fellow church members, whoever, to see someone who is different in a godly way.

Who shines for Jesus. Not because we're holier than thou, but because we've surrendered all to him, and we have been changed by the power of the Holy Spirit that lives inside of us.

More action and less talk starts with my dedication to follow Jesus. See, John Wesley once put it like this, and I love this. He says, I want the whole Christ for my Savior, the whole Bible for my book, the whole church for my fellowship, and the whole world for my mission field.

And listen, I hope that that is our prayer today, because that's where it starts. And then second, less talk and more of my calling to serve.

More of my calling to serve. If we back up a touch to the very start of Mark chapter 1, I want to show you something powerful about John the Baptist here.

[ 13 : 22 ] That's how this whole chapter starts out with John the Baptist. So let's start here in Mark 1, verse 1. It says, The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet.

So it's taking us back to Old Testament prophecy. And then it says this, I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way. A voice of one calling in the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.

And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Now, if you get a chance to read Luke chapter 1, We discover how God moved in the impossible when a priest named Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were very old.

See, he had served faithfully all those years. And yet, many years before that, they had had a true heartache in their lives. They could never have a child.

And I'm sure they had cried all the tears they could when they were younger. They even had come to grips with the sad reality of this after all these years. And yet, in their old age, an angel appears before Zechariah and tells him that his wife will bear a child at her old age.

[ 14 : 38 ] And he will prepare the way for the Lord. And guess what? The impossible happened. And when these two pregnant women, Elizabeth and Mary, came together, By the way, they were related.

When they came together, Scripture says that John, still in Elizabeth's womb, leaped for joy at the sound of Mary's voice, knowing the Lord was in her womb.

So John would have grown up in the reality that God had a special calling on his life to prepare the way for the Messiah.

And yet, he still had to walk obediently in that plan. And we see this humble man call Israel to repentance, even baptizing, even Jesus.

And we see him give all praise and glory to Christ. He refused to put himself on the same level when earthly praise came his way. And he would even give his life for the cause of Christ.

[ 15 : 38 ] And in Matthew 11, 11, Jesus gives him the highest praise when he says, Truly I tell you, among those born of women, there is not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist.

William Carey, who's often called the father of modern missions, He served the Lord in India for many years. He gradually became very concerned about the attitude of his son, Felix.

The young man had felt the call early in his life to become a missionary, but he changed his mind when he was appointed ambassador to Burma by the Queen of England.

Carey wrote to his friend asking for prayer for his son with these words. And man, what a difference from the mentality we see today, where so many Christians would rather see their child as a professional athlete than they would as a missionary of the gospel.

But anyways, here's what he said about his son. He said, Pray for Felix. He has degenerated into an ambassador of the British government when he should be serving the King of Kings.

[ 16 : 43 ] That is a godly perspective. Now, I know there are people listening to my voice who hold great jobs and high positions that you've worked hard to get. I know that many of us have put in a lot of hours of training, even our own money, whether it's a trade or we went to college for two, four, six, seven years.

And there are others who went into the workforce and you've given everything you have to do a great job and take care of your family. Listen, here's the cool thing. We stand on equal ground, all dearly loved by the Lord.

And yet, even more important than our earthly jobs that we usually put so much stock in, more important than that is our calling to serve Jesus according to his plans and the giftedness he gives us over our lives.

And while John the Baptizer had a very special calling to prepare the way for Jesus, we too are called to let our light shine before men. And I love what D.L. Moody wrote in his Bible.

He said, I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. What I can do, I ought to do. And what I ought to do, by the grace of God, I will do.

[ 17 : 54 ] By the way, that man who grew up poor and uneducated, who was criticized by the elitist preachers for not being very elegant, that man went on to preach to millions of people, led hundreds of thousands at least to the Lord because of that attitude of surrender to Christ and that willingness to be his hands and feet.

See, one thing we've been learning in our Wednesday evening class right now on spiritual gifts is that our gifts are not about us. They're all about lifting up Jesus, leading others to know and love him.

And we also know that churches who make the greatest impact for the kingdom, those are the churches that aren't all about just marketing around their pastor and putting that person on a pedestal.

But instead, we encourage the whole church family to discover their giftedness and their passions and where those align and then get to work impacting the lives for the Lord because that is what impacts communities when the whole church family comes together for the cause of Christ.

So less talk and more action because I can tell you that you wouldn't want me in charge of stewardship of the church finances because that stuff makes my head hurt and I don't know anything about Excel spreadsheets, okay?

[ 19 : 15 ] But we got some great people here who help us walk that line of faith and stewardship well. You wouldn't want me baking treats for the Holy Grounds on Sunday or cooking meals for Wednesdays or even the Christmas meal that's today.

But we sure do have some amazing people who have a passion to cook and serve for the glory of God. You wouldn't want me to lead our children's or youth ministries because listen, that is not my gifting.

But I sure am thankful for Mitch, Lynn, and all of our volunteers who love and lead our children closer to Jesus. And you definitely wouldn't want me with a microphone in my hand singing worship songs.

But I sure am thankful for Tyler and our praise teams who are gifted to sing and play as they lead us to the throne in worship. And guys, those are just a few examples as we live out 1 Peter 4.10 that says each of you, each of you should use whatever gift that you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

Church, we can't just talk about our calling. We have to step out and serve Him faithfully. And then third thing this morning, less talk and more of my pursuit to know Christ.

[ 20 : 35 ] Amid the craziness of Christmas, the commercialization that is so easy to just get caught up in as we forget what the Christmas story is about, that baby born in a manger who was God, who came to bring hope, joy, peace, and love, to transform our hearts.

Amid all the chaos that we're being pushed towards, we have to be a people that are set apart. And while we're talking about more action and less talk, that begins with us quieting ourselves before the Lord every day.

And in Mark 1, starting here in verse 35, as everyone seems so worried about where Jesus is, that He has to be here, that He has to be doing this, He has more essential business to attend to first thing in the morning before the day gets started.

Here's what Mark 1, starting in verse 35, says. Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went off to a solitary place where He prayed.

Simon and his companions went to look for Him, and when they found Him, they exclaimed, Everyone is looking for you. In fact, as you study Jesus' life, this habit of getting away from the crowd, especially at the start of the day, to meet with God the Father, man, that happened all the time.

[ 21 : 55 ] That was a priority for Him. And while this may seem like a contradiction, at first at least, the truth to being a person of more action and less talk is that we have to start our day by quietly seeking the Lord's face, being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

See, the great evangelist D.L. Moody also said, We ought to see the face of God every morning before we see the face of men. And then David in Psalm 5, verse 3, said, In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice.

In the morning, I lay my request before you and wait expectantly. There was a man that I met in college. His name was Bob Kirsten. Being 300 miles away from home in the St. Louis area, I didn't know a soul when I went there.

God knew that I needed some godly mentors to pour into me. And I met Bob at a church that I ended up joining as I was studying for ministry. At first, he came across kind of stiff because he was just a very disciplined type of personality.

And yet, he also showed a lot of interest in me and God's call on my life. He and his wife were very good to me, very generous, very kind. And as I got to know this deacon, I learned that he would spend a great deal of time with God every morning in the Word, on his knees praying for me and so many others, and even reading Christian books that go deeper in the Word.

[ 23 : 22 ] And I learned that this time alone with Jesus was vital to starting his day off right. And from that daily encounter with the God of the universe, this man spent a lot of time praying with and encouraging the pastor of the church.

He'd go to a local nursing home and visit shut-ins. He'd lead Bible studies. And he'd regularly tell people about Jesus. He was the head deacon at the Baptist church of at least 300 people, which is kind of the equivalent.

Their deacons are kind of like how we see elders, which meant, man, he was a busy man. And while this may not be a name that very many people know outside of his small sphere of influence, I can tell you that because he has made it an absolute priority to sit at the feet of Jesus, this man has and is making a major impact for the kingdom of God.

See, it's people like this who inspire me to want to go deeper, to daily seek the heart of God, to make time to sit at the feet of my master so that I can stand before anyone for the cause of Christ.

And this Christmas season, while we will always acknowledge that, listen, we are saved by the grace of God through faith, it's not our works, it's his amazing grace, we also know that our faith is what calls us to truly make an impact in this world.

[ 24 : 46 ] The reality that my God could love and forgive me, man, that should motivate us, motivate this heart to get up and do something for the glory of God this Christmas season.

So more action and less talk when it comes to my commitment to follow Jesus. More action and less talk with my calling to serve God where he leads.

And more action and less talk as I daily sit at his feet, growing and maturing so that I'm equipped to live a life of impact for Christ. More action and less talk this Christmas season.

Say that with me. More action and less talk. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I'm just so thankful for these words of hope, these words of life, that you have saved us, not so we can just sit on our hands, so that we can be your hands and your feet in this world.

And so help us this Christmas season, not to just talk the talk or talk to Christianese, but to actually live out our faith as you are our strength and as you are working through us in the area of giftedness you've given us.

[ 26 : 05 ] So Father, we just give you permission to do that. We ask you to mold and shape these hearts more and more into the image of Christ. And we pray this Christmas season that we won't get caught up in all the commercialization, all the ways of this world and what the world has made this Christmas season into, but that we will be a people who slow down, who focus on the message of the Savior born to bring hope into this world and who shine that into the life of others.

So thank you, Jesus, for your amazing love. Thank you for how you are pouring into us. And may we grow more and more into the image of Christ.

May we be covered in the dust of our rabbi. And we pray all of this in his precious name. In the name above all names, the name of Jesus, amen.

Well, hey, I wanna just kinda give you a quick invitation. If you are listening to this and you maybe have some questions about faith, maybe you will have questions about First Christian Church of Greensburg, Indiana.

My name is Ray Sweet. I'm the lead pastor. Maybe you have questions about following Jesus. What does that look like? What does it mean to give my life to him? And then what does that journey look like?

[ 27 : 27 ] Listen, we would love to come alongside you because others have done that for us. And so here's a couple ways you can reach out to us. We are open Monday through Thursday from 8 to 4.30 for office hours.

And so you can call us at 812-663-8488. That's 812-663-8488. Or if you prefer to email, you can email me at ray at fccgreensburg.com.

Hey, God bless you. And we hope that you have an incredible week. Thank you.