

The Church Part 2

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[0 : 00] Thank you for your graciousness, love, and mercy. In your most holy and precious name, amen. Please have a seat. Please take out your Bibles, turn to Matthew 28.

Is my microphone on all right? Is it working? All right, good, good. If you are joining us today and you weren't here last week, I'm going to give you a quick recap.

We're kind of on a quick, short two-sermon series on what the Bible has to say about the church. Needless to say, the Bible has a lot more to say about the church that really can't be covered in two sermons, right?

But we're going to take a quick stab to figure out what God has to say about His church. And I'm kind of doing it around the whole idea of what it is to have a biblical vision for the church.

As I talked about, or I mentioned last week, I get asked a lot of times about what is my vision for the church, whether it be for Squamish Baptist or any other type of ministry that I'm in.

[1 : 11] And the reality is my vision is absolutely irrelevant compared to God's vision, amen. So our whole job is to figure out what God's vision is and then you can ask me or tell me, hey, BK, you're hitting the mark on God's vision or you're kind of veering off to the side, right?

Often when we veer off to the side, we're in a car, it's a big collision and it's a mess. So I pray, and I hope that you pray along with me, that we are able to really understand God's vision for His church. So we looked at three important aspects of the church. And the first aspect of the church that I talked about is does the church matter to God? We found out yes, right?

It's a resounding yes that He died for the church. He loves the church. In fact, what I believe is one of the most compelling passages is found in Acts 9 when Saul, on the way to Damascus to kill Christians, Jesus Christ appears to him and says, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

Not my church, but me. That there's this identity that Jesus Christ has in the church. The second aspect that we talked a little bit about is that we live in unhealthy times.

[2 : 34] In fact, there's a statistic. They believe just in the city of Squamish alone that there is only 2 to 2.5% of the population in a church this Sunday morning. Those are big fields out there, my friends.

Amen? Those are big fields. Those are opportunities for the gospel that should excite us. It should excite us. The question is, how do we get there?

Well, Jeremiah tells us quite clearly, it's because preachers didn't preach, leaders didn't lead, and people were okay with that. My heart for you is never settle for anything but God's word and men who lead biblically.

That is the foundation of the church. That's what he calls us to. And the second point that I brought up, there is hope. Amen? There's this hope that Jesus Christ gives this guarantee for the church in Matthew 16, where he simply says, it is my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. That's a promise. That's ironclad. Is God ever wrong on his promises? No. Is God ever wrong on his promises? Thank you.

[3 : 45] He's not. He's good for them. It's important for us to always remind ourselves of his promises so we can understand during those times of discouragement, sometimes we get into those periods of depression, that Satan will not prevail against his church.

We don't get that guarantee in any other aspect of our lives. So if you're sitting there, you're a believer in Christ, and you're saying, hey, I want to go where God's working, where God's moving, guess where it is?

It's the church. Even lazy, broken down churches, God still works in. So all right, turn with me to Matthew 28. This is a very familiar passage for many of you.

You'll know it, but from this passage, this is where I believe where we get God's vision for the church. This is where he provides his marching orders for the church.

Just to give you a little bit of context, Jesus Christ has died. He's now risen again, and he spends this time with the apostles, kind of this last hurrah, training them and preparing them, because Jesus isn't leaving Israel, right?

[4 : 59] That's where he stayed. But he's trained these men who are going to go out with that message. That's what I alluded to in our prayer. Because they were faithful to their message, we now know the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So he gives them this last message here. So please just read along with me, Matthew 28, starting in verse 16.

Now the 11 disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him.

But some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of this age. From this passage, I'm going to look at five specific words that describe the vision that God has for this church.

[6 : 10] You'll take a notice in your bulletins. You got some fill-in-the-blanks, kind of keep you from falling asleep. But you can mark them off as we go. And feel free to take other notes.

A couple things that I just want to give you, some other comments. I really believe in this verse, we see three things. I believe this is both a message to the disciples, right?

He's given a message. But I believe it's a mandate for our churches today. It's a mandate for our churches. And the third thing, I really believe it is a measure of our effectiveness.

Our measure of our effectiveness. And what I mean by that is, we go through these five descriptive words as a church. We can measure if we are effective in doing them.

You want to know what a healthy church is? You can come. This is the test. Who here likes tests? Right? There's a couple of you freaks out there that like them, right? But the reality is we don't like tests.

[7 : 08] But God has given us a test. But you know what's really great about a test? Is you know where you are. You know how you're measuring up. And more importantly, it's letting us know how we measure up to where God is, what God's calling us to.

Two other caveats I want you to understand about what I believe about ministry. I believe God has called us to a depth of ministry.

A depth of ministry. And what I mean by that, God calls us to go deep. As believers in Christ, to go deep. And guess what? God takes care of the breadth. We're not after size or another way to put it. God's after quality disciples, not a quantity of disciples. You understand that? I'm not here to attract a quantity. I'm here to attract a quality. And that will in itself, God takes his hand in that growth.

So with that, the first word, the church of Jesus Christ is to be vertical. The church of Jesus Christ is to be vertical. Now let's take a look at the text, verse 16.

[8 : 17] Now the 11 disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed to them. And as I said, this is the context in that Jesus Christ rose from the grave, spent 40 days on earth, appearing to over 500 people, teaching them and preparing them for what will happen after he leaves.

So he asked them to go to this mountain. In verse 17, and when they saw him, they worshipped him. But there's this interesting note in there, right?

But some doubted. And I'm going to get to that in a second. But the text tells us here that the first thing that they did is they worshipped him.

They obeyed him by coming to this mountain. He appears and there's worship. And in verse 18, and Jesus said to them, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

You know what that tells us? He's boss of all. He is boss of all. He is the ultimate power. He's the one to all worship.

[9 : 33] You see, a church that follows Jesus Christ is vertical. And what I mean about that is worship in church is about God, not man. And I know some of you guys are thinking, well, of course it's about God, not man.

But what I mean when I say vertical is that it's not really actually about loving people first and going God. It's actually beginning with God, loving God, worshipping God, that allows us to love others. Do you get that? This is an important paradigm for us to understand. Because if you go to any Christian bookstore, you look on manuals on how to grow your church, they will indelibly always begin with man first.

Do you know that? They always talk about how to love man and do all these things for men, but they're kind of pushing God out of the equation or he's the secondary aspect. And the reality is it's attractive, right?

Let's love others. The Bible is full of statements that say love one another. But the priority of our worship is God. What's interesting, in the last 20, 30 years, there's been a debate in the missions field.

[10:44] When we go to foreign lands. And there's enough statistics now that are actually demonstrating, you guys have all heard the term social justice and stuff like that. So some mission organizers say, you know, we're going to go into a part of the country and we're going to do some really good works and we're going to love on the people.

And then we're going to kind of throw Jesus in on the side, right? We're going to kind of bring him in later. What statistics have now shown those missions who have functioned like that, Jesus never comes.

And if he is, he's just kind of side on. Hey, we're just going to, we're going to. And what happens is Jesus becomes just an add-on to your life, right? Hey, we've got you feeding. We've got you drinking. So now there's this add-on that Jesus can bring some sort of purpose to your life.

The missions, ironically enough, that are surviving are the ones that start with Jesus Christ, understand what it is to be redeemed with the gospel that begins with, we were created by man, we woefully sinned, we fell short of his divine image, and we need a mediator.

And that mediator came, and the man, known as Jesus Christ, who is fully the Son of God. And through faith, we can accept him, and his righteousness becomes our righteousness.

[12:07] And we can know no matter how desperate our plight is here on earth, we're hell, we're children of God, and he's got us. And that's what holds us during the tough times.

So here we are, these men are before God, and he tells us that all authority has been given. Not some authority, but all authority.

And that means all worship goes to Jesus. One author I was reading on the subject says, when we get our alignment right, we understand that coming here is about God and not ourselves, we're understanding things.

We're not here because we think it's good for our kids. We're not here because it makes my spouse happy. We're not here because my parents get off my back. We're not here because it's just the thing that I do on Sunday that makes me feel good.

What vertical means is that we are here to worship God with everything we have. It is both our will, our mind, and emotions.

[13:18] It's willingly given ourselves over to the worship of the Lord God who created all things. My appeal to you is to let God be the main attraction when you come here.

That it's a time with brothers and sisters of the faith that we can lift up our voices. It's interesting, the reason why we have the journey class that comes before, it's not just a self-help program that we're trying to make your life better.

Dave is working hard so that through that process we're getting to know God more and our worship is made ever more pure. That's the goal. That's the goal.

So the first word that we understand is we're made to be vertical. That means it's for God, about God, through God. Psalm 91, 2 says, Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God. See, the core of humanity's sin problem is not a horizontal behavior to be corrected, but a vertical relationship that needs to be restored.

[14:38] So the first word is vertical. The second word that I'm going to use here is biblical. God's vision for his church is vertical. And I know most of you are saying, BK, that's kind of obvious.

But sadly, for some it isn't. Check out verse 20. It says, Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

Not teaching some things, teaching your favorite things. He's actually telling them to teach them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And where do we get this teaching? The Bible, right? It's God's word. These are the instructions that God gave to his disciples that he's given to us.

The truth of the matter is, you cannot be about Jesus and not be about the Bible. The Bible is where we learn about Jesus.

[15:41] We learn the truth about Jesus. And we learn about how we are in relationship to Jesus. The thing is, no matter our motivations, we cannot figure out these things on our own.

You know that? A lot of people, Hey, I got the gospel. I got the salvation part. I'm just going to kind of go and do my own thing. Sadly, there's a lot of words, there's a lot of experts in church growth. It tells you to downplay doctrine, which is the biblical teaching, right? It's a teaching of Jesus Christ. Downplay it. Don't talk about theology.

Theology is simply the study of God. Before I married my wife, I took the time to get to know my wife, right?

I want to know what she loves. I do. When I want to express love to my wife, believe it or not, I don't fry her up the best steak she can have.

[16:45] This doesn't work, right? There's certain things that talk to her about love. It's about what she loves. And I get there by studying her. It's the same thing about God.

And I tell you the really biggest danger that has happened in our day and age, and I believe we have reached this point in our culture of such arrogance that we now hold God according to our justice.

You get this? We hold God according to our justice. And what I mean by that is what I naturally think is right, what I think is the right thing to do, if God doesn't do it his way, guess what?

I don't want to talk about it. I kind of segment. How many people have heard, I don't want to talk about the Old Testament? You know, I'm kind of, you know, people will say, I'm kind of embarrassed about the God of the Old Testament.

That's not my form of justice. I've seen many people, many books talk about that. That's not real love. Have you, I usually ask those people, have you read the Old Testament?

[17:57] In that book, we find incredible love. We find incredible patience. I actually pray, when I'm reading my Old Testament, that God would be that patient with my sin.

That he would forbear with me, even in my stupidity and my foolishness. By the time you get to the judgment in the Old Testament, it's centuries and centuries and centuries of rebelliousness.

It's a God that's loving. It's a God that knows that we are so messed up, we can't do it on our own.

And that's why when we sing this, Jesus, we need the song, we need Jesus every hour of every day.

Amen? See, the reality is, wisdom is something that comes from God. It doesn't come from us. The only thing we add to the equation is a word called foolishness.

Foolishness. Anytime we think we know more than what God says. I see people so messed up with their sense of justice collides with God's sense that they reject God because they think they know better.

[19:25] That's scary. You see, when it comes to making decisions in our church, we as elders, and I pray as you as members of the church, seek the Lord out first through His word and through prayer.

I don't begin with my thoughts, compare them against Scripture to see if they're right. I'm actually digging first into His word to instruct me on how to think through these issues.

So the first word that we have to describe a church, God's vision for His church, is to be vertical.

The second one is to be biblical. And the third word is intentional.

All right? God desires His church to be intentional. Check out verse 19. It says, Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

The reality is, once we've figured out what God wants us to do, guess what our job is? Figure out how to do it, right? We know this is what He's calling us to.

[20:34] Let's do it. Now, when we look at this passage, it often is the greatest passage that most missionaries use. If you're familiar with it, it's usually understood in that context that this is an urgent call for us to go to other nations.

But what's important is actually understanding what the Greek words are communicating here. It actually says it better than English.

When we look at this, we think, what is the first word? Go, right? We think that's the first verb. That's the action that we're supposed to do. Actually, there's only one verb in this, and the verb is make disciples.

The command here is make disciples. In its better rendering, it would say, as you go, make disciples.

We're all going somewhere, right? Whether it be to work, to school, to our families, vacations, whatever it is, we're always going. And as we live this life, there's this command.

[21 : 40] It's not a condition. He's telling us, make disciples. Make disciples. And the whole idea of baptizing means what's inherent is that there's a gospel presentation into the people that we meet and know.

Baptism signifies the initiation of a disciple or a person into repentance and submission to Jesus. And the teaching aspect is what disciples are to do, to reproduce what Jesus did with them.

As Jesus taught, they grew in knowledge and understanding. Now Jesus is saying, hey guys, I did this with you.

Now I'm sending you off to do the same. Now it's your turn to make disciples by teaching others to obey everything that I commanded.

What does this have to do with intentionality? My friends, this is to be the agenda of the church. You know that? It's to make disciples.

[22 : 56] I've got a question for you. Have you purposely downloaded your spiritual knowledge and experience into another person?

I know some of you have a lot. Some of you may not have as much. But have you at any time downloaded what you know?

Number two, do you have a plan to do it? The reality is what we're reading here is a command. It's not conditional.

It's not conditional if you're a pastor, you do this. If you're a missionary, you do this. If you're a theologian, you do this. No, no. If you're a member of the church and a disciple of Jesus Christ, are you doing this?

It's interesting just that Dave and I had the pleasure of representing our church at the Fellowship Evangelical Baptist Conference, West Coast Conference this week.

[24 : 10] And a couple of things that they want to happen. They got a few goals for us. One was to train 2,500 leaders to plant 30 churches and one of them was to make sure that every single church has an intentional discipleship plan.

Say what you will about the fab, but I completely agree with that. That's my vision for this church, that we were going to have a design for a very structured discipleship plan that no matter where you are in life, you can fit in there because my desire is for you to obey Jesus Christ.

Amen? That's what I want for you. You see, this is to be the central normal task for the church. I think we are left with no other alternatives.

The reality is discipleship is to define the life of a believer in the church. at the conference, Spurgeon was quoted to say, as believers, to say that we love Jesus yet never speak of Him. Guess what? You're not a believer. Those are penetrating words. Now, there's many different ways that this can happen and usually you need to tailor them to every community, but my desire, you who are parents of young children, our desire is to teach you to be able to disciple your young children.

[25 : 44] That's the first line. Just as we prepare, we've got this whole litany of kids that are going to be teens, and I know every single parent is like, I can't wait for my kids to be teens, right?

No? But we need to prepare you, right? We want to make sure you're trained. We want to partner with you to see them disciplined into mature, healthy members.

And do you realize that those who are mature believers are exhorting the pages of Scripture to build into younger believers? Titus 2.4, Paul tells older women are to train the young women to love their husband and their children.

You know that? That is your job as an older woman of the faith is to help the young mothers and wives to love their children and their husbands.

Again, it's not optional. 2 Timothy 2.2, men. Paul says, what you have heard from me entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

[27 : 10] Radical, right? It's there, but we tend to push it aside. We live this incredible complex world which actually whole target, Satan's whole system is to busy us to the point that we can't save souls.

Do you know that? Everything is designed to stop you from sharing the great love of Christ and seeing others come to Christ. Now, I want to give a word to some of you older saints that are here. What I often find is some of you are reluctant to do so because things didn't go so well in your marriage and things didn't go so well with your kids.

You know that? Some of you are embarrassed. Some of you are ashamed. Some of you will think, well, my kids don't know Jesus. So how can I help any other mom or dad who have young children? Let me encourage you with this word. Paul doesn't condition these words. So the command is just as strong for you. As this is for someone who's been blessed with kids who followed after the Lord because guess what?

[28 : 46] Their salvation is not based on you. Do you get that? Their salvation is not based on you.

And it is arrogant to assume that it is. Now, I'm not going to let you off the hook. If there is some process that you have led your kids in a way to hate God, I would call you to repent, to go to your children.

And you guys know the stories. I don't know your homes. I don't know what goes in there. Perhaps it was a temper. But more often than not, what I find drives most kids away from Jesus is self-righteous legalism where we're trying to earn our salvation through our actions.

But please, you do have wisdom, support, encouragement for our younger families. I remember I was doing this whole Bible study one time.

I was just starting off in my career. I'm in Ottawa, and I've got 14 men, and I'm pretty new to starting them off. And I recognized that every single one of the men in my Bible study is from a broken home, just like me.

[30 : 17] And I kept thinking, what on earth do I have to offer these younger college men? Because I come from the same kind of broken backgrounds, but God has consistently used my background to be able to minister to men.

What I'm saying is, let your pain be power in ministering to others. Let your pain be power. I always say we either have baggage or luggage.

Baggage is those experiences in life that weigh us down. Luggage is the stuff that we climb up on to get closer to God. You get what I'm saying? We just take it and we just use it as tools to further our relationship with God.

We don't get under it and let us weigh us down. So that is my prayer for you and your greatest weapon for the discipleship of younger men and younger women and men in this church is prayer. My prayer, just approach a young couple that you might know here in the church. Just say, I'm going to commit for this next year. I'm going to pray for you twice a week. That's it.

[31 : 33] Just start with that twice a week. See if a relationship starts. Find out how those prayers are doing. Meet for coffee, maybe after work, maybe early morning.

Just tell them, I am going to commit to praying for you and your kids. And just put God to the test. I know we're not supposed to put him to the test. But just see his promises work out and his power work out in the lives of those around us.

The reality is you are all called to be ministers, not to those who are just pastors and elders. The reality is growth only happens in community.

You know that? That's why my other word here is relational. The fourth characteristic of a healthy church is that it is relational.

We need to be in community. We need to be praying for one another. We need to be encouraging. When we get to the point of discipling, discipleship just doesn't happen in a sterile classroom.

[32 : 41] Discipleship tends to happen on life and life. And I don't know about you, but my life is sometimes messy. And it means inviting someone into your life when it's messy.

This past year I had the opportunity to not only be discipled by another man, but I was discipling another young man who wants to be a pastor. We were kind of going through not knowing where the Lord was going to take us.

And I'm still not going to give up just because I'm not a pastor. I'm not discipling someone. Just because I'm going through trials doesn't mean I don't disciple someone. But what's been really great is I've been able to build a very sweet relationship with this man and you guys will get to visit him.

His family will be coming to worship with us soon. But it's an opportunity to encourage our younger saints in the faith as we move through problems and hardships of life.

ministry can be done. We believe the best happens when we're in relationship to one another.

[33 : 54] And where I believe this happens, small groups is really good, intentional accountability, but everything. And just as leaders and ministers, as we come together and we make decisions for what's going on in this church and people have suggestions, the one question I always ask is how is this making us more mature in Jesus?

That's the first question that needs to be asked. And the second way, when we talked about being a part of the church, we have this thing that God has given us called spiritual gifts.

Do you guys know the spiritual gifts? Do you guys know the fruits of the spirit? Do you know the love of one another? Do you know what's really interesting about them? They all take place in relationships. You get that? There is no such thing as a spiritual gift on my own.

Everything, even showing patience, love needs someone else. So if I'm not in relationship, I can't grow. I can accumulate all the knowledge that I want, but I will not grow.

Relationships is the soil for which we grow from. So that's the fourth. So it's that relational part. And I believe the fifth word that I believe that we're to describe church, we have vertical, biblical, intentional, relational.

[35 : 14] The fifth word is missional. I believe we need to be missional. Now, if you read anything that's current on the church, missional is all the buzzwords. In fact, Dave and I heard it.

I think every fifth word at the conference we are at was the word missional. They want us to be missional. And what that means is to adopt the attitude of a missionary so that our lifestyle seeks to mold our behaviors and habits as thinking as a missionary.

every ministry, including the feb, is trying to get people, churches, to think that they are on mission. It was interesting. One speaker spoke at the church to us. There was a worship service that we had. And he talked about we need to become missional rather than mature.

And he talked about we become missional, it leads to maturity. Where he says sometimes when you get mature, you don't actually get missional. I actually didn't agree with that point.

[36 : 20] Because as we learn about Jesus Christ, we're becoming more mature. But a more mature discipleship is missional. Right? That goes hand in hand with what I was just talking about Spurgeon.

If you love Jesus, you got to talk about him. If you love Jesus, you got to talk about him. You got to share what he's doing in your life. Now, I'm going to share with you a little bit of my philosophy of evangelism.

I believe in what's called red apples and green apples. I believe we are to be intentional with people that we see and know.

A red apple is a ripe fruit. Right? It's that fruit that's ready for the picking. A green fruit, green apple, is that fruit that's not meant to be picked.

It's meant to be left on the tree. And I believe we are to use discernment with how we interact with people who don't know Jesus Christ. Nine times out of ten, you know how people come to saving faith in Jesus Christ?

[37 : 28] It's usually over a tragedy. You know that? You've come to either a personal tragedy, you've come to a wall. Whether you've lost your career, it could be the death of a family member. But there's some angst where you realize your stuff's not working anymore and then you've got to say, God, I need you in to help me with my stuff.

Right? That's generally how it happens. Some people, there are some people happily going along in life. Hey, let me tell you about Jesus Christ. Hey, I'm all right with that. God. I'm all right with you. But mostly, God needs to do a work in our lives to prepare us for the gospel.

My goal is to look for people that are on that tree that's low-hanging fruit. That means in the workplace, where you meet someone that's struggling in their marriage, struggling in their parenting, struggling financially.

Right? They're coming to a conclusion in their life that whatever rules of life that they were following that was guaranteeing success, it's not working anymore.

The most fruitful time of my life was actually when I was in university because I lived on university campus and every single kid is getting confronted with so many things of life and their whole paradigms are being shattered.

[38 : 50] Their worldviews are being destroyed. In some, it was panic, whether it's their parents were going through divorce or they were learning things or they weren't as successful or smart as they thought they were.

And it was actually ripe ground for the gospel. See, what's happened when it's a green fruit, it's when it's not ripe and we keep harassing people with the gospel.

I've got a dad like that. My dad doesn't want to talk about the gospel. He doesn't want to hear about the gospel. He likes to hear about me. But it's like a nag, right?

Okay. How many people here have found nagging to be a successful motivation in their life? Come on. All right? It never happens.

But sometimes we can be that way with the gospel. We can keep going after them. And I have this one guy, a friend of mine. He's trying to show love to his dad and he's sending him Bibles and he's sending him tracks.

[39 : 53] And I finally ask him, how's your relationship? Because I don't have a relationship with my dad. What does your dad love? He loves birds. Well, why on his birthday, why don't you send him a book on birds? Like, why not demonstrate a real love for him?

If you've ever read J.I. Packer's book, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, he talks about don't treat people like cases. Treat them like people.

Love them. Get to know them. Take that time. Be intentional. Be relational. That time will come where you will share Jesus Christ with them because Jesus Christ is important to you and you love them.

Most embarrassing time of my life was a friend in university who got saved later on. I worked with him. Came to see me. We were both following our careers.

And he sat me down and he simply said, why didn't you love me enough to tell me about Jesus Christ when we were friends? Man. That was a big, sad hammer to my head.

[41 : 02] He said, I knew you loved me. You were a faithful friend to me for four years. But I never actually got to that point of sharing my love for Jesus.

He knew I was a Christian, but I never took that time to go through the gospel. So my friends, as we follow what God's vision is for us here at the church, I am praying that you will join us in both worshiping God, pursuing our study of God's word, being intentional to build into younger believers, that we will be relational with one another, and that we will be missional.

I really believe God will unleash his power in our lives. You know that? I really do. When we are being obedient and pursuing him in the commands that we know, God will do something.

I remember the writings of John Stodd affected me greatly on this subject. When he said, sometimes we are so busy doing church, we forget about being the church.

My encouragement to you is that you will fully grasp and understand what Jesus is doing here. He is perpetuating the faith.

[42 : 38] And what he means by that in Matthew 28, he is perpetuating the reason that he died. And we have a responsibility to continue sharing that with this world until he comes at the end of the age.

Amen? My role as a pastor and an elder, as well as the other men who have the blessing of serving here, is to help you with those issues.

To help you. Our desire is to continue to bring training that brings about maturity and bring about a more missional attitude in our lives. Right now, I'm just going to take the time to pray for you.

To pray for me. I know for some of you, for lack of a better word, life sucks.

It's hard. Sometimes you're just trying to breathe. I'm going to ask, and I'm going to ask the Lord for a special prayer for you today.

[43 : 56] Sometimes our marriages feel like they're underwater. We've got, I've just been a parent for three and a half years, and I have never wanted to control people more in my life.

I want what's absolutely best for my kids, yet sometimes they choose not to listen to me. I think every parent, that gets in our minds, and it weighs our hearts.

But I want you to understand that that's your first role of responsibility, and I want you to pursue it with all fervency. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we thank you for your glorious word, but more importantly, we thank you for this glorious cross.

It's a horrible thing, this cross. It's a wicked form of punishment that man thought up of, thought of, and wish in their own minds to bring about the greatest amount of pain.

That cross was meant for us. But your love for us was so deep and so powerful that you chose as your son to bear the weight of our sins as the wrath of God was poured out on you.

[45 : 34] Jesus, we come here to say thank you. It's why we give our life to you. It's why we worship you when we call you God. It's why we call you Lord.

It's why we call you Father. Father. Father, just as a church, we come before you, O Lord, desiring all that you would have for us.

Father, I pray that we would become a deep church, an obedient church, and we ask for your blessings of growth. Father, I'm just praying right now a special prayer for those parents that are here whose children have left the faith, no longer walking, making decisions that we absolutely hate.

But Father, we ask that they would get a measure of grace. We pray that it's never too late for you to call them to you. Father, use your life, whether it be a, sometimes, sometimes it's a tragedy, it's a loss of a job.

Sometimes it's a humility, a humbleness that you bring into our lives to reveal yourself fully to us. I don't know what it is, O Father. But I pray that you would do whatever you would do to bring them to the saving knowledge.

[46 : 49] Father, I pray that you would have our parents' prayers mean something. For those that are parents of the younger children here, Father, I pray that you would raise them up to be intentional in how they share Jesus, Father.

Lord, I pray for marriages that you would restore. I know there's marriages that are struggling and feel stuck, and each individual in that same home and that feels alone and desperately lonely.

Lord, I pray that they find you and they find solace in you, and you drive them together to the cross.

Father, I pray that we be not embarrassed by your baggage, but we use it as luggage to not only draw closer to you, but that we would instruct our fellow friends and family here that despite our foolishness, you still saved us and gave us a deeper and greater understanding of you, which led to a more worshipful life of you.

So, God, as we conclude this service, as we come here to sing once again, I can't pray every prayer for every person here, but every person here's prayer is heard before you.

May we pray them fervently, passionately, and unceasingly. In your name, amen. God bless you.

[48 : 27] See you next time.