

# On The Advance Team

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning. It has been kind of a crazy week for me. Ups and downs. And one of the things that impacted that was today's sermon.

I thought I had my sermon finished and in the bag and uploaded the sermon notes to the website. And nope. And then I worked on it some more and uploaded another set of sermon notes, different ones, to the website.

Right. And nope. Yesterday I was like, no, I got to I got I got to address this, too. And so I had to change the sermon notes again.

And yesterday, actually toward the evening, uploaded my sermon notes to the website again and then did something even different that you'll see at the end here.

But as we get going today, so today, who knows? You get what you get today. We'll see how this works. How many horror movie fans or scary movie fans? I am not. I do not like horror movies. Scary movies even bother me a bit.

[ 1 : 23 ] But one of the things that makes them more difficult for me is the music. When the music kicks in and you know something is up and my two grandsons yesterday, we were talking and they called it dramatic irony.

The audience members know something that the character on the movie screen doesn't know. So I want to play for you a little bit of music and see if you recognize this.

This. You guys know what it's from?

How universal is this? This music. I mean, is it does everybody in the audience know or do you have to be of a certain age to know this particular?

I sometimes wonder if this if this movie transitioned into younger people watching it as well. And that music, you know exactly what that is.

[ 3 : 02 ] The audience there caught it. You guys caught it. One note from one oboe was all you needed. A lot of spoofs.

Yeah. A lot of stuff gets built around this. And for good reason. It is very popular. It's very well known. The reason I bring this up because if the Gospels had some background music to them as you're reading them, you'd start to hear some of that music playing right about now.

Luke chapter 10 verse 1. The first hints of that music you would start here playing in the background because it's starting to get ominous.

You know that Jesus has, you know, You know that Jesus has, Luke 9 51, set his face to Jerusalem. He knows that he's going to Jerusalem for one reason.

To present himself as the Messiah and to know that the Jews, the leadership in Israel would reject him and that he would be crucified.

[ 4 : 20 ] He knew he was going to the cross. And so now, 2,000 years later, as we're reading the Gospels, we know this. You know, the dramatic irony.

We know what happened. What's coming next. And so the music starts to play. And that's what we have in this section as Jesus is preparing the way for him to go to Jerusalem.

Now, he's calling in this section what are called the 72. 72 disciples. The word disciple in the Greek just means a follower, a learner.

And so 72 disciples. These are not the original 12. They're staying with him. But there's 72 more that he has recruited to go out and to present the Gospel ahead of him.

To prepare the way for him as he is making his way from up in the north in Galilee down in the south to Jerusalem. And he is traveling through all the towns and villages along the way.

[ 5 : 31 ] And announcing the kingdom of God is at hand. And remember, that's the Gospel that Jesus is preaching. That the kingdom of God is at hand. Literally, the kingdom of God was standing

right in front of them.

And they needed to respond. They needed to accept their King, their Messiah. And so this is what he's doing. This is where he's going. Last week, we saw Jesus.

And we didn't put it this way last week. But Jesus kind of thinning the herd. People who were saying, yes, I'll follow you. And then Jesus, knowing their hearts, was saying, I don't think you're ready.

Because you have some of these other issues. You're not quite there yet. You're not entirely in or all in. You've got things that are holding you back. Things that you're holding on to.

You have expectations that aren't a part of what God's agenda is. And so now, here in chapter 10, he's giving these final instructions to the 72 that he's ready to send out and prepare the way for his ministry as he makes his way through these towns and villages.

[ 6 : 41 ] So, Luke chapter 10, verse 1. After this, after his, if I can call it, it's kind of crude to say it, thinning the herd. Chapter 9, the end of chapter 9.

And after this, the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them on ahead of him. This was their assignment. Two by two into every town and place where he himself was about to go.

So they're laying the groundwork as Jesus is approaching these towns and villages. They're going on ahead of him to kind of prepare the way. And to get them ready to see firsthand for themselves the Messiah.

Verse 2. And he said to them, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. The harvest is ready. The harvest is ripe. People are ready to respond, Jesus said, but there are few laborers. So he says, therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

[ 7 : 47 ] You may have heard this commonly referred to, particularly among missions work and missionaries getting ready to go out. And even in the local community, the harvest is ready, but the laborers are few.

So pray. Pray that God would raise up laborers to go into the harvest and to begin harvesting those souls.

Now, I want you to notice here, Jesus is saying, therefore, pray for these harvesters. And then he tells those same people that he said pray, he now tells them to go.

So those of you who are praying for harvesters, now you go. That's what, it's like, some of you might be able to, you know, well, I'm willing to pray. I'll pray for other people to go into the harvest. I'll do that. But Jesus says, wait a minute. It's actually for all of us. We're all called to go into the harvest field and to work.

[ 8 : 48 ] I'm sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. And if we look at our culture, we might be kind of feeling the same way, right?

All the things that are happening right now, we might be saying, boy, for the Christian believer, we're going out as lambs in the midst of wolves. That's always been true.

It was true in the time of Jesus, what they were going through, what they would be facing. Jesus never told them that everything was going to be wonderful, and you're going to have all of your dreams and wishes come true, and you're going to have lots of money, and you're going to be healthy, and all of the stuff.

No, he said that you're going to face persecution. Some of you will face death. And we're actually seeing some of that in our day today. And he tells them, carry no money bag, no knapsack, no sandals.

It wasn't that they shouldn't wear sandals, but don't take an extra set of sandals. Greet no one on the road. There's this sense of urgency that we'll talk about as well.

[ 9 : 54 ] In our day, there's also a sense of urgency, but it's a different sense of that. The kind of urgency, I think, is a bit different. But he's telling them, just go.

Just be prepared. Don't pack a bag. Whatever house you enter, first say, peace be to this house. And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him.

So go into that house. Declare your purpose. Declare what you're doing. Declare peace to them. And if they seem receptive to you, then stay there.

But if not, it will return to you. This blessing that you had announced when you came in would instead be returned to you. And when they respond in a positive way, remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide.

In other words, you know, if the first house that you go to in town, they're serving bread and water, but you realize that there's a guy who lives in a mansion down the road who's got soft beds and wonderful, you know, lamb, leg of lamb.

[11:00] Don't just be shopping around. That's not the point here. Stay where you're at, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. Remain there.

And whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Now I want you to notice this. The two-pronged approach that they had that they were instructed to do as they went into these towns.

They were told to do two things. One was to heal the sick in it, to provide this miraculous ministry that would verify that what they were saying, which comes next, was absolutely true.

They would heal the sick and the lame and the blind and the demon-possessed and all of that, so that when people heard what they had to say, they would say, well, these people are from God.

These disciples, these preachers of this good news, they are absolutely from God because look at what they could do. So the second part of that ministry then was to say to them, the kingdom of God has come near you.

[12:09] That's the gospel that Jesus had been proclaiming, that John the Baptist started preaching, that Jesus was preaching at the beginning of his public ministry, that the kingdom of God is at hand.

The kingdom of God is at hand. It's that drumbeat that we talked about last week, right? The kingdom of God is at hand. The kingdom of God, and the drumbeat is getting louder and louder. The kingdom of God is near. It's so near, it's just down the road. It's on the way. And the it is actually a he. It's Jesus.

Jesus is the kingdom of God, and he's coming here. And he is declaring to you that he is the long-awaited Messiah.

Messiah, he's coming. He's coming. The kingdom of God is near to you. But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you.

[13:14] So they weren't told to stand there and argue with them. They weren't told to get into a debate. They weren't told to stick them up and let's fight.

They weren't told to just endure to the end. No. If they don't receive you, and move on. Move on to the places, the towns, the houses, the people who will, who are willing to listen to your message, who are willing to respond to what you have to say.

This gives us some instruction in that way as well in terms of our own ministry. So wipe off your feet.

Wipe the dust off your feet and move on. Nevertheless, know this, that the kingdom of God has come near. So even though they were getting ready to abandon that town or that house and say, I'm wiping the dust off of my feet from you, they still are proclaiming this truth that the kingdom of God had come near, has come near, was at hand.

I tell you, it would be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. Now, a little history lesson here. Anybody remember what happened to Sodom?

[14:33] Yeah, it wasn't a good thing. And this is not a fairy tale. This is not something that's a legend. This is something that actually happened to the twin towns of Sodom and Gomorrah.

They were utterly destroyed because of their wickedness. And Jesus is saying that these people in these towns that reject this message, that the kingdom of God has come near, they're going to be worse off than Sodom.

Really? They had it pretty bad. But woe to you if you are living in one of these towns and you reject the Messiah of God as he's standing right in front of you and you say no.

Worse for you. Woe to you, Chorazin. Woe to you, Bethsaida. These are towns in the northern part of Galilee that would have been, if we could say it this way, the regular stomping grounds of Jesus, particularly early on in his ministry.

They would have been very familiar with his ministry early on, the miracles that he was performing early on. They knew it. For if the mighty works done in you, in Chorazin and Bethsaida, if these mighty works that had been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, these two cities are further north and to the east, more toward the Mediterranean coast.

[16:02] Where Jesus had not gone, Jesus for the most part stayed in Israel's territory, and Tyre and Sidon would have been considered Gentile territories, Gentile cities.

Jesus never went there. They never heard him teach. They didn't hear of his ministry, of his healing, of the miracles that he was performing. They may have heard some word of mouth.

Maybe some of them had traveled further south into Galilee to hear or to see him. But the towns, for the most part, never heard. And so for Chorazin and Bethsaida, if these mighty works that were done in your cities, in northern Galilee, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago.

And you'll remember, as you go back into the Gospels, that Jesus was highlighting Gentiles, the centurion, the leader of the town, the servant that was healed.

These were people who were Gentiles, who were responding to the Gospel. Remember, he said, of the Roman centurion, I haven't seen faith like you in all of Israel.

[17:13] So he understood that. Tyre and Sidon, if they had seen these things, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes, kind of like Nineveh, when Jonah finally went to the city of Nineveh and preached there.

But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you and for Capernaum. This was kind of his home base up in the northern, just north of the Sea of Galilee.

Capernaum, will you be exalted in heaven? No, you shall be brought down to Hades. In other words, for hell. Again, because they had seen the early ministry.

They had seen the miracles of Jesus. And they still rejected Jesus as Messiah. Whole towns, individuals who had trusted Christ, who became followers of Christ, but as a whole, these towns were rejecting their Messiah.

The one who hears you, he says to these 72, the ones who hear you, hears me. And the one who rejects you, rejects me.

[18:25] This is still true for us today. That when we proclaim the gospel and people respond to that, they're not hearing our words. They're hearing the voice of God. And they're responding to him.

That's what matters. It's not about you and me. We just need to be faithful in the calling that he has given us to proclaim the gospel. And then God uses those words. It is his words, not ours, that they are responding to.

And then when people reject us, we have a tendency sometimes to get all depressed and, oh, they don't like me. No, it is God that they are rejecting. And we need to remember that.

The one who rejects me, rejects him who sent me. So the 72 returned with joy. So they had gone on their way, gone into all these towns and villages, and they came back and they were astonished. Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. Meaning they had had success. They had gone and performed miracles in the name of Jesus.

[19:33] They had proclaimed the gospel truth that the kingdom of God was near, was indeed at hand. And they had performed these miracles. And even the demons.

So they were able to cast out demons. And he said to them, this is Jesus responding as a way to say that, yes, what you're saying is true.

That I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. He's not talking about when Satan was cast out of heaven. He is figuratively talking about how Satan was falling because his forces were being cast out.

His demon network, if you will, they were being cast out. They were being put out of these people. People were coming to faith in Christ.

Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall hurt you. And again, this is kind of a short-term God protection over them during this time.

[20:39] This is not to say that you should go out and get a scorpion and a snake and start playing with them. You know, that's not what Jesus is saying here. But during that part of their ministry, God protected them during that time.

Nevertheless, he says, I'm grateful that you had this power, this authority, that you were able to perform miracles, that you were able to cast out demons.

But do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you. What should they rejoice in? What should we rejoice in? Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

That's what matters. That's what counts. This life will be over soon enough. But heaven is forever. Rejoice that your names are written in heaven. So in that same hour, he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, Father, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth.

[ 21 : 42 ] Now, I want you to pause here again and see once again another aspect of the Trinity involved here. You have the Holy Spirit, Jesus himself, and God the Father all in the same phrasing.

All together. He rejoiced, Jesus is the he. Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, second person of the Trinity, and said, I thank you, Father, the first person of the Trinity, Lord of heaven and earth. That you have hidden these things from the wise and the understanding and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. And it wasn't just that children were recognizing the truth, but people who had faith like a child would respond.

It wasn't about how much wisdom or how learned you were, how much education you had. We can see even in our day and age that some of the people with the most education end up to be the most twisted in terms of their understanding and knowledge of things.

Okay? Not all of them, thank God for that, but some of them do. But it's responding as a child. Just when you see a toddler reaching out to mom or dad willing to be picked up and hauled into the air.

[ 23 : 09 ] How many of you today, as adults, would be willing to have that happen to you? Somebody that much bigger than you pick you up and haul you into the air and hold you.

You would be freaking out. So would I. But the faith of a child to believe that this person is going to hold me. All things have been handed over to me by my father and no one knows who the son is except the father or who the father is except the son and anyone to whom the son chooses to reveal him.

Again, Jesus is just rejoicing in those who are coming to faith, those who the Lord is opening their eyes to see the truth.

And there are people who are responding and coming to faith. And then finally, turning to the disciples, he said privately, blessed are the eyes that see what you see.

Imagine to be one of the twelve and to be an eyewitness to all that Jesus did, all that Jesus accomplished during this part of his ministry.

[ 24 : 22 ] For I tell you that many prophets and kings, as you read through the Old Testament and you see the prophets and you see the kings, how they would have longed, desired to see the Messiah come in their day.

These many kings and prophets desired to see what you see today and did not see it and to hear what you hear and did not hear it. Oh, to be blessed in that way.

And you and I are blessed as well. We are not witnesses of the earthly ministry of Christ, but we are blessed to come after the cross, after the crucifixion and the resurrection and God and his ascension and Christ's ascension into heaven.

And now we are part of this new thing, the New Testament, the new covenant, the church, the bride of Christ. we get to be a part of that and we will be a part of this great day when Jesus comes for his bride and we will celebrate together, whether we go to be with the Lord before that day comes or we go on that day.

We might be saying, oh, wouldn't it be great if Jesus came for his bride today? today. It's possible. We can see things working toward that end.

[ 25 : 46 ] But every generation of church age believer could say the same thing. Today could be the day and we believe that. Now, before we go on and get some specific lessons from this passage for us, these 72 served as the advance team of Jesus as they went into these towns and villages and declaring the gospel and performing these miracles, they were his advance team and in a sense, we are also on an advance team that we have an assignment to go and to declare the gospel of Jesus.

But what is it that we are to do as Christians? Today we are Christians. The definition of that is little Christs. We represent Christ when we wear that label of Christian.

But what does that look like? What is it that Christians are supposed to be? What is it that we are supposed to do? And we are just going to cover that in a real nutshell.

Three things on your notes here that if you accomplish these three things, you are getting like 80-90% of it in the bag. I mean, that is what this basically boils down to.

So basic responsibilities for the advance team. So we are talking about you and I. Three things that we need to know and three things that we need to do that Jesus told us.

[ 27 : 12 ] For those of you who have been around for a while and following Christ for a while, this is going to be review. For those of you who are newer to this, this might be like, oh, I get it now.

So the first thing is known as the great command or the great commandment. The great commandment, one of the scribes, one of the learned people of the Old Testament law came to Jesus and asked him a trick question, hoping to kind of foil him, to make him stumble, to make him say something that the people would say, oh, that's not right.

He asked him, what's the greatest of all the commands? And Jesus replied, well, that's kind of easy. And in a sense, it was.

This is how Jesus responded. Matthew 22, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.

And the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. So, Jesus would go on to say that if you obey these two commandments, to love the Lord with everything within you and to love your neighbor as yourself, you're fulfilling all the law and the prophets.

[ 28 : 28 ] You kind of, everything gets kind of summed up in these two little statements here. Love God, love each other. So, that's a part of that.

So, individually then, we're called to love God and to love our neighbor. This is the great command. Love God and love our neighbor.

This one is what's known as the great commission. We don't use the word commission like this in our language, so you might want to write the word assignment, the great assignment.

And that's found in Matthew 28. Some of you, again, are going to be familiar with these words. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

Sometimes this commission, this assignment that he's given us kind of gets left behind for just the one aspect of it. And that is, if we win people to Jesus, if people make a decision to trust Christ as Savior, that's it.

[ 29 : 36 ] We're fulfilling the great commission. No, that's not the great commission. The great commission is to make them disciples, make them followers. The great commission is to teach them to observe how much?

All that I have commanded you. That's a pretty steep assignment. Okay? It's not just making converts and abandoning them. It's winning people to Christ, yes, but then it's also teaching them, training them to follow the Lord with their whole lives.

So this second, the second part, the second thing that we need to know is that collectively, as a group, as a church, as the body of Christ at large, we are called to make disciples worldwide.

So we're called to do this. Okay? Collectively. That doesn't mean that all of us are going to go, but some people are going to go overseas and to other cultures to go.

And we're all to be involved in that, in supporting, in prayer, and doing it at home as well. That's all a part of it as we'll see here. A lot of times this doesn't get talked about, but the great priority is found in Acts 1-8.

[ 31 : 03 ] The great priority. What do I mean by that? Well, let's take a look at the text, and we're going to read a couple extra verses here to kind of set this up to kind of talk about the kingdom of God and what the expectation was.

So when they had come together, this is after the resurrection, Jesus had been with them, and he's getting ready to ascend into heaven to leave and to send the Holy Spirit, the birth of the church.

And when they'd come together, they asked him, Lord, will you at this time, is this the time? Okay, we missed it on the front end of the cross.

We didn't get that you needed to die for our sin. We didn't get, you know, the whole resurrection thing. We didn't see that coming. But now that we've seen that, now is it time?

I mean, that's always, that's like their focus. The whole kingdom now. Let's get rid of Rome. Let's set it up. Let's go. That was their question. Is the kingdom now?

[ 31 : 58 ] Are you going to do this now? And he said to them, it is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

I don't know if you guys have seen it. There's some crazy guy on social media or something who's saying that September 23rd or 24th, that's the rapture. Have any of you seen this?

This guy's, this guy's, I don't know, I don't know why his stuff goes viral, but apparently it has because he's saying, yeah, I'm a believer in Jesus and Jesus, I've, September 23rd or 24th, that's coming up here in, oh wait.

We can know, can't we, that when someone makes a prediction like that, that's not coming from God. It's just not.

So apparently this guy got it wrong and went online, I've never seen these, I'm just reading stuff about this, and said, hey, I blew it, I'm sorry, I shouldn't be predicting, you know, the return of Jesus, I get that, I shouldn't be doing that, I'm sorry.

[ 33 : 19 ] Well, that's good. But then he came right back, I don't know, a couple days later, it said, it's October 7th! Or ace! Why?

Why? We don't know. We know that it could be at any day. But the moment that we start making predictions, I just picture the Lord in heaven saying, I could be wrong about that, but, but Jesus said this, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you'll be my witnesses. Now I want you to notice the order, the locations and the order in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Understand here, there's a priority to this, that we're supposed to be first starting with our local area, and then our local region, and you might say it could be West Michigan or Northwest Michigan, or, I don't know, what do we live in?

Do we live in West Michigan or do we live in Northwest Michigan? Ever since I've been living here for 26 years, and I don't know which it is. Is it? Which one is it? You guys don't know either, do you?

[ 34 : 44 ] Okay. All right, that's fair. We're tweeners. So, and you might say, well, this is the state.

Well, Michigan's pretty big. Michigan's bigger than Israel, quite a bit, okay? So, I don't know if you can do that. So, our region, our area. Samaria then represents a different cultural aspect because they were in the same region.

Samaria was inside of Israel, and these were people who were hated by the Jews, not by Jesus, but by the Jews. They were considered half-breeds, half-Gentile, half-Jewish.

And the Jews hated them, and Jesus is like, no, no, no, we're going to, we must needs go through Samaria. We've got to go. We've got to, people need Christ there. And so, that's our calling to go to people who don't fit our own cultural background.

Have we got any of those folks in our area? We need to be doing what we can to reach them. And then, at that point, then we go beyond to the end of the earth.

[ 35 : 54 ] So, the great priority then is ministry should start here before it goes there. And, listen, we need to be serving our local area and declaring the gospel to our local area, and then, from then, from that point, then sending missionaries to go.

okay? And, we shouldn't be sending missionaries to go if they're not willing to do it here before they go. Okay?

That should be a part of their world. So, this advanced team, this basically then covers the basics of what we're supposed to be doing. And, our advanced team today is a bit different than their advanced team.

For instance, Jesus is not among us today. Okay? Like he was with them. Jesus was right down the road when they went.

Okay? It's a little different. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem to the cross. That's not happening today. That happened 2,000 years ago. Jesus is, we are not today preaching the kingdom of God is at hand.

[ 37 : 06 ] We're just not doing that. We talked about this a week or two ago. That what we're preaching today is the gospel of grace. Paul said it in Acts chapter 20. We're preaching the gospel of grace to people who need to hear.

That it's not about earning your way to heaven. It is about, it is about grace that God gives us. We can't earn it. We can't, we don't deserve it. It is simply by placing our faith in Christ to save us.

That is how we are saved. And we need to proclaim that message, that gospel, to those who need to hear it. There is still an urgency, but it's a different kind of urgency.

Because Jesus isn't trailing behind us coming into the village and saying the gospel or the kingdom of God is at hand. Now there's still an urgency here because we don't know a couple of things.

We don't know how long any one person has on this earth. The person that we might be talking to and sharing the gospel with, they may die tomorrow. You may die tomorrow.

[ 38 : 04 ] We simply cannot take for granted each day that we're given. We don't know that. And the people that we're sharing the gospel with, we don't know how long they have either.

And we don't know how long before the rapture, before Jesus comes for his bride. That is also a question that we have. And we're told to look to the skies and be ready.

So we still have a sense of urgency but the urgency is a bit different. And as we do this ministry, what does it look like to represent Jesus well?

To represent Jesus well. So we're going to learn some lessons here from the advanced team in here in Luke chapter 10. First thing that we learn here is that ministry is a team sport.

ministry is a team sport. Luke chapter 10 verse 1. The Lord appointed 72 others and sent them out ahead of him one by one.

[ 39 : 22 ] No, no, no, no, no. It wasn't one by one. It's two by two. This is a team thing. This whole idea of my Christianity is between me and God and my Christianity is all about how I'm doing in my relationship with God.

No, that's kind of a American viewpoint of Christianity that has kind of twisted how it's meant to be. Yes, we have an individual relationship with the Lord where I'm accountable for what I do and say and all of that.

But he's called us to live in community with one another. So many one another commands in the scriptures and you can't do that if you're playing the Lone Ranger game.

If you're trying to live this on your own. You can't do that. And it's gotten worse since the internet. And it's gotten worse since COVID.

Because now we're like, wow, I can just do it online. No. No. You can't. Now, church online is convenient for a few reasons.

[ 40 : 41 ] One, people who are homebound. If you're missing, if you're sick, if you're traveling, you can watch it. But active participation in the local church is supposed to be the norm.

It's what he's called us to. And so we've got to start figuring out, okay, what am I going to do with this? It is not a spectator sport.

So often in church we have a bunch of spectators and it's kind of how we set it up. We've got a bunch of spectators and one guy up front putting on the performance. And that's not how it's meant to be.

Yes, we need to sit and we need to learn and we need to hear from the word of God. And a pastor has been given to the local church. Pastors and elders and deacons have been given to the local church to serve the body of Christ, to build up the body of Christ, to get us to the point where we're all serving one another in love.

So the question then becomes for each of us, when are you going to get in the game? When will you quit being a spectator if you're not plugged in, if you're not involved, if you're not serving in some capacity?

[ 42 : 01 ] When is that going to happen for you? Because until you do, you're just a spectator. And it's not what God intended for us. Secondly, serving the physical needs of others without sharing Jesus has no eternal value.

if I encounter somebody who's hungry and I give them food but I don't care about their relationship with the Lord and I don't share the gospel with them, the food's going to last how long?

Even if I teach them, you know, really good, cool gardening techniques or I train them in a skill and I train them to get a job and they get a job and they start making good money and they get a roof over their heads and they're providing for their families and they've got food on the even if I do all of that, that's good stuff, right?

But if they don't have Jesus, what good does that do them for eternity? Nothing. Nothing. nothing.

And yes, there are ministries who feel like it is their calling to provide that type of ministry to people and they would say, well, we can't force Jesus on them.

I agree with the force part but if we're not declaring Jesus at all, what's the point? what's the point?

[ 43 : 47 ] So, again, two-fold ministry that these messengers, these disciples were called to go into the towns and to, two things, serve the physical needs of the people, heal the sick, and also share the good news, the gospel with them.

In their case, the kingdom of God was at hand. He's coming to town. Get ready. Repent. So, that's our calling as well, that we have a two-pronged approach, that we need to serve the physical needs of people, but it needs to be accompanied by the message of the gospel.

Justice without Jesus only leads to chaos. And this word justice today gets thrown around, and so we need to do a little bit of explanation here.

We're going to camp on this a little bit. A lot of times, you hear the word justice, and what people mean by that is this phrase social justice, which means that we need to make things right, for people.

But understand, if you're trying to make things right, from a framework of the world only, and not from a biblical worldview, not from a worldview, from a perspective that is informed and motivated by Christ and biblical values, don't you know that the world is going to twist what justice means, what justice is all about.

[ 45 : 40 ] I want to show you some pictures, top and bottom, of two different kinds of people. People whose biblical values and biblical worldview is motivating their response to evil, tragedy, and another group of people whose worldly values and worldly point of view is informing and motivating their response to tragedy.

On the top, you see Charlie Kirk and what happened after his murder, after his assassination. People gathering to pray, vigils that would honor this young man and all that he did in the furtherance of the gospel.

On the bottom, a response that was five years ago in 2020, summer of 2020, when George Floyd died. And the response to that, all these people who began to riot and to destroy and to respond with their view of justice.

justice, it is an ungodly, not, it is a worldview that is motivated by anything but a godly perspective. And again, from the perspective of what happened with Charlie Kirk, these people who were gathering for his memorial service a week ago, and the response to that, and what we saw between the top and the bottom was a demonstration of separating the wheat from the chaff that we don't get to see very often in this life.

[ 47 : 33 ] Because normally the separation of the wheat and chaff is something that takes place at the end of days. We're just supposed to kind of go along, and that's kind of how life has been up until now.

We just kind of go along, the chaff looks like wheat, and we're not sure which is chaff and which is wheat, which is the weeds and which is true grain. But now, right before our eyes, this is a spiritual event.

We're able to see a separation of wheat and chaff. The light versus darkness right in front of us. Those on the top grieve, but those who are grieving, but not without hope.

They have a hope that goes beyond this life. On the bottom, you see a people who are also grieving, but they are grieving through the lens of hopelessness.

[ 48 : 41 ] They have no hope, beyond the grave. The only hope that they have is in this life. And so for them, the only justice that they will see is a justice that they try to bring about at their own hands.

And their justice is perverted because it doesn't include Christ. So we see this on full display, in our world.

All they have is this life, and their only reaction is to actually, John 10, 10 is a picture of this. The thief, the enemy, comes only to steal, kill, and destroy.

Those on the bottom, those during the George Floyd, what did we see? We saw exactly that. Those who were stealing, killing, and destroying. Full display.

But what did we see when it came to Charlie Kirk's assassination? Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

[ 49 : 58 ] what we saw from them was, Lord, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

We're told to pray that way, aren't we? And if you watched that memorial, or if you saw any parts of it, it was remarkable in that sense, that we saw, as it were, the kingdom of heaven coming down.

A little foretaste of God's will coming down. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And during the George Floyd protests, what we saw there was a group of people pulling from the pit of hell, hell on earth, death, destruction, maiming, tearing down, everything that the devil represents.

That's what we saw right in front of our eyes. Now, it has been popular in the last 10, 20 years for preachers to say things like, well, I'm not either left or right.

[ 51 : 30 ] I believe the church shouldn't be either left or right. We need to be able to speak to both sides, and we need to be above the fray, and I believe in a third way.

If you pay attention to these things, that's what it was called, the third way, the middle way, that we're going to just focus on Jesus, that's what matters.

Matter of fact, the famous saying was, I'm not either a donkey or an elephant. I represent the slain lamb. Oh, that sounds nice.

It sounds good. We need to seek unity. People are crying for that today.

We need to be unified. Well, I need to make something very clear.

[ 52 : 35 ] We are not going to be unified with your perversion or your transgenderism. We are not going to be unified with your chaos and your lawlessness and your godlessness.

We will not do this. We will not. Now, I believe, and this might sound like a contradiction after what I just said, I believe that we shouldn't be left or right.

I actually believe that. what I believe is that we should drill down deep into the truth of the gospel, into truth of theology, what God has said in his word, that we need to drill down deep, make that our foundation, and here I stand.

we have been preaching the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ down through the years.

What has changed is culture. The culture shifts left and right and forward and backward and here and there.

[ 53 : 55 ] and by culture, you can also use the word politics. Where the culture goes, politicians go, because that's how they are.

Politicians go where the faces are, where the people are, where the culture is at. They lick their finger and stick it in the wind and say, which way is the wind blowing today?

That's the direction I need to go. And we should say, no, sir. here I stand. I will not move. In the United States, we've had 25 decades, 250 years, shifting culture, left and right, forward and backward, whichever way.

the church of Jesus Christ needs to stand firm and grounded on the truth of the word of God so that whichever way the wind blows, whichever way the culture goes, whichever way the politicians go, we are right here, firm.

And when the culture and politicians start veering toward pushing immorality and perversion and lawlessness and godlessness, then we say, no, sir.

[ 55 : 29 ] God has said, thus saith the Lord, we will not be moved. And you might say that this is now acceptable and this is now acceptable and we say, no, sir.

And we will speak truth to power in those moments. And when culture and politicians shift and begin promoting moral truth and gospel imperatives and good theology, in that moment we say, praise the Lord, cheer them come on, you get my vote.

And this is where we stand. I want to say, if you've looked at the memorial service for Charlie Kirk and you saw all that was being presented there and you were responding in a cynical way and all those people and I can't believe, then you're looking and receiving information from media and sources that are not allowing you to see what was right in front of your eyes.

The truth of the gospel was proclaimed over and over again in song and in word from pastor types, from politician types.

You had, we had politicians from our own federal government who gave clearer presentations of the gospels than many pastors from pulpits on Sunday mornings.

[ 57 : 22 ] Praise God! Please put more of that in my veins today, right now. I need that. We need that. As a nation, we should be cheering that on.

What are we thinking? So many people saw that multiple presentations of the gospel clearly spoken.

Many came to faith in Jesus Christ as a result of that. Multiple millions of people watched it worldwide. And if my response to that is cynicism, oh, that's Trump.

Anything Trump touches. Man, I get it. There are some people who don't like Donald Trump. I get that. But if you're allowing that to cloud your judgment of what's happening in this spiritual moment, you're missing it.

You're missing a move of God that is among us, a revival that is happening. Here I stand.

[ 58 : 51 ] I will not be moved. compassion that leaves Jesus out is not compassion at all.

Right? The same idea, the same thought there. How is it compassion if I help somebody out of the gutter but never tell them about Jesus?

Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. A person's greatest need is not their current problem or their current issue.

That might be what they're screaming, what their life, what their world, what their circumstances are screaming for. I've got this issue. I can't eat. I can't work. I can't pay the bills.

I've gotten sick. I've got this disease. My kid is in trouble. We have current needs. But the greatest need that anyone ever has is eternal.

[ 59 : 55 ] We need Jesus. So trying to provide these ministries without Jesus just, it doesn't make any sense. Again, do not rejoice in that the spirits are subject to, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

That's the thing. That's what matters. Now, the flip side of this is also a consideration here.

Sharing Jesus with others without serving their physical needs has little credibility. We're called to do both, right? The disciples were called to go into the towns and do two things, heal the sick and preach the gospel.

We're called to do the same thing as well, to go into the towns and to meet needs and to preach the gospel. It's just what we're called to do.

Again, we see it in Jesus' own ministry earlier in Matthew 4. He went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction.

[ 61 : 03 ] It was two things. He always did the two. Another aspect of this is love without truth. We need to be able to speak truth.

Love without truth is just, I'll add the word here, mushy, sentimentality. I didn't know if it was professional for me to use the word mushy.

Mushy. But it's just sentimentality. It's not serving any good. Again, we're told to speak the truth in love.

So there's a flip side of this. Truth without love is just cruelty. If I'm just going to preach the gospel and hound people and argue with people and not care about their current circumstances, that's not right either.

So we do both. Finally, go where the harvest is. go where the harvest is.

[ 62 : 16 ] Again, we see this in Luke 2. I mentioned it before. He said, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into this harvest.

And he sent them. Wherever you, whatever house you enter, say, peace be this. If the son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. They will accept you. Right? And then verse 10, whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you.

Move on. Move on. What we tend to do is we focus on need. People who need the gospel.

Listen, that's a lot of people in this world. The need is there. But what Jesus, I think, is telling us, generally speaking, now there are times people are called to go to a hard place, particularly missionaries.

But we should focus on where the fruit is, the receptive heart, the person who's willing to listen.

That's where we focus.

[ 63 : 27 ] Not on the arguments. Boy, social media is the opposite of this. Social media, we're going to spend all of our time and energy and the arguments and the debates and the and I would tell you, knock it off.

Have conversations with people who are receptive to what you have to say. There is a time for debate, there is a time for argument, but not many people are equipped like a Charlie Kirk to pull it off well.

And so be aware of the way that God has created you. Be ready to give an answer for the reason why you believe. Absolutely. Be ready, but don't get bogged down in debate and argument and that kind of thing.

And this is where we come to this moment in the service that I am not prepared for and not ready, but I just felt like the Lord was saying to me, I need to do this.

We're going to sing a song together. And I just put this together last night. It wasn't fair to put this on Tom in that short amount of time, so I just got some track music and we're just going to sing along.



