

Reaching Our Community Part 2

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Preacher: Matt Coburn

[0 : 0 0] so today I'm hoping to do two things during the Sunday school this is actually a bonus class I don't know if you had noticed but originally we had planned to end last week and start a different series but for a number of reasons we ended up not doing that which gave us an extra week in this class and remind me at the end to make sure you know what's coming up but I figure it'd be worth waiting until the end and maybe a few more people will be here to know but that's but we have some really we have some really good stuff going on so so what I'm hoping to do today is to actually pick up and try to take Peter's Sunday school class from last week into a little bit more discussion about application and actually try it so I want to look at three passages really briefly and then talk about what does it look like and then I want to just if you guys have been a part of this class for the last five weeks and if you have questions about things we've been teaching about obviously the overall if you haven't been coming the overall plan or the overall topic that we've been looking at is the beauty of the body and what we've meant by that is trying to get a glimpse into how the new testament thinks about our lives communally rather than individually and so we've looked at the significance of how in our salvation we're not just called individually to know God but we are called into a body into a family into a community of the people of God and how that shapes our identity and then we looked at various dynamics of how being a part of the the body of Christ meant for us to be growing and we should expect to grow because we are with one another and not just individually we should expect to grow as we serve one another pastor Greg talked about how do we live out our the one another's and seek to find our spiritual gifts to serve and to give to one another we talked about how um uh how discipleship and expecting relationships to be a part of our growth should be a part of it we talked a little bit about the role of correction and discipline in spiritual growth and how that's a communal activity uh it it obviously can be a one-on-one activity but ultimately it's a communal activity um that when we become members of the body of Christ we become accountable um and that's a blessing to us that we have others who care about us and and love us and then uh as as Peter wanted to explore last week and I think he spent the bulk of the time talking about the significance of being a part of the being a member of of the church um and uh uh maybe we didn't spend as much time as I had hoped and now we have extra time to do it talking about evangelism talking about how is it that uh we as a body um are meant to live out the call that God has given us in Matthew 28 18 through 20 to make disciples of all nations Mr Smith has a question I thought Peter was very clear last week on this application yes do something yes amen absolutely maybe you could use a little bit more detail yeah yes no I I actually want to I I've I've broken it down I'm I'm hoping that we'll be able to uh look at a few a few um passages really quickly just to lay down brief principles and then look at two different contexts or arenas wherein our communal life is a part of our uh outreach uh to others in in our community so that's what we're going to do let me pray and then we'll get started okay Lord thank you for this morning and thank you for the snow and for the beauty of it and for Lord the reminder uh that uh the work that you have done for us in Jesus has washed uh your children white as snow that you have cleansed us from our sin and the beauty of the morning like this reminds us of the beauty of our forgiveness uh that we have in Christ Lord I pray today that as we um talk together about your word as we think about the mission you've called us to as a church Lord as we worship together later uh Lord that you will bless us and that you will be with us we pray this in Jesus name amen okay um if you have bibles or on your phone or whatever um I'd like to get three people just to help me read three different passages um if you're ready to do that give me a high sign Laura can you look at John 13 31 someone else Daniel can you look at John 17 20 and what Laura can you look at first Thessalonians 1 8 um and as I said um uh what we're going to focus in on this morning is how is it that being called to be a part of the community connects with I think we often think about sharing our faith as being an individual

enterprise i have to have a conversation with this person and there's something that's very real about that and very true and that's a good thing to think about but i want to focus on the corporate aspects of outreach so um laura let's laura not laura laura let's start with john 13 31 um and uh read nice and loud so everyone can hear when he had gone out jesus said now is the son of man glorified and god is glorified in him uh oh keep going to 35 if god is glorified in him god will also glorify him in himself and glorify him at once little children get a little while i'm with you you will seek me and just as i said to the jews so now also i say to you where i am going you cannot come a new commandment i give to you that you love one another just as i have loved you you are also to love one another by this all people will know that you are my disciples that you have love for one another all right for all of us who grew up early enough to know the old they will know we are christians by right this is where it comes from right it's in the bible um that uh um and obviously this is such a rich passage jesus is uh um has this is the turning point in the book of john well whereby jesus has been going through and saying my hour's not yet come my hour's not yet come and now he says now the hour has come and he's talking about his crucifixion and his resurrection but in the context of that and talking about the display of his glory and his relationship with the father he then turns to his disciples and the thing that he says to them is i give you a new commandment to love one another and by this the world will know by this all people will know that you are followers of me now some of that is an identity thing it's a it's a recognition oh those people follow jesus that's why they do what it is um but if you've ever wondered about why in first peter three peter tells the the the christians there to be ready to give an answer for the hope that they for the hope that they live in um i think it's connected to this there's meant to be a characteristic or quality in our lives that is distinctive in such a way that as though those who don't know god look at us they go huh i don't know what that is but it's really interesting i think i'm not even sure maybe it's scary but whatever it is it's different and i'm and and there's something about it there's a distinctiveness that comes out of it um and it's it's so striking to me that what of all the things that jesus could have said for his people to be characterized by to be the badges so to speak of what it means to be a follower of jesus being loving to one another is the most important one good so that's principle number one the power of love huey lewis yeah all right sorry just had to put it in there all right um secondly john uh 17 can you read that daniel uh 20 through 23 i do not ask for these only but also for those who may be in me in their works that they may all be one just as you father are in me and i in you that they also may be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me the glory that you have given me i have given to them that they may be one even as we are one i in them and you and me that they may be come perfectly one so that the world may know that you sent me and love them even as you love me okay we're getting into like we're gonna have time to get into the depths of the theology of this this is jesus high priestly prayer for believers um and it's a beautiful prayer and in this part in particular if you notice twice he said that the world may know right and remember that in john the world isn't just people the world is actually the the world systems that are set up in in opposition uh to to god and to his rule and reign in the world and so uh on this earth and so the world is actually a the enemy so to speak of god not just sort of a neutral term as we saw in john 13 and uh and so he and what he's focusing on here actually is unity right he's talking about the unity of the community and the unity the community flows from the reality of god and our communion with god do you see that i and you i and them and you and me so that they may be perfectly one um verse 23 right um that there's a sense in which the unity and and i will just say it like this is part of what i when i brag about our church um one of the things that i brag about is that you walk into our church and i think you would see a group of people who would never congregate any in any other place for any other reason um and what we what we see and thankfully in our church we see this in a beautiful way um we live in a diverse city and we have a diverse church and that's a beautiful thing um and i think it's one of the special things that god has given us as a church as a means of doing this in a in a in a wonderful way and so but recognizing that if the power of love for one another is one of the things that the scriptures point to as a part of our witness in the world the power of unity is another one now just to remind you that we talked about correction and discipline two weeks ago and unity is not unity at all costs unity is not the end goal it is god and his kingdom that are that are the end goal and therefore there are appropriate times for conflict um when there is strain and there's a lot of church history recognizing how difficult it's been to actually determine when unity is worth fighting for and when purity or uh holiness or doctrinal correctness has been worth fighting for um but for what we're talking about today i just simply want to say so if one of the characteristics is love the second one is

unity and that jesus explicitly says this is the markers by which the world will know god all right laura uh first thessalonians 1 8 through 10 the lord's message rang out from you not only in macedonia and aca your faith in god has become known everywhere therefore we do not need to say anything about it for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us they tell they tell how you turned to god from idols to serve the living and true god and to wait for his son from heaven whom he raised from the dead jesus who rescues us from the coming wrath okay again so much in this passage that i'm completely ignoring um but but the interesting thing here that i want you to see is that it says your uh the word of the lord has sounded forth from you your faith has gone forth everywhere what does that mean well i think what it means as you keep reading in verses 9 and 10 is that the power of the gospel transforming their lives individually and corporately to turn from cultural likeness sameness to countercultural turning from the god from idols to serve the true and living god um that that transformation and that clarity of a countercultural community um has had this amplifying effect whereby the things that they have believed as is being is resounding in this in this you know uh reverberation um throughout the area um that they've heard of these people who used to live one way and now they live another way um and uh you know it makes me think of the samaritan woman you know as jesus has his encounter with her and points her to a hope that she's not known before points her to water to drink that she's never had before points her to a worship that she's never known before at the end of it such a striking thing she runs back to the village and you know what she says not hey here's a man who showed me grace and accepted me when the rest of you were just a bunch of jerks uh she didn't say i'm an i'm an outcast and down and now and now now i've been accepted what did she say come see a man who told me everything that i did isn't it striking right now all those other things were true about how jesus taught her but when she went back the thing that she said is my sin has been exposed and now i'm not afraid of it anymore how countercultural is that how beautiful is that and that's what she trumpeted and anyway it's just a little it's it strikes me as a as a interesting example so love unity and countercultural living and i want to say countercultural i mean that every time we engage with culture in every culture there are some places where there's resonance of the gospel and there are some places where there's resistance to the gospel so countercultural in and of itself is not a distinctively christian thing what we need to recognize is that um we ought to be different and i think that in our moment in american history and american church history we have lived for quite a long time believing that you can be a faithful follower of jesus and not really have to stand out a lot from the culture that we live in that there's been enough resonance that it has not it at least we've come to believe that that might be so um and i think that day is closing it might not the lord may revive our country the lord may work in wonderful ways uh but i think that for us to be wise we ought to be prepared and as we're thinking about witness then recognize that this is a beautiful opportunity so what i want to think about then in practice for the next 15 or 20 minutes is what does this look like and how does it work and i want to think about two contexts one of the contexts in which we live out our corporate life in a way that is accessible and and uh meaningful to other people is when we gather for corporate worship so when we come together on sunday mornings right we we as a leadership we as a church i hope have an expectation that there are people there who don't know jesus yet there are people there who are who are there because they want to know jesus because or because they're being drawn by in whatever way they've been invited by a friend but as they come into the corporate worship service there should be things in the corporate worship service that help them display and understand the gospel more so that as they come and see our corporate worship evangelism is going on okay the second context that's the church gathered the second context is the church scattered um and this is where again i think we tend to have a very individualistic viewpoint where okay we when we scatter we skin to scatter atomistically and we just live but what i want to i want us to think about is where or how might there be places or platforms uh whereby our corporate life can happen not here as we gather on sundays but corporate life out in and among our everyday life can be significant in displaying the power of love unity and countercultural living um to those around us who don't know christ so that is the question that i want those are the things that i want to explore so let's start with corporate worship in what ways do you see in our corporate worship there are things that happen that might be displaying that might be meaningful to someone who doesn't yet know christ um for them to come to understand the gospel more clearly danu the prayer confession why do you say that somebody who doesn't know god probably doesn't know that their center is the savior okay so that prayer confession that corporate prayer is uh probably the first time they'll see wow i had no idea that i was a part of this mad

perfection away from god yeah yeah yeah yes matt smith i i was gonna say the same thing yeah um yeah because in in our culture you know i'm okay you're okay you know nobody can say mm-hmm except of course we know those hypocrites christians are wrong they think they're better than everybody else interesting yeah um so that confesses at least that we have the opposite of ourselves yep yep no i think that's right the prayer confession is one of the things we're very intentional about because we want it to we want

[20 : 17] us to recognize the reality and the power of sin uh and our need for our salvation this is true as an unbeliever it is true as a believer for us to increasingly take hold of the gospel because as we take hold of the gospel in increasing matter as we take hold of what god has done for us in christ this then breaks the power of sin in our lives and allows us to pursue the holy living that we're called to live um but we do so not not in a self-reliant and self-righteous way but we do it uh in the mode of grace recognizing that all of this is not because we deserve it but in fact only because we don't uh that god can do this so yeah other thoughts about tyler yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah no i think that's right yeah i think related to that it's just the the variety you can see on the platform and that it's it's not just like the white men who do this you know yep yep yep and i will just say that that's something we work hard at i don't know if we do it perfectly um and uh but it is something that we work hard at not in a and again the challenge is to do it not in a sort of affirmative action sense right if i were in uh northern vermont and i lived in a white town i'd have a white church right there's nothing wrong with that um but what what what we what i would say is that ideally a church there there are different ways to think about i want to be careful not to throw stones too hard but uh there are some churches that might think the best way to reach a community is to reach inside of it right and look we recognize we're not reaching the african-american community in new haven in the same way that say um christian tabernacle over in new hall villas they're doing exactly what they should be doing and we can never replicate what they're doing and so um and their community is mostly african-american uh and that's and it reflects the neighborhood that they're in so it's a good thing but what i want to say is that part again this is part of the way in which i see there's a broader unity this is why i'm really encouraged by bridges of hope the broader unity of evangelical churches in the city and the fact that we're talking to one another and thinking about how to work together you know if you get a chance to be around this summer during i heart new haven to see people from all the churches come together it's a pretty cool thing it's pretty amazing and you realize wow the church is a lot bigger here than i thought and it's a lot more diverse um and uh and one of the things you realize is it's a lot less white than maybe you you might think uh in new haven and that's a good thing um and so but yes we work we work hard to make to to have those up front reflect the diversity of our of our congregation is how i would say it so other thoughts keep up

Yeah, no, I think it is. And we're intentional about that. It's, you know, one of the things that we work on as we're doing that is recognizing, you know, and this is true in other parts of the service too. Part of what we want to do is strike a balance.

There was at one time in the 80s, if you remember the 80s and Willow Creek, and there was a whole movement to make church about reaching unchurched people. And in doing that, they moved the focus of a corporate gathering to be really primarily evangelism and nothing else. And I will say I think it was an overreaction. It had a good heart, but it was an overreaction. I think as we think about corporate worship here, we believe that we are called to gather to worship God and to sit under the preaching of his word.

And that primarily is what we do as we gather together. But what we want to be is not seeker-oriented, but we do want to be seeker-sensitive in a way of saying, hey, we want to acknowledge you're here.

[25 : 22] We want to acknowledge that. We want to expect that there are unbelievers in the church gathering, that there are people who are still, who are seeking God, who are understanding. And we also always want to understand that there are some people who have always grown up in church and yet don't actually know the gospel.

And so we want to recognize these dynamics and acknowledge them in hopes of giving space, like, hey, we know you're here. Like when we do communions, like, hey, we know you're here. Don't take this, but that's okay.

We're not saying that's a bad thing. Don't feel some peer pressure to do this because everyone else is. Do this because it's meaningful. And hey, if it's not meaningful for you in this way yet, then that's okay.

That's the hope behind it. You know, you can give us feedback if we're not doing it very well. But that's a part of it. Any other thoughts about corporate worship? Yeah.

Yeah. Baptism. The public baptisms are really powerful. Yep. Yep. Yeah.

[26 : 27] Yeah. That's probably, for me, that's one of the most powerful things. Yeah. Yeah. Being a Baptist. No.

No, but it's true, right? You just think the Lord has given us two ordinances, two rituals to regularly practice as a part of our church. And in both of them, there's this beautiful display of the gospel and this beautiful clarity of what God has done for us in Christ as it's lived out in individual lives.

You know, the baptism testimonies are some of the most powerful things we have. And so, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. It's a wonderful thing. All right. So, at the risk of, like, we're on the risk of becoming Episcopalians here.

So, hopefully, the preaching of God's word is also a meaningful part of our outreach. And, again, this is something where we'd love, I will speak on behalf of the pastors who preach.

We would love to hear feedback as to how successful we're being in recognizing the breadth of who is there and speaking to different ones during the sermon as we think about application and that sort of thing.

[27 : 46] I will say that fundamentally, this is fundamentally one of the things that we talk about regularly is that in every passage there is a fallen condition exposed.

And there is a pointing to the redemptive work of Christ. And if you want to think about this, you can take notes for the next three months and tell us how well we're doing on are you seeing what is the fallen condition?

What is the sin condition that this passage exposes in our lives or displays in our lives? And then how is it that this passage points us to the redemptive work of Christ?

And along the way, hopefully, we're going to do a lot of other teaching about ethics and about the character of God, about all sorts of things. But there should be this subtext of that's going to be a regular part of what you're going to hear from the pulpit.

And so just so you know, that's a part of our intentionality. And every once in a while, one of us will get up there and say, all right, it's Family Sunday.

[28 : 49] What our topic is is really in-house. And if you're here and you're visiting, we hope you'll see what God has called his church to be. But they're probably not for you. You know, I mean, we're not that blunt, but we – but it's – every once in a while, I feel like there's – I don't – yeah, I just have to start with that.

To say, hey, we know you're here and we're glad you're here. This isn't going to be quite for you, but don't be turned off by that. So that's the hope. So – all right.

I want to turn a corner and start thinking about – oh, can I just say one other thing about it?

Singing. We live in a culture today that doesn't gather to sing. It used to be more true in American culture, I think. People have various ways of just gathering and singing.

It doesn't happen anymore. And we just take it for granted. We just take for granted, oh, hymns, oh, yeah, we're singing again, okay. But really, it's a distinctive thing that the church does.

[29 : 56] Can I just say something? Yeah. So I was having a conversation, this is a couple years ago, but with my mother and my aunt, who are not believers. Please. And they were talking about how people don't sing anymore.

They grew up in that culture that sang a lot. And they knew a lot of the – all the same songs in that game from a certain generation. And they were talking about, you know, we don't do that enough. Nobody does that. And then they, like, looked at me and goes, oh, in church I guess you sing. I'm like, yeah, we sing. And it was something – it was countercultural and attractive as well.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, go ahead, Laura. Sorry. Please, jump in. This is going to be separate from singing. Jump in. Okay. But I think also for ways that display God's grace and God's glory in corporate worship is also just the relationships that are built.

It's really encouraging. I've heard many people at Trinity say, like, their first time just people come up and talk to them and introduce themselves. And, I don't know, that reflection of that God desires to know people, where they are, where they're coming from, pray with them.

[31 : 08] And so, I don't know, it's at the end of service or sometimes used to do it in the middle with the opportunity to turn and meet someone, not just in our own world.

Yeah. It's hard for me. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yes. I wrote down a list of things that ruin our corporate worship and corporate witness.

Formalism and routine, when it becomes rote rather than meaningful. Performance and sexist self-exaltation, when those up front are making it about them, it pretty much ruins it for the witness of the glory of God is lost.

I think one of them, and maybe this is what, I thought of this because it was tying to what you were saying, Laura, is I think that we can, it's very easy for us today to fall into an audience attitude. I'm here to get what I want as long as you're giving me good enough that it's worth me coming. And obviously, you guys, you're sitting here in Sunday school, it's not you who are doing that, right? [32 : 11] But recognize, recognize that this is a cultural pattern and it's a danger for, it's a danger for churches. And it's a danger for churches to run after trying to please people in these ways rather than saying, no, this is who we are.

We gather because there's something worth gathering around, which is God himself. And so just recognizing that those are some of the barriers. So I want to move on because I think the other part is equally as important.

And I wonder, I just would love to hear your thoughts because I see what happens around here a lot more than I see what happens out there. But as we are a dispersed community thinking about how our communal life has impact on others, you know, you think of the constant command, right? Loving your neighbor. Like, what does that look like? And how is that not just an individual? Is there a corporate aspect to that? How do we live counter-culturally without being weird? You know, let's not pursue weirdness.

We think that's not a good goal. The fact is we're going to be weird when we follow Jesus. Weird enough as it is, we don't have to pursue it for its own sake.

[33 : 29] And, you know, how do we think about, in the context of that, how do we think about being known as people who are for things rather than against things? And it's like, we're going to be both at the end, right?

We can't not be against things in our, you know, because we should be. We should be against evil in the world, right? The hard part is when we disagree, perhaps at times, with our culture about what would be right and wrong in the midst of it.

But how do we be for things? And how do we be an inviting community? How do we, you know, we live in a very fragmented society where communities are not easily built?

And they're often built around common interests. It's very easy for the church to become insular. How do we become a community that's actually porous or even expansive in its loving of people? Thoughts? What does it look like for you guys? What have been some of the challenges? What have been some of the encouraging moments where you've seen God work through community as a dispersed church?

[34 : 40] Yeah, Tyler. I have two thoughts. The first one, I think the limitations in our particular circumstances, I think we're not far away from the church. So I think proximity hinders to some extent just organic fellowship that would happen throughout the week.

So I think our goal is important to be close to the distance-wise. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think, secondly, one of the things I've seen in this church is, you know, kind of see it like in the Book of Acts where, like, missionaries would come back to a church and then share what's going on and, you know, what's God doing in the surrounding regions?

I think we're going to let a common side come. Mm-hmm. About the kings in Austria. Like, there's just a way that we can, we see that God is working, and that kind of reorients ourselves to, like, God is doing things outside of this church.

Yeah. Amen. Yeah. No, that's great. Thanks, Tyler. Other thoughts? Laura? What came to mind was, and I haven't experienced it at this church just because I haven't muted it, but when the community would provide meals for someone who's just had a baby or has been ill or something like that, I know that in previous, you know, when I've had that happen, like, my family notices that. Mm-hmm. And you're like, really? Like, really? They're bringing you dinner? How long? You know? Mm-hmm. And it's striking. Yep. Yep. Yep. Yep. And if you don't know, we actually do do that quite a bit as churches, as a church.

[36 : 12] For our young moms, for people recovering from illness, it's actually something that we work hard to provide as much as is needed and wanted. And so if you're one of those people who loves to serve in that way and you don't know about it, you can let Michelle know and you can get

on the list.

So, other ways. Yeah, Demetrius. I think, for me, the verse that comes to mind is, you know, don't let your light be under a basket.

Mm-hmm. I'm not invested with, you know, what you're saying and going through, you know, four points of salvation. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. And that really wouldn't be well received in my professional environment.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. To see, yeah. Mm-hmm. But one thing that's very effective is just, you know, not I expect that I'm a Christian. Yeah. What I believe in that I go to church and that I have these crazy beliefs that perhaps the other faculty don't have.

Yeah. I'm not ashamed of it. Yeah. I can see over the 14 years I've been there that it's made an impact, you know, on families and people professionally that I've been in contact with.

[37 : 29] And just as a kind of anecdote, one of the faculty moved away, leaving to go with them to take a different job in California.

Yeah. And we had been with that family for many years on holidays and stuff. And it was over Thanksgiving when they asked us to pray after that. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. You know, we're in their home.

But they know that when they're in our home, we pray, you know. Yeah. So it was very, and they got emotional, you know. Yeah. They were, you know, moved. And it was kind of interesting, you know, because I wasn't expecting that.

Mm-hmm. You know, I thought, okay, and rub-a-dub-dub, thanks for the growth. You know, but this meant a lot to them that we had these beliefs. Yeah. Yeah. And we were their friends and they're moving out.

So I think, you know, you don't, you know, we're all humans. You don't know what impact you're having on someone. Mm-hmm. You know, and you just have to be who you are. Yeah.

[38 : 28] And be open about who you are. I think that's what happens. Yeah. No, I, yeah. Especially in the science ministry, it's not about how they're going to be good at it.

Yeah, yeah. But it's so generous, and I think that, we're called to that to come in. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yep. It's countercultural. People don't drop by.

It's not. Yeah. It's not organic. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Mm-hmm. Yep.

Yep. Yep. Yep. Yep. Yep. And we're struggling. I'll just say this. Like, as a church, we're struggling to figure out, how do we do this in what is functionally a more post-Christian culture, and recognizing that post-Christian is very different from non-Christian, because post-Christian has these, like, reactive sensibilities.

It's like, don't force your religion on me, right? That is an underlying assumption that you all, I think, live with probably every day. Like, people are just assuming, I have to navigate the question of how do I interact with this person and be authentic in my spiritual life, and yet not somehow feel like I'm imposing on them.

[39 : 51] Does that sound familiar? Yeah. Right? So it's, that's a very common thing, and I think, and I do think that there's a place for just faithful presence with openness, and then, as you're saying, Julie, hospitality is a really, really wonderful gift that the Lord has given us, and for those of us who are able to do it, it gives, it, well, I think we're maybe all able to do it in different ways, but I think that hospitality is a very countercultural way of loving people and creating a space for relationship that often doesn't exist in their lives.

So. All right.

I'm going to go ahead and close this. This is a wonderful conversation. I hope it will continue. I hope it will spark thoughts of, like, how do you do this with other people? How do small groups become welcoming, you know, sponges that draw people in?

And, you know, how do we have communities where, you know, where, you know, my friend might not be ready to come to church, but they'd be willing to hang out on a Saturday afternoon at a barbecue with some of my friends from church.

Right? And, like, how do I create those? How can I be intentional about building some of those things? And yet recognizing, you know, some of us will be very gifted in evangelism and we'll be going for it all the time.

[41 : 20] Hey, what do you know about Jesus? Let me talk to you about. And amen. And we should be doing that. We should be thinking and praying for those. But recognize not all of us are

going to, it's not always going to look like that. And this is where communal evangelism sometimes is really helpful.

Right? Because you get a room full of people and you get Lorna there and Lorna's going to share the gospel with everybody. And then the rest of us can just love people and be authentic and real and it'll be a good thing.

So, anyway, just to recognize there's lots of things. I will just say, like, in closing, this is how I came to Christ. When I was in high school, there were a couple of, just a handful, two, three, of my classmates who knew Jesus.

And they were involved in a ministry. I was actually post-Christian. I was like, you guys think you're all special. And it didn't help. They posted prayer lists in their lockers. Like, we're praying for these ten people to come to know Jesus.

And I knew I was on the list. I was like, wait a minute. I was not impressed by that. I'm not sure that was a wise move on their part. But the praying was good.

[42 : 23] The list was poor. But honestly, in the Lord's grace, I tried the party scene and it was, I just found it very empty. And the other people I had to hang out with were my high school friends, or were my Christian friends.

And as I hung out with them, I could tell you, I saw something in them. I could not tell you what it was. I did not connect it to Jesus for a long time.

But whatever it was, I knew they had something that I wanted to be around more. And as they shared their lives with me, I began to see that it came from Christ.

And then I needed the Lord to give me C.S. Lewis. And I needed them to have actually verbally shared the gospel with me along the way as well. But me being brought into this community of friendship was one of the critical pieces of how God brought me to faith many years ago.

So may he do it much more among us. I'm going to go ahead and pray. And then Kirsten probably would maybe love a little bit of help setting up some tables. So let's pray.

[43 : 33] Lord, thanks for this morning. Lord, thanks as we gather to worship you that we recognize, Lord, how worthy you are. Lord, that it is because of your goodness and your grace and your wonder and your majesty.

Lord, that all of this is worthwhile and meaningful. Lord, you are worthy of our praise. Lord, as we gather here and as we disperse into our week, Lord, may we be those who cherish the worthiness of our Savior in all that we do.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Oh, next week, really quickly. Rachel Gilson, who is a supported missionary who comes from an LGBT background in her life.

She came to faith out of that. She is going to do Sunday school next week on thinking biblically about homosexuality and sexual identity.

She is then going to, after the service, stay for a lunch. The college lunch is inviting everyone to college lunch. So Rachel can share some more about how to think about engaging in our culture and with those who are struggling with same-sex attraction and other sexual identity issues.

[44 : 55] So I wanted to let you know that a little more explicitly. The announcement upstairs may be a little bit less explicit. But just so we all know what we're talking about, this is what we're talking about next week.

And then after that, four weeks with Rhys Bezant, who is our friend who comes from Australia to do study leave. He teaches at a seminary there, and he's going to do four weeks on the nature of worship.

And look at the blurb. It looks really cool. It's like why the church is a gym and a coffee shop. I can't remember, but it looks really cool. So, hey, Kirsten. Kirsten, can I interrupt you for a second?

Would you like some people to set up some tables? Yes, we need 15 round tables with chairs. All right, if able-bodied people could. We need to get the tables out first so we can reach those rectangular ones in the back.

We need to get those down here before the round tables are in the way. All right, there we go.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.