

# Gospel Centered Outreach

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[ 0 : 00 ] Romans 7, right? All right, let's jump in this. So the question I like to ask you when I started here today is, as a kid, what did you think that the measure of making it is? Like, what did you think, if I ever have this in life, then I've really made it, or I'm really now an adult? I don't know what your answer is. I'd love to hear it after the service, but for me, it was having a business card. I thought for sure, if I ever got to a place in life where I had a business card, then I would have to make it. I somehow probably thought they were issued by the government, and so that somehow you could, not anybody could just have a business card, but then I got to 18 and realized I could just make my own business card, all right? I'm like, I've made it. All I had to do was make one, and so I made a business card, and it only had like 15 words on it, and of course, I had a typo. There's only 15 words. I didn't have Wendy and Bo and other people to help me protect myself from myself, and so I had a pretty big typo on it, and I was with Stephanie's dad at a steak and shake, and there's an evangelist there named Lou Rossi, and I was handing everybody at the table my business card. I was going to be involved in this program in the summer, neighborhood Bible time, and I made a card, and I handed it out to him. He was so proud. You know,

I've arrived. Take my business card, and he looked at it, and he said, what is your ministry going to be? Because according to this verse, you are going to persecute the churches, and I'm like, what are you talking about? And he said, I said, Acts 1.8.

That means that they went out into the world, and they were witnesses in Jerusalem, and Judea, and Samaria. That's what I put on the card. He said, no, you didn't. You put Acts 8.1. Acts 8.1 says, and Saul was consenting unto the death, and at the time, there was a great persecution against the church, and so he said, now exactly what are you going to do this summer with the churches? And so I threw away 497 business cards, all right, and I realized I haven't arrived yet, but in that verse, great results come from that. From Acts chapter 8.1, there's a persecution in the church. If you want to look there, and I'll share it with you. It'll be here on the screen, but verse 3 and 4 says what happened. There was a scattering of Christians by persecution that would not have, that create ministry. There's a scattering of Christians, and that because of persecution, and it results in the gospel going forward. That's what verse 3 and 4 says. As for Saul, he had made havoc of the church, entering the every house, and hailing men and women, committed them to prison.

That wasn't what I wanted to do. That's what Paul did, all right? But verse 4 says, therefore, that they were scattered abroad, went everywhere, preaching the word. The church was scattered, scattered, the members went out, and the gospel went forward. And so a question that would be obvious for us to ask as a body, as a congregation, as believers, not an audience, a congregation, not an organization, but a living body, as we saw last week, is if we were to be scattered, would the gospel go forth? It's a worthy question. Another way to ask that is, what does Vision Baptist Church look like on Monday mornings or Tuesday mornings? This time tomorrow, as we are scattered, does the gospel go forward? And it's a reasonable question for us to ask as God's people. I understand the challenge in front of me today because I live with the same challenge every day. By God's grace through you, I get to live my life fully given to this work. But I struggle living my life evangelistically.

I struggle having that conversation with people. And so I have no desire to bring guilt or shame to you. Both of those are poor and short-lived motivators. But when it comes to gospel proclamation or evangelism or witnessing, all words I'll use as synonyms here, we need to be exhorted at times. We need to be equipped. But we also need to be encouraged. 1 Thessalonians 5.14 says this, Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. Comfort the feeble-minded. I thought you said you weren't going to offend us, okay? I'm not trying to offend you here, okay? Comfort the feeble-minded is the opposite of what was both said at the beginning where we said we're going to pray for boldness. Being feeble-minded is being discouraged. It's being timid is the opposite of boldness. So that we are told that we are supposed to encourage one another, to comfort one another when we're being timid and not being bold. And so we all know in here, I can go ahead and move past this. We all should know in here that the greatest need in all of the world is for believers to share the gospel. Nobody's going to make another argument.

[ 4 : 53 ] If I'm going to say this is what we do, we help people find and follow Jesus, we're going to share the gospel no matter how I said it, I don't imagine a single one of you would stand up and say, no, I think this would be more important. Because we know that making sure that people are ready to meet God is the most important thing that we can do. It's a priestly function that we are given as believers. And so I want to encourage you and me as feeble-minded, as timid people, as we want to live lives that are doing that. So first thing that I've said here in our notes here is the greatest possible news is found in holy scriptures. The absolute greatest possible news is found in the scriptures. The gospel addresses the worst news that you could ever hear, and it provides for you something that you could never imagine. And before we look exactly what is the gospel, I want to make sure that we're all on the same page in this fact, that there's a difference between the gospel and your testimony. There's a difference between the gospel and your testimony. I love sharing testimonies. I'm going to ask you tonight when we meet again at five that some of you would be willing to stand up and share your testimony. Maybe you've never done that in this group, and that right now you know that you should, and tonight you're going to be given an opportunity, or some of you just know it's been a while, and if you can't share your testimony among a group of believers, it's going to be even harder to do it outside in a world that is opposed to the things of God. But the content of the gospel is concerning Jesus Christ, and not my journey of faith. You see, witnessing is more than reciting a spiritual autobiography. We have before us here what is called the word of reconciliation. This message of reconciliation, and when we go out and share it, that is called the ministry of reconciliation. That is our ministry together, is this ministry of seeing a broken world reconciled to its creator. And so God's given us this message through the Holy Scriptures. Look at Romans 1, 2 through 4 here. In the first passage, the verse we'll look at in a moment, but look at verses 2 through 4. This is a three-verse description of the gospel, which he had promised the four by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures. And what's found in the Holy Scriptures? It's concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is made of the seed of David according to the flesh, is declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. I considered a visual in here for us today about would we leave the gospel in this building? I thought we could maybe, I could print out the gospel really big, or could get Bo in his 3D printer to print us out some gospel, wouldn't be big enough. But just put the gospel inside of this room and say, are we going to leave it in this place? Is this the only place that we get together and talk about it and sing about it and rejoice in it, or are we going to take it out of here? Maybe I put it as a big word out in the foyer on the wall, and that you would take it and you'd rip it off and we'd leave none of it behind, but we would take it with us out into the community.

You know, even more clear than that, not as an illustration, but literally, we have the word of God, we have the message of reconciliation contained here in the Holy Scriptures. We carry it with us.

Well, some of you would know that no basketball, I know you're not from Kentucky like me, so you may not know quite as much about basketball, but I'm just kidding. Pistol Pete, anybody know who Pistol Pete was? All right. And so there was an old movie about Pistol Pete, and it said that he carried the basketball, it showed he carried the basketball with him everywhere, riding a bicycle, bouncing the ball, everywhere he went, taking a basketball. Selah's in that stage right now. She likes to dribble a ball wherever she is at, carrying it with her. Could I encourage you here, as a means of a practical application, is to take the word of God with you. You carry with it the Holy Scriptures, the message that can reconcile man unto God. You should carry it with you. If you have one, if you have an office and you can put it on the desk, you should. You should have one in your car, you should take one everywhere with you. We live in a time where the Bible is the size of the pulpit here, all right? The Gutenberg isn't printing them off. It doesn't cost as much as a house, which the first Bibles would have. You have many copies of God's word, and praise God for that. Get more, not less, but make sure you have them available to you at all times and carry them with you, because we don't want to leave it behind.

It's the most important message in all the world, and we always want to carry it, all right? And we don't want a concealed carry on the gospel, all right? We want to carry it openly so that people will know. The Bible tells us, 2 Timothy 3.15, that the Scriptures, the Holy Scriptures, are able to make the, even as a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, that you're able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. In another room right now, and it's amazing that we can't hear them, the Holy Scriptures are being taught to our kids. Some of them have already put their faith in Jesus, and others haven't, but the day that they do, it won't be because of anything wonderful that Greg does, it's because their ears will hear the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures that will make them wise unto salvation.

And that's why we call it good news. It is good news. So what do we mean by good news? What is this good news we find in Scripture? I'll put this up here on the screen. Here's the gospel for you, and I'll look at some verses here in a second. But the gospel is the good news that the just and gracious God of the universe looked upon hopelessly sinful people and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, to bear His wrath against sin on the cross and to show His power over sin and the resurrection, so that all who have faith in Him will be reconciled to God forever. Verses 2, 3, and 4, that God came and He died in our place. And so here in the Scriptures, as David walked us through the book of Romans and different ones and 16 passages that spoke about the peace of God, the thing that people are looking for in this world, they're looking for peace, and it's offered here in this news. But we'll read about how Christ died on the cross for us so we can be reconciled. And also in Romans 5, we'll see that there was an enmity between us and God. There's a broken relationship because of our sin. In the Scriptures, we'll learn that Christ bore man's sin upon the cross in 1 Peter, that He went outside the camp and He died for us, and now peace is possible. We'll see in the Scriptures that because we're forgiven people, the wrath of God no longer abides upon us. And that trusting and the reconciling work of Christ, we pass from wrath and God's blessings from spiritual death to life from darkness to light. And that men, the sins are no longer reputed unto us. And the Bible screams it on every page. Some of you are in the book of Exodus, and you're seeing that man is a sinner. As you get to Exodus chapter 20, and you look at the Ten Commandments, and you see, I'm in need of a sacrifice in my place. And then you'll get to Leviticus, and you'll see there's a goat that was provided there, a sacrifice, and the priest will lay his hands upon him, and atonement will be made as the sin that will be laid upon the person. On all these pages, we see. One of my new favorite quotes is one by

[ 11 : 58 ] Donald Barnhouse that says, the shortest road to understanding of the Bible is the acceptance of the fact that God is speaking on every line. Anywhere I'd open this up, it's on every line.

Not just the red letters. Every letter is the Word of God speaking to us. God is speaking to you. And it's wonderful. It's held within, we could just stay here forever. It's held within a culture so you can understand, you can have cross-references. So somebody like Caleb Shifflett from the great state of Texas, he can read it, and somebody on the other side of the world in some kind of small town in some Asian country, when they read it, they don't not miss it because of some not understanding of culture, because all that they need to do is contain inside of the Scriptures that God has made Himself known to us, and it's wonderful.

And so how should we feel as we hold our Bible in our hands? We should feel as we hold the Bible that a loving God is showing me my need to be reconciled to Him. That's what I have right here, is that a loving God has shown me that I need to be reconciled to Him. That we were lost and we didn't know our way home, and this Word tells us this is the way home.

That I can come back to Him. The Holy Scriptures are able to make you wise in the salvation, and it will do the same for other people. The same Scripture that made you wise in the salvation can do that for other people. Luke and Cameron, the same Scripture that you hold in your hands is the same Scripture that will make your child someday Cameron and Luke's expecting, all right?

And I get to tell that, and I'm so happy about that, all right? I'm happy for many reasons, all right? One is because I keep worrying I'm going to say it when I'm not supposed to, and I'm supposed to say it. I'm allowed to say it right now, which is good. But Luke and Cameron, and all the things in the world that are available to that child, that I know that you're going to make sure that is available for them, that the Word that you hold in your hand will help you raise that child.

[ 13 : 56 ] It's a boy or girl. They're not going to find out, okay? So if you hear, don't tell them, all right? They don't want to know, all right? And some of you are wondering how that works. It wouldn't work, all right? Just don't worry about it, all right? Whatever, that boy or girl, that the Word of God.

So the Scriptures tell us, put it on the doorpost. Put it everywhere. Just put the Word of God everywhere. Because as kids grow up, and as adults see the Word of God, and they see it, they can come to know Him. But the problem is that most of the world doesn't have a Christian, Luke and Cameron, raising them to put the Scriptures in front of them, and to bring them to a one-on, and to read Scripture to them. So God uses us to go to them and say, we have found the answers.

They're right here, and we open up the Word of God for them. If you want to live a more exciting life than you're currently living, I know this is going to sound more like a sales pitch, all right?

If you want to live, if you want to find just the greatest blessings and treasures in this world, and you're trying to look for some habit to include, take this Word of God and open it with other people more often. As simple as that. Take the Word of God and open it with other people more often, and I promise you, you will have more fun than you ever could imagine. And so God's Word is divine, and so because it's divine, it is the most historically reliable book in all of the world.

Because it's divine, it's the most historically reliable book in all of the world. Scripture tells us in 2 Peter 1.21 is that by the holy men of God, they were moved by the Holy Ghost, that they wrote of the Holy Spirit and moved upon Him, inspired them to do that. So we know this book is divine, but there is more evidence of the reliability of the Bible than there is evidence that I'm standing here right now. There's about a hundred or so of you in here right now, I don't know how many, that you say, we know Trent was there this Sunday morning. But what if over the next 40 days, I saw 500 of you, and you all began to write about it, and you wrote about it, and you're willing to give your life and say, I guarantee you, I saw Trent. How many of you are old enough to say at two o'clock the day if somebody came up to you and said, are you certain that you went to church today? Are you willing to put your life on it? Some of you are like, I'm not that sure. All right?

[16:10] Like a little bit ago when I was thinking, where am I at? I didn't follow the order of service, there wasn't a special, and I got so confused, and I just for a moment thought, where in the world am I at? All right? And doubted it. You shouldn't doubt the Word of God. Some of you, we ought to take some time, well, let's get this on the schedule, let's spend some time on a Sunday night and just, not just teach, let's just rejoice in the fact that there is no book in all the world that comes even close to being authenticated as reliable as the Word of God. We have it here with us today, and by God's grace, we all have the ability to have a copy of it. So we should not look to our own ability to tell our testimony. Some of us feel more comfortable doing that than others. We all should do it. It's not to we not have the confidence in some program, but the most powerful means of sharing the gospel is that we should rejoice and that we have here this Word, this message of reconciliation available to us right here, the greatest resource for raising a child, the greatest resource that we could share with anybody else. Secondly here, evangelism starts in our hearts and not in the streets. In our hearts, not in the streets. Lord willing, the next book that we go to will go to the book of James. And you're familiar with the passage that says like a man looking in a natural face upon a glass, looking at a mirror, looking at a reflection, and it shows him some things. God's Word shows us ourselves more clearly. When I was a teenager, it was real common for people to say, you don't know me, all right? That was a great argument to say, you don't know me, all right?

Some of you may still use it, but the Word of God is not something that you can say, you don't know me. The Word of God knows you far better than you know yourself. And so as you study it, what you find is, as it's been said before, that we are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we're more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.

As you read through scriptures, that's what you're reminded all the time. Man, I'm in need of a Savior. How wonderful a Savior He is. And so the love and acceptance we find in the Word should move us to want to share the good news with other people. You see, gospel proclamation is the outflow of a gospel saturated heart. It's the outflow of it. It's not a program that you can sign up for, but it's something as a believer that you have been programmed to want to do, that that renewing of the mind has taken place. Jesus tells us, and you know this, that out of the abundance, out of the heart, the mouth speaketh. I did ask myself, personal reflection, and you as well, how much of evangelism do you find flowing out of your mouth? What does that suggest about the love for God? That it just ought to be flowing out of our conversations because it's what our heart is filled with. This is how Paul says it in our scripture passage today of Romans 1, a little bit farther down, but he says in Romans 15, he says, I am ready to preach the gospel. I am ready to preach the gospel. His heart is just filled to the brim of knowing how much he has loved and accepted, and he is just ready for an opportunity to do it. And so the greatest single hindrance to our personal evangelism is the secret poverty of our own spiritual experience. Let me say it like this, the great hindrance that we often have in our personal evangelism is our lack of understanding of what the gospel has done in our lives. It ought to just want to flow out of our mouths. It ought to be the thing that is just there hopping around, just waiting for an opportunity to come out. You see, Paul, in this passage here, you will see his whole identity is wrapped in who he is in Christ and what Christ has done for him. Verse 1, he's a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated into the gospel of God, this servant of the gospel. It's a shocking statement to the original readers. It should be shocking to you, but just like David said, sometimes we take phrases and they lose the meaning because we just think it's some kind of tried expression, but it's not.

It's a servant here, which is he's saying that poor Jewish carpenter that died the most shameful death, that's what many of them saw Jesus to be. He says, that man, he is my master. He describes himself as somebody that waits upon tables as a minister is what he is. And so as a follower of Christ in here, we have sacrificed our right to determine the direction of your lives. That's what it means to be a servant. If it doesn't mean not to be a servant, then what does it mean? It means you have sacrificed the right to choose the direction of your life. As Paul, we are no longer our own.

We have been bought with a price. And so before anything else in this world, before husband, dad, business owner, employee, athlete, pastor, musician, whatever you'd want to describe yourself, you have to say, above all, I am a servant of the gospel. Another understanding of that word talks about being an under rower, like in a boat in the lowest level where a person is just rowing the boat, not choosing direction, but they are just rowing because we are servants. Another thing that's said is that he was separated into the gospel. Those of you in the Exodus, Leviticus part of your Bible right now in Bible reading, you see a lot of things that are separated. They're made holy as unto the Lord. And so you have a tabernacle and the temple and have sacrifices and you have all these things that are separated into the Lord. In the New Testament, we find that we as believers have now been separated. So what is it in the meaning when it calls us saints? We've been separated. So here inside of the church, we're told that we are not to do anything that is necessarily confusing, meaning unbelievers aren't going to understand why we get excited about the things we do, or they're not going to understand a lot of things that we rejoice in. But we're told not to do things in a confusing manner there in 1 Corinthians. But far more compelling of any argument that this or attraction, that this service would ever bring, it is the life set apart by the gospel. It's your life that is supposed to be separated into the gospel that people see that is distinctive and is unto the Lord.

[ 22 : 18 ] It demonstrates the gospel. And so Paul does not have a monopoly on the gospel. Everybody is supposed to be sharing it. But the gospel has a monopoly on Paul's life. His whole life, servant, separated, sent, all those things that describe him is all because the gospel laid claim upon his life. And so we are to live our lives centered upon the same mission that Christ had when he was in this world.

That same mission that Jesus had is now our mission today. Let me say it, all right, simple. The same mission that Jesus has is ours today. John 20, 21. Then said Jesus to them again, peace be unto you. All right. There's another reference. I don't know if David got that. I'm going to write that down. Okay, David. All right. Peace be unto you. As my father has sent me, even so send I you. As the father has sent me, I will send you in that same like manner.

So all of us in here are believers. We are to be messengers that are sent out into this world. Back to our passage in Romans 1, we see that he was set apart for the gospel. We also see that he was a servant of the gospel. And then between those two expressions, verse number one, he said that he was an apostle. And so we know that there's a group of people that are the apostles. They had to see Jesus after the resurrection. There's 12 or 13 of them, including Matthias and including Paul. There would be 13 of them. Judas was not. And they found the replacement there, but there are people that have seen him. It's an important part. Their teaching is what we build upon in our understanding of the gospel. Even so that one day we'll enter heaven and there'll be stones there with the names of these apostles. They play an important part in our understanding of who God is. That's their job as an apostle. But the word is also used in verse number five, but you have received grace and apostleship. This word gets used in other ways, which means sent. You are a sent one into this world. Romans 16, 7, it speaks of this, Paul's saying to my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners who are of note among the apostles. Barnabas, who was not one of those original apostles, but it says in

Romans in Acts 14, 14 about him, which when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of, heard of, they rent their clothes and ran among the people crying out. It's saying the word means the one who was sent. You are a sent one. You're a servant. You're a sent one. And you've been separated unto the gospel in here. All right. I won't ask you to do it because it's always awkward. We can look to our neighbor and say, you are a sent one. All right. Look in here today and look around. We are surrounded by believers who have been sent with a message that we have grace and apostleship, not like the original apostles, but we are messengers of this message. And because of this, our lives should center around being a witness of the truth. Our lives should center around being a witness here. So the definition of witnessing, witnessing I said is evangelism or proclamation, a word that we'd use, a word that scripture would use. Like you have the ministry of reconciliation to wit or to witness of the grace of God. We're told in our giving, when we think about giving, it says how you, even in your poverty, poverty, you're able to give generously because you have witnessed the grace of God. You have seen something about God. And because of that, you're now able to do something and tell others about it. But this word witnessing, the way we define it often feels insufficient. It's either rehearsing a list of facts to a non-believers, that's too narrow, or it's too broad in the fact that it's like anything that we do as Christians.

That's what it is. And so in one sense, it's so narrow that it just only applies to our lips. And the other one, it's so broad, it just means being nice. That's not what the scripture tells us about our witnessing. That's not what we find in Christ. The one who was sent of the Father, he sends us as well. That our words and our deeds can't be separated from one another.

[ 26 : 22 ] I've spoken about this before, but I know some years ago, Chick-fil-A, which I'm in favor of, all right? Some of you have to eat Zaxby's on Sunday because Chick-fil-A is closed, okay? And so that's what makes it Satan's chicken. No, I'm just kidding, all right? But Chick-fil-A, you have your music, and I've said, you know, one time there was words to it, and now you can hear it, and you don't know the words to it. So if you're in the room, and if you know the words, it helps you.

But if you don't know the words, you'll never know them, all right? And I say, that's okay for a business, but that's not okay for a believer. We not just whistle the song, but we give the words to the song. We speak it, okay? We let people know what it is. And so when people see our lives, when you're in a situation, and many of you are, I pray for you, those in the corporate world, and you're in situations that I don't deal with on a daily basis, and that's why we need you leading the charge, and teaching others, and teaching the next generation how to live out the gospel at work, but you're in these situations, and people say, I don't understand the way that you're acting, all right? I don't understand why you won't go along with this, or I don't know why you want to do this. I don't know why you do those things. Do you know how wonderful it is when your deeds and the way you're living is called into question? Because then you can apply the words of the gospel to it. I'm living this way. People want to know. They want to know, are you trying to earn your salvation? Or are you trying to pay for your sins? Like that question of why are you living differently is a question of what do you know about God that I don't know? What do you know about salvation that I don't know? You could see why somebody would be so mad that you're not doing something, or that you are doing something that they're not, if they believe that what you're doing is a way of earning salvation, and they're not willing to get on board with it. So of course it matters to them. But you have the opportunity to teach them that what I'm doing is just simply an expression of my love for God. No, I don't want to go there, and no, I don't want to do that, because I want to show honor and reverence to my Lord. I want to respect my family. I want to do these things in a way that is pleasing to the Lord. And so we shouldn't begrudge those. We ought to thank God for those opportunities. And as I said, all believers are due to the work that Jesus did. John 14, 12, verily, verily, I send you, he that believeth on me, that should be all believers in here, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father. At this point in the book of John, Jesus had turned water into wine, he had sat down on a woman in Samaria, and he knew her thoughts, he had healed a man that had been crippled for 38 years, he had fed 5,000 people, he had walked on water, he had healed Lazarus, so he had brought him back from the dead. And so you say, I'm going to do the same works Jesus did. Those aren't things that

I'm doing. We have to look at the purpose of what he did in his miracles. John 14, 11, there's one verse before what I just read, it says this, believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works sake. If you're a believer in Jesus, that's what your life is to be about. Your works is to display the trustworthiness of Jesus. All those things that Jesus did were his works, which would appoint to the trustworthiness that he was the Son of God.



And so that's how we do the same works of Jesus, is that we live a life that points to the trustworthiness of Jesus. Our whole lives should be centered in living so that people will believe that Jesus is true. And so here we come to a conclusion. So I'm going to give you three things as we leave here tonight. First of all, one that I haven't made mention of is this, our hearts should be broken for those who do not believe the gospel. Our hearts. How does Paul say it? He has a continual sorrow, meaning that it's just constantly on his mind that there are people that you know and that you love and that you pass every day who do not know the gospel. Additionally, we learn in scriptures that it's possible for people to deceive themselves in the one issue that determines all of their eternity. That there's a false hope, a false assurance that is out there that people would have. Jesus tells it in Matthew 7 in that parable, right? Where a man who builds his house upon the rock and another man builds his house upon the sand, but the house is there. But the day comes where it's recognized that that house did not have the foundation that's needed. And so we have loved ones who have a nice house. They have a home and everything seems to be fine, but it's not built upon Jesus Christ. And don't be lulled to sleep by that fact that it's not built upon it. I've shared with you before when I first moved here, I crawled out of the woods of West Kentucky and I came to the big city. I just thought that everybody here, I'd never seen so many houses. There was one, there was a subdivision in my hometown where homes were over 200,000 and we drove through it like it was a parade, all right? We have never seen anything like that in all the world. It was a few years ago, not many, but a few years ago. And we saw that. And so I remember coming to Alpharetta and thinking, I've never seen a place like this. These people have everything. And I realized these homes aren't built upon a rock. The homes may look good and they may serve their purpose in the time being, but they're not built upon Jesus Christ. And that's true wherever you would go in this world. And so don't be lulled to sleep by the fact that your friend and loved ones are living a nice life. You need to know, is their home built upon that rock? And so I would pray,

I want to pray with you. I would love for you to give a name on a piece of paper or send me a text or let's get together. But the people that you're praying for, I want to be praying for. And I would love that opportunity today. Get the name of the people that you're praying for. And if there's not people you're praying for, make that your agenda this week. Get some names of some people that you would be praying for. Our lives should be centered around the gospel, which means that we set forth the truth in this world. In 2 Corinthians 4, 2, it talks about making manifest the truth and that we are to renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, that we have to be sharing with people the gospel truth.

[ 32 : 34 ] And we're even told in 1 Corinthians 5 that we are to persuade men, that we are to live in a life that is persuasive, that is sharing with them God's Word, living on that same mission as the one in whom which we follow. And then lastly here, I just want to ask you this.

What should we expect from this gospel-centered type of life, this gospel-centered kind of outreach? If you weren't with us on Thursday, I wish you'd go back and listen to it. And Cannon came down from New York City where he's been planting a second church there. We praise the Lord for it.

And he just knows that he is over his head. And that's where you're supposed to be, right? He's just over his head there in New York group here in Georgia. And he goes weeks without speaking hardly any English to anybody but Nancy. And it's just, it's a beautiful thing. And he just talked about being fully dependent upon God. And if not, no fruit will come of it. And he just, I would just, I would say envious is not the right word, but I just realized he knew that unless he was dependent on the Lord, nothing of any value would ever come from his time being there. And as he said that, I thought, that's what I want for my life. Because there's so many things that I feel like I'm able to do on my own. And what a shame when the God offers me to do what is way beyond any of us could ever begin to think. And so he challenged us in that area. Here in Romans 1 through 7, and Paul's talking about what was true about him. He was a servant, and he was sin, and all these different things. That group of people, they lived in the same manner. And what was said? It says in Romans 1.8, first, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all that your faith is spoken throughout the whole world. The whole world of people who were far more limited in their travel than we are shared a gospel message that was not. People that were limited in their travel shared a gospel message that was not. You know, Graham just went back to Nigeria for a few weeks there, and he's with those people, you know, in a little town in Carlisle, Ohio. So people shared with them a gospel message, and that gospel message spread, and it made it places that you could just never imagine. People shared the gospel with me. They'd never imagine I'd put shoes on and come to the big city of Atlanta, all right? You just never know where it's going to go. It's always disproportionate. It's always disproportionate. David Brainerd would pray this prayer that's written in his journals. He would say, Lord, let me make a difference for you that is utterly disproportionate to who I am. Lord, let me live a life that is just utterly disproportionate to who I am. Can we just take a moment and recognize that the difference that God has made in our obedience, the disproportionate it's been in our lives, the wonderful things we share in here as a church family, just because somebody was just simply obedient to do what God had told them to do. And so what is the program? It's you. And what is the plan?

It's just simple obedience in sharing this and his word with everybody as you have this opportunity. Before I pray, let me remind you here today, you have the greatest possible news that's contained here in the Holy Scriptures. Get places and open it up and watch it take root in the lives of other people. Evangelism starts in your heart. It isn't going to happen just like my plan to drink more water didn't change because I got a water bottle, all right? It required something. It takes a change internally to be expressed on the outside. Fill yourself up with the gospel. Who do you need to preach to the gospel most importantly every day? It's yourself. You need to spend time in your word, being reminded of what he's done, to a place where you don't even have to plan. It's going to come out in our conversations and speech. And then I remind you, the life we are to live is the life that Christ lived in the fact that we are to live showing the trustworthiness. Not the same miracles he did, but the same purpose to show that God is good and that he is loving and that you can have a relationship that is reconciled to him. Would you pray with me? With every head bowed and every eye closed. And believer, I speak to you in here today. First of all, I want to encourage you to hold your

Bible tightly, knowing more than any program, more than any resource that we could hand to you today. You have the words of life there in your hands. And don't leave it behind. Don't leave it in the church pew. Don't leave it at your home. Take it with you wherever you go. I want to pray with you in here today.

[ 37 : 14 ] If you're a believer and you say, I immediately can think of a person in which I want to see believe Jesus. I know somebody in my heart is heavy for them. And I want to pray to the God of heaven.

If you know somebody like that, would you just raise your hand? I won't call on you to say their name. I just want to, I just want to see your hand so I can know to be praying for you throughout the week. Heavenly Father, you see these hands and more importantly, Lord, you know the names of these people, Lord. And they've heard the gospel, Lord, quite possibly, or they're around believers today that could share it with them. And I pray for the work of the Holy Spirit and the lives of those people that they would give to the conviction, Lord, that is in their lives and that they would accept you before it's eternally too late. As we continue there as believers praying, maybe this is where you'd raise your hand. This is an honest confession before the Lord and say, yes, I know the gospel is the most important message in the world. Yes, I know that there should be people that I'm sharing it with, but I have just not been intentional in developing those types of relationships. And so I just honestly say, there is not a list of people, but with everything in my heart, I want there to be a list of people. Is that your testimony here today? Would you raise your hand with me and say, I want to live a life that is mindful of the people that I meet. And as you continue praying, I want to take a moment here and speak to those that may be watching online or with us today who don't know Jesus Christ.

We have right here before you in these Holy Scriptures, the way in which you can be brought back to God. That brokenness that you feel and that need of peace and all the things that are missing that you know should not be as they are, they can be brought back to Him. Jesus Christ died in your place. And today you can receive that gift of salvation and cry out to Him in prayer and repent of your sins and put your faith and trust in Him. And more than anything in all the world, we would love to show you this wonderful message contained in Scriptures. Stop at the next steps table, come see me at the front, schedule time, but whatever I can do to help you, I most certainly do. Father, I pray for those that are among us or may hear this someday, Lord, who are lost and undone without you, Lord. I pray that they would yield today. Father, I ask that you be with us as a church family. You have allowed us to see wonderful things. Father, as we have just struggled to raise children and not always demonstrated the gospel as we should, Lord, we've had kids that come and put their faith and trust in you. What you've allowed us to see, Father, it's just disproportionate to who we are. And Lord, we want to be obedient to you.

We want you to make us into the people that you would have us for your honor and for your glory and for the sake of those that are lost in our community and in our lives. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Amen.