

The Heart of Man

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

Speaker: Joel Greenwood

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I'm guess who before. Some of you have, it's this game where you have kind of this panel of faces in front of you and the person you're playing against has their same panel of faces and you each draw a card and you ask questions, yes or no questions to try to determine the card that the person you're playing against has. And so you ask questions like, does your person have brown hair? And if they say yes, you flip down everybody that doesn't have brown hair.

And it's really apparently not a politically correct game anymore because you would ask questions like, is your person male or female? You know, think about that today. That's crazy as that is or you ask the person, you know, I often will ask because your person black is your person white. I don't know if those are politically correct, right? But I've been playing this game with my 5 year old daughter and I do beat her quite often because, yeah, it makes me feel good on the inside. Sorry, Hannah, I know you're watching. But she'll ask me questions like, does your person have two eyes?

And I'm like, yeah, you know? She doesn't get to put anybody down. You know, does your person have a nose? Yup, they have a nose, you know, so we play that game together. But you know, what I've realized in life over my time of meeting people is that I can get a good feel for somebody if I begin to ask them questions about who they are. Really, if you give me about 5 or ten questions, I can understand who you are as a person quite well. Some of those questions would be, do you believe in God? That seems like a typical question that I would ask somebody.

Do you attend church regularly? Maybe for Americans only. This is a scary question to ask. I usually don't ask this question, but you know, do you lean more Democrat or Republican and why? That helps you understand the person's perspective and where they're coming from. Maybe are you married? Do you have any kids? But there's one question that I have learned over the years really that divides people into two separate categories and helps me understand their perspective on the world. And that question is this.

Do you believe that man is inherently evil or good? This question really divides people in how they view the world and how they view themselves. Those who say that mankind is inherently evil, would just naturally recognize the fact that there must be a need for a higher power, a God in order to make things right in this world. While those that say no, I believe mankind is inherently good.

They in essence are saying they believe they are God. And they can make things right in the world by themselves. Now I know that this might sound a little harsh. Some of you are like, wow, that's a big jump. But let me explain to you why. If we believe that we are inherently good on our own, then there is no need for a higher power. There is no need for it. There is just a greater need for reform and control and power.

This group that believes that mankind is inherently good, then they believe that there are just a few bad apples in the world. And if they can control them, then the world will be generally good. One problem with this, which we see in our world quite often today, with those that are in leadership positions, is that the ones in power determine who the bad apples are. And just in case you haven't figured out who those people are that are the bad apples, it's the people in power who decide.

And it's those that don't think the way they think. They become the bad apples. And so they try to control with those things. Now, as one who believes in the scriptures, as one who believes the word of God that he has given to us, the Bible, I think that it was given to us by God. I'm going to go ahead and ruin the punchline for the entire sermon and let you know that I believe that mankind is inherently evil and ladies you don't get off the hook. It's men and women, all right?

I know all the women are like, preach it, yeah, men are evil. No. Men and women are evil, right? I believe that we need a savior. I believe that we need somebody to fix us, and this doesn't just come from my own being. It comes from the word of God. We look at Romans chapter three versus ten through 12, where the apostle Paul says this. As it is written, there is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands. There is no one who seeks God, all have turned away.

They have together become worthless. There is no one who does good, not even one. It's a pretty uplifting message so far, right? As we talk about how evil we are, don't worry, it will get better, but not until the very end, because I want to prove to you why I believe mankind is inherently evil. And when you believe this, it changes our outlook on the world. It changes my outlook. And the fact that I am not surprised at all of the problems that exist in our world, because I believe mankind is inherently evil.

And if I am left up to my own desires, if I am to pursue the things that I want, it's going to probably harm somebody else. I'm not surprised by corrupt governments or selfish people because I believe that things will only get worse until we are fixed. Things are only going to get worse until our problem is taken care of. More importantly, this view that mankind is inherently evil, also changes how I view myself.

It allows me to know that I need someone to help me or to fix me. It helps me understand that I am broken. It helps me understand that I can't do anything good on my own. It helps me recognize the danger that I am capable of doing anything, and so I need help. And so as we continue today, I ask you the question, do you believe mankind is inherently good or inherently evil?

And so as we continue in this series of kings and chronicles, I am going to share with you hopefully prove with you how I came to my conclusion that mankind is inherently evil, but that there is a solution to our problem. So let me pray and then we'll jump in. Heavenly Father, this isn't a fun message necessarily as we are trying to prove that we need help. And sometimes that's a difficult thing for us to do.

We want to believe that we have it all figured out and that we can take care of things on our own and that we don't need you or anybody else. But the truth is, without you, we are evil. Without you, we are selfish, and we do things for our own good and not for the good of others.

And so father, as we move through this, just trying to understand this truth that you teach to us, I also pray that you would encourage us as we come to the end that you have provided a way to fix our problem, to provide us Salvation through Jesus Christ on the cross. That we can be made pure that just as pastor Sam said that when you look at us, you don't see our sins and our failures and our mistakes that if we have repented and turned towards you, that you now see your son, Jesus, and his holiness.

And that is what we celebrate and thank you for. It's in Jesus name we pray, amen. All right, so in order to prove my point, I want to walk you through scripture. And it's going to be very fast. It's not really going to be a walk. It's going to be a run, all right? So I'm going to be talking fast. I'm going to take most of the Bible stories that you guys have heard if you grew up in church, and I'm going to put them in a timeline. And this is going to be the history of Israel. God's chosen people, and he said it's through this people that I'm going to reveal myself to the world.

And I'm going to use their story to share with you and to prove to you that mankind is inherently evil, because these are the people that God chose. In order to reveal himself to us. So we're going to begin all the way back at the beginning. And so we go back to Adam and Eve in the book of genesis and God creates Adam and Eve in places them in this perfect garden. There is no sin. And of course we know that Adam and Eve sin. They disobey God. And so they are kicked out of the garden and it doesn't take long for things to get really messy.

In genesis chapter 6 5, very shortly after they're kicked out of the garden, we read this. The lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. Isn't that a great definition for us? Does that encouraging for you all today? That's what the heart of mankind had become, not far removed from Eden, and we had already messed things up.

And so God makes this decision that he's going to start over. And so he chooses this man, Noah, who's considered righteous, and he's going to save Noah and his wife, along with his sons and their wives. And so they get on the boat and God floods the entire earth, and he's going to start over with this family. Maybe things will be better with Noah and we

read in genesis chapter 9 20 that as soon as Noah gets off the boat, Noah, who was a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard.

And when he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. That didn't take long, did it. Right when he gets off the boat, he does something. This leads to a curse and mankind continues to spread and cover the earth. And so then man, believing they are God, decide to build this thing that we call the Tower of Babel. You've heard this story before. Mankind wanted to prove that they were like a God. And so they were going to build this huge structure.

And so in the midst of this, God divides them and God then decides he's going to call this man named Abram, who would later be called Abraham. So we read in genesis chapter 12 one that the lord had said to Abram, go from your country and your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. So God's going to make this nation. The Israelites that are going to come from Abraham and this nation is going to be the example that God's going to reveal himself to the world. And so he calls Abram.

Abram immediately after he is obedient to God and begins to travel towards the promised land, gets into a situation where he decides to lie about his wife, claiming its sister. It's his sister, fearing for his own life. Then, of course, we go on and Abram has his nephew lot and there's some disagreement that happens between Abram and Locke. And so they separate and lot ends up in the land of Sodom and gomorrah, which is known for its evilness, its wickedness. And so Sodom is destroyed.

We know the story that lot is called out with his wife and his two daughters. And as they're fleeing the city, his wife turns back around and she becomes a pillar of salt, but he escapes with his two daughters because apparently they are righteous. And then if you read the story in the book of genesis, we have what takes a place between lot and his two daughters that I'm not even going to mention on a Sunday morning. If you want to read about that, you can read about it, but it's very disturbing, I promise you. These are the people that God is going to use to reveal himself to the world.

So we go back to Abraham and Abraham has this promised child Isaac who follows directly in the footsteps of his father and Isaac does the same thing, lying about his wife, claiming it's his sister, only to save himself from possibly being killed. And so Isaac has these two sons, Jacob and Esau, and we know the stories about Jacob and Esau, don't we? The fighting that took place between them as they were looking for power, looking for authority in their own family who come to genesis chapter 27 35.

Where Isaac said to Jake to Esau, your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing. And so we know that whole story, don't we? We're Jacob lies and deceives his father claiming that he's Esau and he puts on his clothes and hair and everything else. And lies to him and cooks him some stew and God's gives his blessing to Jacob. Then Jacob has children with four women and trust me, their children are not going to get along.

Here we come to the 12 tribes of Israel that come from Jacob. And Jacob's youngest at the time is a man named Joseph. And he's actually the best out of the bunch. So good, so in fact, that his brothers can't stand him. And so we read in genesis chapter 37 that they had made this plot that they were going to kill their brother. But fortunately for Joseph, he had one good brother. Well, not so good, as you will see.

Judah said to his brothers, what will we gain if we kill our brother Joseph and cover up his blood? Come, let's sell him to the ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him. After all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood, and so his brothers agreed. Thank goodness for Judah, right? We'll just sell you into slavery. That's not as bad as killing you. These are God's chosen people through which he's going to reveal himself to the world. Now, Joseph would go on and I guess the most evil thing we have recorded in scripture about Joseph.

He seems like a pretty good guy, but he has multiple wives. But that doesn't seem too bad compared to all of the other things that we've already read. And that takes us to the end of the book of genesis with Joseph. Then we get to the book of exodus, where, of course, all of Joseph's family is brought to Egypt and they continue to grow and multiply and become a nation until they are so feared by the Egyptians that they then become enslaved. And so then we get into the story of Moses. And Moses is going to deliver the Israelites from Egypt and Moses, of course, murders somebody and he doesn't have the best track record either.

And you think that once Moses actually led the Israelites out of the desert that they are out of the bondage to the Egyptians into the desert, they would be excited. They would be grateful. God, thank you for saving us, but we read and

exodus chapter 17 three. But the people were thirsty for water there. And they grumbled against Moses. They said, why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and our livestock die of thirst? Very grateful, weren't they? This goes on for 40 years as you read the book of exodus, you see them traveling through the wilderness.

They continue to complain to God. And so then we enter into their part of the story where we are introduced to another man named Joshua. Who would serve under Moses and Joshua was the one that was commanded to bring the Israelites into their promised land because of course Moses couldn't.

Because of what he had done, and so we read in Joshua chapter one versus one and two that after the death of Moses, the servant of the lord, the lord said to Joshua son of nun, Moses aide, Moses, my servant is dead, now then you and all these people get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land that I am about to give them to the Israelites. And if you read what takes place in Joshua, you will see that this man Joshua who would lead the Israelites in battle taking over this land would have more blood on his hands than you and I can probably comprehend.

And this is the man that God is choosing to lead his people. So now the Israelites have their land. I told you, we're driving through pretty fast, aren't we? The Israelites have their land. They are there. And then we come to the book of judges because they aren't supposed to have a king because God is supposed to be their king. But in judges chapter two versus ten through 11, we read that after that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors. They've all died. Joshua in that entire generation, another generation grew up who knew neither the lord nor what he had done for Israel.

And so then this is the conclusion of what these people are like. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the lord, and they served the baals. Now, this could be a whole separate message by itself, exclaiming the importance of us passing on our faith to the next generation. We are only one generation away from looking like this, always. Every time. So that could be a whole nother message. But here we have the summarizing verse of the Israelites after Joshua has passed away.

That whole generation, their thoughts and actions continue to be evil. So we enter into the time of judges where God raises up a judge who will lead the people, then the people turn away from God, and then they are judged for that. And so then they cry out to God and God raises up a judge and we have this cycle that takes place in judges. Raise up a judge, the people are disobedient. And being good never lasted in their hearts, even when there was a judge that would lead them in a correct way.

And all of this just leads us to the time of the kings and chronicles. Now we're going to quickly just talk about one story in kings and chronicles. This is the time in Israel's history when they would be the ruling nation on the planet. They were supposed to be the example. And again, they wanted to be ruled by a king, just like all the other nations around them, even though God had told them beforehand, you shall not have a king because I am to be your king. But they wanted to be like everybody else.

And so God raises up their first king, king Saul, and king Saul starts out, okay, but he shows his true color as time goes on. We find out what's really in the heart of Saul, and he's afraid of losing his power and losing his authority. And so we read in first Samuel chapter 19 that Saul was concerned about actually his son in law David. That maybe he was going to try to take over the throne.

And so in verse 11, Saul sent some men to David's house to watch it and to kill him in the morning. But David's wife Saul's daughter warned him if you don't run for your life tonight tomorrow, you will be killed. So another quick note, if you think you have a bad mother in law or father in law, you don't. All right? It could be worse. It could be worse. Here's king Saul trying to kill his son in law, David. Because he is afraid that David is going to take over the throne.

David, of course, we all know eventually becomes king of Israel. And as we look at the story of Israel, we now enter into the golden years, their best time as a nation and as a country, we come to King David, who has given the title a man after God's own heart. That seems pretty positive, doesn't? This guy must have his act together. This must be finally we have a good guy. Finally, we have a guy that is good on the inside, and then we come to second Samuel chapter 11.

One evening, David got up from his bed, and he walked around on the roof of his palace, from the roof, he saw a woman bathing and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent someone to find out about her. And the man said, yes, this is Bathsheba. The daughter of a lion and the wife of Uriah the Hittite. That should have been the end of the story, but it's

not. Then David sent his messengers to get her. She came to him and he slept with her. Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.

Then she went back home. So David has an affair. And if this isn't bad enough that he's walking around in his roof and he sees this beautiful woman. And so he sleeps with her. He finds out that nope, she's married. She's actually married to one of his chief fighting men in his army. And so he finds out that after this escapade that she's pregnant. And so now he's got to figure out what is he going to do? How is he going to hide this? And so if this act wasn't bad enough, now he wants to cover it up. And so he calls Uriah from the battlefield. And he says, come on home and he says, go be with your wife.

And of course Uriah, who seems like a much more righteous man than him. He says, how in the world could I go and be with my wife when all of my Friends and other men are fighting out in the fields? And so he refuses to be with his wife. And so David's plan doesn't work. And so then we come to verse 14. This is a man after God's own heart, by the way. In the morning, after Uriah would not be with his wife, Bathsheba, David wrote a letter to Joab, the commander of his army and he sent it with Doria. This is crazy.

He seals the letter and he gives it to Uriah to deliver to his commander. And this is what was in the letter. In it, David wrote, I want you to put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die. This is a man after God's own heart. Hopefully, by now, you see that man is inherently evil. This is probably the best king that Israel would ever have, and this is what he does.

Do any of you need any more proof? That without God, you and I will only live to fulfill our evil desires. We don't have time this morning because I want to give time for doctor Mikey to share to give you the rest of the story in Kings and Chronicles. There were 40 kings in all. And out of those 40 kings, only 8 are given the title of good and good is in quotes. Because they're not really good. They're just good compared to the other ones that were really bad.

It doesn't mean that they made all the right decisions and that they honored God with what they did. They just didn't make as many poor decisions. And so the people of Israel and Judah basically follow the lead of their kings. And so if their king was good, they would try to do good. But if their king was bad, things would get out of control pretty fast. So what's the point? Let me real quickly give you some action steps. Here is the point of my message. I know that I've got issues, but you're pretty messed up too.

Pretty nice, huh? Yeah. Yeah, that's right. Amen. We are all messed up. That's the point. We're all messed up. We will never get better until we admit we have a problem. This is always the first step in getting help. We all have something inside of us that is broken myself included. We all can relate with the apostle Paul when he says in Romans chapter 7. Look at this. The apostle Paul says, so I find this law at work.

Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being in my inner being, I delight in God's law, but I see another law at work in me, and it's waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin that is at work within me. What a wretched man I am, who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death, and I'm so glad that it doesn't end there because here is the good news.

Thanks, be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ, our lord. So then I myself, in my mind, am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature, I'm a slave to the law of sin. I love that the apostle Paul says, who is going to save me from this, but thanks, be to God who through Jesus Christ. Has rescued me. Let me give you three action steps. Three very practical things you can do. And then I'm going to have doctor Mikey come up.

Number one. If you are struggling with some sin, bring it to God. Get help, you're not alone. I don't believe that you will move past your sins and your struggles until you admit that you have a problem and you share it with someone who can help. Don't believe the lie of the enemy, convincing yourself that you can conquer it alone because the enemy wants your sin to remain a secret because when it's a secret, he can continue to drown you over and over again with it.

You must share it with somebody, to conquer it, to overcome it, you're not alone, I promise you. Number two, if you have received freedom from a certain sin, then make sure you continue to thank God and help others. Praise him for his strength that he has given you. Don't even think about standing on a pedestal because you have conquered one sin because the enemy is just going to bring the next one. That you may struggle with. Don't relax.

The moment you relax and think you have everything figured out, is going to be the moment that the enemy is going to try to make you fall again. Keep fighting. Keep relying on the strength of Jesus and keep her lying on those that God has placed around you and the family of Christ and then finally, number three, guard your expectations. Of the world in which we live, don't be shocked at what is happening in the world around us. Without God, we have seen it in the Old Testament.

We have seen it with every kingdom that has risen and has fallen. We watch it over and over again without God mankind is inherently evil. It should not surprise us when people without God do evil things. It doesn't mean I have to like it, but I can understand it. And when I do understand that, it reminds me of the importance of inviting others to know Jesus. And instead of seeing those around me, as evil, I can see them as someone who is lost and is a slave to sin, just like I was before Jesus Christ.

And so I'm encouraged to pray for them. So this morning is doctor Mikey comes up to share with you what's going on in Liberia. We've been talking about spiritual health. And as doctor Mikey is going to come up, they are going and starting a new hospital in Liberia called the Jesus loves me hospital where they're going to be dealing with physical health, but with the goal of addressing spiritual health, because that's what really matters. And so I'm excited that doctor Mikey is here. I've told you he's from Wales.

So he has come a long way to share with us a little bit of what God is laid on his heart and what he is doing and also the opportunity for you all to join him. So I asked that you'd give him a warm welcome. Thank you. Thank you. Thanks so much for inviting me over from Wales. And really, I'm kind of half from Wales, but I'm also mostly from West Africa, my parents were missionaries in a country called Senegal, kind of two countries up from Liberia there.

So it's just off the map. And that was where a really came to know Jesus in West Africa. And that is where I had this sense of calling to do medical missions. So I want to start by just sharing a little story about my youngest brother, Peter, back in 1997, there was a Civil War going on and all these countries and Senegal kind of got involved.

And we ended up we were living in this village, and then we ended up being evacuated out. During that process, Peter got something called encephalitis. That's basically medical language for infection of your brain. And he was really sick. And it's pretty scary time for any mom when your child is sick, but my mom in the middle of really the African bush with a sick little boy, extremely stressful.

But we managed to get him to a hospital and he went through some treatment and he was in a coma. He was convulsing, but he came out of that. And now he's suffering from no ill effects at all. And God really healed him and brought him through that. But during that time, I remember getting this thought about what about all the African children around us.

And we are living in a pretty poor village and there were a lot of African children there who would die of really stupid stuff like malaria and snake bites and malnutrition and all this kind of stuff was going on there. And there was no way for them to get the same level of care that my youngest brother had. And really from there, I had this sense of calling from God to go and be involved and do things about that.

So to cut a long story short, ended up in Liberia in 2019. Firstly, with the hospital called elwe, which is right by the Monrovia there, that's the capital. And spent a couple of years working there. I'm still very involved in L where I still work there as well as in Jesus loves me. And one of my things that we're involved in was starting a pediatric treatment program. And as we started doing that, what we realized is that most of the children who were coming were actually really severely malnourished.

And you can see these two little ones here. They both got different types of malnutrition, but both equally sick and really within days, if these children don't get treatment, they would just die. And as the program started to expand down at L word, what started to happen was more and more children were coming to the point where the hospital is just completely overwhelmed. There's 60 pediatric beds there. It doesn't sound like a lot, but for Liberia, that actually makes it the busiest malnutrition center in the country.

And there are beds are always oversubscribed. And what we realized was that a lot of children were coming from bone county from banga, which is where the Riley family administering, and there was this kind of curiosity that we had a few

of us down at L word to say, well, they're all coming from up there. Let's go and you know, let's go see what's going on up there. Let's see, there's clearly some kind of mission something going on up there.

We need to figure out what this is, and if there is a way that we can start getting involved in helping them out a bit. So I went up there with pretty much no expectations. In Wales, we're pessimistic. We're not like you guys. It's always raining and it's always gray. And so whenever we go into something, our expectations are like this. And I get up to banga.

And I was just blown away by this ministry that with no hype or fanfare or anything, was taking care of all these disabled children who had basically been thrown out of their families. And in that setting in the bush, and I know this, I grew up in the bush. If you have a disabled child, they will often say, oh, it's a devil child, or it's because someone is cursing you, and they'll often want to throw away the child.

I mean, we've had situations up there where children have been beaten and tied to trees and all sorts of horrible things because they're disabled. And hope for home was taking in all these children and putting them in families and giving them incredible care, and that was kind of the same area where all these malnourished children were coming from and just looking at that care and compassion that was being shown by hope for home. Remember thinking, this is a great place to put another center that's going to care for malnourished children.

And so to cut a long story discussions began, lots and lots of people started getting involved, a big group down in Georgia. That's where I just come from. They're very, very supportive. They've helped support the construction of Jesus loves me. Jesus loves me is pretty much two thirds done now. Share a little bit more about the construction in a second. But before I do that, I just want to highlight the challenges of banga.

Now, I'll show you this picture first. This is one of my favorite paintings. There's a guy called prince up there. He paints these basically paints the scripture. So a lot of people can't read or write, so he'll paint something that is a Bible story or proverbs. He's doing the whole book of proverbs. It's mind-blowing. But this painting here, you can see what's happening. There's a lot of children there with various disabilities, and Jesus is welcoming them and leading them.

And that's just a wonderful picture of what God is doing in Liberia. He is bringing people to himself with disabilities with malnutrition through Jesus. And we get to be a part of that. It's a privilege to go up to banga and even be a tiny part of that. For me, that's a huge honor and privilege to serve these children and to see what God is doing. But bangers are four and a half hour drive away from elwe.

Sometimes children would not survive or they would even die on the way down to well, where they would get to us and they'd be extremely sick. And so there's this huge need to set up something else. And I want to just introduce a couple of the children, this is Elizabeth. You can see the picture there on one side, Elizabeth, she has a disability. She has cerebral palsy. And Elizabeth had been rejected by her family. They believed that she had a dragon inside of her. So they chucked her in some room, didn't feed her and said, we got to start the dragon.

I mean, it's shocking, but these things go on. And then her grandma kind of finds her and basically says, this isn't good enough. I'm going to stand up for this child. Cause a couple of missionary people, and they turn up at LY. And they get in and they get onto the pediatric board at Elway. And it's a kind of chaos and everyone's running around. But in that moment, the whole staff just turned from what they're doing. And focus all their attention on Elizabeth.

When I think about these children coming into these centers, you know, the Bible talks about do not despise the little ones, because each of their angels sees the father in heaven. And I often think about Elizabeth coming in. With her angel and the angel basically, you know, God's, you know, it's a bit of a funny sort of God looking down at the end and say, hey, did you get Elizabeth into the hospital? Is she going to get care? And they were like, yeah, it's okay. We got it.

You know, it was at that little kind of imaginary thing in my mind, but it's true. These children are loved by God. And what happened as Elizabeth came into the room. It was like the presence of God just came into that room. And the whole staff worked together in a way I've never seen them before. And within an hour, Elizabeth was able to start breathing normally, her pulse had been way down, very, very low, and she was barely breathing, but she started to recover.

By the end of the day, she was sipping some milk. She was able to do that. A few days later, she was eating the plumping up paste, which we give to the malnourished ones who are more stable. And this is a photo of her at Christmas. She's

placed in a loving family who cared deeply about her. And God just intervened and turned her life around. Another little girl called faith, she four months old, really skin and bone on arrival, just not feeding.

And I love this. Journeying with faith. I mean, that's been this whole thing for me. I did not come to Liberia with the intention of setting up two pediatric hospitals. That was not on my agenda. I didn't really have an agenda. I just wanted to do something with children in Liberia, but it's been this whole faith journey. That God has led us on. And you can see where she is now happy, active, playing, doing really well. This is Jesus loves me.

This guy Daryl bile is a great guy. He's an engineer. He's doing a lot of the construction there. This is an old photo, the construction is pretty much two thirds plus done now. The roof is going on. We've got the solar energy going in. So right now we're looking at sort of putting in the various fixtures and getting a container of equipment to just getting everything over there. So it's all going on really well. And again, Daryl is a wonderful guy. He is not just doing construction.

He's discipling 60 guys while he's doing that construction, just teaching them about what a godly husband and wife. And family man looks like. And that's just amazing to see. But I want to tell you about another child. Little child called miracle. A miracle was brought into the emergency room there at Delaware. Miracle, turns up. Breathing like a hundred breaths a minute, pale, more pale than this PowerPoint here, really anemic.

Basically dying in a coma. We started some treatment. We got some blood, some oxygen, all the bits and bobs and prayed with miracle. And then I went to bed. I was just exhausted. I went to bed. And before I went to bed, I called the missionary who brought her and said, look, miracle is not going to make it. There's no way. I'm really sorry we've done our best. I go to bed. The next morning, wake up, kind of trudge up to the hospital with my low Welsh expectations. You know, expecting a disaster.

Get there. And there's miracles sitting up eating the rice and potato greens and check in, kind of smiling up at me. And I just had this sense of God saying, hey, that child's name is miracle. You need to wake up. You need to wake up, Mikey. It's not about you anymore. And that has stuck with me. And that's something that I've admired and really that fits in with passage Al's message there about it's not about us. This is not about me doing some good and then it's kind of hoping that maybe God will let me into heaven or something.

That's not what this is about. This is about Jesus, it's about showing Jesus to children and watching him do what he does. So I want to show you another little one. This is Naomi. Now this child is from the sort of banga area. This little girl you can see skin and bone on one side really dehydrated. The missionary who is working with her had to fight and fight to persuade them to come to hospital eventually makes it and survived.

But the advantage of having Jesus loves me is the hospital that Jesus loves me hospital is going to be right in the bush where these malnourished children are coming from. So rather than these four and a half hour journeys where children get sick and nearly die on the way, there's going to be something right in the middle of the bush right in the middle of all the demonic stuff that's going on there, basically screaming out Jesus loves the children. And that is what the whole point of this ministry is.

So I just want to finish with a couple of things. I'm going to be sort of out there in the four year for a little while, just anyone's got any questions or anything just hammer me with them. I don't mind. But we are in desperate need of people who would be willing to come and be a part of it. I mean, when I first came up to Bongo in 2020, I did not, in my own mind, think that I would stay more than a few days.

But God has kind of basically put this in that I need to stay longer. I need to be supportive. Daryl bile, who's the engineer there, came out for a week, sort of vision trip to do a bit of consultancy. It's still there now and is going to be there indefinitely. But we have a huge need of people with medical administrative engineering, almost any background you can think of, there is a massive, massive need.

And something that I kind of went through was a younger, less mature Christian was, when I was a young teenager, I went through this phase of basically asking God to bless me. And I'd have an exam and say, oh God, please bless the exam. I'll be doing like a marathon or a 5 K run. God, please bless us 5 K run. And I'd be maybe I'd be playing guess who is my brother, please lord, help me to win guess who, please bless this game.

You know, there's all this kind of stuff I was doing. And someone very wise said to me like, you know, it's not wrong to ask for these blessings. But why don't you try and get involved in what God's already blessing? And God is already blessing what's happening with these little children. And these disabled children and these malnourished children. Jesus is with the poor and the outcast and the ones who have been thrown out of their homes by the world.

So if we want to, if we want to get a blessing, however that looks, we need to be where he is. And we need to be showing his love. And I felt more blessing working with these children than anywhere else in the world. I'm just to finish with that really. The only way this works is being utterly dependent on God. That's a Bible next to a child who's recovering from tetanus. Tetanus is unheard of in Wales and probably here as well in babies.

Very low survival rate. This one's making it, and this one's doing really well. But there is a dependency on God. Imagine a child coming in to the clinic serious malaria and dying and in a coma. And we say, right, let's start some treatment. Let's help you out a bit here. And the child says, oh, no, no, I can make it on my own. I'm good. I'm good. I don't need help. And that's what so many people who don't trust Jesus do, isn't it? Oh, no, no.

I'm good. I don't need someone to die for my sins. I'm good. I was like, no. We're not good. We're not good. I'm not good. So I just want to encourage you. Put your trust in Jesus. He is good. He's beyond anything we could understand of good. And that's where all missions starts is understanding that everything good comes from God. So I think I'll leave it there.

We'll be out in the foyer a little bit later and thank you.

So as Mikey said, he and Donny Reilly will be out in the foyer after service. But I also wanted to tell you if you have sponsored a child in Liberia, there is a sponsor letter from your child either in your church mailbox behind the sanctuary, or if you don't have one, go see Donny Reilly in the foyer and he'll get that to you.

So Mikey, thank you for sharing and the ministry you're doing. Would you mind if we pray for you? Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, we thank you for how you are ministering and blessing children in Liberia. And you're using men like doctor Mikey to go and be faithful and to follow the call that you've put upon his heart. So lord, thank you for the blessing you're putting there. I do pray that you continue to bless him in his work.

Lord, if there are any here today that are gifted and skilled and you are calling to join in this work, be it financially or to go and minister in Liberia. I pray that you would just make that abundantly clear to them. Lord, we believe that you're a God of clarity and a God of direction and that you still guide your people today. So make that clear, and we just thank you for what you're doing. And Jesus name. Amen. Thank you so much.