

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Disciple

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6

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Missionary

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2 Corinthians 5:9-21



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Well good morning Providence family and if you're a guest with us, we really are glad that you're here. If you have a Bible in your hand, turn with me to 1 Corinthians Chapter 5. If you don't have one in your hand there's lots of Bibles in the chairs new year, and if you don't have one at home, take that home as a gift. We would love for you to have that. This is an important morning, as we finish the series, it's important because I believe God deeply wants to speak to each one of us, and so I want to pray for us before we get started, okay?

Father in heaven, we bow before you and we believe that although we are going to read one specific part of the Bible, that we come into this room and there are a number of differing challenges and burdens and heart-aches that we carry and that we brought in with us. There's a lot of things, a lot of questions, that we would love for you to answer and my prayer, simple prayer, is that you would pour out your spirit upon us and that you would cause us to feel the weight of your presence, that your word, as rich as it is in being your word, that by the power of your Holy Spirit, you would take this one passage and that you would feed and heal and bind up what are so many different hearts and so many different concerns.

I ask that you would speak through weakness and through so many distractions, and God I ask that you, by the power of your Holy Spirit, would cause our hearts to find a measure of sheer curiosity that would cause us, would you pique our interest, even those who have come maybe by obligation, God that you would cause them even to be surprised in walking out that you spoke to their heart. For those who are distant from you, would you draw them close this morning. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

There is no truer statement that can be made than this one, that Jesus Christ is worthy of the worship of the whole world, and therefore there is no sadder statement that can be made than Jesus is not being worshiped by the whole world. The church has been built by God himself in order to bridge that gap between Jesus' worth and his receiving worship that he's currently not receiving. This is why we exist as a church family. See, when Jesus died on a cross and he rose from the dead, he looked at his disciples. I know we've looked at this for several weeks in a row, but he said, "Look, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore make disciples of all nations." As a congregation, we have been built, we exist to glorify God by introducing people to Jesus Christ and grow them up to love and worship him. We desire, I desire, I hope you desire, that that gap, that spread between Jesus' worth and the worship that he's not receiving, that it would shrink because in part of us. That God would use us in order to influence people and help people and introduce people to Jesus and to help them to grow to love, to where they would say, "I must worship him. I must worship him because he is worthy."

So we have been looking over the last several weeks of how do you make disciples and what we know is this, you just saw it on the video is that you simply cannot make a disciple if you're not a disciple and you can't be a disciple if you don't know what one is. So we've been looking, through the scriptures, in the New Testament, of what God has said to us of what is true of a disciple. What are the identities of a disciple and what you need to remember is this, is that Jesus set as the mark of authenticity, for all of these marks, the mark of love. He says, "By this, all people will know that you're my disciples, that you have love for one another."

So every one of these identities of a disciple is simply a different direction of that love. The first one was worshiper, and that's a simple love for Jesus himself. The second one is a learner, and that's simply a love for what Jesus has said. The third one was a servant. His disciples are servants and what that means is they look with love upon people, all people that are created in his image, and those disciples of his, they activate their strengths in order to do good to others. Last week we looked at family member and what that means is that the true love that we have for all humanity, is it crystallizes, it centralizes, it ... There's a special affection for the people of God. A special love for God's family, brothers and sisters in Christ, that we would treat them different, that we would care for them in special, unique ways.

Today, we come to the last one and the last identity we find is missionary. A missionary is simply a disciple who is on a mission to love and to reach for those who do not love and do not reach for Jesus. This is what he says, starting in Chapter Five, Verse Nine. "So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, and therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who died for their sake and was raised.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

2 Corinthians is a letter that was written by Paul to a church in the city of Corinth, and the reason that he's writing, if you were to read the entire letter through, you would find what feels like a defensive attitude. Or at very least, words where a man is seeking to defend his motive, his intentions, his aspirations, and the reason, the cause, for why he is living as he is. You can tell he is being attacked and that's precisely what's happening. False teachers that come in and in order to defile the gospel, they had to defile the man who brought them the gospel and that was Paul. You see, these people, when they looked at Paul's life, they simply could not attribute what was happening in his life to natural causes. They looked and they said, "People simply don't start as an enemy of Christ and become a friend and a missionary of Christ. People don't love the way he loves. They don't sacrifice the way that he sacrifices, and because these people refused to attribute supernatural powers

to the transformation of Paul, they were left to attribute evil causes.”

They said, “The only way that people sacrifice the way he’s sacrificing for people is there must be some hidden motive. There must be some personal ambition, some aspiration, some level of greed. There has to be something about him that’s evil.” So throughout the letter, what he’s doing is he’s saying, “Let me tell you how I was changed. Oh, I hated Christ and I hated people who loved Christ, and suddenly, I met Christ. And Jesus changed the operating system of my heart. It’s as though he took out the central computing system out to where all of those aspirations, the intentions and desires of that old self that wanted to hunt down disciples of Jesus Christ and put them in prison or harm them and now all of a sudden I cannot help but march myself all over the entire empire, trying to help people see that Jesus Christ is the risen and reigning son of God.” He could not stop and what he does in the course of the letter is to say, “Now this is what it means to be a disciple,” and here in Chapter Five what we find is this is some of the most crystallized teaching in the entire New Testament that teaches us how to be a missionary.

I’m not just talking about how to move to another country, though that may be true for each one of us as well or for some of us, but that we would be on a mission to love and reach for those who do not love and reach for Jesus Christ. So what are some of those marks? The first one is that these disciples of Jesus, we live to please him. We live to please Jesus. I want you to know that if it has been a while since you have considered what would please Jesus in your decision-making process, you happen to be living a distracted life. The day will come when you see things as they are and when you see things as they are, the thought of making any decisions about your personal, present or future or your future, your children or other people’s life and not giving consideration to the happy pleasure of Jesus Christ is proof that we are utterly distracted and the fact is it happens to every single one of us, myself included. We are all like that guy who appears for two seconds in a movie as part of a background crowd, and then wrongly concludes that the movie is about him, that he is the celebrity.

I want you to know, this movie of life, even your life, it’s not about you. Listen, you can’t even be the hero of your own story. You cannot be the hero of your own life. That’s what the Bible teaches is that we had to have another hero, we had to have another savior, we had to have somebody else come into this world in order to rescue us, even from ourself. So the idea that we would ever live in any part of our life, it proves that things are a little messed up if we’re not considering who Jesus is and what Jesus would have us to do. You see the Bible is so amazing when it teaches us who Jesus is that before any of us were even here or thought to be here, we’re told that Jesus Christ was reigning from heaven, as the eternal king of the ages. We’re told that in love, that he looked upon his own consideration and he said, “I desire to create people in my image in order to have a relationship with them, that they would be able to enjoy my glory and I would be able to enjoy their presence.” He then gifted us.

In other words, he looked upon you and he says, “You know what? I have a special purpose for your life and so I’m going to give you these intentions, this level of intellect, these aspirations, these interests, these

inclinations of the heart that are different from other people.” He instructed us in love and then the Bible says that when we sinned against God, when we sinned against his instructions, it says throughout the whole Old Testament, you see these pictures of the absolute grief and sorrow in the heart of Jesus because of sin separating us from his presence. In the fullness of time then, what we find is that Jesus Christ rises from the throne of heaven where he’s reigning eternally. He takes off the garments of king and he becomes a baby, the form of a servant. He grows up and lives on this earth and he lives over three decades and he doesn’t sin a single time and yet he goes to a cross and there he dies for our sin. He gets put into a grave that should have been our grave. He rises from the dead, the very grave that threatens each one of us, he conquered that grave for us and then he says, “I’m coming back and I’m coming back for you and not only for you but I’m coming back to reign forever.” Ever.

For us to conclude in this narrative that we’re the hero is absolute distraction. For us not to consider what does he like, what’s his pleasure, what makes him happy in the way that I think, in the way that I relate, in the way that I spend, in the way that I work, in the work that I care for other people. It’s his pleasure. You see when people see Jesus as he is, his pleasure becomes our happy consideration. We happily think about what pleases him. This is what he says. Verse 9, look, “Whether we are at home or away,” when he says home or away, he’s not saying, “Look if you’re at your house or if you’re out of the supermarket,” that’s not what he means. Chapter Five, he says whether you’re in heaven, home, or away from heaven, on the earth. What are we going to do? He says, “We make it our aim to please him.” Why? “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”

Do you see what this means? What it means is this. His evaluation of our life will matter. For many of us, it will matter now and therefore it will make his judgment over our life a little sweeter but let me tell you something. One day, you are going to care a whole lot about Jesus’ pleasure over your life. We are all going to care about that deeply. And so Paul says, “We should start caring about that now. We should care about what he loves. We should care about what makes him happy.” The Bible is replete with all these references where he says, “Let me tell you what makes me happy.” Let me just give you a few of them, in Hebrews Chapter 11, he says, “Let me tell you what makes me happy. When a person hears the scriptures and has faith, so much so that they believe that I exist and they believe that I reward those who seek after me, it makes me so happy.” He loves faith. He never says, “I love when they respond to logic only.” Faith.

In 1 John Chapter 3, you know what it says? It says ... It goes, let me tell you what else I just absolutely love. When somebody has such a deep love for me because they’re in a relationship with me that inspires them to obey me at my word, even if they cannot understand how it’s in their best interest. When they trust me enough, when they love me enough, that they say, “You know what? I want to defer to you. I want to show preference to you.” He says, “I just love that kind of obedience. It makes me so happy.” It gives him pleasure.

1 Thessalonians Chapter 4, he says he loves purity. He says that it causes his heart tremendous pleasure. Pleasure wells up. I want you to imagine this. When he says, when in a relationship with me, that you make the decision to resist impurity because you found a superior pleasure in me. In other words, you look and you think I could dabble in that. I could soil my soul today in that, but I have such pleasure in Christ that why would I trade a mountain for a molehill? Why would I make that change? Jesus says, “That makes me so happy. It’s so pleasurable to me when people find in me a superior satisfaction than sin.”

You get to Luke Chapter 15 and he talks about three different parables, and in each one, something is lost. There’s a coin, there’s a sheep, and there’s a son and so the one who lost it starts looking. “We’ve got to find it, search in the house, search in the field, search in everything in order to find that.” Then all of a sudden it says, “And each object is found and they say, “We have to celebrate. We have to have a party.””

You get to Chapter 15 Verse 7 and suddenly Jesus says, “Let me tell you what I’m talking about right now.” He says, “There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance.” For centuries, people have sort of argued and had a hard time understanding who are these 99 righteous persons who have no need for repentance. In the context of those parables, you have to understand that Jesus is addressing the Pharisees, who in their self-righteousness did not think they had to repent for anything. But even if we don’t know precisely who these 99 are, what if we would simply for the purpose of understanding take out the words of comparison and just read what’s left. In other words, let’s take out more and then everything that’s than after. There will be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. That, this thought that heaven and Jesus is repenting when a sinner hears the gospel and trusts Christ, it becomes the fuel and the heart of the disciple. Do you care what Jesus thinks of your next decision? Disciples do.

The second thing I want you to see is that disciples of Jesus view people through a different lens. They view people through a different lens. “Okay, this Jesus, I care about what he says and he says he loves people. People are important to him and so I should care about people. Now let’s think about people.” If you go to a doctor’s office, isn’t it true that it’s not always obvious who needs the doctor and who needs a nap? You get there, even a doctor is surprised, like how come you came? “Oh, you’re fine. Just go home and sleep. You don’t really need a doctor.” In other words, sometimes physical and spiritual sickness is not always discernible to the eye. This is why in Verse 16, Paul comes and he says, “Now listen to me. From now on therefore we regard no one according to the flesh. According to what they see. The color of their skin, the clothes on their back, the kind of car they drove, if they walked. If they got a shark or if they got a whale or they got a horse or they got no animal whatsoever on their shirt. We don’t regard people according to the flesh,” and then he tells us why. Why that’s not the healthiest way to be a true disciple.

This is why, he goes, “Look. For even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.” You see what he’s saying? Paul’s saying, “Look. I once looked at Jesus and thought who cares?” Even worse than that, he said, “I think I’m glad he’s dead and I want to go ahead and harm everyone

who thinks he rose from the dead.” He was looking at Christ and he says, “What I see is utterly inconsequential.” He had contempt for Jesus Christ.

Now here’s the point. If a human being, if it’s possible and it’s true for every one of us, there’s been seasons of our own personal life, maybe before we came to faith in Jesus Christ, that we wondered how relevant it was to become a follower of Jesus Christ. We simply looked at Jesus and we thought, “Is that it? Is that the hope of the world? Is that my hope? I don’t think it is.” Then all of a sudden, he opened our eyes.

Now here’s the deal. If we can make a wrong evaluation about Jesus, then don’t you think that we can also make a wrong evaluation about each other? We do this all the time. You see our instinct is to diagnose spiritual need on the basis of externals. We look at morality, we look at moral history, why do they go to the church. We look at means, we look at all kinds of things which is why the crowd gasps when Jesus said, “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” The inference there is this, because they’re not going to heaven either.

You have to understand that these Pharisees and scribes, they were the gold standard of morality and spirituality in the whole country. Everyone looked at them and said, “Man, could we ever just try to become like them?” Jesus comes in and he says, “Let me tell you something. Unless you’re righteousness exceeds them, you won’t go to heaven, and the reason is because they’re not going either.” Well how in the world are we ...

Let me ask you a question. When you see these faces, what do you see? Look deep. Some of you say, “Well I see age, I see wrinkles and gray.” Look deeper. Some of you say, “Well I see ethnicity.” That’s true, from different parts of the world. Look deeper, what else do you see? Some of you say, “Well I see smiles. They’re all smiling.” They all kind of are I think, which is beautiful. What else? What else do you see? You say, “What are you getting at?” This is what I’m getting at. God would have us look beyond faces to see a soul. A soul that is valuable, a soul that is fearful, a soul that is eternal, that will live forever in heaven or hell, and a soul that is awaiting judgment before God with whom they all have an account.

So let me ask you another question. When you look at me, what do you see? Some of you are like, “Well I see another blue shirt. That’s all you have is blue shirts.” That’s true. I go to the store and my favorite shirts are the blue ones. That’s what I buy. But what else do you see? “Well you’re gray.” Yep, I am. What else, and here’s the question that I have for you. Some of you in the room have known me over 20 years. Now why have you never shared the gospel with me? Because of externals. “Well you’re a pastor. You tell us the gospel. You obviously already know it.” But what Verse 16 says is this, is the heart of a disciple or the heart of a missionary disciple looks at people and instead of seeing anything else, they ask the question, “Is that soul born again?” When you drive home today and you see your neighbor, don’t think, “Man, it’s been a long time since they’ve mowed their grass,” ask the question, “I wonder what’s happening in that soul.” It’ll change us as a people.

That moves to number three and that is that disciples of Jesus prioritize people's need for reconciliation. They prioritize people's need for reconciliation. You see, we have many needs in the room. There's all kinds of different needs and some of us go, "If we could just get rid of those needs, that would be a great thing." But I want you to know there is simply no need that is as significant as each one of us being reconciled to God Almighty. You see the Bible says that God has a settled conviction to resist sin and the Bible also says that people have a settled conviction to go on sinning, and that causes friction. A severing of that relationship and it's interesting that even though Paul is by way of argument showing how his life has been transformed, if we think about where it was transformed from, we find three marks in the text that would be read that would be true of anyone that's alienated from God.

So let's look at those. The first is in Verse 15, and there in Verse 15, what it says is that those who are alienated from God live for themselves. We live for ourselves. He says he died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves. That means that before we're reconciled to God, we do live for ourself. We live for our morality, we live for our standard of righteousness, we live for our will and our aspiration and our dreams and our desires and if our will and all those things get in the way of God or anyone else, well we're in the right and they're in the wrong. That causes alienation with God and with one another.

But the second mark that he gives us is in Verse 12 and there we learned that we boast about externals. He says, "Look, we boast about outward appearances and not about what is in the heart." The reason is because there's nothing in the heart. There's emptiness, there's a sense of, "God, why do I feel such a lack of hope? Why do I feel such a lack of peace?" Yet we want to walk around and give the impression that we're kind of like a train wreck emotionally and so what do we do? We dress up the showroom of our life, and we only show people those areas of our life instead of what's in the heart because we're ashamed of what's not in the heart. That there's not satisfaction, there's not peace and there's not hope and there's not truth. And so we have this glistening, wonderful front of houses and yet behind the curtain it's an absolute disaster. So we train ourself to say, "You know what? Let's just talk about what's in front." That's why so many people, they may be feeling such emptiness and yet they go, "But look at my car. My car. I got a shirt with a whale on it. Aren't you impressed? I may feel like I've got nothing else, but I've got a whale." They are nice shirts by the way. I don't have one, but they are nice shirts.

That leads us to one last sign and that is that those who are alienated see Christ as irrelevant. Verse 16 says, "We once regarded Christ according to the flesh." That is the people who were separated from him, not only did they look at the person of Christ, they even look at the cross and resurrection of Christ, and they find either to be inconsequential or they show contempt for it. You see this separation from God, what it does, this alienation from God, when we live onto ourself, when we boast about the externals, when we see Christ as nothing, it causes a breach in that relationship and that breach in that relationship, it's shattering to the soul. Life still happens, you can still kind of look through the glass.

But it filters everything, all the relationships, all your experiences, everything until the heart is reconciled to God, and you see this is what's true is the broken lives then lead to broken cultures. You see a culture is simply the average of its people. We have a culture. This may be a place where literally nobody here is friendly but one but if you're a first-time guest, you happen to meet that one, you may walk out of here and say, "You know what? It's a really hospitable, kind culture." In other words, one person, each one of us, affects the line of culture. We all contribute to and we all harm whatever culture we're in. Every one of us, and so if that's the case, when a culture is dominated by the majority population of those people who are alienated from God, then culture experiences moral free fall. You see therefore there's no standard of truth or righteousness or justice and the reason is because God is the standard of those things and if we're alienated from God, then we don't pay attention to what he says is right and what is beautiful and what is true and what is just.

As a result of that, we have to make our own rules and so the rules that humanity has made forever is might makes right. If I'm stronger, I can take it from you. If I'm stronger, I can take you. So there's selfishness and violence and greed and deception and utter confusion. You think about the utter confusion that we don't know how many genders there are. Let me tell you, a disciple that stands before God who made two, there is no confusion. You just look, "God, how many?" "I made two. There's two. There's a male and there's female and that's it." Then there's this uninhibited sexual expression. Just have sex with anything. There was an anthropologist, his name was J.D. Unwin. He's no longer with us but he studied in his time 86 cultures and societies that spanned 5,000 years of history, and what he found was this, that there was not a single culture that kept its psychological, mental, relational, and economic health and energy once they gave away the boundaries of where and when to have sex. There is something about uninhibited sexual expression that is destructive to the heart, to the psyche, even to our desire over a period of time to go to work that affects the economy.

So churches have long considered what is the solution to all of this, and you look around the culture and you can find churches that their thing is food shelters and another one it's social causes and another one it's City-Serve and another one it's March for Life and another one it may be Go Vote, it may be for relevant messages or nice music or kids programs. We would simply say yes and yes and yes and yes but until the hearts are reconciled to God, there will be limited progress towards personal peace and cultural reform. You see, when a heart trusts Jesus Christ, even though it's only one heart, now the collective average of the entire people is affected and the reason is because there is now one more heart that has a pulse and a reference point for the creator. It changes culture, which is why as a culture, why as a church culture, number four is so important to us, and that is disciples of Jesus share the gospel as the means of reconciliation.

Some people would say if we have a problem with God, let's just get rid of God. We call that atheism. Some people say we have a problem with God, let's go to syncretism. Let's just sync up all the systems and say they all work. Other people would say, "No, both of those are wrong. There is a god, we must impress him." That it's about human effort and it's about human merit. Disciples of Jesus Christ hold fast to the only thing that can make us a new creation, and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Verses 18 and 19 says, "All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself. That is in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not

counting their trespasses against them.”

For those of you in the room today who are dealing with shame, this should make you smile. You mean there is actually something that can happen to where God Almighty would not count my trespasses against me? The answer is yes. Well how? The reason is because God counted those trespasses against his son. For our sake, Verse 21 says, “He made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God.” In other words, the gospel was this. It’s not try harder, the gospel is God did it all. All this is from God. God took our sins and he put them to Christ’s account where he went to a cross and died for him and then he took Christ’s righteousness and put it to the account of all who would call to him in faith.

Once you call to him in faith and you’re reconciled to God, then he gives us, as it says in Verses 18 through 20, a ministry of reconciliation. Not only that, but he even entrusts us with a message of reconciliation, which is the gospel. Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.

The pleasure of God, the reality and the importance of people’s soul, the need for reconciliation and the gospel is the only fulcrum that can move the soul, that can transform the soul. As a congregation, we will not come off of these. So let me encourage with you a few things. First, let’s make Jesus’ pleasure our happy consideration. Happy consideration. Happy this is so important when we talk about obedience because happiness is the evidence of love. I just hope you love obeying Jesus. Because the Bible says in 1 John, “Those who do, his commandments are simply not burdensome when you love him.”

The second thing I want to encourage us to do or consider is to slow down and begin looking at people differently. Looking deeper than morality, deeper than means, deeper than purchasing power, deeper than political stickers. You see when you look past all those things, what you find is your heart is going to grow with mercy towards people. You see Jesus said, “Whoever believes in the son has eternal life and whoever does not obey the son shall not see life but the wrath of God remains on him.” In other words, when we, we fill up the stage with all kinds of things that separate humanity and God says, “Let me tell you. There’s only two. You all fit into one of two categories. You’re either with my son or against my son, and if you’re with my son, there is no wrath on you, and if you are not with my son, then my wrath remains on you.”

This is why, when disciples absorb this reality and we look at people who have different ideologies, who even believe differently, who may believe that there’s seven different genders, we don’t mock them, we don’t laugh at them, no, what does it do? It causes us to have mercy and compassion, that we would pray for them and we would love them and we would seek to care for them. But you have to slow down to be able to see people beyond their shirt. Beyond their car and beyond their means. You have to see long enough to say, “What is happening in that person’s soul?”

Then there's the third and that's let's begin to move to people as Jesus moved towards us. Look, disciples move, period. Disciples move. I'm not saying we all get on an airplane and we all go overseas, though many of us will. But if you're a disciple, your prayers will move over a period of time, from always praying about yourself to praying about people who are from God. You'll move. Your service, your energy, your resources will move and the reason is because Jesus moved. We're ambassadors of a king who pursued, ran and reconciled. Therefore we must be willing to extend ourselves to the point of discomfort in order to reach others because he was so willing to extend himself to the point of discomfort in order to reach us.

So next week, we're going to start a little series called Reaching People that simply aims at looking at how did Jesus reach people? How did he win people's trust? The last thing is this. I want to close to a word for those who are considering Christ. There may be a lot of things you didn't understand but what I hope you understand is this is that God Almighty loves you with an everlasting love. He sent his son to rescue you and if you'll humble yourself and you'll admit your need and you'll put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, believing in his death and resurrection, he will reconcile you to himself. He'll take away your sin and he'll give you his righteousness. You'll enjoy a relationship with him, and so I join the words of Paul himself and say on behalf of Christ himself, be reconciled to God.

So let me pray. Father in heaven, we come before you and we pray now for those who may be considering and may be praying right now to trust Christ. We ask that you would incline their heart to trust, that you would open up their eyes to help them to see that Jesus is not just relevant but he's everything. I pray Father that you would help them to see that even in the pain and the emptiness that they may be experiencing because of sin in their life, that there is hope, that there is a path. So God, I ask that you would lead them now to admit that they cannot save themselves. They would put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ and confess now through a prayer to you right now as the Lord of all. We would ask God that you would be gracious to them and save them, for your pleasure. We ask now God as we sing to you, that you would be pleased. Not only with the words of our lips but also the meditations of our heart. Jesus, you are worthy of the worship of the whole world, and we want to contribute to that now. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Would you stand? Let's sing together.



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