Can't Stop Won't Stop — Delivery Transcript

Matthew 10:1–4 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, November 22, 2026 · *You Are Sent*

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If you've got a Bible, we're going to be in Matthew chapter 10 this morning. If you don't have a Bible, there should be one on the chair in front of you — underneath the chair in front of you. If you don't have one, you can take that one. If you're new to Broadview, we're going through the Gospel of Matthew in this season of our church. So if you're unfamiliar, just turn your Bible about halfway through and go right until you see Matthew. It's a gospel written by one of the eyewitnesses of Jesus, one of the original twelve apostles. And he's making an effort to not just tell us what Jesus did, but the meaning of what Jesus did for your life and for my life. And this morning we're going to be in Matthew chapter 10, where Jesus begins to shift from doing and saying and ministering to sending out his apostles to do and say the same. So the title of the series is called *You Are Sent*.

Easy to set a goal, hard to reach one

I've never in my own life drifted anywhere great. Typically, if I'm going to do something good in my life, it's going to require a little bit of effort, a little bit of planning, some intentionality. If you think about your life, I don't know if any of you have drifted into greatness just accidentally. I would venture to guess probably not. If you think back to the big wins in your life, it was probably something that you thought about beforehand. You created a definition of what success would look like. You put that on the wall, you took aim at that target, and you developed some kind of a plan to close the gap between where you were and where you wanted to be.

That's probably what you did in terms of finding a spouse, if you are married — finding a girlfriend, if you're starting to, you know, go into that world. It's what most people do in terms of finding a college or some kind of a degree — or not a degree or college — maybe

your job. I know business owners who, before they started their business, put it all out on paper and said, "This is where I want to see us go." And that's helpful. Goals like that are helpful because they paint a picture of what success looks like. Because if you don't have some kind of a picture towards which to aim, most of us are just going to drift. And most of us, when we drift, we drift nowhere. We don't drift anywhere very good.

And so goals are helpful. Goals are useful for driving a person towards success. And we're going to set some goals as a staff next month, or in January 2027. Some of you are going to set New Year's resolutions, and that's great. I hope you win. I hope you get all of your resolutions. What I've noticed is that it's easy to set a goal. It's hard to reach a goal. Can I get a witness?

It's just like we talked about last week with the mission gap — how it's easy for people to identify the mission gap between where things are and where they need to be. That part's easy. It's even easy to criticize the gap between where things are and where they need to be. It's hard to close the mission gap. And if a mission gap is the difference between where things are and where they ultimately need to be, I would think of goals as the thing that you use to shrink the gap. You go from goal to goal to goal. And so they're like little miniature end zones: once you cross that line, now it's time to go on to the next thing. And just like it's easy to identify the gap but not close it, it's easy to set the goal and not reach it.

Good excuses and bad excuses

And I can look back on many goals in my life, and on the ones that I did not reach, in every case I had what I thought was a good reason. Can I get a witness? I've never not reached a goal just because. In almost every case there was a reason why I couldn't reach the goal. You might call it an excuse. And you've probably heard the phrase — I can't repeat it the way I learned it — but excuses are like socks: everybody's got some and they all stink.

And that's a funny thing to say, but I don't know that I buy that. Some excuses don't stink. Some excuses are great. And the difference between a bad excuse and a good excuse typically is the difference between an excuse that begins and ends in you versus an excuse that begins and ends outside of you. And so when you have a goal and you didn't reach your goal because you didn't feel good, or you were tired, or you didn't feel like it, most people are not going to buy that excuse, because, you know, you can change you. You can sleep better. You can work harder. You can do X, Y, or Z.

But when your excuse is not something that begins and ends in you, but it's something outside of you — like, you know, "It wasn't that I wasn't paying attention, it's that I had a terrible teacher," or "It wasn't that I was a bad steward of my resources and my time; I just

wasn't given what I needed. You know, I tried. I did everything that I could do, but this person or that thing was an obstacle that just simply could not be overcome."

And the very best excuses — take notes if you want to use this in the future — the very best excuses are excuses that don't even sound like excuses. They sound like wisdom and discernment, cloaked as an excuse. In other words, people hear that excuse and they go, "I'm so glad you didn't reach your goal. I'm so glad that you were able to wisely stop moving forward in this thing that you had set out to do in your life. I'm afraid if you would have kept going, something really bad could have happened."

Those are great excuses, because what they do is they free us from the burden of accusation, which is what an excuse is. The word *excuse* comes from the Latin — *causare*, or *causa*, I don't know how you pronounce it, but c-a-u-s-e — it means to accuse. And we don't like to be accused. I don't like being accused. So we spend our whole lives trying to get out from underneath the accusation. And so we give an *ex* — out of — *causare*: excuse. We give an excuse to get out from underneath it. And when it's good that we got out from underneath it, we feel morally justified, and the goal dies. And that's maybe good in some cases.

Goals you inherit

But I want to submit to you there are some goals in your life and in my life where even really good excuses are not good enough. There are a handful of goals that, if you were to give even a really good excuse, people would be able to look at it and say, "You should not have quit." And what those goals share in common is that they're not typically goals that you invent. They're goals that you inherit. They're not something that you come up with on your own, but rather something given to you by someone else — typically someone much bigger than you, more important than you, with greater resources than you.

And specifically, I want to think about missions or goals that are given to you from God. And if God, who is greater than all things, was to give you this goal, then there are no excuses that you could point to outside of yourself or within yourself and say, "Because this or that is taking place, therefore I'm justified in quitting." Because in these types of goals, progress in the goal is not even the definition of success. In these kinds of goals, it's perseverance that is the definition of success. It's that you keep moving forward in the goal that God has given you, because you recognize that no matter how hard it is, no matter how impossible it may feel, the man — or the God — who gave me this goal is greater than all things. And so I cannot stop. I cannot quit.

And that's the big idea of our message today: sometimes God will give you a goal. And if God has sent you on this mission, then you can't quit. You cannot stop. There is no excuse good enough for stopping in the mission that God has given.

The Twelve

And that's in Matthew chapter 10. Essentially, like I said, Jesus has been teaching in synagogues. He's been preaching the gospel. He's been healing sickness and disease. He's been doing incredible things. And as he's been growing in his popularity, so also has the opposition against Jesus been growing in its strength. And there was a group that was plotting how to get Jesus arrested and executed by the Romans, because he was a threat to their power and to their interests. And before they do what they're going to do in Matthew's gospel, Matthew turns and says Jesus took all that he had been doing and saying and healing, and he entrusted it to these twelve men. These twelve were given the same authority, the same power, the same mission, and they were sent by Jesus into the same towns, to the same culture, to the same type of people — and therefore they experienced the same kinds of opposition.

And we're going to see with these twelve men that there were many things they could have pointed to as a good excuse — not a bad excuse, a good excuse — for why they could no longer go as Jesus had sent them. And in every case, I think we're going to see that those excuses were deficient. They were not good enough. And if they weren't good enough for them, I don't think they're good enough for you and for me.

And so, Matthew chapter 10 — we're going to start in verse 1. If you're new, Jesus had been having these encounters with various individuals. And at the end, you have the religious establishment, who is firmly against Jesus. And Jesus looks at the crowd. He looks at those religious leaders who had failed in their job to care for people and lead them spiritually. And he says of the crowds that they are like sheep without a shepherd. They are distressed and dejected — meaning they are in a terrible state socially and spiritually, not just because of their poor choices, but because they were without good leadership. And so he says to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few." These people are hurting. They're in need of salvation and deliverance. There is a huge opportunity, but we don't have enough people. "So pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."

We looked at this last week and said it's God's mission, God's harvest. He chooses the people. And therefore God chooses twelve out of all of the disciples of Jesus. We don't know exactly how many there were. But Jesus spends all night in prayer in Luke chapter 6. He wakes up and he knows who God wants him to pick. And so:

Summoning his twelve disciples, he gave them authority over unclean spirits, to drive them out and to heal every disease and sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: First, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James

the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

Now, these are twelve names. Many of you may be familiar with them because of, you know, the television show *The Chosen*. And one of the reasons I really like that show is it brings to life a lot of these characters. Some of these characters we know quite a bit about. A lot of these characters we know very little about. But of the things that we do know about all of them, we know that they're not all that special. They're pretty normal — you know, blue-collar, average type folks. They're not the most wealthy people, but neither are they the poorest. They're not movers and shakers. They're not politically connected. They're not who you would maybe pick if you were going to, you know, run a candidate to become president of the United States. They don't have those kinds of skills. And yet God, in his sovereignty and in his wisdom, leads Jesus to choose these twelve men.

And even in the way that they're listed, you can kind of see certain excuses that they might have appealed to, to say, "No, not me. No, not now." Just like you and I can hear God say, "I want you to do this. I'm sending you into this area. I'm sending you to have this conversation." And we can push back against the Lord and say, "No, not now. No, not me. No, not here."

And one of them, of course, is Judas, who has the commentary about betraying Jesus. You also see Simon, who is called Peter. Simon was his name before Jesus changed it to Cephas, which means rock, which is pronounced *Petros* in Koine Greek. You see Matthew with his old job description attached. This is the only list wherein Matthew has his old job description attached. And in all those ways there's something more there. Finally, you've got Simon, who is the Zealot. And that gives you a clue into an excuse that maybe he could have used.

So what I want us to do with the time that we have this morning is to look at these men and the excuses that they might have given for "God, you can't use me for this particular thing," and why those excuses were deficient — and why they're deficient for you and for me. And the big idea is: if God has sent you, you can't stop.

1. God is greater than our problems

And the first reason we can't stop is because God is always bigger than the problems that we're going to face. There will be, in your life, as you are obedient to what God is calling you to do, hurdles and problems and rocks that you have to lift and jump and overcome. And there are no hurdles, there are no rocks so big that this great God who gave you the mission cannot help you overcome them. And I want to look at four of them this morning. The case in every one is that God is greater. God is greater.

And you see it in our text. It says that Jesus gave them his authority, and then in verse 5 he sent out the Twelve after giving them his instructions. But it's not just there. It's in verse 1, where it says that he summoned his disciples. In Mark 3, it's very explicit. It says that Jesus summoned the Twelve, and then he called them to be with him. And we said last week this is really important: before you are sent out on mission for Jesus, you need to first be brought into Jesus for communion. There is a sense in which Jesus draws you into himself first, so that he can transform you, fill you, strengthen you, and equip you with everything needed to do his will.

"I am with you"

This is not just true in the New Testament. It's true in the Old Testament as well. I just thought through the big stories in the Old Testament, like Abraham and Moses and some of the prophets. I think about Moses, when God sent him to go back into Egypt to demand of Pharaoh, "Let my people go." His big excuse, if you remember, is, "I'm not a very good speaker. I don't speak very well. I have a stuttering problem." And God's response to Moses was, "I'm with you." Amen? "I'm with you." Not, "I'm going to fix your speech problem." Not, "Oh, you're too hard on yourself. You're great." No — "You're terrible. You can't talk, or the dang… I am with you." I am with you.

Same thing with Gideon in Judges chapter 6. He was raised up as a judge to deliver the people of Israel from their terrible decisions. And Gideon says to the Lord, "Lord, I'm the youngest of all the families. I'm the youngest of all the clans." Guess what he said? "I am with you." Amen. Same exact words. "Don't worry about it. I'm with you."

Jeremiah, in Jeremiah chapter 1 — he was sent by God to declare to Israel news they didn't want to hear. They were in Babylonian captivity. There were false prophets who were saying, "Babylon's going to fall. We're going to succeed. You know, don't worry, it's almost over." And God raises Jeremiah up to say, "I want you to tell the people: those fools are dumb. They're lying to you, and you're actually going to be here for seventy years. So get comfy." And that's not a job description I wanted when I went into ministry, but that was what Jeremiah got. And Jeremiah said, "I can't. It's too much. I don't think I can." And guess what the Lord said to Jeremiah? "I'm with you." I'm with you.

Every single time that someone was sent out on mission and pointed to an excuse for why they couldn't, God gave the answer, "I'm with you." Which, for you and me, I think is super comforting. The excuses that we bring to the table — "God, I'm this. God, I'm that. That person…" and so on and so forth — are very real, very true. I don't think God would say, "It's not that bad." He wouldn't say, "You're better than you think you are." What he would say to you is, "I'm greater. I'm greater than the problem that you're facing." Specifically, I'm greater than these four problems.

Stains of history you can't hide

And the first one is the problem of a history you can't outrun — a history that you can't hide. There are some of us who feel like God can't use me because I've got these stains on my reputation that I can't remove. You have done things in your past that are widely known. Your reputation has been shattered. Your face, your pictures are on the Google. When people Google your name, the first thing that pops up is a mug shot, or, you know, I don't know — whatever it may be. Or, like me, you grew up in a small town, and so they don't remember the good stuff. They only remember the bad stuff. And they don't even just remember the bad stuff — they, you know, add and create extra stuff on top of the bad stuff. And you find yourself walking around with a reputation you can't erase. And it makes you feel as though, "God, choose somebody else. Choose somebody that doesn't have the baggage that I have."

And that excuse is exactly what Matthew would have felt. And I think that's one of the reasons Matthew leaves his old job in there: "Matthew the tax collector." And if you're not familiar, tax collectors in that first century were the most despised of Jewish people. They were so despised that the word *tax collector* became synonymous with *sinner* or *prostitute* or *harlot*, or something along those lines. It was so grotesque, so offensive, because these tax collectors were collaborating with Rome to oppress the Jewish people.

You've got to remember, the Jewish people in first-century Palestine believed — I think rightly believed — that it was their land. God had given them this land. He had promised it to Abraham. And because of their disobedience and unwillingness to do what they were supposed to do, God allowed foreign armies to come in and overtake them. And at this time, that foreign army was the Roman Empire. So they hated the Romans. They thought of them as, you know, unclean pagan Gentiles. And therefore anyone who would partner with Rome was likewise anathema. They were defiled. They were unworthy. If they did that — "you're dead to me" kind of thing. He would have been dead to Mom and Dad. He would have been dead to his loved ones.

And yet, while he's in the tax booth, what does Jesus do? He passes by the tax booth, he turns around, and he says, "Matthew — Levi, son of Alphaeus — follow me. Follow me." Meaning: your job as a tax collector, your reputation as the most horrific of all men — that is not so stained that I don't love you, that I can't heal you, that I can't save you. Drop it. Leave the keys. Follow me. And he did. And then he had a huge party with all these other tax collectors.

But now, not only is Jesus letting Matthew into his inner circle, not only is he fellowshipping with him and hanging out with him, he's saying, "I actually want to choose you. I want you to be one of my top guys. I want to send you so that you can be used for the kingdom" — even though he had the stains of history he couldn't hide.

And so if you have stains in your life where you look back — and maybe they were before you became a Christian, you know, something you did with your sexuality, something that you did that was illegal; there are a thousand ways that you can feel this kind of burden — the reality is, if he can use Matthew, he can use you. And so don't let the stains of history you can't hide keep you from going where God has sent you, keep you from saying what he's told you to say, keep you from doing what he's told you to do.

Now, that's not just true for Matthew. It's also true for Peter. When Jesus called Peter, he said, "Lord, depart from me. I'm an unclean man."[1] We don't know why he said that. You can use your imagination. He was a fisherman. He was an average guy. He could have done any number of terrible things. But he recognizes in that moment, "My past is so bad, I don't think you want me on your team, Jesus." And Jesus said, "Follow me." He didn't care. And so if he can use Peter, and if he can use Matthew, he can use any person with stains they can't erase. And so don't let your past stains keep you from the mission.

Suspicion of teammates you can't trust

The second also has to do with Matthew, but it's with Simon. You notice Simon's name — he's listed as a zealot. And a zealot, if you're not familiar, was the opposite of a tax collector in terms of the political spectrum. They could not be further apart. Tax collectors were collaborators with Rome. They were friendly with Roman power. They were even using Roman power to oppress other people. A zealot was someone who was zealous for God's law, zealous for God's glory, zealous for the temple, zealous for the land, et cetera. And so not only were they, you know, passionate about defending God, they were willing to defend God with violence if necessary. They were willing to kill Roman soldiers. They were willing to politically push back against the empire.

And so it'd be like today a conservative, partisan Republican partnering with a super-partisan Democrat. Take those partisan politics in our culture, put them on steroids, add a little bit of theology in there, and you've got this divide. And so it would have been very easy for Simon the Zealot to look at Matthew and say, "I cannot ever work with a man like that." And so it's not just the stains of history you can't hide. Sometimes it's the suspicion of teammates you can't trust.

And I've seen this a lot in ministry in my own life. There are people that God calls together. God rarely puts a team together that you would pick. Can I get a witness on that? He rarely puts the team together that you would pick. He'll often put people on your team that you go, "I don't know. I don't know if I like that guy. I don't know if I trust that guy." And you say, "Well, what? Why? What's wrong?" "I don't know. Just a feeling. Just a feeling. Like the way he smells. Don't like the way he, you know, talks. Don't like the way she — whatever." You

cannot let this suspicion of teammates you don't trust keep you from going where God has sent you to go.

That's, I think, why God chose Matthew and God chose Simon the Zealot to work together: because he is building a table where his kingdom tears down the wall of hostility between people. He tears down the dividing wall of Jew and Gentile, the dividing wall of male and female, of slave and free. He tears down this dividing wall that so many of us like to maintain, because it kind of gives us, if we're not careful, a sense of moral superiority.

And if you're not careful, you can subtly imply, "God, I can't go if you're going to use him." Which means you're kind of thinking, "I think you should use me because I'm worthy." You're saying, "I can't go because he's unworthy," which implies, "I would go because I am. I'm worthy; he's not worthy. So if you're going to use him, then I'm not going to go, because you're making a mistake." Now, none of us would say it that way. None of us would say it out loud. But that's what you're conveying. And what you've done is you've forgotten that God doesn't pick anybody because they're worthy. And sometimes he chooses certain people to do something in you — in your commitment to being humble and operating with the mindset that the ground is level at the foot of the cross. There is no superiority. There is no sense in which God shows favoritism or anything like that. And so don't let your suspicion of the teammates you don't trust keep you from going where God has sent you to go.

Now, I'm not saying they liked each other, and I'm not saying you need to, you know, make up and be friends. I'm not saying that. We never get any insight in the Gospels into whether or not they had a fight. I just kind of believe they had to have — and not just Simon, but Peter and James and John. Peter and James were fishermen; I think John was as well. Matthew would have very likely taxed their produce. He would have been making a living off of their living. That leaves a sore spot. And yet God put them together on a team for a reason — probably to do something in them as much as he was doing something in the world. And so let the Lord do that work of grace while you go, but do not quit. Don't let the stains of history you can't hide keep you from where God has sent you to go. And don't let the suspicion of teammates you don't trust keep you from going where God has sent you to go.

Stumped by questions you can't answer

The third excuse is not explicit in the text. It's more implied, but almost everybody recognizes Thomas as "doubting Thomas." He's known as doubting Thomas because, after Jesus is crucified and risen, Thomas hears the news, and Thomas basically says, "I don't believe it. I don't buy it. No way. Unless I touch his hands, unless I see the holes, that's the only way I'm going to believe." And so Jesus appears to them in the room. Thomas gets to, you know, do whatever he did. Could you imagine putting your finger in the hole? You know, I don't know if I'd do that. What did it look like? I don't know. But Thomas believes, and

Jesus says, you know, "Blessed are you, Thomas, that you believe."[2] Thomas says, "My Lord and my God." He gives this confession.

Thomas, even though he did doubt in that moment — I don't think you should think of Thomas as, like, a skeptical man. He was very often full of courage, full of faith and commitment. When Jesus was going to go out and face opposition and probably die, he's like, "Let's go, so that we may die with him." The thing about Thomas is he was a practical realist, which I kind of appreciate, as a skeptical person myself. I don't like to just move forward on gumption: "It'll probably be fine. Let's go. Let's see what happens." I want to be able to see what's coming, and plan and budget. "Let's make sure this is smart and wise." And Thomas, I think, is very similar in that way.

When Jesus would use conceptual, theoretical language, Thomas would often bring him back to the concrete and the practical. Like in John 14, when Jesus said, "I'm going to go away for a while, guys, and where I'm going, you can't go. But in my Father's house are many mansions; if it weren't so, I would have told you. And hey, if I go, I'm going to go and prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place, I'm going to come back and get you. And you know the way to where I'm going." And Thomas goes, "No, we don't. No, we don't. We don't know where you're going, and so we don't know the way. Where are you going?" And Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." And I'm sure Thomas was like, "Whatever. What are you talking about?" He was a realist. He was practical.

And he was not the only one. There were many disciples who acted this way. Like when Jesus was doing the feeding of the 5,000, I think it was Philip and Andrew who were like, "You can't do it. There's only five loaves. There's only a couple fish. How is this going to be enough for so many?" When — is it Thaddaeus, or Nathanael? One of those two[3] — when Jesus is talking about, "I'm going to reveal myself to you guys, but I'm not going to reveal myself to the world," they're like, "How are you going to do that? How are you going to reveal yourself to us but not to the world?" And so they were often struggling.

Here's the point: you cannot let being stumped by those kinds of questions keep you from continuing in the mission. And the reason this is so important is because there are certain questions that are only ever answered from a place of faith seeking understanding. I don't remember who told me this, but it's always stuck with me: you have permission to carry your questions with you on the way.

I like to debate and think big thoughts, and I'm kind of a skeptical person. I like to argue and stuff like that. And so there were many times in my Christian life where I felt the struggle of unanswered questions. And I felt like I was not authentic if I continued to preach and teach and lead while I was silently struggling with this or that question. And in every case where I

was willing to keep walking, keep trusting, keep continuing where God had sent — in every single case, God was faithful. And in many cases, I got answers to those questions.

But here's what else I found out. The answers that I got to those questions created new questions that didn't have answers. For every one answer I would get, I'd get three new unanswered questions. But the odd dynamic was, as I continued to walk with those questions in tow, and as I got answers to those questions on the journey — even though there were other questions that came about — there was also a greater level of certainty that was established. And so as you continue to walk with eyes of faith, the certainty of what you do know gets larger and larger, so that what you don't know becomes much less important than the things that you do know, even though you hold them. You carry your questions, recognizing some questions are only answered through the eyes of faith. Some questions may not be answered until I get to glory. Just because I don't have the answer doesn't mean there is not one. And unbelief, or stopping, or quitting on the journey will never bring you to a place of clarity or answer your questions.

And so don't let being stumped by questions you can't answer keep you from going where God has sent you to go. That's true in so many arenas of your life. It's not just true in terms of the Great Commission. If God has made it clear, "This is where I want you to go," and you have "What about this?" and "What about that?" and X, Y, or Z thing — there are some answers that you just won't get until you take a step of faith. And it's actually the exercising of your faith that clears the view. And so Thomas, these disciples — they learned that lesson on the way, as they were faithful to go and not to quit. And so don't let the stains keep you from the mission. Don't let suspicion or being stumped keep you from the mission.

Failures you can't fix

Finally, the last one: failures you can't fix. Some people stop going because of failures they can't fix. This, of course, is seen with Judas there at the end. It's also seen with Peter there at the very beginning. If you noticed, he refers to Peter as "Simon, who is called Peter." Simon was his name when Jesus called him. And somewhere along the way in their journey, Jesus says to Simon, "You're no longer Simon. You will be Cephas," which means rock in Aramaic. And if you say that in Koine Greek, it's *Petros*, which is why we call him Peter, which means the rock.

Peter would fail Jesus in many ways, very often, and sometimes in very big ways. Judas would fail Jesus bigly in his betrayal. But there is a difference between those two men. Peter refused to let that failure be the final word, even though I'm sure everything in him wanted it to be. Judas, on the other hand, allowed his failure to take him off the board, and it crushed him, and he hanged himself. I want to show you this dynamic real quickly, and then we're going to wrap it up with the final point.

Peter

The failure of Peter, of course, is his denial. Jesus prophesies that Peter would deny him there at the Last Supper, and Peter basically says, "No way. No one's going to do this." And Jesus says this: "Simon, Simon" — and notice he uses his old name, Simon — "Simon, look out. Satan has asked to sift you like wheat. But I've prayed for you that your faith wouldn't fail. And when you've turned back, I want you to strengthen your brothers."

This has always fascinated me: not only does Jesus know what Peter's going to do, he prays for him so that his faith won't fail, and then gives him an assignment before it's even happened. Crazy. That's just a reminder that Jesus would say, "You cannot let your failures keep you from the mission. I've got things for you to do, even though you fail, even after I've restored you."

What happens? Exactly what Jesus said. Judas betrays him. They all run. While they're on the run, Peter is confronted by this girl around the campfire: "Hey, you're one of his disciples." He says, "No, I'm not." Three times he denies Jesus. Then the rooster crows, and Peter remembered the words that Jesus had spoken: "You're going to deny me before the rooster crows." So what does he do? He goes out and he weeps bitterly.

The sorrow. It's not just the betrayal. It's the sorrow that swallows you whole. "How could I? Even though he saved me, even though he changed me, even though he used me — how could I, after seeing so many incredible things, after seeing so much forgiveness and grace, how could I then fail?" That's what's so hard about this. It'd be one thing if it was before you became a Christian — the stains of your past. That's a little bit easier to get over, because "I didn't know Jesus." But when you know Jesus, and you're following Jesus, and Jesus is using you, and you're seeing things — and then you still find this sin that tempts you to despair, this sifting of Satan that causes you to sin — the sorrow in those moments is almost enough to swallow you.

And it could have swallowed Peter. It probably would have, when Jesus was crucified and buried. Could you imagine what he was thinking? Could you imagine the regret? Could you imagine all of the feels? God raises Jesus from the dead. Jesus appears to the women. He tells the women, "Go tell Peter I'm risen." Then Jesus appears to Peter face to face. And in both instances he says, "I want you to meet me in Galilee."[4] If you were Peter, what would you have done? "He can't use me. He's got to find a new leader. I've ruined it."

But he doesn't. He goes to Galilee. He does what Jesus told him to do. They see Jesus on the water,[5] and, you know, he jumps out of the boat. He restores Peter on the beach, on the shoreline. And the way he does it is he uses his old name and asks him a question three times. Three betrayals, three questions. "Simon, do you love me?" "Simon, do you love me?" "Simon, do you love me?" Every time Simon says, "Yes, Lord, you know." "Yes, Lord, you

know." "Yes, Lord, you know." And in every single instance, Jesus puts him back on mission: "Feed my sheep." "Lead my sheep." "Feed my sheep." "Follow me." Get back in the game. Do not quit. Don't let your failures keep you from doing what I said. Don't let failures that you can't fix keep you from the mission.

Judas

Judas, on the other hand — what does he do? Similar sorrow, similar remorse, but he doesn't take it to Jesus. Instead, he goes to the priests in the temple. If you go to the next slide — he says, "I've done something terrible." There was remorse. "He's an innocent man. You've done a terrible thing. You've crucified him. I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." They said, "Your problem. Figure it out yourself." And so he threw the silver into the temple, and then he went and he hanged himself. He let his failure — he let his sorrow — swallow him whole.

The only difference between Peter and Judas is right there. Every disciple ran. Every disciple deserted him. Every one of us will fail in the mission. The question is: when you fail, will you repent? Will you come back to Jesus? Will you receive forgiveness and grace? Will you let him do what he needs to do to cleanse you of that unrighteousness and that root of sin and unbelief, and then recommission you to go and do what he's called you to do? And who knows — he may use that failure for his kingdom. He may be able to use you.

And I know there are special situations where, you know, maybe you're not restored to ministry, or maybe there are some things where you don't have a public platform. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about being useful to the Lord, being useful to advance the kingdom until he calls you home. Don't let failures that you can't fix keep you from the mission.

God is greater than all of these things. He's greater than your unanswered questions. He's greater than your failures. He's greater than your history. He's greater than your suspicion. And because he's greater, you don't have to stop. Wherever God sends you, don't let these things slow you down.

2. God will give us what we need

The last thing, real quickly, and then we're done: we don't have to stop because God will give us what we need. You see this in verse 1. You see it again in verse 5. You see it all the way down through chapter 10. In every case, Jesus gives them what God promised. We're going to talk about this in future weeks, but he gives them power and authority to cast out demons. He gives them instructions for where to go and how. He gives them their daily bread. He even tells them, "Don't take money. Don't take silver. Don't take gold. Don't take your fanny

pack. Just trust the Lord. Let him feed you every single day." I'm like, "I'm good. No fanny pack for me." "Don't worry about where you're going to stay. You find a worthy person and stay there until you leave."

And he does, every time. He provides them a house. He provides them food. He provides them everything. They have the words to speak when they're brought before the courts. He says, "You're going to be flogged. You're going to be beaten. They're going to hand you over." That's the key word: they're going to hand you over, just like Judas handed Jesus over. "And when they hand you over, they're going to question you and they're going to grill you. And do not be afraid, because in that moment I will give you what to speak." Why? Because the Holy Spirit will put words in your mouth. And they would have the grace they needed to persevere. Jesus tells them it's going to happen. They go, and then it happens. And every time, what Jesus said would happen happened, just as Jesus said it would.

He will give you everything he promised. Now, he doesn't promise you, you know, everything you want, but he does promise you certain things, and everything he promises will happen. His grace will be sufficient for your every need.

God's mission is sourced in his supply

Here's what you need to know, and what I need to learn: God's mission is sourced in his supply. If God has sent you to do something — let's say it's a relationship. Let's say your marriage is on the rocks, or you've got a prodigal son or daughter. God has sent you into this environment to be his ambassador, to preach his gospel, to speak his word, to do the work of the Holy Spirit. And you think to yourself, "I don't know if I have enough patience. I don't know if I have enough this or that." Stop measuring God's assignment by your resources — your emotional resources, your financial resources, whatever else it may be. Start measuring his mission by his resources. God's work is always sourced in God's supply.

This was hard for me to learn when we were doing this building project, because I was like, "Yeah, I know God spiritually can do it, but what about cash? Like, we need money. That's real stuff. Real money. It's, like, in a real bank and stuff. It's real wood, real workers — real people who've got to get paid." Don't measure God's assignment in your life by your resources. It's a mistake. If it's his work, if he's sent you into the work, then he will supply what you need for the work according to his supply.

The finished mission

So what happens is exactly what Jesus said. And everything that happens to them happens to Jesus later. That's the parallel Matthew wants us to see. Jesus does it. He sends them to do it. And then it happens to Jesus. Jesus is handed over to the Romans. He is flogged. He is

beaten. They question him. In that moment, Jesus could have quit. He could have checked out. He could have given up. But he does not do so. In every single case, he finishes the mission that God had sent him to accomplish.

If you go to the next slide, in Matthew 20 — the next, next slide: "We're going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be handed over. They're going to condemn him to death. They will hand him over to the Gentiles. He will be mocked, flogged, and crucified. But on the third day he will be raised." And that's exactly what happened. He was mocked. He was flogged. He was beaten. And on the third day, he was raised.

And because he was raised, here's what I want you to see: every one of those excuses is moot. The stains of your past, the suspicion of that person, the questions you can't answer, and the failures you can't fix — every single one of them is a moot point. It does not matter, because God raised Jesus from the dead.

I often joke: if the resurrected Jesus stood in front of you and said, "I have an answer to the problem of divine sovereignty and human freedom. I just need you to chill and wait" — you good? If the risen Jesus Christ said that to me, I'm good. I'll keep going. It's moot, because God raised Jesus from the dead. My failures, my skepticism — it can wait. It'll be okay. I can keep going, because God is greater than my problems.

And that's true for your marriage problem. That's true for your prodigal son or daughter. That's true for the intersection between what God is calling you to do and your inability to do it. Whatever that is in your life, do not quit. If God has sent you, you can't quit. You can't stop. You've got to keep going. I know it's a good excuse. Anyone else would say, "I would do the same thing." If it's God's work, let him supply you for what he wants you to do. And just keep swimming. Just keep walking. Just don't quit. Because he is going to do something big through your perseverance and faithfulness, just like he accomplished our salvation through the perseverance of Jesus.

Respond

And so let's take a few moments and respond to the Lord as Cheryl leads us instrumentally. You can do it right there where you're seated. Allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart for the excuses maybe you've been clinging to without even recognizing it. Maybe a sense of fear or unbelief, because you have felt overwhelmed and under-resourced for what you've been trying to do. Maybe you've been treating it like your deal instead of God's deal. And this morning he's asking you to turn over the reins, to let him take the wheel.

Maybe you would be here this morning, and there's never been a time in your life where you've repented of sin and come to Jesus for salvation. Maybe you would point to your past. You'd point to your failures. This morning, God is saying, "My grace is sufficient. My grace is

sufficient for where you are right now, in this season. If you will just come — if you will just continue and persevere…"

[The recording ends here.]

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "I'm an unclean man"; Luke 5:8 reads, "Go away from me, because I'm a *sinful* man, Lord!" ("unclean" echoes Isaiah 6:5, "a man of unclean lips"). Wording left as spoken. Source: Luke 5:8; Isaiah 6:5 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "Blessed are you, Thomas, that you believe"; in John 20:29 Jesus says to Thomas, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." Wording left as spoken. Source: John 20:29 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩
3. Transcript note: spoken as "Thaddaeus, or Nathanael? One of those two"; the question in John 14:22 ("Lord, how is it you're going to reveal yourself to us and not to the world?") was asked by "Judas (not Iscariot)," the "Judas the son of James" of Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13, who is traditionally identified with Thaddaeus (Matthew 10:3) — not Nathanael. Source: John 14:22; Luke 6:16; Matthew 10:3 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩
4. Transcript note: spoken as "He tells the women, 'Go tell Peter' … in both instances he says, 'I want you to meet me in Galilee'"; the message "go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee'" comes from the young man (angel) at the tomb in Mark 16:7; when Jesus himself meets the women in Matthew 28:10 he says, "Go and tell my brothers to leave for Galilee." His private appearance to Peter is only reported (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5), with no recorded words. Wording left as spoken. Source: Mark 16:7; Matthew 28:10; Luke 24:34 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩
5. Transcript note: spoken as "They see Jesus on the water"; in John 21:4–7, "Jesus stood on the shore," and Peter "plunged into the sea" from the boat to reach him. Wording left as spoken. Source: John 21:4–7 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩