



# CANYON HILLS

COMMUNITY CHURCH

Series: Mark

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## The Parable of the Soils

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We have worshiped in Spirit. That is for sure, as we lift up our hearts, our voices, and our praise to him. Now, we will worship in truth as well as we open God's Word and we let him speak to us through his Word. I'm going to ask you to open your Bibles to the gospel of Mark. We now arrive at chapter 4, where he's going to group several of Jesus' parables together in this chapter.

I'm not sure if you remember this, but it's estimated that one third of all the teaching we have recorded of Jesus is actually parables. It's certainly where we find some of his most memorable lessons. Aren't they? The parable of the prodigal son, of the good Samaritan, of the sheep and the goats...

We know Jesus wasn't the only one who used parables when he taught. In fact, in his very day, the Jewish rabbis would use parables. They would use them to illustrate or explain Old Testament laws. They would use them to kind of help understand Old Testament lessons, but when Jesus uses parables, he's not using them to teach us truths and lessons we already have. When Jesus uses parables, it's typically for the purpose of presenting new teaching or new truth.

Today, in this chapter, I want us to read the first parable in the chapter, and then I want to stop and explain what a parable is and why Jesus chose to teach with parables. Then, I want us to interpret the parable and apply it to our lives as best we can. That's kind of the trajectory we're on this morning, so with your Bibles open to the gospel of Mark, let's stand for the reading of his Holy Word. We're going to pick it up right in verse 1. We left off at the end of chapter 3 last week, so we just keep right on going. Verse 1, chapter 4.

**"Again [Jesus] began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: 'Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it.**

**Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.' And he said, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear.'"** Let's pray.

Father in heaven, we have heard your Word. We have heard the words of your Son, Jesus Christ, and we pray in his name that you would be our Teacher right now, that the presence of your Holy Spirit in us would reveal what this means, that you would help us understand it, and, ultimately, God, we ask that you would give us courage to obey it, to apply it to our lives today.

God, we thank you for your Word. It leaves us with direction. It gives us truth we can live our lives by, and I just pray that when it's all said and done this morning, we will have been changed, made different, made more like Jesus because we are here, allowing you to speak to us through your Word.

God, I pray for those who are standing all around us this morning who have heavy hearts. I ask in the powerful name of Jesus that you would meet them in this place with comfort. God, help them to know you are with them and you will walk with them through whatever they might need to face. God, overwhelm them right now with a peace, knowing you will not abandon them. Lord, we trust you and we love you. In Christ's name, amen.

If you look down at your Bibles, you're going to notice there's a heading right above chapter 4 that says, "The Parable of the Sower." Now, those headings are not inspired by the Holy Spirit. Those are just put there by man to kind of help us organize ourselves as we're reading through the Scriptures. Your Bible and my Bible say, "The Parable of the Sower." I have titled this sermon, *The Parable of the Soils*. I think as we get further into this, it's going to become evident that the main topic of this parable is the four different soils. We'll explain that in a minute.

1. *What is a parable?* I want to answer the question, "What is a parable?" The word literally means to place beside. A parable is a story that places one example beside another example for the purpose of clarifying meaning, making something clearer, or illustrating a concept or principle. A parable is a story of human experience, much like this one: a farmer sowing seed. It's a story of human experience, from which we learn spiritual lessons.

I think maybe a simpler definition, still, and one many of us have heard most of our Christian lives is that *a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning*. Now, for some people, that may be overly simplistic. I don't agree. I think that's a very adequate way to understand the concept of a parable.

Yet the question comes up: "Why the tricky little stories with hidden messages? Why didn't Jesus just get to the point instead of kind of using these stories as he does so often?" That is the exact question the people standing around Jesus that day, when Jesus was teaching this parable, asked

him. They asked him in real time, "What's going on with these parables?" and so I think we should let Jesus answer the question.

2. *Why parables?* If we just read a little bit further, in verses 10-12, it says, "**And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, 'To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, so that 'they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.'"**"

It's an interesting answer here. Jesus tells us there are two reasons why he uses parables when he teaches. I'm going to cover the second reason first and then back up to the first reason. In his answers, we see that Jesus uses parables...

A. *To conceal spiritual truths from the stubborn-hearted.* Parables are stories that keep hidden the real truth about God and his kingdom. At the very least, that's a little bit mysterious. Certainly, for some, it's kind of objectionable. Why is Jesus teaching in a way that hides what he's trying to say, that hides what it really means?

Well, to get to that answer, we have to first remember that in our unconverted state, before we're born again, the Bible teaches us that we sinful human beings have no natural desire to hear or understand God's Word. In fact, the book of Romans, in the New Testament, tells us that, naturally speaking, none of us, before we're born again, before we repent of our sin and ask Jesus to be our Lord and Savior... Before that, none of us wants God in our thinking.

Notice in his answer here in verses 11 and 12, Jesus actually quotes the Old Testament. He quotes Isaiah, chapter 6. A little background on Isaiah, chapter 6... We find there that God commissions Isaiah to call the Jewish people to repent of their rebellion, but they are so rebellious and so hardhearted toward God that he tells Isaiah,

"I want you to go and command them to repent. On behalf of me, you're going to speak for me as my prophet, Isaiah, but when you command them to repent, I'm going to shut their eyes. I'm going to stop up their ears. I'm going to harden their hearts and prevent them from understanding what you're going to tell them. These people don't even want to look at me. They don't want to listen to me. Isaiah, your mission is to be my instrument of judgment."

Now, with that in mind, that's what Jesus refers to when he answers the question. Jesus is using the example of Isaiah to tell us his parables were also a means of divine judgment against those who have no intention and no desire for knowing, worshiping, or submitting to God. Look at the end of verse 11. He says, "**...but for those outside...**" He's saying, "But for those who refuse to want to consider, to think about me..."

He says he speaks "**...in parables, so that 'they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.'**" Jesus is intimating that he was fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy that when the day arrived for God to fulfill his promise to

all mankind and he would send a Savior to redeem his people and save them from their wicked ways, the multitudes would not listen.

Jesus, as he's teaching in his earthly ministry, knows they are going to see the miracles and they're still going to refuse to believe. They're going to want to kill him. He knows they're going to hear the truth of his teaching and absolutely refuse to repent. Don't we all know someone like that? Haven't we either met them or know them personally? People in our lives who, honestly, if we were to walk on water in front of them, would not believe Jesus has any part in it.

We all have those people. We all know those people in our lives where it doesn't matter to them how indisputable the evidence is, historically, for the empty tomb and resurrection of Jesus. They will absolutely not want to have anything to do with Jesus. We all know that person. We all know those people.

So, Jesus says, "You know what? Just like in the day of Isaiah, one of the purposes for parables is to be an instrument of my judgment upon the hardness of a heart." Now, that's not the only reason Jesus taught in parables. He gives a second reason in the same passage.

*B. To reveal spiritual truths to the humble in heart.* Parables are meant to unlock the secrets of God's kingdom for the humble. Look at verse 11. "**And he said to them, 'To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God...'**" Now, that phrase, *the kingdom of God*, refers to God's plan of redemption. God's Messiah was coming to usher in an eternal and spiritual reign and rule.

As Jesus uses the phrase, *the kingdom of God*, he's referring to the fact that God has sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior, King, and final say in all things regarding life and faith. The kingdom of God is actually in all of us who have willingly surrendered the throne of our hearts to him in faithfulness and obedience. Jesus is saying he uses parables to open the door of the kingdom to those who are humble. Wow!

Now, with all that kind of out there swirling around in our minds, let's get back to the parable and let Jesus finish it. He's going to help us know what it means. If you look at verses 13 and 14, it says, "**And he said to them, 'Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?'**" In other words, Jesus is letting us know right now, "You're going to need to understand this parable if any of the other parables will ever make sense. That's what he says in verse 13.

Then, he says, in verse 14, "**The sower sows the word.**" The *word*... There's the hint. The seed the sower is sowing is meant to be the gospel, the Word of God, the message of the kingdom. The sower is the person who shares the message.

Now, in the context here, that would for sure refer to Jesus as he's sharing the gospel with the Jewish people, but it certainly has an eternal application that the sower in the parable is any of us followers of Jesus who want and attempt to tell anybody about him...any of us who want to share the gospel, who attempt to share the gospel with those who don't believe.

Now, the soil in the parable has a whole different application. Jesus is going to use the four different soils in the parable to explain why there's such a wide variety of responses to the gospel. He's going to use soil samples to describe the heart of human beings who hear the gospel and they'll explain why people respond so differently when they hear about Jesus. Let's just take them one at a time and make it simple.

The first soil is *the hard-worn path*. He says here in verse 15, "**And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.**" In this first soil, he's explaining why some people absolutely reject the gospel. He's saying the heart can be so closed and so hardened to the point of zero penetration of kingdom truth, zero penetration of the Word of God.

He's describing that person who maybe even comes to church and hears the Bible, maybe even multiple times, but it has absolutely no effect on their life. This person could have multiple people in their life who love Jesus, who share about Jesus on a regular, consistent basis, and they hear it over and over, and it's like it just bounces off of them.

Jesus says here, "These people are easy pickings for Satan." He says, "**...Satan immediately comes and takes away the word...**" Satan, the great liar and deceiver, swoops in with worldly philosophies and self-worshiping pursuits and dangles them in front of the person with the hard heart. He dangles things like partying, sensuality, popularity, power, or materialism.

He'll dangle in front of them fake spirituality like relativism: "Hey, it doesn't matter as long as you believe. Just believe whatever you want." He dangles intellectualism, like, "Hey, you need to figure God out, and if you can't figure a God out, that must mean there's no God." He'll dangle things like atheism and say, "You just determine in your own heart if there's some higher power, and if you say no, then it's no." That's what Satan does to the person with the hard heart.

The people in this category are usually very self-absorbed with their dreams, with their plans, with their pleasures, ambitions, and goals. That is what their lives are centered on. They're completely resistant to the leadership of God in their lives and they want to live their lives independent of God's love and rule, but it doesn't erase the fact that God still commands all men everywhere to repent.

If the person refuses to repent, if the command is ignored, God warns us that they will stand before him in the judgment. In their unbelief, they will be condemned to an eternity in hell, where Satan, the great liar and deceiver, is also destined forever. They will follow Satan right into eternity lost. That's the first soil, the first heart, the hardened heart.

The second soil would be *the rocky ground*. Jesus continues to explain in verse 16, "**And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.**"

This person, Jesus says, has the kind of heart that initially seems open to the gospel, open to the truth about Jesus and his death on the cross. They seem receptive, enthusiastic. They might even start going to church. Some things in their lives might even start to change. You might notice, "Wow, they're a little different!"

Yet Jesus says as soon as the demands of the King start to crowd in on their agenda, the demands of commitment, faithfulness, sacrifice, tithing, or living a holy life... As soon as the demands of the King, Jesus, and the kingdom of God start to squeeze in on their agenda, they start to backtrack.

Then, Jesus says, when persecution enters in, when trouble gets thrown in there because they're followers of Jesus and all of a sudden, they realize not everybody is on their bandwagon, then they abandon all interest in the heavenly kingdom, because that's not what they signed up for. So, without any real roots of true, total surrender, they eventually burn out because they're trying to live with one foot in their kingdom and one foot in God's kingdom, and that is, frankly, not only exhausting, but it's impossible to do, and so eventually, they just fade away.

Jesus calls the third soil *the thorny soil*. Verse 18: "**And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.**" I think this is the person who has a lot to lose.

For some reason, they're in a place in life where they're consumed with caring for and holding on to things like their career, career path, money, investments, stuff, or even relationships in their life. Those things are very busy, consuming, and overwhelming, and they have all of that to somehow push aside and make room for Jesus in their hearts.

What happens is the weeds of their own pursuits, the thorns of their own priorities and plans grow faster and stronger than their kingdom commitment, and God's rule and reign in their hearts just gets choked out like a garden full of weeds. These people heard. They understood the ways of God, but they never obeyed them. They never pulled the weeds of sin out of their heart. They just left all of their priorities there and they never obeyed the ways of God. Eventually, Jesus was crowded out and they went back to their old ways.

Once again, we are sobered by the truth in God's Word. In 1 John, chapter 2, verse 4, it says the man who says, "I know Jesus," but does not do what he commands, "**...is a liar, and the truth is not in him...**" It doesn't matter how many times they say, "I believe in Jesus. I'm a Christian. I'm a Christian. I'm a Christian." Scripture says if everything in your life crowds him out of your life, you're a liar.

Thank the Lord that Jesus didn't end the parable there, because there's a fourth soil. He calls it *the good soil*. In verse 20, he says, "**But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.**" Jesus is saying, "This person's life produces fruit, evidence that they have

surrendered to the leadership of God in their life. The evidence is fruit. It is obvious fruit. It is visible fruit. It is good fruit. It is a lot of fruit," Jesus is saying.

In Matthew, chapter 7, Jesus teaches, "**You will recognize them by their fruits.**" Right after that, in chapter 7, he says, "The good tree produces good fruit." Those are all descriptions of a genuine conversion, a genuine disciple.

Let me give you a couple of thoughts or observations here, and then I'll get right to the application. I think you need to kind of wrestle with me here now. It's very possible to read this parable and to wrongly deduce that Jesus taught this parable in order to kind of console us for disappointing witnessing attempts.

It's easy to read this and say, "Well, what Jesus is doing here is kind of letting us off the hook a little bit. He's saying three out of four people, three out of four hearts are going to reject the gospel. They're going to reject Jesus, so give yourself a break. Just keep going. Keep sharing your faith, and if one out of four people will stop, listen, and consider Jesus, then praise God."

I want to tell you I do not believe that is what Jesus is teaching here. When you study the parable a little closer, you're going to find that the good soil here, that fourth person, that fourth heart he's describing as good soil... The genuine convert had some things the other hearers didn't have.

You may think, "Well, wait a minute. It doesn't say that here." You're right, but we have the privilege of living on this side of the cross, where now we have the whole Bible in our hands, and so we get to go look and see what Matthew and Luke wrote. When they recorded Jesus' parable, they included some of the things Mark left out. It wasn't that Mark made a mistake, it was just that Mark didn't choose to emphasize this, but Matthew and Luke do.

If we had the time... We don't now, and I'm going to let you go look on your own, but let me explain to you. In the gospel of Matthew, chapter 13, Matthew writes, as he's recording Jesus' parable, that that fourth heart, that good soil, had understanding. Luke, in chapter 8, records this parable of the sower, of the soil, and he says in that fourth soil, when Jesus was teaching, he said they had "**...an honest and good heart...**"

So, that raises a question, doesn't it? Does this mean that in humanity there are some who have understanding and some whose hearts are good and honest, and so we as Christians should just keep looking for those who have those virtues, and if we get lucky, we're going to find them and we'll just give them the gospel and they'll believe? Is that the natural conclusion?

Again, I would say no, because as we've already heard, the Bible tells us that before our conversion, there are none who understand. In fact, in the book of Jeremiah, chapter 17, verse 9, it says the heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked. The Bible is very clear. Before we're saved, before we're born again, there's nothing in our hearts that's good, that understands God. Nothing.

So, we ask another question, don't we? You're probably thinking, "When are you going to give us the answer? Well, let's ask the next logical question. How did the genuine convert, that fourth soil, that good soil heart, obtain these virtues that Luke and Matthew tell us Jesus said? I would submit to you that something from outside of his own heart must have given him understanding, must have brought him to a point of having a good and honest heart. Something had to make that happen in that fourth soil, in that fourth heart that Jesus describes.

Herein is where I think modern Christianity makes two major mistakes. In our day and age, the church, the Christianity in which we live, and the pastors under whom we sit look at this parable wrongly and, therefore, make two major mistakes.

First, in our attempt to increase the odds of getting more people to accept Jesus, *we've changed the seed*. In our day and age, we've changed the gospel message and we've determined we need to woo people to Jesus by dangling the carrots of God's kingdom in front of people so they'll want the carrots and, therefore, want Jesus. "The carrots of peace, forgiveness, happiness, and joy... Come get some of that!" we say.

The problem this has created is that the minute a similar carrot comes along with less commitment, less sacrifice, and certainly less persecution, the person jumps at that carrot and says, "I like that one better because it comes with none of that!" It's a wicked cycle we have created in modern-day Christianity.

Now the carrots have become the message, not salvation from our sin. Our new gospel message now rings the bell and says, "Come and get! Come and get heaven without a hell! Come and get all God's grace without God's laws and consequences for breaking his laws!" We're ringing the bell loud today.

"Come and get forgiveness without having to repent! Come now! Come and find the laughter, joy, and happiness you so desperately want without first the tears, sorrow, and brokenness over your sin!" The church today is ringing the bell. "Come and be justified without ever being condemned." Maybe worst of all, the modern message today is, "Come and enter God's kingdom without ever being told you need to lay down your crown and give up your throne."

You see, the problem is not with the seed or the gospel message. The problem is with the soil of the sinner's heart. Once we remove the rototiller blades of hell, repentance, and God's law, wrath, and judgment... Once we take that out of the seed, we're left with a gospel that has no power to churn up the soil of a hard heart. Are you with me? Do you understand that?

We have taken the seed, the message, the gospel of Jesus, and we've pulled out of it those blades that have the power to make us realize we are lost, dead, and hopeless. We can't save ourselves and we're going to stand in front of God one day and he is going to judge our hearts. If we take that stuff out of there, all we have is a whole bunch of cool little carrots. We're going to stand before God in the judgment, reach in our pocket, and wave the carrots at God, and God is going to say, "Where's Jesus?"

"But God, I have peace! I was happy! I went to church and I got to feel good," and whatever the carrot was or is. I think those in Matthew's and Luke's gospels who have a good and honest heart are merely those who are poor in spirit. They're honest about their wickedness and honestly know they are facing the flames of hell without the blood of Christ to cover over their sins.

You see, when those rototiller blades of the whole gospel seed are there, then, and only then, as Romans 3:19 says, our mouths will be shut with our own justification. I think it's important for us to realize the chief end, the chief reason and blessing of repenting and accepting the gospel is not our happiness here on earth. You see, happiness is not man's greatest need. Righteousness is, so we can be saved from God's coming wrath and fury upon the sins of all mankind.

If you hear and remember anything tomorrow that was said today, here's what I want you to remember. *Happiness is not the world's greatest need. Holiness is, because holiness is what's going to save us from the coming judgment of God upon the sins of mankind.* Without holiness, we're lost. Something has to make us holy, and that's where Jesus comes in.

Let me talk about the second mistake. I said there were two mistakes. In our right belief that God saves us by his grace through faith in his Son, Jesus Christ... That's the gospel. We rightly believe and teach that God saves us by his gift, grace, through faith in his crucified Son. We have been rightly teaching that the true convert cannot lose his salvation.

Let me say it again. At Canyon Hills, we believe it's impossible for a person to lose their salvation. A person who has been truly saved and converted, whose heart has been changed by the miraculous power of the gospel and is born again, cannot lose their salvation. That's what we teach here, and we believe we're right on that. Yet here's the mistake.

Paul commands us in 2 Corinthians, verse 5, to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith. I believe this is the exact reason for the parable. The reason for the parable is Jesus is using it as a sorting device to determine the real from the false. He's using this parable to allow us to determine if we are truly saved or not. This is eternally important. This teaching of Jesus causes us to stop and consider, "Am I in the faith?" Here's the application.

First, *not everyone who says they're a Christian is.* In this parable, Jesus is saying some people will look and sound a lot like a disciple, at least for a while, but they are actually a false conversion. They may respond to it quickly, be all happy, and start going to church, maybe for weeks, months, or years. They may add Jesus to their life and try to spin all the other plates of all the other commitments in their lives for a long time, but there's no fruit.

Jesus said, in Matthew 7, verse 21, **"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."** Not everyone who says, "I'm a Christian," is, according to this parable. Jesus is saying, "Don't be surprised when you continually see no fruit in the person who continually claims they're a believer."

"I'm a Christian! I believe in Jesus! I grew up going to church! I have a Bible! I even read it sometimes!" They'll say that with such conviction and passion, and yet there's nothing in their life that evidences that Jesus is their King and Lord. There's no fruit in their life that shows that serving him, worshiping him, loving him, and living for him is a priority for them. Jesus says, "Don't be surprised by that."

Secondly, *the real disciple has little resistance to Jesus' leadership*. This disciple delights to follow Jesus. When Jesus is truly embraced and accepted as our Savior and King, we willingly put ourselves in the hands of God and throw ourselves upon his amazing grace every single day of our lives. We're no longer blind or deaf to the goodness of God that we see in the life and face of Jesus.

In fact, this is what happens in the heart of a true disciple of Jesus. We actually begin to understand that the most excellent part of being a Christian is Jesus, not the carrots. Something happens along the way where we realize, "Jesus died for me. The sinless, holy Son of God came down, stood between me and God, and offered his perfectly sinless life as a sacrifice, dying in my place, because that's what's going to happen if my sins aren't forgiven. Then he rises from the dead and he says, 'Repent, believe, and follow me.'"

When that happens, do you know what the only response we can do, the thing we want to do most is? We just want to worship him. We just want to honor him. We just want to please him. He's our Savior. The real disciple knows when that transaction, our faith for his forgiveness, truly takes place, then there will be fruit. No fruit, no faith.

Do you want to know what I think the main point of this is? You've heard me say this before, but this is what I think this parable says. *A faith that hasn't changed you hasn't saved you*. A faith that is not changing you isn't saving you. Do you feel the weight of that parable? I think, in Jesus' love and compassion, he gives us this parable because he wants us to be able to look in the mirror and know we are his.

He's not trying to talk us out of being saved. He's not trying to say, "You're really lost when you think you're saved." That could be true, but that's not what he's doing. He wants us to look into our hearts with this parable and see, "Is there evidence? Is there growing fruit in my life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control?" How's that for a little fruit? "Are those things growing in my life? Are my commitment, my service, my sacrifice, my love, and my worship growing for Christ or not?"

I'm going to ask you to bow your heads right now, just in this moment of seriousness. Let's not let this bounce off our busy schedule for the rest of the day. Let's just stop and breathe for a minute. We must be thankful for these moments that Jesus gives us with his teaching. I would ask you, right now, would you be willing to commit that before this day is over you will get alone with Jesus and examine yourself?

Would you commit, before you leave this room, that you are grateful for this truth and you will look into your own heart to see if you have surrendered? You're not looking for perfection.

You're not looking for sinlessness. Jesus lived a sinless life for us because we couldn't. You're looking for genuine faithfulness as evidenced by fruit. When you find it, rejoice. Worship him. Thank him. Praise him. Love him. If you don't find it, repent. Get on your knees, ask for his forgiveness, and invite him to save you and to be your King and your Lord.

Father in heaven, thank you for these moments where you quiet our souls. You quiet the room and God, you allow us that beautiful moment to see ourselves for who we are in light of your Son Jesus and what he has done. God, may our joy increase. May our hope increase as we go from here. God, we love you. You are amazing. In the name of Jesus, we have gathered, prayed, worshiped, and learned. Amen.

Right in front of you are people standing up here who are prepared and excited to talk to any of you who sense right now, "You know what? Okay. I get it. I need to do business with God." You don't even need to go home and think about it. You already know. That's the beauty of God's love. It's already obvious to you and you realize, "I need to surrender."

If you're ready to surrender your heart to Jesus and allow him to save you and be your Lord and Savior, that's what they're here for. They just want to give you something to go home with. They want to pray with you before you leave and just help you take that next step of faith. I hope you'll let us do that. Before you walk out of this room, walk up and speak to any of these people right up here.

Let me remind you, if you didn't get into the room early, we have five or six Global Encounter Trips going on next year. The information meeting for those short-term mission trips is next Sunday. You're going to want to attend that meeting if you're interested in going on a Global Encounter Trip next year. Check your bulletin. Don't miss out on that. God bless you. See you next Sunday.