

**Introduction:** Summer U celebration – 117 new commitments and a bunch more recommitments to Jesus. 800 kids, 330 volunteers. Give it up!

Also, had board meetings this week where we approved 6 new international workers for the Alliance. Last June, we prayed for one per week from June til June and these six bring the total up to 54 this year – including Myhiah Dotzler from Omaha. If you are new, let me connect the dots. Because of reach one more, we are able to grow our giving to the fund that sends these missionaries – the GCF – to \$1Million per year to send people to the hardest to reach places in the world. This result opens doors for these 54 to go. So let's praise God for the mission going forward.

**Outline:**

So for our message, lets bring this global perspective into our own back yard. Because we believe that the good news is for every people on earth, we believe it is for Nebraskans and yeah, even the lowans across thy Missouri River. And if you ask who we are most strategically positioned to reach, it is people who are geographically close to us.

God has put us on mission. In a chain of grace that goes all the way back, link by link to the apostles, you and I are here because somebody told us. And somebody told them. And somebody told them going all the way back to the New Testament 2000 years. Our question is whether that chain dies with us or whether we will make one more link to reach one more.

Reaching one more is an all-skate. Everybody is in. Because you can't reach 500,000 in Omaha or 8 Billion around the world if you make this thing the exclusive job of those who have a Bible School degree or ten years ministry experience. We need kids and seniors and athletes and couch potatoes and pretty people and people with horrible fashion sense and tall people and people with a gap in their teeth. It was the Joe's rather than the Pros that Jesus chose. So if you think you are just a Joe and not a Pro, he calls you to GO!

So, there will come a time when you are at a table with people who don't know Jesus – remember our challenge? ...and the moment will come up that it is time to share the gospel with them. It will become apparent to you that there is a gap in their understanding about how to find eternal life. And there are two key things that everyone should be able to do – tell your story and tell his story. And we will walk through these today.

## Telling Your Story

You have a story. Now, one of the biggest things people are afraid of is the idea that their story is boring. They want the dramatic rise out of prison to tell. But I am convinced that each of us has a window that makes sense for us. A felt need or a paradigm shift that Jesus brought us through. It could be a long time ago or recent. Each of us has a window of brokenness that we can tell a story about – and how Jesus makes all the difference. But let me give you a few examples: Maybe it is a shift from confusion to truth. Maybe it was a shift from performing the rules to living in grace. Maybe it was a shift from looking for gratification through parties or sex to finding life in Jesus. Maybe it was a medical situation and healing. Maybe it was an addiction and freedom. Maybe it was a change in how you raise your kids. Maybe it was loneliness to living life in God's presence. Maybe it was from feeling totally dirty to being clean. Can you think of a window for yourself that Jesus changed?

- Not before everything was bad, Jesus, now everything is good. That is just not reasonable or reflective of the way God works. He changes us in stages. He meets us in brokenness. He powers us up when life is down.
- Usually these conversations happen in person, but sometimes in public. Even online. Facebook is usually abused by people who have a low relational IQ and love to spout opinions, but once in a while, someone is just great at it. One of those people who is amazing at telling her story in a way that points people to Jesus is Kylie Cole. Kylie is a school counselor and the mom of 2.9 children and a dear friend who has been through a lot of loss in her life. The other day Kelle read me her post on facebook and after wiping a tear from my eye, I invited her to just share her post with all of you – an ordinary Joe really doing it well

### o Kylie Cole Facebook Story

I am ten years sober and to celebrate, I'm sharing a few pieces I've written over the years regarding my experience with alcohol with a corresponding picture from the day I wrote it. Behind smiles in photos are often hurts, grief, struggles, anger, pain, etc. - all of which don't show up in a picture.

The writings are raw, authentically me, and it brings me joy and peace sharing in hopes that my vulnerability breeds vulnerability in others.

This one might be my favorite:

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Thirsty (Oct 2023)

I'm Kylie, I'm an alcoholic. And it's been 9 years and 4 months since I've had a drink. And I'm thirsty.

For soul rest

For freedom  
For unconditional love  
For fun  
For redemption  
In my heart: I believe all these things are found only in Jesus.  
In my head: I want a drink that's a little stronger, no offense.  
When I drank, I let go.  
When I drank, I cried.  
When I drank, someone else was the strong one.  
When I drank, my walls came down.  
When I drank, I felt free.  
A drink sounds pretty good right now.  
I wasn't made to be the strong one.  
I wasn't made to bear the weight of the cross.  
I wasn't made to prove my worth or earn my way.  
He was. He is. And He always will be.  
But practically?  
"Surrender" makes me want to puke.  
"Trust" is difficult for me  
"Obey" - uhhhhhh  
"Love" - don't even get me started...  
I don't have this figured out, not even close. And it pains me to say I don't think I'll ever "get there".  
I'm a mess. I'm on multiple therapists calendars.  
Kylie wants a drink.  
The Holy Spirit says He's the answer.  
"Everyone who drinks from this well will thirst again. But whoever drinks from the water I give will never thirst again."  
I'm Kylie.  
And in Christ, I am a child of God. I am a daughter of the King. I am forgiven, washed clean by His blood, and redeemed. I am loved unconditionally by a perfect Father. I have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide me and sanctify me. I have nothing to earn or prove because He's done it all already. I was made for a purpose: to know Him and glorify Him in all - to love Him, and out of that love, love others. I will spend eternity in heaven with Him.  
I'm still thirsty.  
But I know, that I know, that I know.  
He who quenches that thirst.

So good. Humble. Pointing to Jesus and not herself. Window of brokenness = thirst. Wow.

So that is an example of telling your story. I know I have about a half dozen windows of brokenness that I could share. And this week, I was having dinner on Thursday with a friend from my science and faith forum. After listening for a while about his spiritual journey, I had the chance to tell him my story of skepticism to clarity. And it was powerful. How about you? What are your windows of brokenness that Jesus changed?

Alright, I told you that we will cover your story and HIS story this week.

- Sometimes, there is a chance to just ask the question “Have you ever heard the main message of Christianity explained in under five minutes?” You are in a conversation and realize that the other person has some misconceptions about Jesus or what he came for and you can see an opportunity to present the good news.
- Now many of you have done this before. Some of us hundreds of times. I know that I have about a dozen different tools that I use depending on the person and the situation. But I always like to learn a new one... so we are going to learn one together here today so that when the time is right, you have a tool... or another tool to share the good news.
- Three Circles- Mark Example and Explanation on Neon Board
  - Circle 1 – Circle of brokenness – We live in a shattered world. Abusive relationships, divorce, greed, people hurting people, suicide, wars, anxiety...
    - We try to escape through tools like alcohol, the ladder of success, swapping sexual partners or lifestyles, or escapism of internet or TV... but we continually get snapped back into the middle of brokenness and sometime harder than when we started
    - And most people have a profound sense that there is something very wrong with this world. And this is because it is not the way it was meant to be.
  - Circle 2 – God designed the world to run according to his ways – love, abundance, order, healthy relationships, justice, humility. And our heart yearns for this.
    - Draw arrow - BUT every human being has run from it. Anytime we betray God’s ways – from lying to judgementalism to murder – we add to the brokenness of this world. And this rebellion is called sin. And everyone is guilty.
    - And if we die in this state of brokenness and bungee... you are separated from God forever.
  - Fortunately God brought a solution to our brokenness... he sent Jesus to the broken planet and he took all the brokenness – the lies, hatred, murder on himself and paid the death penalty for it. But, the game changer is that he rose from the dead too! So he used death, then he beat death. And his new way is a kingdom where he is our king – to bring peace, healing, and restoration.
    - Draw Arrow to Circle 2 – This is a new kind of life that allows our heart to beat with God.

- Draw Arrow to Circle 3 – In order for us to gain this for ourselves, we need to be humble enough to trust him, rather than ourselves or our bungees – and ask him to be our kind too.
- You know, there are two kinds of people in this world. Those living in brokenness and those living out God’s perfect design. How about you? where do you see yourself living right now? Where would you like to live? If I can help you get there, would you like that?

Alright, let me tell you a few things I like about this tool.

- 1) I like that it starts with brokenness. It is something that everybody can relate to and it is a piece of common ground. Other tools may start with God – and people might reject your notion of God right away. But the idea of brokenness... everybody has it and sees it.
  - 2) I like that it points the heart of God and explains sin in a way that give everyone responsibility.
  - 3) I like that the solution of Jesus is so clear and that it includes the ideas of death, resurrection and kingdom
  - 4) I like that it lands us with life and renewal and the heart of God
  - 5) I like that you can add stuff around if you want... Bible Verses, Or Grow, GO, Invest... so there is not a finish line, but a lifestyle.
- I am going to have you do it in a few moments to practice, then switch
  - But just to prime the pump, here is one more video that explains is in under three minutes
  - Three Circles – Video (Three Circles in Three minutes that could change your life)
    - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcj5G\\_4dwrl&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcj5G_4dwrl&t=3s)

Not too hard, right? Now, I want you to not just see it but do it. Back when I was a high school student in the gymnastics balcony, we had to do a thousand circles on the pommel horse, a hundred pushups a week, handstands, and so much more. Then routine after routine until it was right a high percentage of the time. It was all about reps. Sharing the gospel is the same... so you get two today. Alright, we have put empty pieces of cardstock paper in the seats with pens... now, find one other person – someone you came with or a new friend and practice with them. You each get three minutes – I have it on the timer, then switch and the other one gets it.

### **Challenge for the week**

- It takes reps to get good. Sports, pilots need a thousand hours of flying, musicians need to play a thousand songs, sharing your faith requires a thousand tries with

improvements. I believe you will get better and I believe that God makes up for it if we mess up.

- SO your challenge for this week is to Tell someone who is NOT here – I just learned this new tool in church to explain Christianity in 3 minutes or less. I am supposed to practice on someone this week who is not an every week church attender. Can I tell you about the three circles and get your feedback?