

the gospel of

JOHN

all intents and purposes

JOHN: BEING A SENT DISCIPLE

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John 20:19-23

The death of Christ was seen as a horrific tragedy by his followers, but unknown to them, it was a plan carried out, an intentional act of sacrificial love. Every moment of his perfect life, his death, his resurrection--all of it was done to intentionally display his rule and reign over the world. How do we obey his commands to love others with the same intentional love? Join us for our final installment in our walk through the Gospel of John. We will see that God's love is behind all of his intents and purposes. Go to doxa-church.com to learn more about Doxa, find service times, or support the making of disciples in the everyday stuff of life.

Good morning, Doxa.

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

This is the word of the Lord. Please be seated.

Thanks, bud. Good morning, everyone.

Morning!

Hey, where'd everyone go?

We're here.

Well, Easter, the most important people are here. <laugh>, You guys, you specifically, no, I'm kidding. Good to see you guys. Welcome. If you're new, my name's Eddie. I'm the lead pastor here with Doxa, so glad you guys could all join us. I'm a little jealous because I got to talk to a few of you, and you came back from your spring break nice and sunburned. And, well I was here. And if you were here, you got rained on a lot and got a lot of clouds, and so I'm jealous. And uh, but I'm glad to see you guys.

Last week is a big week for all churches around the world. You've got, you know, good Friday and Easter, and so I'm relying on your energy today because I am tired from that week. My kids were home all week, they were not in school. So I'm relying on your energy to help us turn up. Okay? Doesn't sound promising, I'll be honest with you. I'm worried! <laugh>

Hey, will you turn to John chapter 20 verse 19 through 23, what Shannon just read. I'm gonna pray for us. We are essentially in a spot where we are talking about sort of an, it's a little bit of an epilogue to the resurrection. And it, the sermon is very practical, but also maybe a little, maybe a little, um, ranty. So just get ready, turn to that and I'll pray.

Well, Father, I ask for your energy as I preach. It's been a long week for a lot of us, Lord, so I pray for that. I pray for courage, clarity, calm, and confidence as I proclaim your word. Lord, this is a very important message. And I also pray for all of our friends here that are here ready to listen. Lord, I'm so thankful for them that they showed up, that they're ready for your word. This is definitely a "go and die" sort of message.

And for my friends, our friends that aren't here, joining us as they travel, Lord God, I pray for them and their safe travels, that they'd be back and rested and ready for the week ahead with energy. For the kids, and for those that are single, no kids, Lord, God bless them, that they might just come back and relax and enjoy their lives and get ready for the week ahead. Lord, as we talk about what it means to be sent into the world, I pray for energy and excitement for us and also a critical eye and an examination of how we believe what this means for us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. All right, well, we are four weeks out from the end of the book of John. Okay. And how many of you have been here for the last four years at Doxa? Mostly. Okay. A lot of you. So, you've gotten to be at least here for part of the series that we're going through. We've been going through a four-year, four-part series in the Gospel of John. And finally, we find ourselves four weeks out from the very end.

This is a very, so, most people think, though, which is weird, and I think I've been talking to you after some of the gatherings this past weekend, contrary to popular belief, John's Gospel doesn't end after Jesus resurrects. There's actually more that happens. It's not just the resurrection, and then on to the next book. There's sort of a mini epilogue, like I mentioned, that sets up the next chapter for all of history.

I want to start by saying that sort of what happens next, and this is important, is perhaps the most important actionable message for us from the mouth of Jesus, perhaps in all of the Bible. Okay? So let me set all of that big statement up by asking a big question to you. If you died and you were able to come back from the dead and appear to those you love the most, what might you say to them? Right? What might you say? If you were to die and you were to come back from the dead and appear to those you love the most and have a message for them, what might you say? Now, I'm not talking about you sort of as a zombie, sort of coming back, Walking Dead style, appearing to them. You might not say very much if that's how you're coming. I mean like Jesus came back, came back in his resurrected body. What would you say? Would you come back and remind them of the arguments you had? Maybe like a little last bit of arguing? Would you describe the afterlife to them? Maybe, would you have apologized for something you said or did while you were alive? What might you say?

My guess is that whatever you said next would be some of the most important things you'd ever say. It would be of the utmost importance. Well, Jesus has this opportunity. Last week on Easter, we saw Jesus conquer Satan, sin, death and hell by rising from the grave. Amen. This is amazing news, right? And he comes back, and the very first thing he says to us, listen to this, the very first thing he says to us is a huge and massive important calling on your life. The very first thing. What does he say?

Verse 21. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you." Remember the first words Jesus says to his disciples after being dead for three days, "As the Father has sent me, even so I'm sending you." What does this mean? What is Jesus doing? Well, what Jesus is doing is he's framing up his entire life for us. Maybe you had an idea what you thought Jesus' life was about. Maybe you thought it was about him coming with peace and enjoyment, and just loving life and kissing babies and shaking hands, or whatever you thought Jesus was, and he was sort of an innocent guy who sort of got killed and that was his life. Jesus is actually gonna frame it up for you very specifically. He's helping us see that his life, his three years in his ministry, especially had a very strategic purpose.

It's very important. It was targeted. Okay? Jesus is concerned that his followers understand he was not simply living whatever life he wanted to while he was here on earth, trying his best to be good and to do good, like we often do. No. He is framing up his life in light of his sentness. His sentness. Jesus says he was sent for a very specific and targeted purpose. And this purpose is to help save people from their sin and to reconcile those people to the Father. That's specifically what it is. That's what the resurrection story is. That's what the cross is. Okay? So, now that he's returned from the dead, it is clear Jesus' primary post-resurrection concern is making sure his followers frame up their lives the exact same way. The exact same way. And here it is: "Just as Jesus was sent into the world, so you are also sent."

Ah. Here lies the challenge for Jesus calling all of us, right? And I don't suspect this is probably new information for you. In fact, my guess is that you've heard something similar. There's some sort of nebulous mission you're supposed to go on as a Christian. Maybe you've heard that. Maybe it is new information for you if you don't know anything about Christianity, for sure. But

I think it will serve as an urgent reminder for those that do know what this mission is. And it's this, Jesus didn't just come onto earth only to build relationships, be comfortable, have a glass of wine, and live his best life. That's not why he is here. That's not why he came. Again, his purpose: specific; targeted. He wants all of us to understand that our purpose needs to be just as specific and just as targeted.

People are lost. Maybe some of us in here today, right? We're longing for what the truths of the world are, we're longing for meaning, we're longing for purpose. We have desires to get answers: why the world is so difficult, why it's so hard to live in the place we live. Why is it hard? And Jesus sends and desires you to go into their midst and to tell them the good news that there is meaning in the world. He chose you. There is a God. He is not angry, he is not distant, he is peaceful, he is near, and he demonstrates his love for us in the story of Jesus resurrection, which we celebrated on Easter.

And yet, despite our clear callings to live out our sentness, we are comfortable living not the sent life, but the American dream, where we often make polarized jumps from overwork and stress and burnout, and making something of ourselves, to medicating, vegging out and numbing ourselves with technology.

And where has the American dream led us? Well for now, let's look at the reality of our lack of whatever it might be, desire, courage, intentionality, in our lack of being sent to tell people about Jesus. What are some of the actual brutal facts around our lack of doing this as a whole? Well, I've got some statistics for you here.

The first one here is by Lifeway. Now, Lifeway did this massive study around discipleship. And I mean, I can read it for you, I think I will. It says, in the past six months, how many times did you share with someone how to become a Christian? Now this is, this was among people that call themselves Christians. Now, as you can see, it's an anonymous poll. So, people are more honest, and overwhelmingly 55% of those who are Protestant churchgoers said that they have not shared anything about Jesus to anybody in the last six months. Overwhelmingly.

And maybe you find yourself in that category. Here, I want to stop you for a second. Don't go, don't go into shame mode. Like, oh man, this guy's just gonna shame me for this. Like, oh my gosh, like I'm feeling... That's not the message of the gospel. The gospel isn't to shame you. Jesus has a mission for you. He wants you to do it, because he wants other people to get to know Jesus like you know him. This isn't about shame, it's about us doing what God's called us to. So, let's just hold off on that a little bit. At least hold reserve judgment till the end. And if afterwards you still feel like shaming and you want to judge me, that's totally fine. I'll take that bullet, okay? But for now, 55% of people haven't shared the gospel with anyone in the past six months.

Let's go to the next one. This is called the Spectrum of Discipleship Community. This is a Barna study, and this is about how many people are in a discipling relationship or a discipling community. Now, a discipling relationship could be seen as someone being told about Jesus, or

you telling someone about Jesus. So, it's either or. Are you being shared the gospel with, or are you sharing the gospel? And as you can see, 39% of Christians are not actively engaged in any form of discipleship. 40% of Christians aren't telling anyone about Jesus, nor, if they're maybe a new or seasoned Christian, aren't in any relationship where they're being mentored or served by someone else. 40%, that's a lot. 28% are in some form of community like a church or a missional community.

And then you've got these other two categories where you have only being disciplined, like 28% of people are being led in some form or fashion, and only 5% of people are only helping others. Now, I will say that's a dangerous spot to be in because when you're serving people but not being served, you're oftentimes, you find your cup is empty, and you're trying to lead with like gifting or emotion, and that's a dangerous spot to be. So, you want a little of both.

The point is that most people don't have either. Some people are in a community where it's happening. Maybe we're at a church like Doxa and they talk about discipleship, there are MCs or DNAs, but you're not a part of any of that stuff. So that would be you and the 28%. Additionally, not the next one, let's stay here. Additionally, I don't have this on the screen, but just for us Millennials in the room, and I think I would suspect Gen Z is also following this trend, almost half of practicing Christian Millennials say and believe that evangelism is morally wrong according to this same study.

What that means is that people in my generation, people that are in the Millennial generation, believe--practicing Christian Millennials, not a passive person--believe that telling someone what you believe about Jesus is not just wrong or mistimed, it's morally wrong, because some of the doctrine in our day is to allow people to live their lives, right? You do you and I'm gonna do me, as long as those don't bump into each other, we're good, right? Except when they, when we want 'em to, right? And then it gets really confusing about who's right and who's wrong, of course, right? I don't want to even open that can of worms, right? This is very, very sticky stuff. It's very messy.

So, people believe, over half of practicing Christian Millennials believe evangelism is wrong, even though that's literally what Jesus says, to go forth and make disciples to literally be sent into the world. And if you look at these statistics worldwide from the same Barna study, less than 10% of Christians share the gospel with at least one person a year around the world. Less than 10%.

Now these are sort of self-reported sort of Christian stats, and maybe you're here and you're not a Christian. You're going, dude, what is this for? I don't understand. What you're getting is a little inside baseball. You're getting a little family talk where we say we believe that the story of Jesus is so important. We have this big celebration called Easter. And yet the very next thing Jesus does is tell everyone, hey, now that you saw that, you need to go tell people about it, because it should have impacted you in a way that it would change you, and you should go tell others because you want them to be changed too. What you're hearing me do is read what

Jesus did and tell everyone, "Hey guys, Jesus did something so big that he's changed us all, right? Why aren't we telling anyone about it?" This is what we're gonna try to dissect today.

Those are self-reported statistics. But what do people who are not Christians, maybe some of you say about this? There's another graph here. This was asked, I want to make sure I get this right, this is by Lifeway Research. They asked, people that are not Christians, has anyone shared any of the following with you? And so you've got some things: does someone share with you how to become a Christian, or what are the benefits of becoming a Christian, or the benefits of participating in local church.

But clearly at the bottom, 40% of people were asked this question, they said, I've never heard any of these things said to them. 40% of your friends have never had anyone talk to 'em about being a Christian, getting them plugged into a church or helping them see that the benefits of new life peace and joy in their lives are important. No one has heard that, 40%.

And you want to know the kicker? Out of those 40% that said none of these, 80% of those people, actually 79% said that they would be absolutely willing to hear out somebody's story about their religious faith. You got 40% of your friends walking around open to hearing about Jesus, and you are a Christian and you haven't told them. The question is, why?

And that should create some tension in us. We should feel that tension if we are Christian, certainly. Why are we not sharing this message? If Jesus comes back and tells us that the most important thing for us to do going forward in this next stage of history is to be sent into the world to share the good news of Jesus, why aren't we doing it?

I think there are three possible reasons. I think there's three reasons, we're gonna go through those, but also in our passage, we're gonna see three additional pieces of information as to why we should have a lot of confidence in sharing that faith. So, you're going to hear three reasons why I think we're not sharing the gospel, and you're going to get three more reasons why we should be absolutely confident in doing so.

First, what's the first reason we aren't sharing the gospel? Why aren't we sharing the good news of Jesus? First is that we Christians tend to believe that discipleship and evangelism are mostly for professionals or mostly for people that are pros. Okay, what do I mean by that? I mean people in like vocational ministry, people that get paid to do ministry. If you work for a nonprofit or parachurch organization or a church like Doxa, we believe that discipleship and evangelism are mostly for them.

Now, to be fair, we live in a day where, especially in the region, the Eastside, where we believe people should be specialized in their particular fields. And we should leave those jobs that fit those fields for them. That makes sense, right? So don't go working on your car. If you have no idea what you're doing, you're gonna blow something up. Take that as an example. Let me pay your dumb tax. Don't unscrew stuff that you don't know what you're doing. Okay? I've done that a few times. It's a bad idea. However, in our culture today, we believe we should leave

education to educators. We believe we should leave healthcare to healthcare workers. We believe we should leave figuring out what you're supposed to eat to specialized scientists and dieticians. We believe that we should even leave landscaping to landscapers, at least if you want it to look good, right?

But also, we believe we should leave ministry to ministers, professional ministers. Now, to a large degree, our churches have changed their philosophy over the last 2000 years of church history, but especially in the post-modern technological age over the last hundred years. As you might imagine, when the church was in its infancy stage, right after Jesus resurrected, the church was a little more, a little more hands on, a little more nitty-gritty. Why? Because the church was being persecuted. People were being killed for their Christian faith. And so, when you were gonna go tell someone about Jesus, you actually felt the stakes because like, man, this could get somebody killed, if I share this message, or I could get killed. You felt the reality of it. But today, 20th and 21st century, as those centuries have trucked along the church has become a little bit more institutionalized.

We had something called the church growth movement. This is the way we grow church, and this church growth movement in the 1960s and seventies, it gamified church, it gamified it. It made the win for church, not people making disciples, telling people the good news and souls being saved. It made the win the three Bs. Has anyone heard of the three Bs of church? It's probably better. You haven't heard it. The three Bs are--the wins--bucks, buildings and butts in seats. If you want to win in church, bucks, buildings and butts and seats, you need money. You need a big old building with an Applebee's in the lobby, and you need, I'm not kidding you, I'm not kidding you, and you need butts in seats. You need people to come see the show. This is how you know if you're winning in church.

The prize was no longer championing our sentness into our community. It was getting bigger and getting bigger faster. That's what happened in the last 50 years, especially. As a result, very few Christians are sent in the world. Very few people even know what it means to be sent into the world and to tell and even share their faith. All right?

Now, I don't want you to feel like you're a hundred percent liable for this, or something. I hope you're not feeling that. You're not. We all have culpability in all of this. We all are guilty of participating in something. But I will say I actually believe that our pastors, preachers, teachers and elders, shepherds, overseers are actually more responsible than most. And I don't just mean Doxa's leaders, although of course we are, I'm talking about the church as a whole, our pastors, preachers and leaders. Why? Because our job is to communicate what the Bible says to you adequately and fairly and real. And your job is to double check that, to see if we're doing our job right, and you should.

But one of the things the church says is, "As the Father sent me, so I'm now sending you." And if we're not adequately communicating that to you, and instead we're telling you something, absolutely, something different, then we're liable for that. And I believe that's been happening. We're entrusted ones telling the truth. Instead, we have brought into Christianity this sort of

Christian Church consumerism. And instead of calling you to go out into hard things, we've called you in to enjoy comfortable and cushy things, which if you know, anything about church or church history or if you know anything about Jesus, he was executed, innocently executed, and all his followers immediately were killed. They all died heinous deaths because his message is dangerous. If you know anything about this, you know the word easy and the word church on opposite sides of the spectrum, at least they're supposed to be. But instead <gesture>.

And so now church becomes about seamlessness, ease, comfort. Is there good food in the back? Like that. Is there a church youth camp happening? It's all about this consumerism, right? We have things like restaurants in our lobbies, cotton candy machines, freaking free merch giveaways. We call our clothes merch and we give stuff like that. But those things are fine in and of themselves. I mean, I mean we wouldn't--I don't think I'd want a cotton candy machine, a lot of sugar. But if there's no real gospel to offer alongside it, then what's the point? What's the point? And that's what's happened.

And church becomes then in that scenario, a fun sort of affinity club with no real call to go and die. And church, if you, if you want to call it church, if you call it that, it becomes palatable and easy, it becomes palatable and easy. Now all of a sudden, we get into this spot where we're doing the same thing Walmart's doing and the same thing Doritos is doing, trying to masquerade, produce a sort of phantom image of ourselves to get people to come inside and see the show or buy the product. We're luring people to church with like good coffee and donuts and amenities and accoutrement. Now, I like coffee, okay? I want to just describe you, like, coffee? It's bad? No, coffee's fine. In fact, all this is probably fine. I like coffee. We have coffee, we offer stuff.

It's not bad to do. But again, luring someone to church with good coffee, especially like on Instagram or something, is like luring a sick person to a doctor with hospital food. <Laugh> Because like, I'm glad it's there, right? If you're gonna go to the doctor, but you're not there for the hospital food, you're there because you're sick. That's why you go to the hospital. And so if you market it like, hey, we got cotton candy machines and all this amazing stuff, and you show up, you think that's why you're here. That's not why you're here. You're here because you're spiritually sick. We're all spiritually sick. That's why we can't sit still for 35 minutes. We gotta look at our phone to see what's happening in the world. We can't sit still and listen to what God has to say. We can't pray. We can't disciple our children because we're sick.

That's why we're here. So, we still have coffee. It's good to have coffee, but that's just to keep you awake so you can listen. That's it. It's a game. We got you. Yeah. But all of this really is a fundamental misunderstanding of what it means to be sort of professional and how they're supposed to do the ministries. But if you look at Ephesians chapter 4, you'll see something a little different. Look, it'll be on the screen here, 11 and 12, the verses. "And he", that's God, "he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and the teachers," those are the professionals, okay, quote unquote, "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body". God gives us, quote, professionals to the church, and by that I mean sort of, think about vocational ministers here, to equip the saints.

Who are the saints? That's Christians, right? That's us. "Equip the saints for the work of the ministry." So, your vocational ministers aren't given to the church to do all the ministry. That is your job. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers, those people, their job is to equip the saints, and as American pastors, I feel like we've failed in that way and that's where we come in. Our ministry leaders haven't always done a great job of this.

Now think about it. What's been the typical process for doing the ministry? Well, the pastor, someone like me, will say, invite people to church, hear them, hear me preach, let them love the music, and then we'll take it from here. You give 'em to us, we got this card, you fill this card out, we kick them into the system. They'll join a small group if they have time, and then they're off to the races, right? Participating along in the American Evangelical flywheel. And we say, man, you know what? My pastor or such and such preacher, man, he is so good. I gotta send this to my mom, my cousin. I gotta send this to my coworker, my friend. Because man, if they heard them preach, they might turn them. That might turn them.

But here's the thing. You and I, we are all professionals, we are all professional sharers of the gospel. We are all professional ministers, because the boss, the man, the God, the great God, he said when he rose from the grave and appeared, the first thing he said was, "as the Father sent me, so I'm now sending" who? You. Me. You, right. "As the Father sent me, even so I am sending you". It doesn't say, as the Father sent me, even so I am sending awesome YouTube clip. As the Father sent me even so I'm sending your pastor. As the Father sent me, so I'm now sending Steven Furtick. As the Father sent me, so I'm now sending other cool preacher, hipster, awesome, great music. He's not sending anyone else. He's sending you, which means you have an important role to play. We've cheapened the church in America for consumerism. And as a result, people aren't getting saved.

This is important. For you leaders in the room, maybe you're a pastor at another church or something, or maybe you're an MC leader or maybe you lead a Bible study or something, on your campus or whatever you might do. Whatever you might feel. You, my friend, are not called to do the mission for people. You are there to equip them for the mission. Okay? And here's just, spoiler alert, here's a little heads-up for you. When you stop doing for people what God has called them to do, they're going to be mad at you. When you stop doing for people what God has called them to do, they're going to be mad. Why? Because the opposite of mission is self. It's not non-mission, it's self.

Mission inherently is selfless. You're giving up your life, you're giving up your time, your energy, your money, your talent to go share the gospel for fear of ostracism or even potential persecution, depending on where you live. People say, we want our Christian needs met. Do my work for me. Do my work for me. Produce something for me to sit in here once or twice a month, check my kids in, move on and let me feel good and keep me docile. That's American individualism. That is not Christianity. The opposite of mission is self.

Now listen, we can't control every church, but we can help ours. We can help our people. And listen, I like to think that Doxa is doing a better job at this than most places. I really believe that, as a person, as someone who knows a lot of pastors and has lots of great relationships around our city and our region. We can't control everything.

But that's why we've sort of rolled out something called Full Circle Discipleship. This is a four-week training on how to be a disciple of Jesus and to make disciples of Jesus. And we designed this to help you sort of get started in how to share the good news of Jesus and be a good disciple of Jesus, and help other people do the same. That's why we created this. So please, sign up and participate in something like this, not just in American evangelicalism machine, but in authentic discipleship and following Jesus the way we should all follow him. Please sign up for that. Our next one is the first week of May. You should sign up for that. You can do that on the Doxa Church app. You can see Allison or any of us in the lobby, we would love to get you plugged in doing that.

If you've already gone through that, now is a great time for you to practice going forth. Who do you know at Doxa or otherwise that needs to know how to grow in this area? Well, why don't you invite them? Why don't you sit with them? Why don't you ask them questions? This is a great opportunity for you. That's only reason one of why we are not sharing the good news. Here's reason two. We believe American evangelicalism as structured is probably fine. It's probably fine. Again, we've trusted in the consumeristic American system, in church growth movements, thinking that they'll sort of, you know, we must be producing authentic disciples if people are attending, and the churches are big and packed. So let me break down for you, to see what sort of a modern way a church is typically trying to grow in the United States, and you tell me what the problem is, if there even is a problem.

Here's the first one. Go to church. You go to church because you're not the church. You go to church because a church is a building with a cross on it. And you walk in, and you feel God's presence. It's not you. You go to church. Second thing. Hear competent message from a preacher; if he's not competent, you leave. Fair enough. I mean, I get that right? Keep it simple, preacher, not too hot, not too cold. Smile a lot, make sure you're smiling, make sure you're happy, make sure you're saying everything right. If you like that guy, then the next step, you move on, bring your friend to hear that pastor preach, maybe, of course, because he smiles a lot and he's so smart. You bring someone to hear him, and they might like him, right, and they might convert. Fourth, you join a small group, maybe, of course, if you have time, you might not. That's fine. Fifth thing, give, give because churches need your money. And then sixth, be happy. Or at least pretend to be happy, because we all wear masks around here, because this is American evangelicalism. Now do you see anything missing from that?

By the way, I'm not saying any of these things are wrong. I want you to be happy, I want you to give, I want you to join a group, I want you to bring a friend to hear people preach. All this is great. It's just missing one really massive idea. Do you know what it is? It's what Jesus said. You're sitting in the world. "Go make disciples of many nations, baptizing the name of the Father, Son, the Holy Spirit."

We missed a big step here. The church is a people on mission sent into the world. It's not a building you attend to come fake like you're happy. Now I'm sort of being lighthearted. Maybe not in that moment. That was a little heavyhearted. I don't know, but I don't think this is far off. The thing that's missing is that your neighbor is lost and needs the gospel, and hear me, their soul is on the line. So, this is important. And maybe your soul is on the line. This is important.

Let's look at what Jesus says about all this in Matthew 9:35-38, Jesus talks about this a little bit. "And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and affliction." Jesus did a lot of awesome ministry. "When he saw the crowds," after all the preaching he did, "he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'"

What happens here is that Jesus just got done preaching the Sermon on the Mount. Now if you know anything about that, this is the most well preached, greatest sermon of all time by the greatest preacher ever, because he's preaching his life. Okay? This is Jesus. This is the best sermon you'll ever hear. And he preached more. It says he preached all around the region. He was in synagogues preaching, he was in fields preaching. Thousands of people were listening to this man preach. And then he did some healing. He was healing people with diseases and afflictions, making blind men see and lame people walk and deaf people hear, he's doing all this stuff.

And then he looks at the crowd and goes, oh my gosh, all these people are lost. They're still lost. All those sermons, they're still lost. They're like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus then says the harvest is ripe, but the workers are a few, man, there's plenty of people just ripe for the gospel, to just finally have their lives transformed, to be free from all of the stuff on them. They could finally be free. And my sermons didn't free 'em. Me, Jesus, my sermons didn't free 'em. Why? Because they need shepherds to walk alongside them. The harvest is ripe, but the workers are few, and pray that laborers would be sent into the harvest.

So much of modern discipleship today in America has been reduced to good preaching. Jesus preached countless sermons. People were still lost. That's Jesus preaching. Good sermons are not enough to make disciples. If you, the extent of your Christianity, is you coming to hear me or somebody else preach and then watching other people preach online during the week, that's not enough to be a disciple. That certainly isn't enough for anyone else to be a disciple if you are ever seeking to help them either. People need laborers in the fields to walk alongside them and to disciple them, teach them the ways of Jesus, spending time with them, and then sending them out themselves so that they can make more disciples. That's what they need. So, here's where you come in. People need shepherds. All of us are equipped to be shepherds. There are only some hands that you have been equipped to hold. There are only some hearts and brains that you are meant to pierce.

Not everyone can preach, and we say things like, man, this preacher, man, this is a really good sermon. I ought to bring someone to hear this amazing sermon. And I would say to you, God might not use a sermon, but he might use your conversation with them. Because he doesn't, he doesn't work that way. God can make a disciple however he wants. And his chosen method is you. That's his chosen method. Christian Ted talk once or two times a month is not enough to help you make a disciple. It may be enough to keep you docile on your way to eternity apart from God. But it is not enough to have a disciple be made. We need people that will help us through our broken marriages and our wayward children and our job loss and our addiction and our depression, so we don't have to come up here showing, wearing masks and pretending like we're somebody that we're not, every week.

Last reason we aren't sharing the good news. We live as if the power of the resurrection isn't real. We live as if the power of the resurrection isn't real in our lives. Now, if you were here last week, I talked a little about this in our response time, but I think it bears repeating in the context of people being sent into the world.

In this story here in John, we're at this crucial point where Jesus encounters his disciples again after being crucified and resurrecting. All of the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, sort of tell a little bit different version of the story from their perspective. And I think Mark's section is really interesting. So, here's Mark 16:14 and 15. "Afterward he", that's Jesus, "appeared to the eleven" disciples, that's the remaining eleven after Judas, "as they were reclining at the table", Jesus "rebuked them for their unbelief".

That sort of gets missed in the Easter service, right? Jesus rebuked them for their hardness of heart and their unbelief because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. The disciples witnessed Jesus be crucified on Friday, and on Sunday they heard the news from the women that were at the tomb, Mary Magdalene and the crew that Jesus had resurrected. But what about Saturday? What were they doing on Saturday? Were they like sort of fully confident Jesus was coming back? Were they sort of reclining at the table relaxing? Ah, finally the Lord died. Here he comes. I know he is coming back, he said it. He promised us, he said he was going to die in accordance with the scriptures, and on the third day resurrect. Any moment now might be the morning, might be evening, doesn't matter. He's coming. Is that what they were doing?

No. They were depressed, they were distraught, they were sad, they were broken. Last week we called this the Saturday state of mind, the Saturday state of mind, downtrodden and broken as if the promises that Jesus made them would not come true. And what does Jesus do when he finds them in their Saturday state of mind? He rebukes them because they're wrong. Because they're wrong, because he, he told them so many times, I'm coming back. I made you so many promises. Why aren't you living, why aren't you living as if the promises I told you are going to happen? Don't you trust me?

But you know what, Jesus has made us a heck of a lot of promises too, hasn't he? He promised us new life. He promised us the things that I did in my life, the sin I commit and the stuff that

other people did to me, can fall off me and I could be made new. That's what he promised me. He promised me freedom from my sin. He promised me peace in my soul in this life and the next. He promised me contentment and joy, all these wonderful things, if only I believe in him. Do you have all those things?

He promised them to you. You know he promised those to you, right? He promised you joy, peace, contentment. He promised you that you didn't have to be fearful of death, that your sin has no sting on you anymore. That you could, death has lost its power and you can move past it. That you could forgive your mother, or forgive your former spouse, or work through that issue with your children. He promised you that he was gonna find you a job. Aren't you reading the same Bible I'm reading? He promised all these things. Do you have immeasurable joy? He promised it. How about contentment? Why not?

Do you have the Saturday state of mind? Are you living as if the promises that Jesus made you won't come true? Because if you do live this way, then, well, you definitely won't tell anybody about Jesus because those promises probably aren't gonna come true for you, and why would they come true for anybody else? Whether you know this is why you aren't telling people about Jesus or not, you not believing the power of the resurrection on your life is probably tied to the fact that you haven't shared the gospel with anybody.

This is why, friends, new Christians are often the best evangelists, because they just tasted and saw the Lord, and they're like, oh my gosh, this is for real. Like, I saw it, I felt it. I'm gonna go, I'm gonna go tell my neighbor, and you're knocking on people's door, "Hey, you gotta hear about this guy named Jesus". You're annoying people, people hate you, but you don't care because you're like, "You don't understand, this is great."

And over time we get this like hardened callous, like bubble, where we go, I don't know, I think I need to build equity with them for the next 15 years before I feel I've earned the right to be able to save their soul from eternity in hell. You're missing the point, we're missing the point, guys. This is very important. Jesus wants us to get this. This is so valuable.

And then in verse 15, Jesus says to them, right after he's done rebuking them on all this stuff for having the Saturday state mined, he says, all right, now "go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation." Okay. Okay. Stop acting like what I said didn't happen; it did; now go. That's how Jesus talks to us. Because people need you. Like I don't want you to sit in shame. I died so your shame would fall off you. But now it's time to go tell people about this. This is good news.

We live like these promises won't come true. But what's the reality? When it comes to being sent, I think we can close up like this. You need to remember three really important things as you go off and actually share the gospel with people this week. Because I know, I feel like God will motivate you in such a way that you will actually go, "You know what, what am I so worried about?"

Speaking of which, fear will stop you when it comes to your, when it comes to you being an evangelist and telling people about Jesus. In our text in John 20, it says that "On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews..." Dot, dot, dot, Jesus appears right? The disciples were terrified. They were terrified to go out and they didn't want the Jews to come and sort of kill them like they killed Jesus. As if Jesus didn't tell them that he was gonna rise from the dead, and that they were actually gonna carry on the message, and that the helper, the Holy Spirit would be the one that perpetuated their work. He said all of that a lot. His followers were terrified to go out.

But if God's promises over your life are real, then his power and protection should be sufficient. What are we so worried about? That's the question. What could possibly happen that would override their ability to get into the kingdom of God by them hearing the story of Jesus? Like how could that be worse? I guess the question has to be then for all of us, where have your fears of the thoughts and opinions of other people kept you from doing the work you know God has called you to. There's a moment where you had the shot and you're like, you know what, this might not be it. And fear is normal, but Jesus does say, fear not, I'm with you.

And he gives us something else that'll help overcome fear, and that's this: peace. Peace is on you. "...Jesus came and stood among" the disciples "and he said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord."

Oh man. Jesus tells them as the very first thing, he says, post resurrection, peace be with you. He then shows them the scars of the sacrifice he made for them. He shows them the side, if you remember the story, he was pierced with a spear and blood and water poured out of him. They signify he was dead. And then Jesus shows them his scars on his hands where he was ultimately nailed to the cross. He shows them proof that he sacrificed for them.

Jesus doesn't just tell them to have peace, or even tell us to have peace, in some sort of trivial way or frustrating way, like, just relax, have peace, you'll be fine, as if he has no control over it, and he just wants you to stop complaining. He tells them to have peace and he offers us proof that he earned the peace for us.

And when I tell my kids to have peace or to be quiet, in other words, I just want them to stop because they're so loud. Jesus is not telling us to be quiet. He's telling us, no, no, you should have ultimate peace. You're afraid of stuff. You don't have to be afraid of it any longer. I solved that. We're good.

Fear will stop you. Peace is on you. And then the Holy Spirit will lead you. And when he had said these things, "he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'". God, the Spirit. "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any it is withheld."

Maybe you're thinking, I checked out after this guy called me a professional 20 minutes ago. He called me a professional disciple maker, a professional sharer of the gospel. I'm not a professional anything, I just got saved. I'm not saved at all. I don't know anything about Jesus, or I'm not ready, I don't know enough. Whatever it may be. You're maybe thinking, dude, you don't know who I am. I can't share the gospel; I can barely talk out loud. I email everything. I can't do any phone calls.

You might be thinking all these things, but here's the weird thing. All those things are important, but when it comes to someone getting to know Jesus, none of those things actually really are the thing that makes them become a Christian. Do you understand what I'm saying? Because the Holy Spirit does all of the heavy lifting when it comes to helping people understand his truth. You are simply an instrument in the hands of the redeemer. You get to be the mouthpiece. You get to be the way by which he does it.

That's pretty cool. But it's not about you. You're just the messenger. And frankly, that takes a lot of pressure off. I have to get up here and communicate a lot of really hard things sometimes. And sometimes I know that people disagree with 'em and I've had those conversations. I gotta say them, and it doesn't mean I have like utmost courage. I don't, and I'm not a good example for this honestly, but I'll just say that one of the things that helps me is that I know that the source material I'm working with is what's responsible. So, if you have an issue, I would just say take it up with God. Read the Bible. And that helps me.

And you can do the same thing. "Hey, Jesus died for your sins and did you know that maybe you might be a sinner? And have you ever experienced some of the broken things in this world? Have you ever hurt somebody? I have. Have you ever been hurt by anybody? I know I have. Wouldn't it be great if that wasn't true anymore? Well, let me tell you the story about this guy Jesus, because he says..." And if they don't like it, you go, oh man, well okay, because the Holy Spirit is the one doing the lifting. And you might say, man, I don't know, I don't know enough, I'm not ready.

And there's always someone who knows less and believes less than you. Always. If you've been saved for three months, someone else has been saved for three days, and you are a spiritual giant to that person. Did you know there's a book called The Book of Acts back here? Really? Acts, what does it say? Oh, it's like the second part of the gospel. There's all this stuff about the church. And they're like, really? You're, do you know, they make bibles with extra words on the bottom that tell you what it means. You're a giant to them. It doesn't matter if you've been saved for three days, someone's been saved for three minutes. If you've been saved for three minutes, someone never met Jesus. You can always be used because it's not about you. The Spirit is the catalyst for our transformation.

Every Christian has a standing order to make disciples. There's no exceptions, includes all of us, and if we fulfill this urgent calling, guys, we can help others experience peace by the power of the Holy Spirit that we all have access to today. And if you're here and you're like, man, what is

like that power that I have access to? Well, let me just tell you real quick if you don't know what I'm talking about.

This guy, Jesus, came into the world for a very specific reason, like I mentioned. The reason is that humanity does a lot of wrong in the world. The reason why there's all these bad things happening and the reason why you turn on the news and see horrible stuff happening is because of us. We do these things. And you might say, Hey, I'm not a murderer. I'm not a robber. Yeah, hopefully you're not. But we also heard a lot of people, we backstab, we gossip, we slander, we steal, we do all sorts of other stuff when we hurt people. What if the world was never created to be like that? What if the world was never meant to have anything like that ever happen? What if all the negative experiences you feel, the shame and the guilt and the loss and the loneliness and the hurt that you experienced, the anger, was all eradicated?

Well, that's why God sends Jesus into the world. He sends Jesus in the world to live perfectly, to demonstrate what a perfect life should look like and then to die on the cross because the wages of sin is death. Our sin kills us literally. And if we believe in him, we would receive his perfection and give him our brokenness and our lostness, and we would count as righteous before God. This is amazing story, all because of Jesus. And guess what? We're not just, we don't just get eternity with God. We get to live with peace, joy, and contentment now. We get to be free of condemnation because who cares what anyone says, if my Lord says that I am made new and I have peace and I have joy, who cares? I get to live with that freedom and I get to leave the burden of my broken marriage and my broken childhood back and my lost job, all that burden, I get to leave that back because, guess what? I got eternity ahead of me and glory with Jesus. Who cares? While it hurts and it stings, I get to look forward to a day where all of it will be gone. That's why we do what we do. That's why we tell the message of the gospel to people, because that's why it's so important. There are literally souls on the line. Maybe your soul's on the line. You should consider that. Let's pray.

Well, Lord, what a practical message for all of us. It's a call, it's a strong call. But Lord, when you send Jesus to come back and he says the first thing out of his mouth is a message that we need to go out and tell people about him, then that's important. And we've gotta know that. Lord, I wanna repent for anything I've done to like skew anyone from the gospel as a preacher, as a pastor, in my years of doing this, if I've ever led someone to me or to some sort of an American evangelicalistic view of the gospel, I just want to repent. I'm sorry. I repent for our church, if we've done that in any way. I want to, Lord, I want to publicly repent for all of American evangelicalism, Lord. Would we find you in your truest form, in the trenches, in our communities, in our neighborhoods, in our grocery stores, in our gyms and our homeschool co-ops or our courtyards at campus. Whatever it is, Lord, will we find you there, where the wild things are, sharing the good news of Jesus. Lord, I pray for the Spirit here where we be empowered to know you in a way that's transformative. And I pray for those of us here that don't know you, would we be a little bit moved, just a little bit, to hear a little bit more about who you might be today? We love you. In Jesus name. Amen.