

Local Missions

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[0 : 00] If you haven't been here in a while or you've been attending for quite some time, you know that we've been in the book of Romans for over a year.!

So, we thought it would be good for a couple of weeks to really just talk about local missions this week and global missions next week.

So, that's kind of the plan where we're headed. I was thinking earlier when Nathan was praying that we can say that we love Jesus.

We can say that we love God. We can say that we honor Him and we glorify Him with this service and our singing. But unless there's action behind those words, those are just words.

Unless there's true humility, repentance, believing, faith, unless any of that is behind those words, they're just words. And this morning, this sermon, as practical as it may be or as impractical, I hope it's practical, it's pointless and worthless if we don't have action attached to our love, attached to our faith, attached to our belief, and on and on and on.

[1 : 39] So, that's kind of where I really wanted to start this morning. We're going to be in John chapter 20, if you guys want to take your Bibles and turn there.

We'll be there in just a few minutes. But let me kind of give you a quick summary of where we've been sitting in Romans chapter 10. Paul, in chapter 9 and a little bit into chapter 10, Paul, writing to the Christians in Rome, has just lamented over the unbelief of Israel, moved emotionally, just couldn't understand, can't understand why they haven't believed the truth of the Gospel.

And that lamenting, that emotional stress and distress over the truth, moves him and brings him to chapter 10 in Romans, where I'm going to read, and you guys can turn there if you want.

It brings him to the simplicity of the Gospel, as Nathan said last week, that Paul is brought, or the week before, Paul is brought to the simplicity of the Gospel after lamenting over Israel.

Let me read in chapter 10, starting in verse 5. For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.

[3 : 07] But the righteousness based on faith says, do not say on your heart, who will ascend into heaven, that is, to bring Christ down, or who will descend into the abyss, that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.

But what does it say? The Word is near you, in your mouth, and in your heart. That is, the Word of faith that we proclaim. Because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek.

For the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing His riches on all who call on Him. For everyone who calls in the name of the Lord will be saved. Now, moving into the next few verses, we get this practical outline that Paul gives us.

He says, how then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

[4 : 17] And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news. That's where we are.

That's kind of where we sit this morning. Preaching the good news. Who will preach the good news? Who is sent? How will they hear if nobody is sent? How will they hear the good news?

And that's where we are camped out. That's where we're kind of moving from. So this week, local missions. And next week, global missions. And I hope between the two weeks, it's really not a big

difference.

The difference will be where you go. That will be the big difference. I hope we can prove that to you. So, John chapter 20.

We're going to start reading in verse 21. As Paul, in the book of Romans, is writing to the Christians in Rome, so too this morning is to Christians.

[5 : 19] This message is to those of you who once were dead and are now alive. Those who once had a heart of stone and now have a heart of flesh.

Those who once lived, wallowed, and slept in your sin and in the muck of bad choice after bad choice after bad choice. Worshiping yourselves.

Those of you who now worship God, live for God. Your purpose is to glorify Him and honor Him. And there's action behind that purpose.

That's who I'm speaking to this morning. That's who this message is for. And if we're Christians, we bear the name of Christ.

Christian. Simple as that. We belong to Him. So in John chapter 20, verse 21, Jesus said to them again, and this is the apostles, this is the disciples, Peace be with you as the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.

[6 : 26] 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.

Let's pray together. Father, I ask your grace this morning as we gather, as I preach this morning a sermon that I believe is from you.

God, speak clearly to us. Communicate your will, your purposes to us. Show us areas in our lives where we need to step up.

Areas where we're not painting a clear picture of the gospel. Our picture is muddied. And show us areas where our action needs to be to let go of some things.

Our action needs to be to clean up our life a little bit so that we can be clear in communicating the hope that we have. Speak through me. God, if there's any error that comes from my mouth, let it fall from our ears.

[7 : 30] That we can honor you and glorify you completely through the preaching of your word and through the hearing of it this morning. In Jesus' name I pray. All of this. Amen.

So, some quick background here in the book of John. Jesus has died. He has resurrected. And in this context, he has not yet appeared to the disciples. And if you look back a couple of verses to verse 19, this is where the disciples are.

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. Now, what I want you to see here is that the disciples are scared out of their mind, fearing for their life from the Jews because Jesus has died. They don't know that he's resurrected.

They think all is lost. What they have put their hope in, what they had followed for these three and a half years has all just crumbled apart. Everything has just been broken down in their eyes.

[8 : 35] And so now they're hiding out, fearing for their lives, afraid of the religious leaders, afraid of the Jewish people, afraid of those that at some point they watch Jesus stand up against, Jesus call out, Jesus give them a piece of his mind.

He's watched this. These are the guys that they are now afraid of. And for the kind of the first point here back into verse 21, what I want you to see is that we all, all of us in this room have been commissioned for a specific task.

We have been commissioned for a specific task. And I know that word means something to a lot of you in here, those who are in military, those who are in the Corps at North Georgia, commissioned. And definition, empowered to carry out a particular task or duty. All of us have been commissioned to a specific task.

We say a lot, Nathan said last week, the Great Commission, go, and in your going, make disciples. All of us have been sent to a specific place, to a specific area, a specific group of people.

[9 : 43] All of us have been sent. So all of us have been commissioned. We have been commissioned by Jesus, empowered to carry out a particular task or duty.

You and I have been sent. Verse 21 says to the disciples, Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you. In America, we romanticize the daring.

We romanticize the dangerous, the brave. We, sadly, in our churches, we do the same with missionaries.

We romanticize the fact that they're willing to go to the ends of the earth, where it's dangerous, where it's not safe, where they may not see any conversions. And we say, These guys, they, you know, the whetstones, I think of the whetstones, and their willingness to put everything aside for the gospel.

And I look at them, and I look at other missionaries, and I say, Man, that's, they're amazing. And, and what happens when I do that, is I disconnect global missions, and local missions from my life.

[10:53] I say, That's them. That's, that's their job. So we look at, like, frontier ministries, or we look at, the international mission board, or we look at, whatever the case may be, whatever group, ministry, missions, oriented group that you can think of, and we say, They're amazing.

That's, that's their job. Global missions is their job. But, to be honest with you, all of us in this room, our call is global missions. We are the missionaries in this room.

Likewise, we look at ministries in town, we look at, the Lauderdale Care Center, the Gainesville Care Center, we look at, all these places that are doing great things, the potter's house, we say, man, they are ministering, they are reaching people.

We look at Set Free, see the conversions that, that God is doing, and changing lives there, and we say, man, God is doing something, and they are, they are part of what God is doing, and that is great stuff.

What happens is, we disconnect ourselves from that. We say, that's them. But guys, we are local missions, here in this room. We, are the sent ones.

[11:57] Not somebody else, not some other ministry, not people going to India, or Afghanistan, or Burma, or wherever. We, our local missions, and global missions, sitting in this room.

It's not thinking biblical, if we say it's them. To think biblically, it's all of us being sent. We have been commissioned, for a specific task.

We have been empowered, to a specific place, for a specific reason, to a specific people. Now, your people may be in Afghanistan, like the Whetstones, but your people also may be at Chesity High School, or Gainesville High School, or Phenicity, or fill in the blank, North Georgia College, Truett McConnell College, wherever you are.

You've been sent there, for a purpose, and a specific task. And you've been commissioned, you've been empowered, by Jesus, to go. Now, remember who Jesus is talking to.

He's talking to his disciples. Now, context wise, they're in this room, scared out of their mind. But these are fishermen, tax collectors. These guys aren't, the smart of the smart, classroom, A plus students.

[13:15] These aren't, these aren't the, the elite of the elite, ranger, or, or Navy SEAL, or anything like that. These are just guys, who God set apart, to do a specific task.

Just like you and I, in this room, we have been set apart, and commissioned, to do a specific task. So how do we do that?

What are we, what are we to do? You know, if Jesus is our example, and all of us, and every Christian would say, yes, Jesus is our example. We need to strive, to be like Jesus. Well, if Jesus is that example, Jesus fulfilled everything, that the Father sent Him to do.

All the way, to death on the cross, and resurrection. Now, are you willing, to fulfill everything, that God has called you, to do? Has called, has sent you to do? God has commissioned you, to do, to the specific area, in your life, the specific people group, around you.

So what are we, to do then? As Christians, what are we to do? How do we, do this? Well, first of all, we must, need to engage, the culture we live in.

[14:24] We need to engage, the culture we live in. We need to get involved, in the culture. We need to get involved, in the lives of people, around us. For example, Jamie and I, took the kids, Friday night, to the movie, in the park, there in, in downtown, Dhalonega.

Never been there before, but we, had a great time, met a lot of people, had just a great, fellowship time, with believers, and non-believers. Didn't have any, gospel centered, conversation per se, didn't lead anybody, to Christ, but we were there, with the people, of Dhalonega, sharing time together.

Another example, that, a few weeks ago, we were, Nathan and I, and some of us, in this room, participated with, the Dhalonega Care Center. They had a family fund, it was a, you know, we were

in a dunk tank.

There's not much, gospel preaching, in a dunk tank. But we were in a dunk tank, because we believed, in what they were doing, and we wanted to support them, and we wanted to engage, what they were, trying to accomplish.

Another example, in the political, circles right now, Mormonism is a big deal, especially in, in Christianity, do we, do we vote for a Mormon, do we not? Well, that's not, not even going to talk about that.

[15:43] Have you noticed, have you paid attention to, the, and I'm a Mormon videos, commercials? Have you seen any of those? Raise your hand, if you've seen any of those. Okay, so a lot of you have. The Church of Latter Day Saints, the Mormons, are trying really hard, to infiltrate culture, and to, dismiss, the stereotype, that they are, you know, multi-wives, multi-kids, going to take over the world, building their kingdom, so that when they die, they got all the, you know, whatever.

They're trying to do this, and they're trying to strip away, that, that stereotype. Why? Because, because they believe, that the best way, to reach, the culture, the rest, best place to reach, people, is to show them, that they're cool.

So you get, lead singers of, of the band, The Killers, you get, um, design, fashion designers, you get, architects, you get all these guys, to do commercials, and talk about, just their morality, and how God has led them, and then they say, and I'm a Mormon.

Shows you, that they're, they're cool, that they're, they're mainstream now, instead of being, multi-wives, hundred kids, which, I'm sure that still exists, but they're, trying really hard.

They're engaging the culture, showing that they're relevant, showing that they're cool. Um, do we need to make videos, and show how cool we are? No. We need to just show the world, that we're people, sinners, who need Jesus, who need the grace of God, and show them, that we're real, engaging culture.

[17:18] A biblical example, is Jesus' first miracle. His coming out party, was at a what? At a wedding. And he changed water, into wine. Now, the wedding, is a, is a culturally rich, celebration.

Now, Jesus, could have said, um, to everyone, now we need to stop this wedding, because I have some things, I need to say. He could have done that, because he's Jesus. But he didn't.

He, was there, he participated, and he blessed, the wedding. He blessed them, by changing the water, into wine. And he showed, his power. He showed, his grace.

He showed, who he was. A hint, of who he was, even at that, wedding. And guys, let's, let's be honest. When, when Jesus goes through, and he travels, he doesn't stay, in the synagogue.

Jesus doesn't, you know, mail out mailers, send out stuff, and say, I'm going to be here, at six o'clock, come hear my message. Jesus, preaches in the synagogue, and then he goes, to the people.

[18:19] He goes, to the city. He eats with, prostitutes, and tax collectors. He stays, with sinners. We too, have to, be with sinners.

Be with people. We have to engage, the people like Jesus. Jesus went out, and he engaged, the people. And the whole time, Jesus did that, what did he do?

He pointed out, who he was. He showed, the people, that he was God, that he was, the son of God. Showed his power, through his miracles. And he showed, and he told them, that he was the savior, of the world.

He pointed, his conversation, his words, to the truth, that he was God. We too, do the same, should, do the same, pointing people, not that we're God, pointing people, to Jesus.

Pointing people, to the better, life. We are to point, people, in 1 Corinthians 13, we have the famous, love chapter, love is patient, love is kind, follow, you know, all the way through.

[19:30] At the beginning, of the chapter though, it says, if we don't have, love, what are we? Noisy, gong, or clanging cymbal. Our actions, have to be, filled with, love.

As, as we live, and as we try, to engage culture, as we try, to display, the glory of God, and the grace of God, and the beauty of the gospel, we're, we're, we're trying to paint, a picture for people, to, to come, and to see, that, this, the way we live, is better, than the way, a non-Christian is living. And not because, of anything in us, not because, of our decisions, we have made, although that is, evidence of, but because, we have Christ, and we have hope, and we have joy, and we have, love, for one another, we have love, for God, that, that is, as Nathan, prayed earlier, because he first

loved us, we then love him.

We have that, that love. So, if we don't have love though, if we try to live this out, and try to live, in a specific way, for people to see, and we don't have love, then, we are, noisy gong, or a clanging cymbal.

So, when we engage the culture, we also must love the people, in the culture. And, some of this is very elementary, I understand, but sometimes, we need to hear the basics.

[21 : 04] We need to be challenged, in the basics, so that we can, strive more. We need to love, the people in the culture. And the truth, and I think why, Paul wrote what he wrote, in Corinthians 13, in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, is that Christians, can come across, as arrogant people.

We can come across, as some arrogant people, because, we know the truth, and we have the answer. But the truth, the reality, I don't want to confuse you, the reality is, is that if we truly understood, and had a true, right understanding, of the gospel, arrogance, arrogance wouldn't be, even close, to the emotion, that we share, with somebody, the emotion, that we show somebody. We would be, full of humility, and full of thanksgiving, and full, of, grace, to others, even, because, of that grace, and that mercy, that we have been shown, through Christ, through, the gospel.

So, how do we, then, love? If we've got the right, understanding of the gospel, we're not going to come across, arrogant. So how do we love, the people in the culture? Well, just three real quick. We love them, by inviting them, into our life. We invite them, into our life. In a big picture, I shared this Thursday night, with our little group, afterwards, in a big, big, humanity picture, we love all, humanity, right?

[22 : 35] Because, every person, is created, in the image of God. And I can look at you, and I can say, I love you, because you're, you're a man, or you're a woman. I'm you, and if you're a Christian, you and I, are brothers and sisters, so you're family too, so now I love you even more.

But that love, that love becomes even more, intense, more, vibrant, when we get to know, said person. When I get to know you, I get to share life with you, I get to invite you, into my life, and I get to learn about you, and you, the same with me, that love becomes, even more, real, even more, flavorful, more, robust, more emotional, for you, and for me.

So, we love all people, so we love the people, of Dahlenegar, we love the people, of Hall County, true statement, but, we really love somebody, when we share life together, and we share our lives, we invite people, into our lives, by, you know, meals, sharing hobbies together, you get to know them, we also, love them, by making sacrifices, for them, by making sacrifices, for them, for an example, you have, an extra room, in your house, that is your office, your office, could be just a desk, make that office, into an extra bedroom, and have people, stay with you, who are in need, who are suffering, who have, who God has brought to you, now, that's just an example, I'm not saying, go out and do that, college students, don't go out and do that, because all you have, is a desk, and a bed, I understand that, don't go crazy, but you understand, what I'm saying, make sacrifices, your comfort, may need to be, sacrificed, for the gospel, and the advancement, of the kingdom, another example,

Nathan mentioned this, this morning, in our CFC 101, love them, by speaking to them, in love, that sounds very basic, and elementary, but if we're not, speaking to people, in love, if I'm not speaking, to you in love, you're not going, to listen to me, you're not even, going to hear me, probably, and that's just a given, human tendency, we need to speak, to people in love, we need to, encourage them, we need to, stand, for the right things, stand, for the right things, not for the trivial things, when Nathan, was talking about it, this morning, in CFC 101, we were talking about, congregationalism, and how, and when is the right time, to, discuss issues, and what kind of issues, are worth discussing, the color of the carpet, we could talk about it, but, is that really important, whether somebody, is a member or not, or we need to discipline them, inviting somebody, to be a member, those types of things, we need to talk about, and we need to talk about it, in love, if somebody is, is in sin, and we need to go, and confront them, we confront them, in love, not, arrogance, not, dude I've got it all figured out, and you are messing up, big time, no, we go and say man,

I understand it's hard, you know I've, you know I'm only here, by the grace of God, I have tasted, God's mercy, and let me share with you, let me help you, because I love you, not because, not because I want you, to achieve, said goals, but I love you, and I want to see the best, for you, that's totally different, than speaking of them, just out of, straighten up, or ship out, so, we have been commissioned, we have been commissioned, by Jesus, to accomplish, a specific task, we've also

been resourced, to accomplish, a specific task, verse 22 says, and when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, receive the Holy Spirit, the only resource, we need is Jesus, is the Holy Spirit, that is the only resource, that you and I need, to achieve, what God has put before us,

[26 : 55] Jesus breathes, on the disciples, to show that, that part of him, now resides, in them, part of him, resides in them, and thus, in us, now there's debate, on whether, they receive the Holy Spirit, here, or at Pentecost, and, it doesn't matter, either way, they've received, the Holy Spirit, and us, have received, we have received, the Holy Spirit, through Christ, and he displays that, here by breathing, on them, kind of puts a stamp, on their commission, you've been empowered, now, and this is how, you're going to, do the task, I have laid out, before you, this is how, you're going to do it, in Matthew 28, last week, Nathan talked about, the great commission, and it says, therefore, go and make disciples, and right before that, Jesus says, I have, all authority, in heaven, and on earth, have been given to me, go therefore, and make disciples, of all nations,

God is, Jesus is, has commissioned, the disciples, he's commissioned us, to go, and make disciples, Acts 1.8 says, but you will receive power, when the Holy Spirit, has come upon you, Nathan mentioned that, last week as well, and that, that word power, is the word we get, in the Greek, we get the word dynamite from, so it's this explosive, life altering power, the power, this power, dwells in, in you, and in me, and we have been resourced, with it, so that we can, accomplish the task, that God is, calling us, to do, and just, you know, a reminder, who Jesus is talking to, and where they are, they're held up, in a room, the door is locked, they're scared out of their mind, they think they're going to die, fishermen, tax collectors, not the religious, they're scared, of the religious, and you and I, have been given, power, just like, the disciples here, to accomplish, what he has commissioned us for,

God's not going to lead us, into a situation, that, that he hasn't first prepared, for us, and prepared for us, to go for that moment, he's just, he's just not, he's preparing us, for what's coming next, he's preparing the people, for who we're going to come, in contact with next, God is working, and so as we live, as we strive, to live, and to love, to preach, and to proclaim, God is working in you, and in me, to accomplish his will, he's using us, to accomplish, his will, his plan, his purpose, that we've been sent to, we've been called to, we've been commissioned to, so as missionaries, all of us, in this room, are missionaries, as missionaries, we're all sent, to where we are, right now, God sends us, to specific places, now, we're sent, to specific places, where people are hurting, people are suffering, where pain, and agony, and sadness, is, all around us, and to be honest with you, where it's messy, people around you, are messy, you're messy,

I'm messy, ministry, messy, why? Because in those moments, we can share, why we are hopeful, we can share, why we are joyful, why we continue, with patience, and kindness, with one another, we can share, why we love, love, and the other side, of that is, when we are suffering, when we are in pain, and agony, and sadness, we can lean, on the promises, that God has given us, the promises, that will occur, that will happen, and we can share, the hope, and the joy, and the love, and the mercy, and the grace, that we've been shown, and we can share that, with others, in even those moments, to the answer, to all of these struggles, the answer, to all the pain, the suffering, the answer, to all the, the sadness, of striving, for something, and never being able, to achieve it in life, because of sin, the answer, to, to, working, out, trying to be somebody, but you just can't get there, because it's not of God, because you're doing it, in your own power, the answer, is Jesus, it's not, anything else, and that power, is in us, and it is greater, than anything else, and that's what we can try, to communicate, to the people around us, 1 John 4, 4 says, he that is in you, is greater than he, that is in the world, which means, that no matter, what circumstance, no matter, what hurt, or pain,

Jesus is better, Jesus is the great physician, Jesus, is, better, and greater, than all the pain, and all the suffering, we have been resourced, to accomplish, exactly, what God calls us to, so we live out, our life, in the power, of the Holy Spirit, we walk, by the Spirit, we bear, the fruit, of the Spirit, and when we do this, we're painting a picture, we're painting this picture, of how we live, a better way, how we live, so in our marriages, we show, a better way, in our decisions, we make about finances, we show, the better way, in our unity, that we have, here and out, among, the world, we show, a better way, in the way, that we love, one another, and others, we show, a better way, we're painting, this picture, that people will see, and they will see,

[33 : 15] Jesus, not us, we live, a specific way, to show Jesus, not to show, what we can accomplish, not to show, how articulate, we are, or how well, we can teach, we show, we live, a specific way, to show, Jesus, now, local missions, is not just, not just about, demographics, numbers, about the area you are, or getting to know, the people around you, it's not about strategy, or plan, although, that comes into play, it's not about, door to door evangelism, although it can be, but it's about, living in such a way, that people see a difference, that people are drawn, to a better way, that people see clearly, the picture that you're painting, which is, Jesus, I think of Daniel, chapter 1, where Daniel, Daniel says, you know, I don't, I don't eat that stuff, we're not going to eat that stuff, if that's okay with you, we're just going to eat, what God has created for us, we're going to eat the fruits, and the vegetables, and drink the water, and, and all the other, all the other guys drink, or eat, you know, the meats, and the kings, food, and the wine, and, and at the end of the 10 days, or whatever it is, you know,

Daniel, and, and the three other guys, they, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they, they look amazing, they're glowing, they're strong, their, their bodies look fit, and the other guys, look, probably gray, or green, or just, you know, just blah, and, the, the, the point, is that Daniel, showed a better way, Daniel, Daniel communicated to them, a better way, now, Jesus wasn't involved, but, but Daniel was able to point to, my God, this is, why I eat this way, because God has, told me to eat this way, and he was able to point people to that, you and I can make, decisions that point people, likewise, don't go out and eat the maker's diet, or whatever, I mean, if you want to, feel free, but, that's not what I'm saying, I hope you understand that, what I'm saying is, is the decisions that you make, the choices that you make, can point people to Jesus, and can give you opportunities, to communicate that truth,

Daniel was able to communicate, that truth, so remember, that you and I, are missionaries, that we are communicating, we are painting a picture, for people, so, the picture, will allow people, for example, the addict, can see that his addiction, can be broken through Jesus, the prostitute, can see that her bondage, can be freed, through Jesus, the liar, can see that his lies, can be forgiven, through Jesus, the idolater, can see that his gods, no longer supply his desires, because he has seen, Jesus, all of this, and more can happen, not because, of some religious activity, that you do, or because you're here, at 1030, or because you pray, five times a day, or whatever it is, this stuff can happen, because, of the power that's in you, and the life, that you're trying to live, and the picture, that you're trying to paint, for people, we have been commissioned, for a specific task, we have been resourced, for that task, and we have been outsourced, with a specific message, verse 23, if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them, if you withhold, withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld, now when I first read this, super confusing, what, he's giving forgiveness, to the, the power of forgiveness, to his disciples, like that, doesn't make any sense, well that's not what he's doing, so first of all,

Jesus is not saying, that forgiveness, is the Christians, to give out, like tickets to a concert, yes I like you, so here's two tickets, yes I like you, you are forgiven, no that's not what he's saying, at all, it is not our forgiveness, to give, we forgive, because we have first been, forgiven, so Jesus is, is telling his disciples, and telling us this morning, that our message, is a message of forgiveness, of sins, that we are, to preach forgiveness, of sins, and if we base, if we look at Romans chapter 3, through chapter 5, we know, that forgiveness, forgiveness, is directed, to a right relation, with God, called justification, God has forgiven our sins, we have been justified, in Christ, and in Christ alone, for the forgiveness, of sins, so if we know that, which was probably, a year ago, when we went through those, if we know that, then we are to be, ministers of forgiveness, ministers, another way, Paul says this, in 2nd Corinthians chapter 5, ministers, of reconciliation, making a relationship, right again, preaching, forgiveness, so that people, can be reconciled, to God, as we were created, in God's image, as we were created, for his glory, in his image, sin came in, and destroyed, that image, destroyed that relationship, destroyed our ability, to be, proper image bearers, of God, and Jesus came, and died, and allowed us, through his righteousness, through his death, life, death, and resurrection, on the cross, allowed us, to be image bearers, once again, of the glory, and the grace, of God, and that's what we're, talking about this morning, is we live out a life, painting a picture, showing, the image, of Jesus Christ, who we now, are image bearers, of as well, so we live out, specifically, we have this specific, message, so remember, we are painting a picture, now, [39 : 39] I was going to try to do, like an art lesson, for you, and talk about this artist, and this artist, and how I hate this one, and I like this one, because this is clear, but I'm not going to do that, you

guys, all of us in here, like art, for some reason, there's just a picture, that really just, stands out to us, it communicates, something to us, and we see exactly, what it communicates, and we are just, drawn to it, shake your head, if you agree, everybody's agreeing, and there's some pictures, where you look at, and you go, I don't get it, I don't get that one, that guy was, I don't know, he was sleeping, when he did that, something, we just, we just don't get it, because, maybe because, it just doesn't speak to us, it doesn't communicate, something clearly, to us, well, for the painting, that we're trying to paint, the picture, that we're trying to, to show the world, what makes that picture, clear, what makes that picture, different, than any other picture, is our message, of forgiveness, is our message, of reconciliation, because, every other religion, may have forgiveness, every other religion, may have, your sins, have been, forgiven, but not by grace, not by grace alone, through faith alone, they've got to do something, there's a task, that they have to accomplish, there's a task, or, or many tasks, that they have to do, in order to be, have their, their weight, leaning towards good, instead of evil, well, you and I, have a message, of forgiveness, by grace, by grace alone, undeserving, are all of us, in this room, of this forgiveness, undeserving, of this grace, we have done nothing, we have not worked, a specific way, we have not made, the right decision, we are all recipients, as Christians, recipients, of the grace of God, and the forgiveness, of our sins, so this message, clears up, that painting, clears up, that picture, the message, of forgiveness, that Jesus, is the only way, that Jesus, is the only way, you're going to receive, forgiveness of sins, that Jesus, has died, for that very sin, that you are, dead in, the sin, that you can't get out of,

Jesus, has died for that, and this picture, let me show you, let me show you, what Jesus, has done, let me show you, the truth of God's word, and we live out, a specific way, so that people see that, so people know that, though there's no doubt, so that you look at it, and you say, I like that, because, and everybody in here, looks at the picture, Jesus says, I like that, because, I'm a recipient, of grace, and I've done nothing, to deserve that, and everyone in here, looks the same way, looks the same picture, the picture the same, so we were, we were once, the addict, we were once, the thief, we were once, the prostitute, but by God's grace, our story, is changed, by God's grace, our hearts, have been changed, our desires, have been changed, our lives, have been changed, all by God's grace, to paint a picture, of who, Jesus is, why he came, why he lived, why he taught, what he taught, why he died, on the cross, and why he resurrected, all, in that one picture, that we can paint, with our lives, we can paint, so people can see it, clearly, local missions, is painting this picture, around, so that people can see it, painting this picture, so people can clearly, see, Jesus, local missions, is also volunteering, is also participating, in groups, and ministries, that I mentioned, at the beginning, it is, but if you don't, get the picture right, then for you, it doesn't matter, if you don't, get the picture right, if you're not painting, the right picture, then your intentions, and your intentions, are wrong, and your decisions, are wrong, then you're not pointing, to the right thing, you're pointing, to yourself, you're pointing, to confusion, you're pointing, to stuff, that people don't get, stuff, that they're already hearing, what's, what's more important, your activities, what you can put, on your calendar, or the kingdom of God, what's more important, the activities, that you accomplish, or your heart, all of that, points to, helps us, paint this picture, our intentions, our heart, the kingdom of God, building, the kingdom of God, and we, live, a specific way, for Jesus, because, we have been commissioned, for a specific task, God has sent, all of us, into the world, into the circles, of people, and influence, that we are around, for a purpose, for a reason, and we have been commissioned, we have been given, his power to do so, which, we have been resourced, for that task, he has given us, the Holy Spirit, to accomplish, what he has called us, to accomplish, and we have been outsourced, with a specific message, we have a message, to proclaim, to preach, to display, and God has called us, to do, to do it, our message is different, than any other message, because forgiveness, by grace alone, through faith alone, not by works, lest any man, should boast, let's pray together,