

Gospel Significance: Matthew 28:18-20

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[0 : 00] Please take your copy of God's Word and turn to Matthew chapter 28.! Our text for this morning will be Matthew chapter 28, verses 18-20.

! The gospel has eternal weight. It has massive significance.

The world needs to be reconciled to God in Christ. The penalty of sin is death and it's eternal separation from the Lord God Almighty.

And God has given to us the ministry of reconciliation. Restoring relationship between God and mankind. There's much talk these days about calling.

And what you can be sure of is that if you have been called to follow Christ, you have been called to the ministry of reconciliation. Let me read to you from 2 Corinthians chapter 5.

[1 : 16] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. We've been given a new identity.

All of this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ.

Be reconciled to God. For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

This is the message of reconciliation that has been trusted to us as followers of Christ. And you may have noticed this morning that I placed a globe on the lectern.

[2 : 24] I really hope you noticed I placed a globe on the lectern. We have other issues to address if you didn't notice that I did that. This globe sat in my father's study when I was a child.

I don't even know if he realizes that I have it. It's an old globe. In fact, it has still on it the Soviet Union, so it's not an accurate globe.

But as a child, I used to look at this globe and dream about the places in the world that I might go. I love it because it comes off the stand, and I can play with it like a ball, and dream about as a child where I'd want to go in the world.

When I discovered that it was being discarded, I grabbed it up, and it now sits in my study. And it sits right in front of where I sit in my study, and it reminds me to dream about the places that our church might go to declare the good news of Jesus Christ.

And so, not to prop for silly reasons, but that's why it's sitting here this morning, both for me and for you to dream together about how God might use Christ's Family Church, Dahlonga, to advance the good news of Christ to the world.

[3 : 42] The world currently holds approximately 7.4 billion people. I can't even fathom what that number means. 7.4 billion people.

And those 7.4 billion people are divided into 11,498 ethno-linguistic groups. I don't know exactly what that even means. But divided into peoples, 11,498.

6,803 of those people groups have less than 2% evangelical Christians as part of their population. Typically, missiologists talk in terms of 2% and above is a reached people, which is a low statistic. But 6,803 of those people groups have less than 2% of evangelical Christians, which I would say are the only type of Christians.

3,040 of those people groups are not engaged by any Christian work. None whatsoever. There's no one on the ground working amongst those people.

[4 : 52] This means that today, roughly 7 billion people do not have the gospel. Today, 7 billion people could die eternally, separated from the goodness of God, if the gospel is not proclaimed to

them, and if they do not believe.

This is a great problem. This is a massive problem. And the great remedy to this great problem is found in our text this morning.

It doesn't get any more complex than this. Matthew 28, beginning in verse 18. And Jesus came and said to the apostles, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Beloved, this is God's word to us. It was written for His glory and for our good.

[6 : 10] We would all do well this morning to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands. Now, over the past four weeks, we have been considering the Christian life.

We have been giving you so-called hooks to hang the Christian life on, beginning with our gospel identity. And we've been kind of rolling out some summary statements to you and the summary statement for our gospel identity, what we want you to have in your mind when you see the church logo and all of the many places that it shows up, by grace alone, through faith alone, in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone.

So this is both the nature of our faith and the object of our faith. We are justified before God, forgiven and adopted by Him.

This is the new identity. This is now who we are if we have believed, by grace alone, through faith alone, in the personal work of Jesus Christ. We're justified before Him, forgiven and adopted.

This precious truth, this gospel identity, is our great motivation for worship. So out of who we are comes everything that we do. We are accepted by God in Christ, so we live how He wants us to in all things.

[7 : 31] And this is worship. Not just music. It includes music. It's everything that we do is a result of who we are to God in Christ. Having experienced the mercies of God to us in Christ, we live for Him.

Our identity motivates our action. So we've been talking about four areas of Christian living, and they are as follows.

Gospel conviction. Being justified before God, forgiven and adopted by Him. We worship Him through gospel conviction. Knowing God, through His word and prayer. We worship Him through gospel community.

Loving the church in varying means of fellowship and service. Last week we talked about worshiping Him through gospel character. Conforming to Christ, both in private and in public. And today we come to the last of these four C's and the conclusion of this little five-week series and our break from the book of Acts to talk about gospel commission.

[8 : 37] And the summary statement is as follows. It's found on your notes. I hope you have. Being justified before God, forgiven and adopted by Him. We're not tired of saying that, right? Because of who we are.

Because of who we are. Because of who we are. Right? Justified before God, forgiven and adopted by Him. We worship Him through gospel commission. Proclaiming the gospel to the ends of the earth.

We find in Matthew chapter 28, verse 18 through 20, what is most often referred to as the great commission. And we find in it a command.

But what is that command? Many suggest that the command is go. You see therefore in verse 19. Go therefore. Or that the command is go.

And the command is make disciples. And that the command is baptize them. And the command is teach them all that I have commanded you. Let me posit to you that the command found in Matthew 28, 18 through 20, is make disciples.

[9 : 44] And if you study the Greek, if you look at these verbs, not a single one of those is an imperative form of the verb. All of them are non-imperative forms of the verbs.

The only imperative form, which is the command form in the Greek language, is make disciples. So when we look at go therefore, we can rightly read it in your going therefore.

Or as you're going along therefore. This doesn't exclude the ends of the earth. But what it does is it includes everywhere we go.

It includes everything. It actually makes the verse much more powerful, right? That the command is to make disciples. As followers of Jesus Christ, those who claim to follow Him, we make disciples. Jesus sums up His ministry in this way in Luke 19, verse 10. He says, I came to seek and to save the lost. And He imparts this ministry to us.

[10 : 53] As followers of Christ, disciples under His overview, under His guidance, we do what He did.

And what He does in us. We should be about the very same work. So what follows in Matthew 28 is the where and the how of making disciples.

What does that look like? What is the command to make disciples look like in a broader sense? And so let's address first the where. The where. To the ends of the earth.

He says, last part of verse 19, make disciples of all nations. Matthew 24, 14, Jesus says, And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations. And then the end will come. There could be much debate about what is meant by all nations or the whole world or every tribe, nation, and tongue.

[12 : 02] I've heard a lot of explanations about what that could possibly mean. We recently, just a moment ago, talked about the classification of ethno-linguistic people groups. Is that number exactly correct?

11,498? I don't know. We can't be sure. But what we can be sure of is that we are not done proclaiming because the end has not come.

Disciple making, which begins with gospel proclamation as part of making disciples, proclaiming the gospel. It does not end with gospel proclamation, right?

Verse 19, we're going to baptize them. Verse 20, we're going to teach them all that Christ has commanded. It includes guidance in obedience, growing people up in Christ. But disciple making begins with gospel proclamation.

And it starts at home. Go, therefore, in your going, as your going, make disciples.

[13 : 04] That means that we are to make disciples of our roommates and our classmates and our co-workers and our families and people at the coffee shop and those we encounter at restaurants and that guy that cuts us off on the road.

We are to make disciples, to regard no one any longer according to the flesh. We have the eyes of Christ, right? To seek and to save the lost.

To see people as eternally secure or eternally damned. And to come to their rescue with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And I find for many of us the great problem in proclaiming the gospel, making disciples, is that we don't find ourselves that often around the unsaved.

Now this congregation is a little unique from many churches in this nation in that a lot of you are college students and you're college students on a secular campus. And I say to you, that is a wonderful opportunity.

[14 : 08] Praise God that you have at your fingertips a bounding opportunity. So many of you, this is not very pertinent, but for some of us it is. For some of us it's extremely pertinent that we have a difficult time being around people who need the gospel of Jesus Christ because we tend to sequester ourselves off.

We're being limited in our exposure to people because we're at home and we're at work and we're at church. There's a sociologist, a secular sociologist by the name of Ray Oldenburg who wrote a book and a number of other books on the idea that this book is called The Great Good Place.

And my brain got turned on to this by John Cochran, so thank you. At least I think it did. I think the information came to me by way of John Cochran. The Great Good Place. And he talks about how societies have thrived because of these common gathering places that are informal, that are public, like the marketplace, right?

or the pub, places where people gathered together and the community was drawn together because of these great good places. He also calls The Great Good Place a third place, right?

So think in terms of work, home, and that other place that you frequent and that you're at. The bordega on the corner, it's where you go consistently and encounter people in that way.

[15 : 35] And we all need a third place. You need to be seeking out a third place where you can encounter the lost people here as you're going.

Now, moms, this third place could be at home with your unbelieving children. Students, this could be at school, what you would deem work for many of you.

It could be at school. It could be your place of employment. For some, there's many, many opportunities to encounter lost people at their place of employment. For some, they sit in a cubicle and they put on a headset and they might encounter a couple people from time to time.

It's not a good place to foster relationships of this nature, although you should be sharing the gospel at your workplace as well. We need to be creative about this third place.

many of you, I hope, and I hope in a continuing way as, particularly as college students come through, the life of this church will be sent elsewhere. And I hope that many of you are sent to the ends of the earth.

[16:39] I would love to see that. It is a dream of the leadership of this church that we would equip and send people to the farthest reaches of this planet to share the good news of Christ. But many of you will stay right here.

You'll stay in North Georgia. You might go as far as Atlanta. And you have a part to play in this glorious process of advancing the kingdom of God.

So many where we live claim to be followers of Christ, claim to be quote-unquote Christian, and they desperately need the gospel. They need to be shown what it looks like to follow Jesus.

There's been this trending in relational evangelism, and I think that it has goodness at its root, but so often, people are investing themselves into the lives of other individuals in the hopes that maybe someday something might happen that will bring about a gospel conversation, and I'm just building the relationship, and I'm building the relationship, and I'm building the relationship.

We see this happen often with well-intentioned individuals who get involved with fraternities and sororities on campus. They say, I'm going to get in there. It's a mission field. They're lost people. I'm automatically connected.

[17:55] We've got a club thing going on, and I'm going to get in the midst of that, and some years later, the trouble persists, and their life is declining in holiness rather than increasing in holiness.

They're getting wrapped up in the society of it all. If you love people and you set your intention on them to be in relationship with them, the aim of it should be that you would fellowship with them around the things that matter most.

If you're following Christ, you have very little in common with people who are not following Christ. Christ. Some of you experience this with your families, how you just have nothing to talk about anymore when you go home because you're pursuing the Lord and your family's heading off in an opposite direction or your old friends from high school.

You used to be so close and have so much to say and so much to do, and suddenly you find that the way they live their lives is distasteful to you. We need to press, and we need to press as quickly as we can to gospel proclamation.

To some, it's going to be a precious gift to them. And to some, they're going to hate it. And at least you know where you stand in your relationship with them. So the where is to the ends of the earth.

[19:06] It's to everywhere. It's to as you're going. The how is by the power of God. We proclaim the gospel truth by the power of God.

And I'm so thankful for the way that this gospel commission is sandwiched. Verse 18, Jesus says to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Right? I am the king. I am reigning over all things. And then he gives this command to go and to make disciples and to baptize them and to teach them. And then verse 20 he says, And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

And so until this mission is complete, I am with you with all of this authority bringing about my good will. What a massive motivation to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the lost and dying around us.

Jesus has all authority and he is with us. It is by the power of God that the gospel is proclaimed and believed. But it also happens by the activity of men.

[20:12] I promise you that you will never under some imaginary felt compulsion just start talking and you are not going to know what you are saying and you are just going to start sharing.

You are going to be moved to get up and call that friend that you haven't talked to in a while. You are going to suddenly find yourself hanging out in that place where people need to hear the gospel and declaring it from the street corner. It won't happen.

It is also by the activity of man. God gives this, Jesus gives this command. Right? I have got all authority. I am going to be with you. Go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them. Teach them. There is command that comes along with this. We must recognize that we have a part to play.

Romans chapter 10 verse 13 14 and 15 Paul writes for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

[21 : 12] 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 never heard?

Hear this carefully, beloved. No one is getting some revelation of Christ post-death. They have to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and believe in it to be saved.

How can they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

Paul is not just talking about what I do on Sunday mornings and what many men do on Sunday mornings. He's talking about you preaching the good news of Jesus Christ to your friends and your co-workers and your classmates and your family.

Verse 15 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. So gospel proclamation is the beginning of disciple making.

[22 : 17] There are two axioms I want to present to you. Axioms are statements that ideas hinge upon that change things. So two axioms for gospel proclamation.

Number one, we are all different. We are all different. This means in order to share the gospel of Jesus Christ well, you need to know people.

You need to know people. You need to learn the art of asking questions and listening to answers. I find it fascinating that so many Christians walk into some form of spiritual conversation and they bear the burden of proof.

We have the upper hand in this. You know that, right? We follow the one true living God. We have the scripture in our hands, I hope in your minds and in your hearts.

I would suggest that the burden of proof lies on the world. Ask the atheist to help you understand how they've arrived at their conclusion. Ask the agnostic.

[23 : 33] Did you say you believe in a God? How can you believe in a God and not follow some version of his way? Ask good questions and listen to the answers.

Get to know people. Just have conversations. And I will tell you, and I use the word, learn the art. The only way to get good at it is to do it. Start talking to the people you know about religion, about the world, about the gospel.

Understand people's uniqueness. People have a unique history. They have a unique set of circumstances. They have a unique set of hurts. They have a unique worldview. We're all different. But the second axiom, we're all the same. We're all the same. We're all a part of God's redemptive story.

We have all at one time set ourselves against God. We have rejected His good word. We have said to Him with our activity, I hate you.

[24 : 42] All of us have been in that place. All of us deserve the just condemnation of God for the way that we have treated His good reign over our lives.

All of us need the salvation that is found in Christ. We're all part of God's redemptive story. We call this, if you want a big word, the meta narrative.

There's stories within a great, big story. God's creation of the world and the fall of that world and His rescue of that world and His soon-and-coming restoration of that world.

It's a big, beautiful story that we are all a part of. So we're all different. That means we have to get into the mix with people. We have to love people. We have to know people. And we're all the same. We all need that. Our little stories connected to the great, big story. I want to show you, I tend to shy away from stuff like this, I think because of the hokiness of so many churches that do multimedia things.

[25 : 50] That may even be sinful on my part. I want to show you, I think the guys are getting ready, a video that's a little over five minutes, which is the story.

It's actually called the story. The story, short film. It's a wonderful telling of this great, big, redemptive picture. It uses that pattern, creation, fall, rescue, restoration.

So I'm going to let those guys play it for you and then I'll pop back up here. there is only one story that answers life's most essential questions and gives a lasting sense of purpose and meaning. It's the story that inspires all other stories. It's the true story that defines every one of us. This is that story. How did it all begin?

Like all stories, this one begins in the beginning with the author, who is God. He spoke everything into being. With a word, galaxies appeared with stars and planets.

[26 : 56] Earth was designed for life to flourish. Everything God made was gloriously good and breathtakingly perfect. The highlight of God's creation was the first man and woman, Adam and Eve.

God entrusted everything he created to his beloved children, giving just one more. They were not to eat fruit from a specific tree. They lived in loving obedience, worshiping God as their heavenly father, and enjoying perfect harmony with creation, each other, and God.

Considering our world today, its obvious perfect peace didn't last. Turmoil,! War, sickness, troubles. We each have our share.

What went wrong? It started when a fallen angel named Satan grew jealous of God and determined to ruin the perfection of creation. Satan took the form of a serpent and enticed Adam and Eve to question God's goodness and rebel against his one rule.

In disobedience they ate the fruit, and peace unraveled, ushering in sin and death, which still plagues us today. If we are honest, we are very much like Adam and Eve.

[28 : 12] We all rebel against our Heavenly Father, making our hearts heavy with fear, guilt, and shame. Our bodies are weary with sickness, disease, and death.

Earth is afflicted with storms, calamities, and disasters. Even worse, sin has separated us from God, causing a permanent divide, a miserable separation called hell.

The fallout of sin has been catastrophic. it's inescapable with no way to fix it, leaving us all to wonder, is there any hope?

The love that prompted God to create us also prompted him to send a Savior who would set everything right again. As centuries passed, God shared exact details of the coming Savior's birth, life, and death.

Everything in the Bible points to this rescuer. Father, almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus came to earth as God the Son to fulfill the promise. He was born miraculously, as his mother was a virgin.

[29 : 18] Just like us, Jesus grew up and experienced life on earth. But unlike us, Jesus never sinned and always obeyed the Father. When Jesus was in his 30s, he began teaching all around Israel, pointing people to God's kingdom, and performing many miracles.

after a few years, he was wrongly accused and sentenced to an agonizing death on a cross. Jesus lovingly gave up his perfect life as a sacrifice to pay for the sins of mankind.

He died a perfect death, taking our place, the innocent for the guilty. But the grave couldn't hold Jesus. Three days later, God brought Jesus to life again.

Jesus defeated sin by dying on the cross, and defeated death by rising from the dead. Today, Jesus sits at God's right hand as king and judge over all creation.

This is the story of rescue God has authored. He invites us, through repentance and faith, to make his story of rescue the one we trust in and live from.

[30 : 28] When we do, everything changes. And now, what will the future hold? For everyone who trusts in Jesus alone for rescue, God has promised to restore your heart and set you free from sin's hold, because God is loving, kind, merciful, forgiving, tenderhearted, and true.

God has also promised to make all things new. One day, there will be a new heaven and a new earth, forever free from sin. Everything that causes pain and sadness will be gone.

God has also promised to be with us forever. The moment you trust in Jesus, your relationship with God is restored, because Jesus has closed the divide sin caused.

Getting to know this all-loving God starts today and continues forever. For God's story never ends.

You can make God's story the foundation of your life even now by admitting your need for God's rescue, asking forgiveness for your sin, trusting in Jesus Christ alone to rescue you, following Jesus in faith from this moment on.

This is God's story. will you make it yours? So I think that's a wonderful like big flyover of the redemptive story of scripture.

[32 : 05] You have creation and fall just in the first three chapters of the book of Genesis. And everything that follows through the Old Testament is about pointing to the future promise of Christ.

People were saved then by faith in this future promise. And we're now drawn back to believe in the realized promise of Christ and the redemption of our sin in his person and his work.

It's a wonderful, wonderful story. And this is what we want to draw people into. They're unique, but we are the same. Now, each year, Lifeway Research conducts and releases a denominational report entitled the Annual Church Profile Report.

Some of you may not know this, but we're a Southern Baptist Church. So this is for the SBC. In 2006, they reported that the member to baptism ratio for SBC churches was 86 to 1.

So that's saying that they're just counting the stats up and we know stats can get all skewed and funky like probably a lot of those people that were counted as members were counted multiple times because they probably had membership at multiple churches.

[33 : 16] Certainly, we can't be sure that every baptism was a true conversion or that every person that converted was necessarily baptized, recognizing full well that statistics can be skewed, but all the same, this report looks at the number of members of SBC churches and the number of baptisms reported, and that's 86 to 1 in 2006.

So that's to say that it took 86 members to see one person converted to faith in Christ. I hope that's a staggering number to you. That means there's a lot of inactivity in the church in 2006.

This year, they reported, so for last year, an improvement on that ratio. I'm thankful for, praise God, that it's for last year, 2015, 52 to 1.

Better, but not great. Now our church. You recall that we have sent out a survey for our members, we've called it the Member Health Survey, in which we made this statement and we asked people to strongly disagree or strongly agree and a range of answers in between, and the statement was this, I have led someone to faith in Christ this year.

I have led someone to faith in Christ this year. And again, we recognize that gathering this kind of information, even the way some people may have read the question could be misleading. So we recognize this full well, but all the same, if we take the answers that were given, three people said agree and three people said strongly agree.

[34 : 57] That's six. That's six. Which brings our ratio, and again, praise God, praise God our ratio is better than the average Southern Baptist church, I suppose, with this ratio of 52 to 1 to 15 to 1.

So this is us right now. I'm thankful, man I'm thankful, I am so thankful that last year, by the work of six members of our church, or maybe one, I guess is possible, no it's not possible, six members, they answered in that way, agree or strongly agree, that six people came to faith in Christ.

What a wonderful, wonderful reality, we should rejoice in that, but I would say to you, beloved, it's not enough. It's not enough. That means that a lot of us are not actively sharing the gospel with those around us.

So the challenge that the elders of CFC Dahlongega are issuing to our fellowship this morning, we want to see happen across the next year, is to change that ratio, to see that ratio change.

And I am not saying that this is not a work of God. I am not saying that we are going to knuckle down and get it done. That is not what I am saying. What I am saying, though, is that this work of God also requires work on our part.

[36 : 16] And I am going to go on to suggest to you that I think it is that we are not doing the work, not that he doesn't desire to work out salvation in the lives of this community. So the challenge being issued to our fellowship this morning is to see this ratio change next year to one to one.

And that means, and this is being pressed upon and expected of, members of Christ Family Church, if you are not a member of Christ Family Church, you should be a member of a church, whether it is here or not, so you are not entirely off the hook in this regard.

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you are not off the hook, you are meant to be sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, but we are going to place an expectation upon members of our church that they be working at this. Not that you are going to get your t-shirt when you see somebody come to faith in Christ, that we are going to get some extra points, a gold star on your chart, that you get a new ESV study Bible or anything like that.

But to set some goals together and say, we can do this, let's start encouraging and pressing at one another to be actively sharing our faith in a way that we're used like this by God.

I'd love to see it go beyond this. I'd love to see it be 1 to 2 or 1 to 10 or 1 to 20. Let's press this next year to see it be 1 to 1.

[37 : 36] Not legalistically, I'm not suggesting that. You won't be kicked out of the church if you're not seeing someone converted in your life. If this seems extreme to you, if you go, but Nathan, come on, man.

We're going to double the fellowship in this next year. Let me say to you that I have for a long time operated under this notion that we live in the days of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah, if you're not familiar with him as a prophet, we see some evidence across his whole ministry, his lifelong ministry of calling people back to God. Possibly one person who turned back to God, a very fruitless ministry as far as following God was concerned.

And I have long thought, if we're going to be true and we're going to be faithful, that's not appealing to people. We're just going to have to keep grinding, right? We're just going to keep grinding, keep doing the thing that we're doing.

And I don't think we live in the days of Jeremiah, and I want to show you that. I want you to turn to Luke chapter 10 with me to see this. This is the account of Jesus sending out a broader group of disciples to proclaim the good news of the gospel.

[39 : 05] Beginning in verse 1, after this the Lord appointed 72 others with 36 pairs and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.

They went ahead of him as heralds. And he said to them, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Jesus goes on to tell them that some will receive them and their message and others will not. There should be an expectation on their part that as they're going and proclaiming the coming of the kingdom, the good news of Jesus Christ, that some will accept it and some will not.

But then he does this really curious thing. Note carefully this thing that he does say, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, and then he tells them to pray.

And he doesn't suggest that they pray for the harvest. Now, I don't believe that what we should take from this is that we ought not pray that people be converted to Christ. We should definitely do that. We should definitely be praying that people would respond in faith to the gospel proclaimed.

[40 : 14] But that's not what he tells them to do. He says, there is a harvest. It's a plentiful harvest. It's a huge harvest. Souls ready to but there's a problem.

The laborers are few. So pray for laborers. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

And I think reading this rightly, we should see that there is a harvest in the place that we live.

People that God intends to save. And he wants laborers to go out and bring the harvest in.

There's a harvest. It is the Lord's harvest. Pray for laborers. And we asked some other questions in the member health survey.

We asked the question, I share the gospel or made the statement, I share the gospel with my friends, co-workers, classmates, and or family. And we went through and we scored this.

[41 : 23] I hope that you can hear this right. I don't want to confuse you with the way we scored it, but out of a hundred possible points, the way this statement was answered, we got seventy.

Not too bad, but not too good. I share the gospel with my friends, co-workers, classmates, and or family. If I were a college professor, that would be a failing grade. Secondly, I frequent a place where I interact with the lost.

Out of a hundred possible points, we scored a seventy-five. I think a lot of those points, possible points, came from college student members that are responding. Which means particularly for us non-college adults, we need a third place.

We need a place where we're consistently interacting with lost people. So we're going to start expecting that. We're going to start talking about it with members of the church. This doesn't preclude you non-members. We'll be talking about it with you too.

What I'm saying is that it's going to be an expectation of members. You need a third place. And again, that might be work. And it's possible that it's home. And it's possible that it's school. But the place that you're intentionally inserting yourself to build relationships for the sake of the kingdom.

[42 : 37] This is a weakness in my life. I'm going to walk through this with you because I preach the gospel all the time. Barely a day goes by that I don't preach the gospel to somebody, but it's ninety-nine percent believing people.

Counsel, I preach the gospel. I get up here and I preach the gospel. I interact with believing people most of the time. I need a place to plant myself. I'm working right now on freeing up my schedule. You're going to hear me say more and more, that's not my job. That's not my responsibility. Go see. And one of the things I'm trying to free my schedule up for is for this. I want to give you leadership in this. I want to be around lots of people on a consistent basis.

So ask me. Nathan, where's your third place? I don't know where it is yet. I'm trying to figure it out. Another statement we made, right? And I was encouraged by this.

The statement was, I am equipped to share the gospel. I'm equipped to share the gospel. Eighty-six of a possible hundred points are scored here.

[43 : 39] Let's say that the members of our church are saying, yeah, we're equipped. We've got what we need to share the gospel. But it's not happening in the same measure, right? And those who are saying they are equipped still are not comfortable.

Another statement, I am comfortable sharing the gospel. We only scored a sixty-eight out of a hundred there. And I do not have fears or anxieties about sharing the gospel. A fifty-seven out of a hundred there.

So the feeling of members of our church is that they're equipped, but they're not equipped, which is an interesting response. My guess would be that members of our church have heard me say, you are equipped because you believe the gospel and you have the word.

And they've gone, okay, but they still don't feel that that's enough. Final statement to address today. I have attended an evangelism training held by our church.

There's a forty-eight out of a hundred for that. Now, that could be largely because we haven't offered that many evangelism trainings. That's going to change. Because we're seeing this response of, I'm equipped, but I'm not really equipped.

[44 : 52] We're going to hold evangelism trainings. We're planning for three this year. So think of it as a school year. Before summer's out, we're going to offer three evangelism trainings. There's going to be three different evangelism trainings.

We're going to have guys that are regularly practiced in this, that can serve and lead as models in consistent and clear gospel presentation. I fear that we're having a lot of gospel conversations as a church, but we may not actually be presenting the gospel itself.

We may not be presenting it in its entirety to people. Maybe we're having spiritual conversations, but we're not pressing people to repentance. So we're going to have evangelism trainings.

And of our members, we're going to expect that you'll attend one of those this year. They're going to be different formats. We're going to offer them at different times. If you are one of those amongst us that are comfortable sharing the gospel, good, we need you to come to the training and help those who are less comfortable sharing the gospel.

So no one's excluded from this. As a church, we need to be growing in this way, moving forward. In a week or two, we're going to have the first one ready to go. We're going to have, we'll say plenty about it.

[46 : 01] We'll have sign-ups for it, etc. It's actually going to be the video that you watch, the story training that goes along with that media and the presentation that you can present with that.

So hear me, members, an evangelism training across this next year. So being justified before God, forgiven and adopted by Him, we worship Him through gospel commission, proclaiming the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Followers of Christ proclaim the gospel to make disciples everywhere. On your bulletin, Spurgeon quote, love this one.

I'm going to explain a phrase to you and I'm just going to read it. I want you to know what the phrase means so that you know it when I get to it. Towards the end he says, in the teeth of our exertions, that is to say, it's an old phrase, it is to say in the face of our exertions, right?

That we are present in our exertions. So if sinners be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our dead bodies.

[47 : 09] And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for.

If you do not share the gospel, there are some options. Number one, you may not be a Christian. If you do not share the gospel, you may not be a Christian.

If you have no desire for others to experience the mercy of God, you may not have experienced the mercy of God. Number two, you may be a Christian, but the truth of the gospel may have grown cold in your heart.

You've forgotten who you are. You're having an identity crisis. Christ family church exists to glorify God by experiencing.

So there's a reality of who Christ is, proclaiming and displaying the supremacy of Jesus Christ in all things to all peoples. So your experience of the supremacy of Christ, of the beauty of the gospel may have grown cold.

[48 : 18] And you need to do the work that's necessary to fan that flame back. You need to be in the scripture. You need to be praying. You need to be with community. You need to be obedient. Do those things that your passions may increase.

You talk about what you love. Isn't this true? I used to be a rock climber many years ago. I would say it in many ways defined me in an unhealthy way.

And man, if you wanted to talk about rock climbing, I would talk about it. I love to talk about it. And so often you try to strike up a conversation about it with a person that would just go, that seems scary.

And you'd go, I'm not going to be able to talk about it. It's got its own language. It's got this whole, like, the vernacular is totally different for it. You found a person who knew what you were talking about. It was so exciting. Talk about climbing.

You talk about what you love. Pay attention to what you talk about. It'll expose kinds of idolatry in your heart. And I'm not saying we don't talk about, talk about, you know, I got some new pants today.

[49 : 17] It doesn't mean I worship my pants. But what controls your conversation? What's controlling your conversation? What do you mostly talk about? You talk about what you love.

So the truth of the gospel may have grown cold in your heart. Number three, you might not know lost people. It might be like a really like honest, like I just don't interact with lost people. And I'm suggesting to you that needs to change, right?

We need to press out and change that. You need to know people whose end is hell and draw them away from it. Or fourthly, you may not believe that you can be used by God to proclaim the gospel. You may feel so guilty for your sin and you need to remember who you are, that you're forgiven and adopted and you're equipped, right? That God wants to send you out. He's given you the gospel message. We want to help you wrap your mind in clearer ways around that to have those tools to pick up and go out and share the gospel of Christ.

So you may not be a Christian at all or you're a Christian who's struggling and there's some work to be done in these regards. And so to that end, I'm going to pray for us and then we'll take the Lord's Supper together.