

Evangelism

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 March 2013

Preacher: Clay Naylor

[0 : 00] What is evangelism? You know, why don't we do it? Why do we have fears and sharing the gospel, etc. And then why should we do it? And then last week, I think the overall framework of this series, I guess, is like knowing, living, and speaking the gospel.

And I kind of got that from one of my favorite books about evangelism. If you want like an awesome read that's not long, but it's this really good, thorough Marks of the Messenger by Max Stiles. He's a missionary in Dubai. But yeah, knowing, living, and speaking the gospel. And to where evangelism really isn't a program or a duty.

It's a lifestyle that we live with our words and with our actions and to bring people into the kingdom. So the first part of this is knowing the gospel.

And so we're talking about the contents of the gospel message. And that's important because you could talk about gospel just means good news or glad tidings.

[1 : 08] We talked about that. And there's a lot of good news in the Bible, right? Like everything. We could like start naming off all the promises of God, all the awesome things God's done, and call that gospel.

And, you know, and I guess that could be an accurate description. But scripture is also different when it talks about the content of the gospel message. Like things that when we go out and we actually proclaim the gospel to people in order for them to be saved and come to salvation in Christ. And there's a few key components that need to be there or else something's going to be lost. And most theologians have kind of broken that up into four different things.

They break it up into God, man, Christ's response. You know, like those are the key things. And so last week, Swanson talked about God and man.

And now we're going to pick up on Christ in response. But just a brief overview of what he said last week, just really briefly, just to make sure we're connecting the dots. The gospel is a message about God.

[2 : 15] It means that it tells us about who he is, his character, what he demands of us, what he requires of us as his creatures, as those that he's made. And it tells us that we owe our very existence to him and that we live, move, and breathe in him.

And that we don't have any existence outside of him. He holds our life breath in his hand. And he's totally worthy of our affections, our joy, our obedience.

Completely worthy. And he's a living, eternal God. And he's there. Revelation 4.11 says, So one of the Old Testament words for glory, I think it means like, I think the word is kabod.

But it means like, your glory is measured back to you in your weight. The weight of like what you possess and who you are. And so, like a king would have great glory.

He would have a huge kingdom, money, wealth, possessions, a large army, etc. He would have great glory. But a peasant would have very little glory. So your worth was measured back to you by your weight.

[3 : 38] And God is of an infinite weight. He owns all things. He's made all things. He possesses all things. And so we rightfully belong to him. So only when we see God as a sovereign, holy creator, can we see who we are and how ugly our sin is.

Which brings us to the gospel as a message about man. That God originally created man in his own image to reflect who he was, his holy character.

And to walk with him in a joyful, obedient relationship. But all men, all men have just utterly rebelled against God and decided to be lords of their own life.

And have sought to find fulfillment and whatever in a thousand other things other than God. And so we've rebelled against God. And we've kind of shaken our fist at him and told him that we're going

to live how we want to live.

Our lives are going to be about this and not about you. We've turned away from God and turned to the things of this world. And so in being aware that God is not just our creator but our judge, that brings like a serious thing into view.

[4 : 53] We've cosmically wronged God. And all men have fallen short of the glory of God, as it says in Romans 3.23. We've fallen short of what he's made, created us to do, designed us to do.

And in Romans 1, it says, Romans 1.18, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

And then later on, verse 24 in Romans 1, it says, God gave them up to the lusts of their hearts, to impurity and the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves. And here's that trade I'm talking about.

Verse 25, Because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator, who is blessed forever.

Amen. And that's what it is. It's idolatry. It's seeking to find your existence and your being in something other than God and rebelling against Him in that way.

[6 : 00] So that's who man is. Man has utterly rebelled against God. So I'm not going to go back over that. Swanson covered that well last week. So because of that now, that will be bad.

But it's kind of stopped right there. But now we get into the next part of this. And really there's just two main points tonight, and some sub-points under those.

So this is Christ, the Savior. This is the next part of the gospel message. So the good news is that God has not left us to ourselves and left us to His wrath and judgment, but He's actually made provision for us to be pardoned of our sin and to be reconciled back to Him in relationship with Him so that we can once again glorify Him and know Him as we were supposed to do originally.

And He did that in Christ. Lovingly, He sent Christ to die in our place as a substitute. And the word Christ, you know, like when I'm sharing the gospel with people, sometimes this is something that a friend of mine taught me, like particularly in the Bible Belt where a lot of you are going to claim to be Christians, and you want to be respectful, you can ask them something like, you know, so what does someone have to do to be right with God?

You know, what does someone have to do to... I'm mainly leaving heaven out of things because the gospel is not about heaven. The gospel is about God. It's not about hell either.

[7 : 32] It's about God. Those are parts of the gospel, but they're not the end. And so I just ask them, like, what does it take to be made right with God? And then I sometimes start jotting down what they say.

Like if they're like, oh, man, well, I've gone to church since I was a kid, and, you know, I was really active in my youth ministry in high school, and I start laying it on thick. I've been on some mission trips, et cetera.

And then I just kind of jot some of that stuff down, and then I kind of come around and do well. Well, it really is about, you know, faith and complete reliance in Christ to be saved by grace.

And, of course, they're like, oh, yeah, well, I know that. I'm like, well, that's not what you said. You know, like I wrote down exactly what you said to that, and that was your response, you know. So can you honestly tell me that was what the deal was?

There's always sometimes a little strange moment at that time when they're kind of like, wow, I just got exposed. But this is a good thing. And then you can just kind of come in and start to tell them about Christ.

[8 : 36] And so when they call themselves a Christian, they're saying they're a follower of the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Savior. And what did He come to save you from?

Your sin. Like it all starts just connecting. And like so you can't claim to be a follower of Christ if you don't actually believe Him to be the Messiah. Yeah, so these are some things I try to talk about with people in discussing who Christ is.

You could get into all this stuff. I mean, the doctrine of the person of Christ and the work of Christ and et cetera. But if you have to keep it down, just a few things to share with people.

Like I'm going to give you just a phrase and I'm going to unpack it just to kind of help. And you don't have to throw this phrase out to somebody you're sharing with. I'm telling you this because you're mostly believers here.

But a big word, okay? We're going to talk about how Christ was the substitute. And how we're going to unpack that is the penal substitutionary atonement.

[9 : 43] Okay? That's big words, but they're important. Penal, P-E-N-E-L, like penalty. And then substitutionary atonement. Okay?

So what Christ did was He was a substitute. And we're talking about penal substitution. It's the idea that we deserved something, a penalty, that was given to us rightfully.

But someone else voluntarily came in and took that penalty for us. That's what it means. And so Christ voluntarily took our place and bore the penalty that we deserve, which is the judgment and the wrath of God.

So that's where that first part comes in. Penal substitutionary. Another way of saying this is like Christ's atonement was vicarious.

He was, which means like a vicar is someone who stands in the place of someone else and represents them. So Christ was that for us. He stood in our place and He represented us.

[10 : 50] So His death was vicarious because He stood in our place and bore that penalty. All right? And turn to Isaiah 53 real fast.

I want you to see this. And this is a great text to go to people, go to with people, excuse me, to talk about how Christ was our substitute and His atonement was both penal and vicarious.

You can probably kill those words. I'm telling you, sometimes when you use big words, it'll help you remember things because it's different. Like sometimes I'll throw like a Latin phrase or something and it's not to sound smart.

It's to like, it's different. So you sometimes will remember. You're like, oh, that's that word that means, and it just stands out to you. So that's why we're doing that. Isaiah 53 and go to verse 4.

And this was a prophecy about Christ written around 700 years before Christ. Really cool. So think about that. Now, Christ is our substitute in these verses.

[12 : 00] All right? Surely He has bore our, there's the our, our griefs, and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, afflicted.

But He was wounded for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with His stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. So, us, again, He was oppressed and He was afflicted.

Yet He opened not His mouth like a lion that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before it shears is silent, so He opened not His mouth. Remember that, how Christ just stood there and took it?

Just didn't plead His case before Pilate or anybody. Then it says, By oppression and judgment He was taken away, and as for His generation who considered that He was cut off the land of living, stricken for the transgressions of my people.

[13 : 08] You know, so that's a picture of like, it was in our place, all these things He did on our behalf. He was, those words in that text, you've got the words smitten, you've got wounded, chastised, oppressed, afflicted, you know, and all that was on in our place.

And so, and another word that we're going to kind of look at is the atonement part. If you just want a simple, a lot over-complicating it, a simple definition of atonement, it just means like the work that Christ did in His life and His death to make us right with God, to right the offense that we've made with God.

And so, in 1 John 4, 8, it says, And this is the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son to the world, that we might live through Him.

And this is the love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. Okay? So when you're talking about, when you're sharing with somebody, that's a good verse to look at.

1 John 4, 8-10. But that word, it's a Bible word, so here we go. Propitiation. It kind of really sums up a lot of what the work of Christ did, what He did on the cross.

[14 : 32] And it means like for or in front of, literally, but it means like how, in our case, Christ, He bore the full wrath of God on the cross, and then that changed it, that changed God's attitude towards us.

And so, some of your translations, I don't know what translation you have, but some translations use the word like to appease or to placate or to, let's see, you know, those are not the best words to

use for a lot of different reasons, but propitiation does not mean to appease or to placate, because that would kind of suggest that like God can be kind of bought off and His wrath can be kind of sued, like, hey God, it's okay, you know, don't be so upset, calm down, you know, it's like, it's not a really good word to use, and it's inadequate.

And the NIV actually uses the word atoning sacrifice, which isn't bad, you know, but it's expressed in a way as someone who would turn aside the wrath of God, and that's not the best way either, because it means like, like, think about yourself, you know, you're standing here, and you're under the wrath of God, and God's wrath is coming straight towards you, and Christ stands in your place, like, and when that wrath comes, like, what this is kind of suggesting is that He like, deflected it, like, like in a boxing match, you know, like you, you kind of parry off the wrath of God, but what the word really can imply, and what it does mean, is like, exhausted, like, Christ exhausted the wrath of God, like He fully, it hit Him right on, and He absorbed it, you know, like He fully embraced the wrath of God, and not one ounce of wrath was left after He did that, and so, turn to Romans 5, go fast, Romans 5, and go to verse 6, so all of God's fury was unleashed on Christ, and He held nothing back, and even in the Garden of Gethsemane, where He prayed, you know, Father, if it's possible, let this cup pass from me, you know, and what He means by that is, in the Old Testament, God's wrath was referred to as like these cups of wrath that God would pour out on people, also in Revelation, so He knew that that cup was going to be the wrath of God, and so Romans 5, this is my, I probably go to this, like, at least half the time, when I'm like initially trying to share the gospel with somebody, I go to Romans 5, 6 through 11, so verse 6, for while we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly, okay, and just stop there, that's important, because, like, God doesn't help those who help themselves, that's not the gospel, that's medieval theology, and like it says, while we were weak, and while we were helpless, you know, like while we couldn't do anything to help ourselves, Christ died for the ungodly, and then it says, for one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person, someone might dare even to die, okay, and what, Paul is trying to make a case there, like, I kind of, I kind of try to describe this to people, I say, I tell them, I have three nieces, Addison, Ansley, and Ava, the oldest one's six now, and like, I, without hesitation, would give my wife or any of them, like, just, you know, if it was between them or me, I would like, gladly choose me any day, it'd be easy for me to die for them, but, if you place another decision before me, and said, hey, there's a guy here who, he's like a serial killer, and a child rapist, and he has no regret whatsoever, but, the only way he'll go free is if you die for him, and stand in his place, you might be more like, uh, you know, maybe not, maybe not, not that guy, he's had his chance, you start rationalizing everything, but what Paul is saying here is you are that guy, like we are that guy, and, that we didn't deserve, to be saved at all, we didn't have some kind of innocence, hanging over us, and, but this is what it says, and there in verse 8, but God shows his love for us, and that while we were still sinners,

[19 : 19] Christ died for us, see that, so that kind of shows you the, the magnitude, of like God's love, okay, and, remember, a lot of people are thinking in their minds, like, a lot of them are either thinking, God is like seriously wrathful, in judgment, and that's, and he's holy, and that's all I can think about, when I think of God, and other people would just see him, as the big grandpa in the sky, the nice loving God, that's just not ever going to do anything, to, to harm you, and, and so we have the love of God there, on the table, you see that, like, he shows his love for us, he died for us, and then the next verse, since therefore, we have now been justified, by his blood, much more shall I be saved, by him from the wrath of God, so I like to say that, I like to show them, like you see love, and you see wrath, like right by each other, like the love of God, and the wrath of God, side by side, and, and I tell them, that justified, like, like you're not, you don't have a right standing with God, until you have Christ, and only when you have Christ, you can be justified, made right, declared righteous, according to his blood, and so, then it goes on, it says, verse 10, for if we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his son, much more now, that we've been, we are reconciled, shall be saved by his life, more than that, we also rejoice in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom, we have now received reconciliation, reconciliation, so we are saved, by the death of Christ, and we've been brought back to God, been reconciled, you know, brought back to God, so, those are like the, a very simple, picture,

I guess, if we want to put it that way, what Christ has done, if you have to come across with, a message, this is who Christ is, this is what he's done, so, we know what you've, most of us have probably seen the movie, Passion of the Christ, but, Passion, at least biblically, in a positive way,

means, I think in Greek, it really just means like, the degree of difficulty, you're willing to go through, to accomplish a goal, to, like, it's the thing inside of you, that says that goal, or that, you know, thing, is worth anything, to get to, and I'm going to do it, that's like what Passion is, and it's not just like a, yeah, I'm passionate, you know, like, it's not like a, I'm passionate, it's like a, I'm willing to live, and die, to get that, that's what Passion is, and so, that's, so what was Christ's Passion, you know, well, one was, he wanted us to be restored, back into, the relationship, with the Father, so that we could glorify, the Father once again, you know, and, and that we'd be able, to walk in a manner, that reflects God's glory, once again, all the stuff that was lost, he was going to restore, and, and ultimately, we are the bride of Christ, so he died for us, his bride, to be brought back to her, that was his passion, so, in Romans, or Hebrews 12, for the joys that before him, he endured the cross, you know, that's what, that was the joy, that was before him, to see that happen, so, so summing that up, really fast, that's what, the, the Christ part, of the gospel message, like, at least needs to contain, you can go, and tell a lot more things, but, those are at least two scriptures, I like to look at, when I'm discussing with someone, so, which brings us to the next part of this, response, okay, the response, this is the other main, point here, response, and, and, I guess, under that, like, what do you mean by response, well, the gospel is not just a message, that you can just say, you know, that's, that's kind of cool, you know, like, it's, it's a message, that like, demands a response, like, it's, it calls you, to that, and that response, really should be, faith and repentance, that's what, what the response, kind of contains, inside it, is faith and repentance, um, people need to understand, like, like, this isn't a trivial decision, you make, like, a lot of churches, like, have reduced the gospel, to mere decisionism, like, write your name down, this card, walk this aisle, pray this prayer, you know, just decide to do it, you'd make the right decision, you know, go up there and do it, and, no,

I mean, that's not what it is, I'm not saying, if you've done that, then it wasn't real, I'm just saying, that's not, in and of itself, what response is, um, we don't have altar calls, here, at Christ's family, um, for a lot of reasons, but, but, we're talking about David Platt, earlier, I'll tell you a really funny story, just to kind of lighten the mood, for a second, before we get back into serious, but, I was in Birmingham, recently, and, for my surgery, that was the next morning, but I went to Brook Hills, that Sunday night, and, heard the Sunday sermon, um, and he actually was talking about, this kind of stuff, that was kind of cool, he was talking about, it was called threads, so it was like the main points, of the gospel, that, hit the head on us, I was like, I asked him, when I saw him later, I was like, David, did you like, know that we were doing that, on Thursday night, and that's why you're doing it here, too, he was like, no, but, um, but he told a funny story, about an altar call, that happened, but, he said when he was 10 years old, he was a, he was a believer then, he was 10 years old, and, um, he said that he went to a really old church, and, probably like, 9% of the congregation, were like really old people, he said, mostly kind of hard of hearing, and, and, and the pastor was also kind of old, and hard of hearing, and, and they said, you know, before you leave tonight, go up and say like, an encouraging word to somebody, and, you know, so that this music started playing, you know, and, and they, they had an altar call, and so the pastor, like, you know, did the number, where he kind of comes down here, and he's kind of looking for people to, come down the aisle, you know, just for, for, for whatever, and, uh, and David said,

I was sitting in the front row, and I just thought, you know, like, I really love the pastor, the pastor really encourages me, and I want to just go, and just say an encouraging word to him, I just want to encourage the pastor, so, he, he walks up to the pastor, he's like, you know, pastor, I, I'm really grateful for all you've done for this church, and, you know, you've really had a big impact on my life, and, and he said the pastor really couldn't hear that good, and he was like, what did you say, and, uh, he said, I'm just, I love you, and, you know, I'm grateful for all you've done, and how you've impacted my life, and he said, you want to rededicate your life, and he said, yes, sir, and, uh, and so he, uh, then after it was over, you know, he like called the music, but he's like, young David has come up here to rededicate his life to the Lord, and he said his parents came up there with him, and his mom was crying, and he was just like, oh, you know, it's kind of, um, I just didn't know what to do, I didn't want to like let him down, so, um, but, but those kind of things encourage a lot of faults, a lot of people have a lot of faults hoping that,

[26 : 45] I did that, so I'm good, but, but then the present day, ten years later, they're living like total heathens, and they have no evidence at all that Christ has touched them, so their salvation is based on a past experience, and that's not what faith and repentance is at all, and so, um, when you're talking to someone, they need to know that like presently, their soul is hanging in the

balance, you know, like, like, that there's a holy living God that they have to reckon with, like, there's not a choice, and, and, they need to know that like, God's not waiting for them, you know, he doesn't consider them neutral, like, huh, their answer to God is no, until it becomes yes, and, that if they're not with him, they're against him, and, that to remain, we just read it in Romans, though we were enemies of God, right, and we were, so they need to understand that, apart from Christ, and apart from faith and repentance in Christ, they're an enemy of God, there's like, hostility there, and, that they have to repent of their sins, surrender to Christ, and so, and like telling them, you will exist, forever, like me and you, we're going to exist forever, and we're either going to exist, as friends of God, on his terms, or enemies on your terms, you know, like, this is called, you have to make a decision, this isn't like a, a neutral thing, like, guys are like, okay, well cool, just get back to me, you know, like, just RSVP whenever you feel like it, no, like, there's, this like demands something, it should keep people awake at night, until they've come to, to grips with what's going on, so, um, turn to Mark real fast,

Mark one, Mark is that gospel, that kind of comes right out, and tells you who Jesus is, and what he's about, as were Luke, and some other ones, you're kind of like, learning about who Jesus is, you don't really know, until like later on, if you were just reading it, for the first time, but, there's no joking around in Mark, it comes right out, and says it, Mark one, and go to verse 14, Mark one, and go to verse 14, it says, now after John was arrested, John the Baptist, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent, and believe in the gospel, alright, so, out of the mouth of Jesus there, so, so, we see two things, repent, believe, you know, so, we'll look at those two words, for a second, this is, this is really key, to the response, you know, in the gospel, but, when we talk about believing, we're not talking about, how children believe, in Santa Claus, and the Easter Bunny, and, you know, mystics believe, in the power of crystals, and rocks, and Christians, they just believe in Jesus, it's not like the same, kind of thing at all, like, to believe is to have faith, and faith isn't like, faith is not believing, excuse me, it's not, trying to prove something, faith is like a strong reliance, it's like rock solid, and truth grounded, trust in Christ, to save us, that's what it is, it's like a, it's like this unwavering trust, full reliance upon Christ, to save us, it's what, faith really is, biblically, and your faith doesn't save you,

Christ saves you, but your faith is what links you, to Christ, so, to throw yourself, you know, on him, and say, hey, I need you, and it's being fully convinced, that Christ is able to deliver you, from your sin, and, so, a lot of people need to know that, and, and then the repentance part, like, I mean, I know if I ask you, what does repentance mean, a lot of people, I mean, you could have a lot of different answers, to that probably, but at least in the context, of the gospel message, repentance really means, it's like, forsaking your sinful ways, and thoughts, and turning towards God, and it's not just, turning away from something, it's turning to something, and, it's, it's, you come believing, recognizing your sin, and your rebellion towards God, and desiring to have forgiveness from God, and deliverance from his wrath, and you throw yourself completely, at his mercy, and say, you know, I can't, I can't do this,

I know I'm, I'm under the waterfall, of your wrath right now, and I need help, to turn away from my sin, and, and to say, you know, I believe that Christ, is my substitute, that he died, in my place, and, and through him, I can like know, know you, once again, you know, God, and, so, that's kind of what repentance is, to some degree, they have to understand, that it's not just, you know, check, I'm a Christian now, and then you just continue walking, and then you just continue walking, in that sinful way, all the time, with no remorse, or, brokenness about it at all, but, to repent and believe, to turn, from your sin, and from self-worship, and turn to God, you know, that's what it is, and so, also underneath response, we're going to talk about two realities, okay, and, and usually, most people are tracking, you know, with me pretty well, until I get to this time, you know, you know, I don't have like a, a technique, or a method, that I try to follow, but, I do have kind of like a, a flow, which I try to talk to people, I try to talk to them, you know, just about the gospel, of, of, of God, and a man, and Christ, and then, I let them chew on that, for a while, and maybe the next week, kind of ask them where they are with that, and if they have questions, but then it gets to, like eventually, it comes to this, and sometimes this is where, you know, this is like the fork in the road, kind of thing, but, there's two existing realities, in the scripture, when it comes to response, both are there, and both you need to emphasize, one is, that Christ demands, that you weigh the cost, of following him, like you must think about this, and the other one is, there's urgency, that we have to respond, right,

so, weighing the cost, urgency, you know, all right, so, the first one, weighing the cost, turn to Luke 14, real fast,

[33 : 46] Luke 14, this is a, a classic text, that kind of contains, these, these truths in it, you know, and walk them, walk them through this, you know, okay, I'm sorry, I should have told you, where to turn, in Luke 14, but yeah, go to verse 25, and, and in this place, in Luke, Christ is on his final journey, toward Jerusalem, it says that he turned his eyes, towards Jerusalem, and he, he's going there, to be, you know, betrayed, arrested, and crucified, so, um, he's being followed, by some crowds, that are somewhat, kind of flirting, with Jesus, they're kind of like, intrigued by him, and, you know, what do we do, when we get a big crowd, we do anything we can, to get them to stay, you know, and like, make them happy, and tell them what they want, to hear, but Jesus would just, when stuff kind of got like this, he would kind of look at them, and just like, say something, that would like, make them leave, or make them stay, you know, like it would just be, again, just kind of like a fork in the road, and, um, so he turns around, this is what he says, well, uh, context, verse 25, now great crowds, accompanied them, and he turned, and said to them, if anyone comes, to me, and does not hate, his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, and yes, even his own life, he cannot be, my disciple, wow, okay, and, then it says, whoever does not bear, his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple, for which of you, desiring, to build a tower, does not first sit down, and count the cost, whether he has enough, to complete it, otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it, will begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build, and was not able to finish, or what king, going out to encounter, another king in war, will not sit down first, and deliberate, whether, he is able, with 10,000, to meet him, who comes against him, with 20,000, and if not, while the other, is still a great way off, he sends a delegation, and asks them, for terms of peace, all right, so then he brings it back, so therefore, any one of you, who does not renounce, all he has, cannot be my disciple, man, like, again, like, most people are like, okay, well, we're done with that, and they go home, so,

I bet, I've had this question before, when I read this one time, to some guy, he said, well, it sounds like, we have to do something then, like, it sounds like, we have to like, do some kind of work, to be saved, and you just told me, that salvation is free, you know, it's a free, I'm like, good question, I have an answer, but, what, what Christ understands, okay, why he can say this, is like, if these people, really believe, who he says he is, and what he says, he will do, they will have no problem, like, giving up those things, like, they'll be like, oh, I don't care, like, whatever it takes, I want you, and so all it really does, is kind of expose those people, who don't really believe that, because they're not willing, to die for that, they think it's cool, but they're not willing, they don't believe it enough, to die for it, while the other people are like, that sounds awful, but, and I don't want, to like, lose anybody in my life, but, I'm willing to, if it means I can get you, you know, because this life is short, and, eternity is a long time, and now,

I want to be with God, in eternity, you know, so whatever it takes, I believe you're worth it, it's like, Jesus is like, testing them in a way, like, he just knew, that if they really did believe, who he says he was, then they wouldn't care, like, what it costs, so, but in this text, you see, kind of, kind of two things, or three, but, you see that, Christ demands that, you love him, more important than your family, you know, this is just like the people, you care about, this could be any kind of relationship, but he throws family in there, because it's usually the closest, relationships we have, it can mean a boyfriend, or a girlfriend, whatever, friends in general, but it says, he demands that we have a superior love, to all our earthly relationships, and, let me clear that up, where it says hate, there, it doesn't mean like, man, I hate my dad, or man, I hate my mom, it's not what it means, it, it really just kind of implies, like, like, to love less than, but the way he's kind of using it, it kind of means like, the love that you should have for me, compared to the love that you should have for others, should be so great, that your love for them looks like hate, compared to the love you have for me, and so, that's kind of what he means by that, and we know that only loving Christ first, we can love other people too, so, so it's not a wrong, a wrong thing, so, in Matthew 10, there's a parallel to this text, and he says,

I've not come to bring peace, but the sword, and what he means is like, if Christ, I tell people like, if Christ's presence in your life, you need to know, that that can cause division, like, you can lose friends, you can lose family, you can, a lot, you can suffer a lot of loss, because of this, you understand, and I kind of tell them, like, in this context, and in other places in the world, even today, and then, like, this is, this is true, I said, you're probably, you know, not going to be killed, and in

prison for the gospel, here in the U.S. at least, but I can, I have friends that are scattered abroad, that have been in prison, for following Christ, and in this context, it meant losing everything, and, my friend, some of you, some of you guys met him, up in Hiawasi, also from Kyrgyzstan, he, he's been in prison, for the gospel before, a few times, he never would come out, and tell you that, but, but, he tells people this, he says, like, you know, when you become a Christian, in Asia, like, first of all, like, your family kicks you out, of the house, like, they kind of, like, don't want anything to do, with you anymore, and this would have been, the same case, in this Jewish context, they want, they don't want anything, to do with you anymore, secondly, you're probably ostracized, by your community, they're like, we just don't, you know, don't come into my store, don't like, I don't want you to work, anywhere here, and then he said, thirdly, the government will either, tell you, you're not allowed to work, and work within their nation, while you're a Christian, or they'll imprison you, or they'll kill you, and he said, and if you do all those things, and you're still trusting in Christ, we know you're a true Christian, that's like what he said, you know, so like, so Christ understood, like, this is what it's gonna, this could mean death, that's why he brings out the cross in this, you know, he says like, take up your cross, and that leads us to, so we got like relationships there, but then he says yourself, like you gotta love him more than yourself, you know, like Christ's love should be superior to ourselves, even our own lives, and then Luke 9, 23 says, if anyone comes after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me, and so, taking up your cross, in that context, would have meant, come and die, come and die with me, like, that's what it would mean, it would mean like, as Christ is carrying his cross, you're gonna be right behind him, that's like, what it kind of implies, like, you have to be willing to die, for this, and, so, and when he says, deny yourself, what that means, is like to refuse to associate with, simply, it means don't, don't associate with this, and, it means like, a willingness to follow him, to serve one another, and to keep his commandments, you know, and,

[42 : 30] I'll try to paraphrase it, he's like saying, if you knew, that following me, would cost you your life, would you still come anyway, are you that desperate, do you, do you understand your sin, that much, you know, you might not die, but, if it costs you that, would you still do it, do you see your sin, and you see my, my grace, that much, you see, you see what he's doing, he's like, he's calling them to, to take up the cross, and to die, so, it's a call, to a living savior, and then finally, in that last part, in, in Luke, that we read, he kind of like, sums it up there, in verse 23, if one of you, that does not renounce, all he has, he cannot be my disciple, so, in case I've missed everything, renounce all you have, so, you're like, okay, I can renounce that, and now, he's like, well, how about everything, and he kind of like, kind of sums it up, with that, you have to be willing, to renounce everything, so, you know, with the left, no stone or in turn, he kind of throws that in there, and you get that picture, of weighing the cost, he like talks about the tower, and he talks about, the king going to war, think about this, you know, like I, don't be in a hurry,

I told somebody, this one time, they're like, what, that's so wrong, and then I had to, explain what I meant, but I say that, I try to talk people, out of becoming a Christian, after like I've told them, what the gospel is, and I can do that, because God is sovereign, and salvation, and if God really, is working in them, I can't change their minds, about it, like I can't, I can't say, they're not going to be like, well, I don't want that anymore, like they're like, I don't care, I want, I want Christ, so, he kind of, that's important, to understand, that they need to think about it, you need to tell them, don't enter to this decision hastily, think about it, okay, and so this next part though, urgency, is the next part of that, because they can't, weigh the cost for 20 years, you know, so, I'll give you an example, I try to, I give to people, I'm sharing, I tell them like, five years ago, I had a lung transplant, okay, and the doctors at UAB, told me, like, we can do this surgery, but you need to know, this surgery has, a lot of risks, you can have a lot of side effects, you know, like this isn't a perfect science, it's like a lot of things can go wrong, and so you need to think about this, you don't need to jump into this, this surgery really quickly, you need to go home, and talk about it with, your family, and your friends, and, you know, whatever, you need to think about it, it's a big deal, you know, it's going to take a lot of time, and there's risks, but then he also threw in there, he said, but you need to also understand, that your lung function, is not great, and it's declining, you know, almost every other month, it's getting worse, so you don't have like forever, to kind of put this off, you need to, come to the decision, so you see that idea of like, how both of those are pressing in, and, so, we get into this idea of urgency, flip this second Corinthians, real fast, verse six, or chapter six, sorry, second Corinthians chapter six, and, this is Paul, and he says, working together with him, then we appeal to

you, not to receive, the grace of God in vain, right, so we're pleading with these people, it says, for he says, in a favorable time,

I listened to you, and in a day of salvation, I have helped you, and behold, now is the favorable time, behold, now is the day of salvation, and, so, like, right now, we're living in, like a season of grace, okay, like God's wrath has not come yet, fully, if you're alive and breathing, you're being shown mercy, right now, without Christ, and, like, that's what God's saying here, he quotes out of the Old Testament, like in this favorable time, I listened to you, like you had, this window of time, to come to me, and repent of your sin, you know, and, but then he says, now is the favorable time, behold, now is the day of salvation, like, don't put this off, there's an allotted time, but then when, like the gates shut, it shut, there's not like another, you know, time when God's going to open it up, and, they need to come to Christ, for forgiveness and restoration, and, and,

I'll read this to you real fast, you don't, have to turn there, but Isaiah 55, you can write it down, Isaiah 55, verse 6, this is another text, that I use, it says, seek the Lord, while he may be found, call upon him, while he is near, let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon, all right, and, that's another verse, just saying, come on, like, seek the Lord, while he's near, and, I have a quote, by Charles Spurgeon here, I liked a lot, he says, if you were sick, would you send, for your physician tomorrow, if your house were on fire, would you call fire tomorrow, no, but a man is foolish, in these things, that concern his soul, unless divine, infinite love, shall teach him, to number his days, he will still, he will go on, boasting of tomorrows, until his soul, has been destroyed by them, remember, that if you have missed Christ, by just a ticking of a clock, you have missed him forever, you know, like, like, it's urgent, like, take care of this, you need to, so, remember, both of those things, weighing the cost, and urgency, should be stressed to them, and if you're taking notes,

Proverbs 1, verse 24, through 33, is another time, another text to look at, where, it's kind of like saying, like, hey, I called you, and you didn't listen, I did this, and you didn't listen, I did this, and you didn't listen, so, but, if you do turn to me, there will be life, you know, kind of, kind of idea, so, that's what, the content, of the gospel message, should be, God, man, Christ, response, and, those all need to be covered, you know, with, with someone, and some, to some degree, they have to have some understanding, of these things, and, and let's just praise God, that most of us here, have believed this, if you haven't, I hope that this has helped you, and you'll come to, talk to someone, who came with you tonight, or come and talk to me, or Swanson, or Alex, Ashley, because, this is, this is the only news, that will save your soul, there is no other, there's no, there's salvation, no other name, it says, in Acts, other than Christ, and,

[50 : 28] Christ is worth it, anything it takes, you know, if you lose your life, so be it, if you lose, all your possessions, so be it, like it's, he's worth it, he's that treasured, there's a place in Mark, where, where the disciples told him, like hey, we left everything, to follow you Jesus, and he says, really, have you really left everything, to follow me, and he goes, I tell you, that if you, are following me now, like your reward, will be, he's like, no one has left, father, mother, home, for me, who will not receive, you know, a hundred times more, in the life to come, like saying that, whatever you think, you've sacrificed, I'm going to be so great, that in the end of the day, you won't be able to speak, of sacrificing anything, to follow me, because it'll be that awesome, you won't, you won't say, it'll be like trading 10, so you can get gold, you know, like it's not, you can't really say, that's like a sacrifice, but, so Christ is worth it, and so we're going to just, respond with some seeing, right now, and, in the next week, we're going to talk about, like living the gospel, like how our lifestyle, should kind of reflect that, and how we can bring people, into our lives, to show them Christ, so,

Alex and Ashley, you can come on up, Father, we just want to stop, and, and praise you, because this isn't just news, it's, it's glorious news, it's news that, meets our greatest need, brings us to the greatest treasure, in Christ, and so, Father, we love you, and give you praise, thank you for the gospel message, help us, Lord, to, remember the depths, that you pulled us out of, and, to, be broken enough, to go out, and love other people, and, to lay down our lives, for other people, to know Christ, and, so Lord, we praise you, in Christ's name, Amen.