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God's Plan to Reach the World

August 30, 2026
Series: Sovereign
Romans 10:5-15

**BIG IDEA – WHY TELLING OTHERS ABOUT JESUS MATTERS AND
WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN AND EVERY LOCAL
CHURCH TO TAKE PART IN GOD'S MISSION**

Two Cities Church, we love our missionaries. You just saw a bunch of missionaries who, by the grace of God, because of your generosity, we've been able to send out from our own church. Now, here's the thing. We use the word *missionary* in a lot of different ways today. At one level, it is true that everybody here and at all of our campuses... Every Christian is a missionary, because you're supposed to live sent where you live, learn, work, and play. You're always supposed to live like a missionary.

Charles Spurgeon said every person is either a missionary or an impostor. You can think about yourself. You are either a missionary or a mission field. At the same time, there is something special about the cross-cultural missionary, those who learn a language, cross an ocean, and say goodbye to family and friends. We're going to honor them today, particularly because it's Send Sunday.

Let me tell you why we're doing this. The Bible does not necessitate a special day you set aside to call *Send Sunday*. We're doing Send Sunday in the middle of Multiply Month (partly because we love alliteration) because it shows up in Romans, chapter 10. So, here's what I want you to know if you're a Christian, if you've been with us for a long time, or maybe you just stumbled into one of our campuses: *global spiritual lostness is the greatest problem on earth.*

I mean, your life is full of problems, that's for sure. You'll spend the rest of your life solving a lot of problems, but I'm telling you, there is no greater problem, according to God and his Word, than global spiritual lostness. I'm not saying these *aren't*

problems, but the greatest problem is not the economy. The greatest problem is not lack of health care or lack of education. The greatest problem is not the environment. The greatest problem is not wars going on.

It's the problem underneath all of the other problems, which we're going to talk about today. It's such a big problem. It's going to blow some of your minds. The problem is global spiritual lostness. Here's what I want you to know: it's the greatest problem, and it's the problem given to the local church to solve. If you haven't noticed, nobody else cares about this problem. *Nobody.*

Like, people might look at the Middle East, and they think it has a lot of problems. They're not worried about spiritual lostness. They may look at China as an economic competitor, but they're not thinking about the spiritual lostness of China. Or they may think about India, and they think about an untapped economy for Amazon. That's not what we think about. The greatest problem is spiritual lostness.

Here's what I'm going to do. I'm just going to tell you now. In about 42 minutes, I'm going to invite you to help us solve this problem. That's, by the way, what we just call being a Christian. I'm going to call a bunch of us today to move from being spectators and being on the sidelines to being participants and being on the front lines. It's a big deal.

So, I'm going to read to us Romans 10:5-15, and I'm going to do something... I never do this, but in light of how serious what we're talking about today is, I want to call everyone to attention. So, would you please stand across all of our campuses? We're going to read Romans 10:5-15. Stand if you can. Here we go. This is going to be great.

"For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. But the righteousness based on faith says, 'Do not say in 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." The same guy who wrote Romans 9 wrote this.

"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 on the name of the Lord will be saved.'" Then Paul gives us a strategy to solve this problem.

"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? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 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!'"

Let's pray.

Lord, across our campuses, I pray you would get us ready. Part of it is we are so overwhelmed with our own lives that our souls have shrunk to the problems in our kids' classrooms or the problems at work. And they're real problems. Or even more serious problems, the problems of health.

Lord, would you open up our eyes to do the work that...? Only the Holy Spirit can open up our eyes to care about something the physical eyes can't see, which is spiritual lostness. We can see the effects of it, Lord, but would you give us a heart, Lord? Would you give us a heart for people all over the world who have no access to the gospel?

They have nowhere to go to hear the gospel if they wanted to. They have no Bible to read in their language. Would you, first and foremost, break our hearts for that, make us care about that, and then show us the strategy, the divine design and strategy, you have to solve it? We pray this in Christ's name, amen.

Have you ever heard of the bystander effect? I like sociological and psychological ideas. The bystander effect is a sociological phenomenon that has been as proven as anything else. Here's the bystander effect. We're going to do a little technical thinking before we get to the text again. Let me just tell you what the bystander effect is. It's the whole idea that the more people there are when there's an emergency, the less likely anyone will do anything about it.

There was a famous story a long time ago. People tried to refute it. It's about this lady who was stabbed. Basically, you find out at the end of the day, 38 people saw it. Some people said no one called. Some people said two called. At best, 36 people saw it and did not call. Why? Because they thought someone else was going to call.

Underneath the bystander effect... I'm telling you this because this is our problem with mission. The bystander effect says, "There are so many people; somebody else will do it." That's called the *diffusion of responsibility*. Then there's another part. You can break down the bystander effect. Like, why does it happen? There's the diffusion of responsibility. "I don't need to take care of this because there are so many people. Someone will take care of this."

Then there's what's called *pluralistic ignorance*. I know; another big phrase. It basically means, "If nobody else is worried about this, I don't need to be worried about this." So, they've done the bystander effect where they said, "Hey, we want you to be part of a study." They brought these people in and told the people, "Here's what you're doing for the study. You're filling out this survey." Well, that's not really why they were there.

While they were in the room, they filled the room with smoke from a vent. It was harmless, but it looked like it might not be harmless. Here's what they said. If the person was by themselves, almost all the time they left the room and told somebody, but if they would place five or six or seven people in the room, and those people (they were part of the props) acted like they didn't care about the smoke, guess what? The person almost never got up and reported it.

We live in a time where the Great Commission, which ends every gospel... "As the Father has sent me, so I send you. Go into all the world and preach the gospel. Make disciples of all nations." Guys, if we could just be honest (and I know we're in church, and it's hard to be honest in church), for most of us, the Great Commission has become the "Great Omission." It has become the "Great Suggestion."

It has become what we hope a few people from our church who are really committed will take seriously. Well, today, I'm going to show you Paul tells us four truths to motivate mission. I'm going to take a really short time on the first one, and then we're going to drill down into the next three. So, these four things... They're like a logical argument.

Here's the first thing Paul wants you to know: *you cannot save yourself*. Nobody can save themselves. Now, I'm not going to talk about this for long, even though it's super important. The whole reason I'm not going to talk about it for a long time is because Paul talks about it for a long time in Romans 1-3.

I'm ready to preach a Send Sunday, and I read this, and I'm like, "Paul is talking about how the law can't save us again." I'm like, "He's always repeating himself." So, I guess if he repeats himself, I should repeat myself. Basically, I'm only repeating what Paul decided, underneath the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was important enough to repeat.

So, let's just read it quickly. Here's what he says. Verse 5: **"For Moses..."** You know who that is. He wrote this book called *Deuteronomy*. Paul is referring to Deuteronomy 30. **"...writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them."** He's like, "Hey, Moses wrote this whole idea about the righteousness that comes from the law."

Basically, Paul is like, "Listen. The problem is you can't obey the law." We talked about that. "You can't do enough good works, and you can't do enough religious activity." Look at what he says here. **"But the righteousness based on faith says, 'Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'"** So, don't have ladder theology. "Yeah, somehow, I'm going to be able to climb my way to God."

He goes, **"...(that is, to bring Christ down)..."** In other words, you don't need to bring Christ down. You *can't* bring Christ down. Christ came down voluntarily. You don't get to go to him; he comes to you. That's what he's saying. Then he says, if that's not clear enough, **"'...or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)."**

Basically, Paul goes... You know this. You know this with some of your coworkers or your classmates. With some of you at our campuses and here, the hard thing is not getting you saved; the hard thing is getting you lost, because you have to basically tell people, "Listen. You can't be a good enough person. You can't be religiously good enough. You can't go to church enough. You can't pray enough. You can't read your Bible enough to earn God's salvation."

Then you have to go over to the world and be like, "You can't be a good enough person. I don't care how much organic food you eat. I know you use a reusable water bottle, and you ride your bike, and you voted for the right candidate. You're still not a good enough person."

Listen. This is really important to know. There's nothing you can do to be good enough, and then the other thing Paul says is there's nothing you can do to feel bad enough that God is going to do something about it. In other words, you can't punish yourself enough. You can't cry enough. You can't make up for your... Here's what people think all the time: "I can make up for my past with more good deeds in my present and future."

Just so you know, every time I meet somebody on the golf course, I have to introduce myself that I'm a pastor, and then they do the same thing. They apologize for swearing or warn me that they will swear. They tell me about the one religious person in their life. Then, not always, but a lot of guys will tell me basically this.

I think this is a North Carolina story. It may be a South Carolina story, too, a Southeast story. It's, "Man, I used to live a crazy life, but then I met this Southern girl. Basically, she really has rehabilitated me. You know what I mean? She's really got me on the right path." I'm like, "That's not a testimony. That's a dysfunctional marriage or something like that. It's not a testimony."

So, here's what he says. Look at verse 8. This is the key. This is what I want to focus on. ***"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)..."*** In verse 8, you can see your mouth and your heart are talked about. Then, if you go to verse 9, your mouth and your heart are talked about. Then, if you go to verse 10, your mouth and your heart are talked about.

What's repeated is important. So, I'm thinking to myself this week, "Why is Paul talking about our mouth and our heart?" Because Jesus says they're connected, that whatever is in your heart will come out of your mouth. "Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks." Here's what I want you to know. He's saying the Word is so near that when you believe, the Word of God and Christ come into your heart and then come out of your mouth.

Now, I thought about this. Think about this with me for a second. What if you tried to divide them? Let's play this game for a minute. What if Christ is in our mouth, but Christ is not in our heart? You're like, "Does the Bible talk about that?" It actually does. Unbelievably so. Jesus quotes from the Old Testament. "These people praise me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."

Think about it this way. If he's in your mouth, but not in your heart, you're a hypocrite. Nobody wants to be a hypocrite. No one wants to say, "I'm a hypocrite." The harder thing is... I worry about this, because if you grew up with our kids' ministry and our student ministry in a great Christian family, you're going to know the right answer to everything. You're going to know all the Christianese.

You're going to be able to say you're struggling with sin when you're not. You're going to be able to say you're praying about something when you're only thinking about it. But what's interesting is I looked through the whole Bible, and I could not find one instance of it talking about Christ being in our heart and not in our mouth.

If I want to be generous (and we want to be as generous and gracious as possible), we might say there could be a season in a real Christian's life where Christ is in the heart and not on the mouth. That person would not be a hypocrite; they would be hiding. Then you think, "Well, what hinders mission?" Hypocrisy and hiding.

How many people go, "You know what? I could never believe because of my dad" or "my mom" or "my coworker" or "that family in my neighborhood" or "that Christian family at my school," or whatever it is. It's the hypocrisy that hinders the mission, and then it's the hiding. We don't ever bring out of our mouths what's in our hearts.

Basically, Paul just wants to go at first, "Listen, guys. You can't save yourself." He's like, "This is so old. Moses wrote about it. Don't try to bring Christ down. He already

came down." Then he says, "Let me now tell you how anyone can be saved." Look. This is what he says, and this may be the most famous and well-known part of Romans 10.

"...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." There's the mouth and the heart again. Then look at verse 10. He's like, "Let me explain why this is." ***"For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."***

So, he tells us how faith works. Faith is when we entrust ourselves to the person and work of Christ. You can think about it two ways. He goes, "Okay, there are two things you need: a heart and a mouth; and there are two things you need to know: the person of Christ and the work of Christ."

Let's talk about the person of Christ first. He basically takes the entire... This is not easy to do. He takes the entire Christian belief confession, and he summarizes and simplifies it down to three words: "Jesus is Lord." That is the easiest thing in the world to say and the hardest thing in the world to mean. "Jesus is Lord." Think about it this way.

First of all, it's a *cosmic* claim. Anytime you hear someone say, "Jesus is Lord," they're not saying he's a tribal deity over the Triad. It's like, "No, Jesus is Lord over every particle." Think about it this way. This gives you a big view of God. If we could shrink the galaxy so it could scale and fit in this room...just our galaxy...you couldn't find earth. It's very humbling. It would be smaller than a speck of dust. You could look for days, and you couldn't find earth if the galaxy was the size of this room.

So, I know what people mean. Every once in a while, someone says something like, "I made Jesus the Lord of my life when I was 18 years old." I don't correct people, because I do have social skills and manners and somewhat self-awareness, and all that kind of stuff, but the correct way to say it would be, "I recognized the lordship of Jesus Christ when I was 18," or 15, or whatever.

So, I want you to know, every time this statement is said, whether you realize it or not, it's a cosmic claim and it's a *political* claim. If that makes you uncomfortable, you can at least say it this way: it's a claim with political implications. If *you* don't know that, North Korea knows that. Every totalitarian dictator government ever has known that.

Caesar knew that, because when Jesus was walking around and when Paul was writing this, guess what it said on all of the Roman coins? "Caesar is Lord." So, I wonder if Caesar would think it was interesting if people started to say, "Jesus is

Lord." Interesting. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (who was a complex character, but one of my heroes) was against Hitler in the 1930s when nobody was.

He said the problem in Germany in the 1930s was German Christians and German churches tried to say, "Jesus is Lord of my heart, and Hitler is lord of the nation." How many Christians try to do...? It's not *that*. We wouldn't do *that*. We do "Jesus is Lord of my heart, and I am lord of my sexuality. Jesus is Lord of my heart, and I am lord of my finances. Jesus is Lord of my heart, and I am lord over my kid's future."

That leads to the third one: it's a *personal* claim. So, you can think about it. Every time someone says it, they're making a cosmic claim, a political claim, and a personal claim at the same time, even if they don't know it. The personal claim is "I'm no longer in charge." This is why you can't... You can say it, but it's an oxymoron. You can't say, "No, Lord."

Jesus is Lord, not consultant. We live in this time where everybody wants to be a consultant. Consultants can make a ton of money. Consultants are all of these young guys, MIT grads, and everything else. You bring them in, and they think they're smart and all this.

Basically, here's what a consultant does. You pay them an enormous amount of money because they're an expert in an area, and you get their advice, and then you decide afterward whether or not you're going to do it. Jesus is not interested in being your life coach and your consultant.

By the way, let me encourage you. "Jesus is Lord" is actually a really freeing statement. I wonder if some of the issues of anxiety and depression are issues of you trying to be lord. The pressure is off. The results belong to Jesus. When you say he's Lord, here's what you're saying: responsibility ultimately flows to him.

So, we're told, "Jesus is Lord." That's a big statement. Then we're supposed to confess that with our mouth, and then believe in our heart God raised him from the dead. Really quickly, at the center of our faith is not just the *person* of Christ; it's the *work* of Christ. You can't untangle them, but it's the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Here's what's important. When a person becomes a believer, they understand that what Jesus did 2,000 years ago counted for them.

I've told you this. I grew up as a casual Catholic. When you're a casual Catholic... Maybe it's like being a casual Protestant. You just go to church a little bit, and less as you get older because you have sports, and then you go to college and don't go to church anymore. When you're Catholic, they don't have a cross; they have a crucifix. The difference between a cross and a crucifix is that Jesus is still on the crucifix.

It has been interesting for me to go back to 14-year-old me and be like, "I went to church probably once a month and saw an image that's the center of Christianity and didn't understand it." It wasn't until I was in tenth grade that someone said, "Wait. Not just Jesus lived a sinless life; he lived a sinless life because you needed a perfect record."

"And not just Jesus died for sinners." I'd heard *that*. "But Jesus died for *you* to pay the punishment for *your* sin. God wants to have a relationship with you." That's when Christianity became personal. He's saying you realize, "Jesus is Lord, and Jesus lived, died, and rose on my behalf, and if I transfer trust to him and give him my best and my worst, my sin and myself, I can be saved."

If you think about it, so far, the first three parts of this message are really great, which are, "You can't save yourself, but don't worry about it, because Jesus will save you." Being a Christian is hard, but becoming a Christian is fairly simple. It's not easy, but it's simple. I confess and I believe. So, you go, "Well, this is a great message." Then he says, "And it gets even better: anybody can believe."

So, the first three things he says are really good. You're like, "Okay." Look at what he says next. He says, "Guys, anyone can believe." Verse 11: ***"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 on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"***

Christianity is, at the same time, the most *inclusive* religion in the world and the most *exclusive* religion in the world. If you say it's the most *inclusive* religion in the world, everyone is encouraged. You're like, "Look. No matter where you live, no matter what you've done, no matter what has been done to you, no matter what your parents believe, no matter what you grew up believing, no matter your race or your ethnicity or your culture, anybody anywhere can believe in Jesus."

That's encouraging because, by the way, in every other world religion (you can look this up), 80 percent of the people who believe that world religion live in one location. There are so many other requirements of what you have to have to believe that it only happens in that one location.

The part people don't like is the *exclusivity* of Christ. The exclusivity of Christ says that every person everywhere can be saved, but they must have conscious saving faith in the person and work of Christ; that there is one name under salvation by which you can be saved, Jesus Christ; that Jesus himself said, "I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the life."

So, here's where the text and the message turn. Up until right now, it has all been good news. It's like, "Listen. You can't save yourself. Stop trying. The Word is near. Just repent and believe, and anyone can." This is where we're going to go deep together for a little bit. He goes, "The Word is near." Here's the problem: most people haven't heard the Word.

Let me show you a picture. You may have seen this before. We're going to learn something new together. This is the 10/40 Window. The 10/40 Window is where basically all of the global missions work is left to be done. It's where all of the spiritual lostness is. Now, if you look at that window, none of you are looking to go on fall break or spring break there. Right? These are not cool areas that are on your trip bucket list, for most of you.

Here's why. Unreached people are unreached for a reason. Let me say that again. Unreached people are unreached for a reason. I had a buddy who lived in northern India, and I talked to him. I said, "Northern India? Man, it's so hot there." I said, "If you don't mind me asking, did you have air conditioning when you...?" He was there for seven years in northern India as a missionary.

I asked, "Did you have air conditioning?" He said, "Oh, yeah, we had air conditioning." I said, "Oh, that's great." He said, "The problem was most times the electricity didn't work." These are really, really, really hard places to live, and a lot of the unreached people don't want us coming to them, especially not their political leaders. They do not want us coming.

So, you have to ask this question. We're going to think about something for a minute that basically no one wants to think about. Like, you want to think about which lunch place you're going to. You have enough problems of your own, and your life is hard enough as it is, and I get it. But basically, 43 percent of people in the world live in a place where there is no access to the gospel. I want to explain that to you for a second.

There's a difference between being lost and being unreached. Anybody who doesn't know Christ is lost. By the way, that's not a negative indictment on them. Do you know why we call them *lost*? Because they're far from home. Because they need to come home. They're lost.

See, in Winston, in Davie, in Lexington, at Butner...it doesn't even matter...in San Francisco... Think about the area where you're like, "That's the darkest area ever"...Portland. You just choose it. Guess what? People there are lost, but they're not unreached. Why? Because if they wanted to hear about the gospel, they could. If they wanted to read the Bible, there would be one in their language.

There are roughly 3.6 billion people on earth who are part of what are called *UPGs*, unreached people groups. Here's a simple way to think about it: they have no believers who live anywhere near them, and they have no Bible in their language. There was a famous lady who was a missionary's wife. She was a missionary too. She was the wife of a guy who was in the field. She came back to try to raise money for him. She would go to these churches, and she would say, "I don't know how to help you feel the misery of the heathen world."

There are so many places where there's no access to the gospel. You know this because, I'm guessing, in your dorm room, or maybe your 12-year-old asked a question about this in the back of a car, or maybe (and they come with different motives) your snarky, cynical coworker asked you about this... Have you ever heard the question, "Well, what about the innocent man on the island who has never heard about Jesus and dies?"

As soon as you teach on the exclusivity of Christ, you're going to get that question. Let me repeat it again. "What about the innocent man who's on an island, never hears about Jesus, and dies?" By the way, this guy must be the most famous guy in all of apologetics. We don't know his name. We don't know his island. We don't have an address.

I wonder if he's on the island going, "What about the person in North Carolina who has five versions of the Bible?" Do you know what's interesting? Everybody who's asking that question doesn't have that problem. They need to be responsible for the revelation that they're given. Here's what I can confidently say. The innocent man who has never heard about Jesus and dies goes to heaven. The problem is he doesn't exist.

Paul just spent Romans 1-3 telling us that there is no one innocent, not even one, and that people need to hear about Jesus to be saved, and they will be condemned and sent to hell not because... No one is sent to hell for not receiving a Jesus they've never heard about or rejecting a Jesus they've never heard about; they're sent to hell because they're sinners under the wrath of God.

Now you understand why people don't want to think about this, because it's very, very complex and requires a lot of us. Particularly, it's going to require a lot of suffering if we're going to reach these people.

Here's the other thing, guys. If this isn't true... Just think about this. You guys are logical most of the time. Think about this with me. If people are okay in their ignorance... Let's imagine there's a place in India where no one has ever heard about Jesus, ever. Well, if they're okay, we'd better not send anyone there, because as soon

as you send somebody there, and they share about Jesus, and they go, "Nah..." Uh-oh. Now they're in trouble. See what I'm saying?

The load-bearing wall for world missions is the exclusivity of Christ. If there are other ways to get to heaven, if there are anonymous Christians, if everybody just dies and gets to go to heaven, then we don't need a Send Sunday. We certainly don't need to meet every week, and unfortunately, I need to find another job. I mean, this is what we have to do.

So, with our time left, what I want to show you is Paul basically says, "You can't save yourself, but anyone can be saved by believing and trusting in Jesus. The problem is everybody hasn't heard." So, Paul is going to tell us the divinely designed strategy to get the gospel to the world.

I didn't get to fact-check this, but someone told me that Harvard University used to use Paul's argument here as the way to show how to make an airtight argument. It's a logical argument, starting with the end in mind and going back to the beginning. Let's read it together and we'll talk about it. Here's what it says. It's four "hows."

"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? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 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!'"

In marketing, they talk about a funnel. Some of you are in marketing and know more about this than me. Every sponsored post you've ever seen has a funnel connected to it, and here's how the funnel works: *know, like, trust, try, buy*. So, the first thing they want you... You have to see it. Okay, know. Then I like it. Then I trust it. Then I try it. That's why they're always trying to get you to... Then I try. Then I buy.

What's interesting is, if you know anything about marketing, people are obsessed with it. They're obsessed with the funnel. "We have to move *here*, and we have to move *here*. Once they do *this*, they do *this*. Then I get them on the email list. Then they sign up for *this*, and I send them *this* at half price." It's a shame that the world is so much better at thinking about how to reach people than we are.

Paul gives a different strategy. If you reverse it, it's *send, preach, hear, believe, call on the name of the Lord*. I want to talk about each of these. First, let's read it. Paul says, ***"How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?"*** No one can confess with their mouth and believe in their heart Jesus is Lord... They can't make the call if they don't believe in the first place. Then Paul says, ***"And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?"***

Now, this is interesting. This is super simple. We live in a very interesting time. Right? We live in a time where you can FaceTime somebody who lives on the other side of the world. I mean, since Alexander Graham Bell... That guy was interesting, because he had the idea that you could talk to somebody who wasn't there. Very strange. "What if I could talk to somebody who lives somewhere else?"

We live in a time where... Even what I'm doing right now. I have this little mic on, and we're on campuses. This is very new. Hearing has historically been a proximity problem. If I can't hear, it's because I'm not close enough, so somebody needs to get close enough to me so I can hear. Yes, we can send online videos to people somewhere else, but nothing is as powerful as a person they know who loves them.

Here's the other thing. Hearing requires hearing something in your heart language. There was a guy named Cameron Townsend. He was a missionary. While he was evangelizing one day to this new people group that had never heard of Jesus... True story. A guy he was evangelizing said to him, "If your God is so smart, why doesn't he speak my language?" Wow! It's a fair question. "If your God is so smart, why can't I understand him? Why doesn't he speak my language?"

Well, Cameron Townsend took that to heart. He spent 10 years (this was before AI), first learning that language, and then translating just the New Testament into their language so they could have an understanding of the Word of God in their heart language. He would go on to start what became Wycliffe Bible Translators.

First, they have to be able to hear, which means they need someone in their life who knows the gospel who can speak it in their own language. Secondly, look at what it says. ***"And how are they to hear without someone preaching?"*** Now, it doesn't say a sermon. There *is* something powerful... We know the stories of George Whitefield preaching.

George Whitefield was such an awesome guy. They told him not to leave the church and preach. They told him, "You can only preach inside the church." I learned this in seminary. He built his own little stand, and he took this little stand with him outside. He would go out to the coal miners. They said, "Don't go to the coal miners."

He would go out to these coal miners. They'd have all the coal dust on their faces. When he was preaching to them, he couldn't see what they looked like until he got about halfway through his message. He said, "I could start to see what the men looked like because their tears would cleanse their faces." We think of stories of Billy Graham and others you might know.

When it says "preaching," it means talking about Jesus out loud, confidently. God uniquely does use gathered preaching, but almost every time...it might be the final

thing or one of many things...God is going to use you talking to your friends about Jesus. Here's the truth: we all preach about what we're most passionate about.

You're always preaching to your friends. It might be about your new pickleball paddle or whatever. Here's a really common one. Watch this. See how often a conversation does not devolve into this. "Have you seen that show? Have you listened to this podcast?" Americans have become evangelists for podcasts and streaming services, if it's not already sports.

I want to encourage you, though, in one sense. You already are an evangelist, and you're good at following up. I know how some of you are. "Did you start episode 2 yet? It gets really good at the end of episode 2." We are so good at telling people about what we love, seeing if they love it, and following up and asking them if they do love it. It's like, oh, we already know how to do that, because that's natural, because we're humans and we're worshipers. We just need to do that about Jesus.

Here's where we're going to spend the rest of our time before we close. He goes all the way back to the beginning. He says, "***And how are they to preach unless they are sent?***" Paul goes, "Let me take you all the way to the end. It's an individual. More than that, it's millions and millions and millions of people who are going to believe in Jesus Christ and call on the name of the Lord." You go, "All right. That's our North Star."

He goes, "It actually doesn't start with hearing, and it doesn't start with preaching; it starts with being sent." That's why we end every service with "Two Cities Church, you are sent." That's why we're having a Send Sunday, because individuals preach the gospel, but individuals do not send themselves.

We're kind of at a moment as a church. We're in the growing pains, guys. We have to decide: Are we going to be a reservoir, just a nice body of water that gathers, or are we going to be a river that's going to send people? It's going to be unbelievably painful if we're going to send.

First of all, it's going to mean we're going to call people up (I'm going to do this at the end) to say, "Is God calling you? Is God calling you to go with one of our church plants to one of those three cities? Is God calling you to go to the world mission field, whether short-term, mid-term, or long-term?"

It requires training, but I'll tell you practically and functionally, one of the things... If we are genuinely going to be a sending church... Let me say it this way. Stingy churches can't be sending churches. As a general rule, we have a very, very generous church, and I thank God. Way above the national average for generous churches.

But here's what I want you to know. The average American professing Christian gives 2.5 percent of their income to the kingdom of Christ. Our great-grandparents, during the Great Depression, while they were standing in bread lines, gave 3.3 percent to the kingdom. So, there are many people's Great Depression great-grandparents who were outgiving the abundance of America today.

Here's a question to ask. By the way, why am I talking about this? People who don't like me to talk about money, it's always because money is their god. It's like, "I don't like when people talk about Jesus in ways that are kind of attacking..." Yeah, you don't like when I talk about money in ways that are attacking you, but here's why I have to talk about this. God cares about the two things money is attached to: your heart and his mission.

When I first got here years ago, I was told, "You cannot disciple people if you don't talk to them about money." Everybody thinks sex is their big problem. It's not. It's just their most obvious problem that they feel most guilty about. Money is the big issue. Here's a question: If everybody gave like you, how many people could we send to the mission field? Some of you could do the math very, very easily...zero...because you give nothing.

Here's the thing. Of the people who call Two Cities Church home, who come around here, 70 percent give, but that means that 30... I'm trying to figure it out. That means that 30 percent of the people... And don't look around right now, because it would be awkward. You can do basic math. That means one out of every three people who show up to our church gives nothing.

These are the same people who drop their kids off and their kids are getting ministered to in our kids' ministry. These are the same people who drop their kids off on Wednesday nights. Some of these people are the same people who are going on a short-term mission trip. These are the same people who are tearing up and telling us how their Community Group saved their marriage. There's something broken in there.

We are not going to be able to be the sending church... Part of what you'll need to do at the end... Some of you will need to come down and repent because you have not prioritized the kingdom of God in your life in general, but it has been most obvious through your finances.

Paul says, "Guys, if we're going to do this, if we're going to be a sending church, here's going to be the description." This is where we're going to end. I want you to see this. Verse 15: ***"As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'"*** Now, this should be confusing to us for many reasons. First, it's like, "Well, why are you talking about their feet? Feet aren't beautiful." That's Paul's point.

I don't care how you ladies put lotions and potions on them and paint them. They're still creaturely feet. They're still the basement of your body. They still are the place that touches the earth. It's the most creaturely part of all of us. Back then, everyone wore sandals. Everyone walked everywhere. It collected dung and dust, and only the lowest servants washed feet. That's why Jesus washing feet was such a big deal.

Why wouldn't he say, "How beautiful are the faces of those who bring good news"? You could still get your point across. That *is* the most beautiful part of us. Or, "How beautiful are the voices," because that's actually the part of them that's going to proclaim the life-saving message. Why would you talk about their feet? Here's why. This is important to get. Because Paul praises the part that experiences the most pain.

If you're going to take the gospel, like they did, by foot hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of miles, then the part of your body that is going to experience the most pain, the most blisters, is going to be your feet. See, here's what we're going to talk about. We cannot do this... I just did this in the 9:00 service, and I'm thinking to myself, there is so much suffering that is associated with completing, finishing, obeying the Great Commission. It's honestly overwhelming. I don't want you to get overwhelmed.

Have you ever heard the story of the starfish? It's a little cheesy, but I'll tell it to you really quickly. There's a story of the starfish, where this kid... There's a storm, and all of the starfish are on the shore. This young kid... He's 10 or 12. He's running down the beach. He's throwing the starfish back into the water. This grumpy old guy says, "What are you doing? There are thousands of starfish. You can't get them all. It doesn't matter." The kid goes, "It matters to *this* one."

That's where we have to get. We have to go, "You know what? Am I willing to suffer for my coworker? Am I willing for Thanksgiving to be a little bit more awkward?" See, I spent the week reading the story of Adoniram Judson. You want to Google Adoniram Judson? You want to hear a life of suffering?

Adoniram Judson, a very famous missionary... This is a true story. He's about to head on a boat to be a missionary. The boat ride he's about to go on is going to end up being 114 days. A few months before he goes to the mission field, he falls in love with a young lady named Ann. He wants her to be a missionary with him, but he knows there's a lot of suffering going on, so he talks to her about it, and she says, "You've got to ask my dad."

Now, most guys, when they talk to their father-in-law, want to put their best foot forward. You know, "I'm going to try to make a lot of money. I'm going to take care of her. I'm going to give her the house. Yes, sir. I'd like it if she didn't have to work." I'm

going to read you the letter Adoniram Judson wrote his father-in-law. Here's what it says.

"I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world? Whether you can consent to her departure to a heathen land, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life? Whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death? Can you consent to all this..." Look at his motivation.

"...for the sake of him who left his heavenly home and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing, immortal souls; for the sake of Zion and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this, in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with a crown of righteousness brightened by the acclamations of praise which shall redound to her Savior from heathens saved, through her means, from eternal woe and despair?"

Ann went with him. If you read the story, there's so much glory. There are a lot of people who came to Christ. There's a thriving church in that location today, but it did not come apart from immense suffering. Guys, there is no shortcut in getting the gospel to people. There's no way to do it without suffering.

That's why I want to show you a video of a couple that's deeply connected to our church. It's going to show you the suffering they've gone through to bring the gospel to people who are not just far from God and close to them, but who were far from God and far from them, so they had to get close to them. After I show you this story, the temptation will be to clap, but I want to call us to respond. So, if you'll stay silent after the video, I'll call us to respond. Thank you.