



Message **Transcript**

Be The Light

CB Barthlow

Good morning, BRAVE church. How are you feeling this morning? Good. I'm so glad that you chose to worship with us. Will you do me a favor? Help me welcome the Broomfield Campus to church as well.

Well, I sure am glad to be here with you on Sunday. I'm here every Sunday. This is my church. My wife and I and our two beautiful boys, we go to BRAVE and we actually sit right down the middle row about two seats over, right there. Maybe if you've heard, we started coming here about two years ago.

I remember the first time we started coming, I come from, as Pastor Jeff said, a bit of a different tradition. So the first time we came and he was preaching and I thought it was good. I yelled out, preach preacher. And somebody was like, [inaudible 00:00:46] and I was like, okay. It's a different kind of church. I get it. I do. I come from a different tradition. Where I come from, the preaching is a little loud. We sweat a lot. I brought a towel. Don't be alarmed. It's the same Jesus. We'll be just fine.

And it is a little weird to stand on this stage with a giant screen where they talk about how humble you are. The two things just don't balance out. But I'm so glad to be home. And I'm so excited to tell you about the church that you're helping to build and to plant downtown this fall. And I believe that I have a word that may change your life today as well. Amen. So do me a favor. If you have your Bible, I want you to go to the gospel of Matthew chapter five. And I'm going to read but just one verse today.

Now I know our pastor, Pastor Jeff, he reads in big chunks. And it's amazing. I'm not going to try to do that. I'm going to give you the verse that is the compass for this

new church that we're planting this fall called beacon. It's Matthew chapter five verse 14. I'm sure that you've heard it before.

And the reason we're going to read it today is because I'm simple guy and sometimes the simpler the message the better. And I believe in this one short phrase from Jesus, we get really the whole Bible packed into one thing. I'm a former addict and alcoholic. Today I have nine years, two months and 23 days sober.

And I remember in the darkest of times, it was this book, this word. You know the word that we believe is the inherent God breathed words from the throne. This book that's debated about and mocked. For me, it set a course for my life. And I found that this book gave me three things. Number one, my identity, number two, my community and number three, our mission. And so today I want to do those three things, identity, community, and mission and the beautiful things is that they're all found in. But one sentence from Jesus.

Do you have your Bible open to Matthew 5:14? Say, yeah. That feels good. It reads like this. It says, Jesus standing on the sermon, he's preaching the sermon on the mountain. And he says this, you, that's you, you're the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Jesus in this moment speaks literally an impossible truth. And the moment he says it, it becomes true. You know that God is not a man that he should lie. So whatever God says, whatever Jesus speaks, the moment it exits his mouth, it becomes a universal eternal truth and there's no negating it ever, period, point blank. Amen.

He stands on this mountain. You see he's a few seasons into his ministry. And he's amassed a few groups of followers. People begin to understand that this Jesus, this rabbi, he's all together different than the other folks who call themselves something great. There's something special about Jesus. And they begin to follow him. By this time they're starting to call themselves disciples. And when we find Jesus in chapter five, delivering what is easily the greatest sermon ever preached, he's standing on a mountain and these disciples are spread out before him.

Common, everyday Galileans, people of Jewish tradition from all walks of life. There's merchants, sailors, homemakers, farmers, some that are bond servants, some that are unemployed, some rich, some poor, some up, some down, some struggling. And Jesus looks at them and he starts this conversation with what we call the beatitudes. It's a beautiful conversation where he begins to redefine how they look at themselves and how they think about this thing called faith. I love how Jesus does does reeve definition all the time.

I mean, like for example, I know that you came here today to church. And as soon as I walked up on the pulpit, you were like, he has tattoos. Okay. And those jeans are awfully skinny. I believe he's wearing his wife's boots. And if I'm not mistaken, that's a mullet. And so I'm not sure what's about to happen here today.

Here's what I want you to understand. I'm just like you. I love the same Jesus. I'm going to plant a church in the inner city. Amen. This is... It's the inner city uniform for church planters. It comes in a box. You send away for it. It's a cinch. And then they

put you downtown with lasers and lights. It's going to be amazing.

Sometimes, what we see in the natural is not an indicator of what's really happening in the supernatural. But we fall back to that all the time, don't we? I mean, Jesus, when he starts this conversation in the beatitudes, he has to set a stage for them and talk to this group of disciples like he might talk to us here today and say, what you see here is not true about what is seen here. He understands at this time that these Galileans who come from this Jewish tradition have fallen into the trap of thinking that natural circumstances are an indicator of supernatural heaven stance.

That is to say, that if you are successful and rich and blessed and happy and whole in the tangible, in the flesh, then that means that you're saved and sanctified and righteous and loved by God. And if you're struggling and you fall down and you make a lot of mistakes and you suffer from depression or anxiety, then that also is an indicator that God has turned his back on you. You see, they used to think that then. And I could say then, but you know that today we fall into that trap as well too. You do it to yourself, right?

Why do I deal with this? Has God turned his back on me? Why don't they keep falling into that same trap? Don't they know how to do this thing right? Are they serious about God? You see this problem is not unique to the disciples on the Mount listening to Jesus. It's a common plague and attack of the enemy on the minds and souls of Christians, which is to think that if everything's not perfect, then God's not real. And so Jesus, before he starts this sermon, he has to set the stage.

And I want to read you the beatitudes so that you see what he's about to do. He looks out across this group of misfits, this group of diverse people, and he says this. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are the gentle. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are the peacemakers. Blessed are those who've persecuted for the sake of righteousness. And you, blessed at are you when people insult you for my sake.

You see, he talks to everybody, the high and the low, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Those of you here today, who've been walking lockstep with God for a season, for a long season, and your life is marked by your faith. But he also talks to you in here who are in a season of mourning. Mourning the loss of someone you love. Mourning the failure that you continue to walk in.

He says, I'm also talking to you who are poor in spirit. Those who just can't seem to figure this out. Why is life so hard for us? He talks to the saved and the struggling, the righteous and the routinely falling down. And he says, I don't care where you came from. And I don't care what you're going through. And I don't care what the world says about you. And I don't even care what you think about your yourself. The only thing that matters is, am I in you?

He says, if I'm the Lord of your life, if I'm in you, if Christ be in you, if I lead, if I'm your Lord, if I'm your king, then you're blessed. Which means, you can struggle and fall down but if I'm Lord, guess what? You're blessed. You can be high, but guess what? If

I'm there, you're blessed. He says it doesn't matter who the world says you are, what you go through, how you define yourself. Am I the Lord of your life? Then guess what? You're blessed. Period. Point blank. There's no arguing.

Wish I could have been there on the mountain when he was doing this. I don't know how you read your Bible. But I read my Bible like a comic book. Like I'm just flipping the page. My mind is racing. Like I just see it. And like I want to be in every story.

Like I wish I could have been standing shoulder to shoulder with other soldiers in the army of Israel, looking across the valley at that Philistine army when they sent that giant down into the valley. And he mocked us and me and my friends were just shaking. I was like, I'm not going out there. You're going out there? Nobody's going out there. I wish I could have been there when that little boy exited the line, shook off the King's armor and grabbed five stones.

I mean, I'm holy but I'm not that holy. I'm sure I would've been like, he is going to die. Somebody get the kid. Why are we doing this? But when that boy grabbed that sling and he began to wing it back, and he eyed up, and he swung it, and the giant fell, I wish I could have been there to look at my compatriots and say, we going to win today. The God of angel armies is on our side.

I wish I could have been there after four days when Lazarus had long since died and it was time to take care of business and put him away. And Jesus were walked in the scene and Mary and Martha were like, it's too late. You can't save anything. And

Jesus calmly looked at him and said, it's the perfect time. And he said Lazarus, and that stone began to shake. I wish I could have been there as people looked at each other. What in the world, is there an earthquake? Lazarus, and then the man walked out of his tomb.

And I wish I could have been there when our king stood before us. And he looked us dead in the face. And he said, you. Yeah, you. You are the light of the whole world. No doubt I would've done the same thing that you've just done, which is like, he doesn't know my life thankfully. I don't feel like the light of the world. There's no indication for me that I'm the brightest. And yet Jesus begins this conversation with this vast and diverse group of characters by saying three things to them.

Number one, be yourself. Be who I say that you are. Be who I made you to be. You see when Jesus is looking at every one of these disciples, when he stands before you and he says, you are the light of the world. He's not saying something to encourage you. He is stating a matter of fact. You are a bright and shining beam of his light in this world.

And you're here today, and you're like, C B, look, I'm not going to tell anybody next to me at church because I want to make sure everybody thinks I've got it all together. But I am in huge amounts of debt. My relationship is not the best. I barely talk to my friends and family. I don't share much about the gospel. It was hard for me to get here today. I even got an argument on the way here. I told somebody who cut me off they were number one but not the best way. I certainly don't feel like the light of the world.

And we do this thing as Christians, right? Where we hear an eternal truth every week. Pastor Jeff stands before us and he does line upon line, precept upon precept. He breaks out the word of God for us and we hear who God calls us to be but we don't feel like God calls us to be. Do you know what I'm talking about? Where you dance this thing. You know Paul calls us the saints of light. Like saints. I still feel like a sinner. That's the attack of the enemy. That's the enemy lying to you every day.

Paul says also in second Corinthians chapter five, verse 17. He says, if any man be in Christ... How many men? Any, right? Is that the holy ones? The righteous ones, the older ones, the ones who go to both the nine and the 11:00 AM service. Is it the ones who serve on the elder board? Is it the ones who are the greeters? No, it's anyone. Paul says, if anyone comes to the father, all things are new. He says the old... It's not swept under the rug. It's not put into the pocket. It's not ignored. It is dead. Behold, all things are new.

I love the gospel. It's so absolute. Isn't that the best part? There's no Ham and Han. When Paul starts to talk, he's not like, if you come the right way and you do the right things and hopefully things will work out and you might be able to go to heaven. He says any and all, it's period, point blank. You come, he changes you completely. He doesn't revise you. Amen. God doesn't make you a little bit better. He doesn't shave off the rough edges. He doesn't improve upon what you've already built. He doesn't confirm about the good things that you've done. I love it. God breaks everything on purpose for a purpose. And then he remakes you brand new.

I get to stand upon this pulpit on this Sunday. Usually I get to sit right there, but I'm going to tell you today that I wish you could see you like he sees you. Like I wish you could just see you. You see every one of you the day that God made you, before the world began, before time ever even existed, when he formed and fashioned you and he was just about done and he breathed the breath of life into your lungs, there wasn't a single person in this room when he finished. He was like, well, they're not all winners, right? That's not what he said.

Let me break the news to you. When he finished with you and he finished with you, you took his breath away. And he stood back and he just marveled at the creation that is you. I imagine in my sanctified mind that he called over the 12 elders ruling over the 12 tribes. He said, come here. Peter, come here, look at this one. Perfect. And John was like, what about me? I'm the one you love the most, right? Bible humor. Every one of you, he was absolutely enamored with and amazed. And that's the problem, is that the enemy always comes after your identity.

Number one, the first and biggest attack that is on your life, is the enemy wants to lie to you about who you are. You see, you walked in and you're a father, a husband, a business owner, a mother, a wife, a Proverbs 31 woman. You're saved and sanctified, filled with the holy spirit, powerful. And the enemy lies to you and he says, you're divorced too. You know that right? You're bitter all the time. You're a business owner but this one's barely holding on. You're lost and confused.

Sometimes you don't even think this God thing is real. Did you know, the enemy

says to you that if you don't believe it all the time, it's not even real at all and it's not available to you. You're even not a real Christian. You don't share your faith. How dare you? You walked in here and you struggle with substance abuse. And the enemy says, you'll never get free of addiction ever. And so you come here and you hear a thing about you, but it doesn't feel like you.

Let me tell you this. The enemy, the devil is a liar. What God says about you is true. There's no negating it. So when he says you are more than a conqueror, guess what? Not only do you win, you get all the spoils of every battle you fight. You're more than a conqueror, that's a fact.

When he says you're fearfully and wonderfully made, that's it. Fearfully, wonderfully, fearful to be in awe of God. You were made to worship him in spirit and in truth. Wonderfully, you were made to walk in such a fashion that other people are in awe of you. Did you know that? God made you so that people would see you and go, what in the world? I got to meet that person. That's you? That's why the enemy's so mad at you. And you're called to be yourself, the way he sees you.

But can I tell you, you can't do it alone. Amen. You just can't become who you're called to be all by yourself. But you know those Christians, right? You know that person, they're like, no, I love Jesus. I don't like the church. Do you know that? You've ever meet those people? I love the church.

So when they say that to me, I'm not a pastor. I'm very good pastor. I'm like, you can't love... I get frustrated. I don't believe that you can do much loving of the groom if

you don't like as bride. I believe you are the bride. And I believe that in order to become who you're called to be, you become in community. It's this unity that brings that forth together.

That's why Jesus says in Matthew 5:14, 3 things. Number one, be yourself. Be the light of the world. And number two, be together like a city on a hill. He commands us to walk in this thing. I don't read anywhere in our text where it says, that you're supposed to do this faith thing all by yourself. I just don't see it. I see a lot of community. In fact, I see Jesus always talking to groups of people. And I see the apostle Paul talking to the multitudes and talking about how they work together to do this thing.

You see Jesus uses the phrase, a city on the hill to paint a picture. Many scholars believe that as he was standing on the mount, he pointed across the valley to another city on a hill so that they would see what he was talking about. And he uses that phrase city to signify an interdependent organism, each part, moving differently but everyone dependent upon each other.

Paul says, we're one body. That means that whether you're the pinky toe or I'm the pinky toe, or someone's the head, in order for this whole thing to work together, we need each other. Church, can I tell you, I need you. I'm not trying to be hyperbolic and trying to tug on your heartstrings. I'm telling you church, I need you. I'm just this tattooed ex addict going to plant the church in one of the most unchurch neighborhoods in the city of Denver. And I need your help. I need you to pray for me, because we were about to do something that's never been done before.

And you, I hope you know, you need each other. Right now there's a person sitting on your row when Justin said it was time to pray and you were like, okay. Because you got nervous because you had to meet somebody new. And so you grabbed hands and they got sweaty and halfway through the prayer, you forgot. And you weren't thinking about how sweaty your hands were. Do you know... Am I talking... Am I like a normal person? You need that person 100% completely.

You see, it wasn't an accident that the person who's on your road that you don't know today is sitting right next to you. That was God ordained and you need each other to become who you're called to be. How do I know this? Well, I know that the church is the only organism, the only organization, the only community wherein there's a biblical promise for miracles.

You see many of you, you belong to any number of other organizations. You go to church but maybe you're in a book club or you have a great group of friends and you go to the Broncos games together or maybe you're in CrossFit and we have to pray for you because I think CrossFit might be a cult. I'm not sure people are crazy about... They're almost as bad as vegans. Have you ever met somebody who's a vegan? It's like, that's all we talk about.

And each one of those things is absolutely fantastic. You can find great community and wonderful fellowship and even purpose in civic organizations. But you do not find in those things what you find in the church. Let me show you something in Acts chapter two, chapter two versus 42 through 46. I read this to our launch team,

almost all the time that we meet. It's called the fellowship of the believers. It's the description of their very first church. And I'll just read you a couple sections, Acts chapter two versus 42 through 46.

It says, and they, that's the first church, we're continually devoting themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship and to the breaking of bread and to prayer. It sounds like our church. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe and many signs and wonders were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common, they even began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might had need. It goes on and at the end it says, in day by day, God began to add to their numbers.

This description of the first church also can be a description of the church today. And it's marked by three unique promises that set the church aside from any organization. The first one is this, that living in awe. You see there's no other organization, no other group where God says, if you join that, you're just going to live in a state of awe. You'll feel awesome. You'll see great things. But that is the promise for the church.

How do I know? Well, it says it there, but I also know that sometimes when I'm sitting in church and they get to that third chorus of that song that I really love and usually I'm kind of like this, but something happens and I've got my hands all the way up and I'm jumping up and down. You know what I'm talking about? Where you just suddenly, you're like, this is my song and I'm worshiping louder than everyone right out. And I feel something inside of me. I don't feel that anywhere else. You know the

tangible presence of God that you feel here, that's awe. And it's guaranteed here.

The other two things that it promises, these miracles, signs and wonders. This, the church, our church, the capital C church is the only place where God promises that when you walk in, you will see a miracle. What's that mean pastor? What's that mean C B? It doesn't always mean that you're going to see a giant healing up front. It doesn't all mean that you're going to watch water breakthrough a rock. It does mean that today, right now, you're probably sitting next to a miracle.

I mean, look to your left. It's probably right now, someone sitting next to you who looks nothing like who they were when they first started coming to church. I mean, you know, you've invited somebody to church and you kept inviting and they kept blowing you off and you kept inviting and they promised and they didn't show up and you kept inviting. And then one day they started to come and over a period of six or nine or 12 months, suddenly you look at them and they're just so different. And you're like, God, it's a miracle. Or maybe it's you.

Maybe if you can just for a moment reflect back on who you were pre Christ. All of those decisions you used to make, and all of the ways that you used to tell yourself that you were a failure, the sin and the bondage that had you locked up in defeat and look at you now. You're a sign and you are a wonder and it's this place, that church where that's guaranteed. You won't find it anywhere else, I guarantee. It's in the church.

We started the process of planting beacon in November of last year. I got to be

in the church planter residency in the fall. I got to study from pastor Jeff and pastor Kent. If you don't know Pastor Kent, he knows the whole Bible I think, almost all of it, verbatim. It's incredible. And I got an opportunity to be filled by great leaders. And then we started to build a group of people. What we now call our launch team in preparation for a September 8th launch downtown.

Some of them are here this morning. Beacon make some noise. They're tired, it's 9:00 AM. We're young people. Look, I want to tell you about this launch team of ours. We're growing in every aspect. I've got this group of people in my launch team. They just absolutely have my heart, 10 or 15 people, all kind of related.

Many of them are dreamers. They're in the middle of the process of trying to get citizenship because they've been born somewhere else. And I don't care what politically you think about that. I want you to see them the way that God sees them. You see together, they are persevering every day to navigate a difficult system so that they might be a part of something absolutely greater, that they might build a legacy upon. And it's not just our church, it's this country. And they blow my mind because they're so strong and they're miracles.

We've got to go group of guys. They're part of our launch team and they wear bracelets, well, ankle bracelets, and they're black and they're magnetic and they track them. It's not the most attractive jewelry. But they only have to wear it for a short season. And they're in the process, each one of them and it different stage of walking out of a life of community corrections and incarceration. And each one of them pressing to redefine how they see themselves and how the world might see them. And

their strength is just mind boggling. They're walking miracles.

And then I have a couple of people who are in our group. Who are navigate this strange world of gender and sexuality and what the world says that they can be. And they're trying to reconcile it with what we know to be true in this world. And every week they keep pressing in because they know I don't not tell the truth. And every week they know that I'll stand firm on what the Bible's says about men and women. And they keep pressing in. And they're humble and they're teachable and they're walking miracles and I get to pastor them.

And I want to tell you that, that's who you are too. Like every one of you here today, you've had your own struggle and it was here in the church. Even if you don't feel like it, where God called you to be in community so that he might have someone walk alongside you. Challenge you when you fall down, pick you up when you're too weak, stand behind you when you shine. It's the church where you become.

But can I tell you church, that even if you believe number one and discover who God says you are, and you become come yourself. And even if you really subscribe to the idea of the fellowship of the believer and you be together, if you're only that here, you're not that at all. Sunday Christianity is no Christianity.

Can I tell you that you were called to be transformed and then you were called to be sent out? Every one of you. Absolutely, 100%. And you're here today and you're like, C B, I don't feel called to be sent out anywhere. When I was younger, I always wanted to be just, sort of like preach to the choir. I like the fellowship with Christians,

but telling people about God was a challenge for me. Maybe you're like that. Maybe at your job, it's just not the most hospitable environment for you to share your faith.

I mean, you know how it is. You come to church, Pastor Jeff delivers a great word. They do a worship set that just changes you. You're on cloud nine all day and you show up to the job and all things are completely different because you revert back to your old self. Sometimes you feel like you don't have the right words or maybe you don't have the right power or you're not brave enough, or you're not strong enough. And how could you ever be the kind of person who brought somebody to the Lord? I'm feel that way too sometimes.

I mean, thankfully we're not all called to be preachers. Amen. It'll be a loud room. We're only called to be witnesses. That's it. Such a simple term. I mean, if you really read your Bible, it's very powerful what God does and it asks almost very little of us. It's surrender and tell people about it.

You don't have to stand upon a box in 16th Street Mall with a bullhorn and tell everybody they're going to hell. Because guess what? It doesn't work. And you don't have to stand on the street corners of Colfax Avenue with gospel tracks and tell people you want to tell them about the Lord Jesus Christ and secure for them a place in heaven. Because guess what? It also doesn't work very well. But you know what does work? It's simple. You've heard it before. You've probably sang it a million times. Is to look somebody dead in the face and tell them the truth.

I once was lost, but now I'm found. I was blind, but now I see. You see the true

gospel call that is on your life is far simpler, far easier, far more tailor made than you believe it to be. It's simply this, be a witness. Tell people what God did in your life, from who you used to be to who you're becoming today.

Paul said it in Romans chapter one, verse 16. He says, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power unto salvation. When you see it like that, you understand that every person that you walk near, every person that you run into, every person that you know and all of their struggles, there is something that can solve that thing. And I might push you today if you were my church and I might say, how dare you know him like you know him and not share him with every person who's suffering?

I mean, that's what you're called to do. And it doesn't have to be eloquent. It can be simply, I'm praying for you. Do you need anything from me? We're bringing dinner over tomorrow night. You know, I go to church and I'm part of a small group and we've been praying for you. I don't believe in God. Don't worry, he believes in you. It's so much simpler but I want to tell you, it's simple because it's a mandate you've got to tell the world about Jesus. They're dying. It's darker than you think out there. And you have the light inside of you today.

And you say, Pastor C B, man, I don't know if you know just how broken I feel. I love that you feel broken because every crack and every crevice is another way for Jesus's light to shine out outside of you in such a fashion that people see you in all of your realness and your authenticity, and they say, you don't look perfect and you say, I'm not, but he is and I'm trying and you should come. That's what my generation and the generation below me are looking for, something real. Tell me who he is to you. Tell

me what it feels like. Tell me there's something better than this life.

Nine years sober. I was a drug addict for 15 years before that. The last five years of my addiction was crystal meth. I did crystal meth every day, all day for five years straight. Last year of my addiction, I spent over \$50,000 in dope. I lost a career, friends, a house, a car, my first wife and those two boys. I lost everything. And at the last night of my addiction on May 4th of 2010, I sat in my living room and the weight of what had happened fell upon me.

You see, I was raised in a great family. My parents loved the Lord. I went to church. And I had just looked at this, surveyed the field of my bad decisions. And it was apparent that I had just destroyed everything. I mean, I was a walking shipwreck, that's all I had left were broken pieces. I had no semblance. You know how sometimes when you're struggling, you throw out a foxhole prayer. God, if you get me out of this, then I promise... Because you feel like you can bargain with God. It was in that moment I realized I had nothing to bargain with. I had nothing left to give. I was a shipwreck.

I found my way into a church, just like this one, with a pastor, just like ours, who saw something in me that I didn't see. And he just walked alongside of me. Turned out I was called to ministry. It's always interesting how God uses the seemingly worst people. About two years ago, God began to birth a vision in my heart for this church that we might plant. It's called beacon.

You see, you may not know this, but an ancient maritime, when the first explorers

would go out to find new lands, they didn't have GPS like we do. There was no recalculating if you took the left turn at Iceland. The way that they actually discovered new land was by running a ground. They would shipwreck. It would crash in miraculous fashion.

And in order so that the next group of Mariners, the next explorers who were coming down with more supplies or looking for more new land, the next group of people who were trying to find a way home so that they didn't suffer the same fit, the first group would gather all of the pieces of the shipwreck off of the beach. Every little shard of that boat, that in that moment probably felt like total failure, total embarrassment.

We should have thought, we should have planned, we should have done this better. And they would grab every piece of that shipwreck and they would March it to the top of the highest hill on that coast. And they would rebuild those pieces that signified failure, disaster, and defeat into the very first lighthouses. And then they would set their failure on fire and everyone else would see the way home. And that's our church.

In fact, that's the church. It's this. Take everything that you have, especially the broken pieces and bring them here, take your defeat and your failure, take your hurt and your shame, your past and your mistakes and bring them to the city on a hill, to be seen, to be shown off, to be set ablaze by the love of Jesus Christ so that people who are just like you, who are looking for a home, who are looking for the way home, who are desperate, who are suffering like you did, might find the same strength and the

same power that you found.

And so we started the journey of planting our church. And I discovered that when God chose a supremely broken man like me, he, gave me his heart for supremely broken people. And to tonight, today, this morning, we did the Saturday night service. I'm still in that. I want to say two things to you as we close this message.

And the first thing is this. BRAVE family, my God, thank you. Thanks for believing in pastors who love broken people. Thank you for loving my wife and my family and I, while we learned how to build a church. Thank you for sewing into Kingdom Advancement last year that we might have enough money to pay for a venue. Thank you for sending us downtown. You may not know it, but I needed you this last year. And you came through in spades. And I'm so thankful for you.

And number two is this. Broken people aren't just downtown. You might have walked in here today and it felt like I was reading your mail. Like God, that was me. Like I know what the Bible says about me, but I don't feel I'm the light of the world. My life is more marked by my sin and by my shame and by my failure and if I'm being honest, I don't feel like a beacon. I feel like a shipwreck. Guess what? All of that can change here this morning. That's the beautiful thing about the gospel that says behold, all things are new.

And so in just a moment, we're going to pray. In fact, I'd love to call our prayer team down here. I want to give you an opportunity to pray with somebody today. If you're here and you're broken, if you're here and you feel like today is the day, it's time

to make that change. If you've been feeling for weeks or for months, that he's called you for something greater than the life that you've been living, I want to invite you to join one of these people down at this altar to pray and ask God to transform you from a shipwreck into a beacon.

Would you pray with me today. Father God, we love you. God, you're so worthy to be praised. God, thank you for loving us. Thank you for loving us in spite of ourselves, in spite of every mistake, in spite of the fact that we so often believe what the enemy has said about us. Thank you for repeating who we are to us. We're the light of the world. We're more than conquerors. We're fearfully and wonderfully made. We're saved, righteous, set free.

And even when we doubt you, you continue to wrap us in the spirit of your love and remind us that we're called for something greater. Father today, soften every heart in this room. If there's something that we need to confess to you, and if today is the day we surrender completely and let you take the lead, do it tonight, today. In Jesus name, amen. Thank you BRAVE.