



Message Transcript

Meeting for a Mission

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Pastor Jeff:

Father, we do praise you today. We thank you for your living and active word. And Lord, we do praise you, because Lord, we do believe that every time that your word is faithfully and accurately proclaimed, Lord, that you speak directly to our hearts. And so, our prayer this morning is speak Lord, for we are ready to hear. And so, now, for all those who have gathered who desire to hear the Lord Jesus Christ speak directly to you, who will believe what he tells you and who will by faith put into practice what he shows you, will you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word amen? Amen.

In this series, the Kingdom Invasion, we've been talking about the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and how he became incarnate flesh. He became the god-man, and came to this earth to do one thing and one thing only, to die on the cross for the sins of the world to be raised from the dead and then to commission followers to go and tell others about who he is.

We've taken a look at who Jesus was during his earthly ministry, how he had power over demons and power over disease and even power over death. We then took a look at how he took 12 men and appointed them as apostles and he poured into them. And what did he do? He sent them out and commissioned them to do exactly what he had been doing. When they came back, they started rejoicing that even the demons submitted to their name, their demons submitted to them in Jesus Christ's name. Jesus said, "Do not rejoice that the demons submit, but rejoice because your

name is written in the lamb's book of life." In other words, don't rejoice because I'm working through you, rejoice because we have a relationship. That's the most important thing.

Then, we talked about, it wasn't just the 12, but he commissioned 70 others and he sent them out to do what? Exactly what he had been doing as well. They went out and they were healing people and casting out demons as well. We see all throughout the New Testament, go, I'm sending you out as lambs among wolves. Just get out there and live this mission. Then, we talked about some of the hindrances to this mission. We took a look at the story of the Good Samaritan and how things get in our way from helping people that we see have a need. And so, it brings us back to the place where we need to be on mission, and last week, we spent time talking about five keys to being successful in sharing the gospel and what that looks like and we shared finally what the three circles look like, which is a tool for sharing the gospel.

Just out of curiosity, how many got a chance to share the three circles with at least someone this week? Yeah, that's amazing. Praise God for that. I heard more stories come through our church this week about people that were sharing the three circles and people that were getting saved. It's so cool, because once you do it, you realize, I can do this. Now here's the challenge, and this is where we get in the church. For most people, they can come and hear stories about Jesus Christ's uniqueness, how he was powerful, how he commissioned disciples, how he sent us out on a mission, how we need to go be about doing the same, and we can all nod our heads on Sunday and say, "Praise the Lord, brother." I'm all about that.

But when it comes to actually living out the mission of growing in our daily obedience to Christ and being intentional about being on mission for Jesus, there's a disconnect between what we say and what we actually do. We have so many people in the church and not just BRAVE Church, but every church who are actually saved but decommissioned rather than saved and commissioned. If you've ever wondered, hey, how can I get from a place where I'm just sitting in church or experiencing some of God in church too? How can I actually be used by God in the mission that I read about in this book? God has a word for you today, and I want to encourage you to open your Bible up to the book of Hebrews, the book of Hebrews. We're going to be in chapter 10:24-25. Hebrews 10:24-25.

While you're turning there, let me just set this up. God is writing to a group of Jewish converts. We went through this book within the last year, and he's writing into a group of Jewish converts who have become Christians, and they're finding it more difficult to follow Jesus than simply being religious and they're thinking about turning their backs on the faith. Did you know it's much easier to be religious than it is to be a follower of Jesus Christ? Sometimes, we need encouragement and exhortation to stay in the fight because it's so difficult, and this is why the author's writing.

Now, let me tell you what he's writing about. He understands who Jesus is. He understands them as the king of kings and the lord of lords. He understands the uniqueness of Jesus, how Jesus came and commissioned the 12, how Jesus came and commissioned the 70. He also understands how Jesus commissioned all of his disciples, because after Jesus rose from the dead in Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus said

these words, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Therefore, what? Go! Jesus telling them, "Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey all that I've commanded you, and I'll be with you always till the end of the age." So, Jesus is going to commission everybody.

In Acts 1:8, after Jesus rises into the sky and the angels tell the men, "Why are you looking into the sky the same way you saw him go, he'll come." But Jesus told him, "You're going to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth." They know that they're commissioned to go. They know that they're going to be his witnesses. In the same way, everything we read about that Jesus began to do and teach, he's now doing through his church. He told his disciples he would build his church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it. The church is primary for all mission for Jesus Christ. Let me say it again. The church is the primary vehicle for all mission for the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because he established that mission. For what purpose? To bring people that are born again together, to be trained and equipped to go back out into the world. That's the purpose of the church.

By definition, church is Christians. That's what church is. Church is not for non-Christians. Non-Christians can come to church. We're going to proclaim the gospel. You can get saved, but the church is the called out ones that are gathering for a purpose. Now, what's the purpose? The purpose is twofold. It's to live obediently to Jesus Christ and to remain on mission. That's what we need. And so, how do we

meet? How do we come together and meet for a mission? Because I find after being a Christian for about 34 years, we're good at coming together. We're good at huddling up, but when it comes to scattering and going, we're not just as good about that. We need to understand that the purpose that we get together and why we do what we do is for the glory of God, so that we'll be filled up with his spirit, so that we can live on mission from Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. That's the point.

And so, this writer of Hebrews is writing to exhort and encourage these people that are finding, "I rather just stay religious rather than to be about the mission of Jesus." Here's what he says in Hebrews 10:24-25, he says this, "And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near." Let me read it again. And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

What's the first thing he says? Let's consider something. Consider means let's make an assessment here. Let's think carefully about this. How we can do what? Stimulate one another to love and good deeds. Do you know what stimulate means? Stimulate means to stir up. It means to irritate. It means to aggravate. It means to provoke. Let's consider here just for a second how we can provoke one another. Now, he continues to talk because some of you're like, "I'm really good at that and I'm great

at irritating and provoking everybody." That's not what he says. Provoking them to what? Towards love and good deeds. Love is an action. It is not a feeling. Love can have emotion attached to it, but love first and foremost is an act of your will.

When a husband and wife stand at the altar and they make vows to love one another till death of their part, it's not a vow to feel a certain way till death of their part, it's to act a certain way until death do they part. We're considering, we're going to make a careful assessment how we can provoke or irritate one another to do love. What's love? Loving God and loving others. We're going to come alongside and help people do that, and do what? Good deeds. Good deeds are a byproduct of knowing Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. If you love the Lord, you will love people, and if you love the Lord and people, you will do good deeds.

How can we come alongside and do that? How can we stir that up in others? How can we aggravate that in others, so to speak? Think about the spur on the back of a cowboy's boot as he drives it into the horse. It's not to hurt the horse, it's to provoke the horse to get moving, to do what he needs to do. Why? Because apparently in the first century the same way as in the 21st century, sometimes we need a little prodding, don't we? Sometimes we can talk about how we want to be obedient to Jesus and live on mission, but sometimes we need to be a little spiritually prodded to get to where we need to go. And so, he says, "Let's think about how we can spiritually prod one another to do what God wants us to do," which is what? Love him and love others, to be obedient to him and be on mission for him.

How can we stir that up in each other? Notice what he says in verse 25, "Not

forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some." Now, I don't know about you, but when I had younger children and I was buying Christmas presents, if I was at a toy store and these three words were on the side of the package, I never bought it. "Some assembly required." I got to a place I'm like, "That's not for me." When it comes to church, there is some assembly required. To say that you love Jesus, but don't assemble in a church is to say you don't love the Jesus of the Bible. It's to say you can't become the fullness of what you're called to become without a local church. A local church is the hope of the world.

Apparently in the first century the same way as it is today, some people felt like they could just love Jesus and not be part of the church. He said, "Don't be like that." If you love Jesus, there's some assembly required, there's some gathering required. Now, what are we gathering for? What are we meeting for? We're gathering to scatter. We're we're meeting for a mission. That's why we're getting together. He says, but encouraging one another all the more as you see the day drawing near. Now, what's the day? The day is the rapture in return of the Lord Jesus Christ. As you see that getting closer, we need to have more assembly required. We need to be more about growing an obedience. We need to be more about the mission.

Let me ask you a rhetorical... that's not rhetorical. I'll ask you the question. Do you see the day drawing near? I see it drawing near. I mean, 30 years ago when I was hearing messages on prophecy and people would talk like this, "There's going to be one world order. There's going to be one currency for the whole world." I would sit

there 30 years ago like, "How's that ever going to happen? Where are they reading that in their Bible? How's there going to be one world government? How's that ever going to happen? When would that ever happen where government would start controlling people? I mean, that could happen in two weeks, y'all."

I mean, do you see the day drawing near? Do you see evil getting greater and good being separated? Do you see a difference between light and darkness like never before? The more you see it, there's more assembly required for a purpose, and the purpose is so I'll grow in Christ, so you'll grow in Christ. The purpose is so I'll be more about the mission of Jesus. The purpose is so you'll be more about the mission of Jesus. That's what the author of Hebrews is encouraging. The closer we get to the end, which we're the closest we've ever been, the more necessary it is for us to be focused on what we're doing and why we're meeting. That's what we do.

Now, we know that the great commission is really the mission for every single church. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore, go, make disciples of all nations. That's what we're all called to do. So, no matter where you go to church, that's your mission. Now, lots of different churches have different mission statements to clarify some of the uniqueness's to how that church is supposed to operate. I believe God looks down from heaven and churches that are faithful sometimes have different expressions of how God wants to work through that local assembly for his glory. Some churches feel entrusted to serve the poor in a special way. Some churches feel entrusted to do mission in a special way. Some people feel entrusted by the Lord to do worship in a special way, some people to do preaching in

a special way, and there's all sorts of different combinations. When a church is faithful to the Lord, that unique expression is used of the Lord for his glory.

Now, what we tend to say is we look at other churches that do it different and we're just like, "Oh, they're not doing it right. They're not doing it right." What we're really trying to say is they're not doing it like us. It's okay that they're not doing it like us as long as they're doing it like Jesus. But each church has an expression and no church can do every single thing. What we want to talk about is how do we live on mission the way the Lord wants us to do and how do we grow an obedience together so that we can reach the loss and advance Christ's kingdom in the world?

Our mission statement that you'll see up here on the board is this, coming out of Matthew 28:18-20, it's to challenge BRAVE warriors for courageous kingdom advancement. Can you say that with me? To challenge BRAVE warriors for courageous kingdom advancement. Now this time, can you say it like you're excited about it? All right. We're here to challenge BRAVE warriors for courageous kingdom advancement. That's our mission. We use the word challenge to provoke or irritate. We want to challenge you. When you come to BRAVE, it's a challenge. We're going to challenge you because we're not going to let you walk in here alone. We're going to greet you. We're going to challenge you to come in here. We're going to challenge you to open up your Bible. We're going to challenge you to hear the word. We're going to challenge you to come and pray with us. We're going to challenge you to be on mission. Everything we do, we're trying to challenge you.

Well, what's a BRAVE warrior? The way we define it here is someone who's

bold, resolute, authentic, virtuous and engaged. Someone who's bold in their faith, meaning they're willing to take the next step of faith. Somebody who's resolute in their identity, meaning they know who they are in Christ and they're operating from the inside out of who Jesus says that they are. They're authentic in relationship, meaning I'm going to be who I am all the time with my strengths and my weaknesses, with my struggles and failures, with my joys and my concerns. I am who I am. I'm authentic and I'm virtuous in my character, means I'm growing in Christ's commands, not perfectly, but increasingly. Finally, I'm engaged in mission, means I'm growing in my obedience and I'm seriously going among the loss and I'm looking for those that need Jesus, and I'm asking him to open up doors so I can faithfully declare the mystery of the gospel. That's what a BRAVE warrior is.

What's courageous kingdom advancement? That's taking the courage to take the next step. Because if you're a believer, everywhere you go, Jesus Christ is right there with you, and how do you live for him at any given moment, at any given time for his glory. That's how we sum up our mission. That's what we're called to. If you can't remember those seven words, then remember this. What are we about here? We're about Sundays, Tuesdays and cadres. That's it. It's like a three-legged stool for us. That's BRAVE. What's BRAVE about? Sundays. What do we do on Sundays? Primarily on Sundays, it's about worshiping the word. We have prayer times like we did today. We come together for the purpose of being refreshed in the Lord and hearing his voice, so for the rest of the week, we can go out and be who God wants us to be. That's Sundays. That's when we gather as a whole to be taught so that we can go out.

What are Tuesdays? On the first Tuesday of every month, we gather to worship and seek the face of Jesus and to pray corporately as a group of people who believe that Jesus Christ is the head of his church. Then, we allow the Holy Spirit to move in special ways. We see healings and we see deliverance ministry taking place. We see God bringing marriages back together and healing the hearts of singles and removing obstacles that have been in the way, because that's why we're about first Tuesdays because Jesus said, "My father's house will be called a house of prayer."

Then what are cadres? Cadres are a small group on a mission. What's the mission? We'll do two things. One is growing our obedience, and two is growing our ability to go among the lost and share the life-changing message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's what I want to talk to you about today is, well, what's a cadre and how do we do that, and what does that look like, and how can that help?

Here's why it's so important to me. It's because for many of y'all, and I've been a Christian for 34 years, for many of you, you've been all sorts of different kinds of small groups. I've been in a lot of different kinds of small groups, some exceptionally good, some not so good, some super close friends with, some not so good, but I've been in very few that have held me accountable to personal obedience to grow with Christ in a loving way. I haven't been in any in 34 years that have ever held me accountable to how well I'm going among the lost in sharing the gospel.

Cadres do both of those things, and if both of those things aren't going on, you can call it a cadre, but it's not a cadre. A cadre's a small group on a mission. Just so

you know, this is what you were created for, it's what you were designed for, and it's what you're called to. It's why for many of you that are here and you come on Sundays and you can come on first Tuesdays, there's something that goes off in your heart and you say this, "I just want to meet some more people that go to BRAVE. I want to get connected with people that go to BRAVE." Why? Because God created you for a relationship. He created you for relationship with himself and relationship with others.

Here's what we falsely think. We falsely think if we start with community, that mission will happen automatically. Friends, I've been in small groups that are community-driven and mission never happens. It doesn't even happen accidentally. But I can tell you when you start like Jesus started, where he sends you out as lambs among wolves, where he tells you to go and you're in a community like that, community happens automatically.

As a matter of fact, we have someone on staff that told us recently after being in small groups for about 40 years and joining the cadre said this, "I have never had deeper community in my life since I joined a cadre." If you're looking for deep community, it starts with mission. I want to talk to you today about what does it look like when we talk about a cadre. What does Jeff mean? That's just a weird name. Cadres have been used. They're small groups on a mission. They've been used for good or evil all throughout history. Small groups that have done things for good, small groups that have done things for evil, we're using it in a good way.

Jesus had a cadre. He had a cadre of 12 that he spent three full years with, that he took deep sea fishing, that he took mountain climbing, that he took to the richest of

the rich and the poorest of the poor and all the government officials. When he said go, there wasn't a place they hadn't been. He had taken them out all among the lost in every place, so they knew exactly what to do. How will a cadre function? Well, here's what I want to say before, when we talk about Sundays, Tuesdays and cadres, just understand for our weekend services, they're about 90 minutes long. Our first Tuesday, once a month, it's about 90 minutes long. For a cadre, they're going to be about 90 minutes long.

On that first Tuesday, I encourage you, bring your cadre to first Tuesday and make that what you do that week. That means this. This is all I'm asking. If you're going to be all in at BRAVE to grow an obedience and be on mission for Jesus Christ asking three hours a week, there's 168 hours in a week. That means you get 165 to do whatever you want asking for three to meet up so that you can go do the rest. Means if you sleep about eight hours a night, you get about 15 hours a day to do whatever you want. If you sleep like me, you get about 17 or 18 hours a day to do whatever you want. That's what Jesus calls us to do.

And so, we're trying to keep it real simple and real clear. Some churches have a philosophy that every time, every day, the church should be open for some sort of activity. Some of you grew up in families like that, and you'll tell me jokingly, "My parents had a drug problem. Every time the doors were open at church, they drug us there." On Monday you're at church, and Tuesday you're at church, and Wednesday you're at church, and Thursday you're at church, and Friday you're at church, and

Sunday you're at church two different times and all this kind of stuff. Here's my question, when were you ever out among the lost? The answer is never because you were meeting for the sake of meeting.

Friends, when you die, we will have the most glorious meeting you've ever seen for all eternity. It's awesome. With every saint that's trusted in Jesus Christ of every tribe, tongue and nation from all around the world in a beautiful place with no sin and Jesus having the time of our life. Until then, we're called to grow an obedience and grow in our mission. Amen.

And so, this is how we're going to do it at BRAVE. We're going to do what we call a cadre. A cadre's broken down into three thirds. When you meet together, it's broken in three thirds. Now, again, 90 minutes is not a mandate. You don't have to get in and get out, but here's what I've discovered in small groups over the years. If it gets to be longer than about an hour and a half, and for those of you highly relational people that want to do a meal before and hang out afterwards and talk all the way during, so the small group's now two, two and a half hours plus we had a meal before and we hung out afterwards, what happens is even if it's a really good time and you go home, you start to think to yourself, can I really give up four or five hours every Tuesday night and come to this? The answer is, I can't. And so, you start fading off.

Try to keep this short. We even have some men's cadres, they'll say, "Pastor Jeff, we can get in and out in an hour, and we can do everything God wants us to do to be held accountable to obedience and going among the lost, and God's doing some incredible things." Again, it's not a mandate for 90 minutes, I'm just telling you, you can

do it in 90 minutes. It's broken down into three thirds. Each third doesn't have to be 30 minutes or doesn't have to be 20. You can use your own timeframe, but this is just a timeframe for you to consider.

There's three different ways that we're going to challenge BRAVE warriors in a cadre. The first is by this, we challenge BRAVE warriors by looking back. The first third of a cadre meeting, we look back. You'll see it on the screen, it'll come in and out. But the first way when we get together, you might pray for 30 seconds or a minute, but the very first thing you're going to do in a cadre when you come together as a group is you're going to give thanks. You're going to give thanks. You're going to ask this question, hey, where have you seen God at work this week? Or, what do you have to be thankful for?

Now, think about this. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18, it says, "Pray without ceasing. In everything, give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." When we start with thanksgiving, we're living out God's will. Why is it important to start with Thanksgiving? Why is it important to ask the question, where have you seen God at work this week? Why is it important to ask the question, what are you thankful for? Here's why. Because if you don't start there, you'll never get there.

If you ever been part of a group where people come together and they say, hey, what have you guys been struggling with this week? An hour and a half later, all we're doing is just dumping. Just so you know, it's not that we don't have problems at BRAVE. Just out of curiosity, humor me. How many have had some challenge this

week in some area of your life? Just show of hands. Bless you back there, brother.

Rest of us have challenges, but everybody's got challenges. But if you come and start talking about it, here's how I'm challenging my marriage, and here's how I'm challenging my singleness, and here's how we're challenged financially, here's my health challenge, and here's this. Anybody else got one to top that? All of a sudden, it starts spiraling.

When we come together and we start asking, hey, where have you seen God at work this week? How'd you see God's good hand? What do you have to be thankful for? I mean, the reality is while you're sitting here, you have 10 to 20 things to be thankful for in the next 10 minutes that God is doing in your life. Here's what happens when you start talking that way, other people start thinking, yeah, I have that to be thankful for too. Man, the fact that I could even make it to church today, I'm thankful for my health and the fact that I have a family and the fact that I'm thankful for that. I'm thankful for this.

When you're getting back together with a group that's going to ask you where you saw God at work and what you're thankful for, what will you be thinking about during the week? Where's God working today and what am I thankful for that he's doing? You'll create new habits that will be a blessing to your life and to all those around you. That's why we start with Thanksgiving. You can pray before you start. That's totally fine to welcome God in and say, "Holy Spirit, do a work with us today." But let's just talk about where we saw God at work this week and what we're thankful for. It's a great way to start. It start unpacking all the great ways and you get to hear

stories about God at work, and it's just super exciting.

Then, we move into the secondary, which we'll talk about more at the end, which is loving accountability. We've talked about two things that God wants us to be about, growing in our obedience, not perfectly, but increasingly, and being about going among the lost, both of those things. When we come back together at the end, you'll see how you're going to give, here's what God's calling me to obey and what he's calling me to do among the lost. When you come back together, we're going to hold each other accountable. Now, when I use the word accountability in church, I need to define it because most people in church don't understand accountability. Most people think of church of, oh, I got accountability partner. All that means is this is the person I can talk to about all my sin and they won't judge me, or it means this is the bully in my life that tries to beat me up when I tell them I do anything wrong. Both of those are in there.

Because here's the reality, if you come back and there's not loving accountability, and you were saying, "Hey, this week I want to read three chapters of the Bible every day." You come back and you realize, I didn't read three chapters of the Bible every day, and you know there's somebody in that circle that's going to beat you up and say, "Seriously, you didn't do that?" Guess what I'm going to do? I'm either A, not going back to that group, that cadre, or B, I'm just going to lie when it comes to my turn. You say Christians lie, yeah, all the time, because I don't want to feel foolish. I'm already being beat up enough by the enemy. He's the accuser of the brethren, he's the one that tells us I'm no good, he's the one that tells me I don't deserve to have anything that I have, he's the one that tells me I'm lousy, so what's loving accountability look like?

It means when somebody comes back and I'm like, "Hey, Joe, hey Susie. Hey, whoever. Hey, last week you said this is what you were going to grow an obedience to. How'd it go?" And they say, "Unbelievable. Here's what I did," and they did it, what are we going to do? We're going to cheer and applaud God's working in and through them. Amen? What if they come back and say, "It was a real hard week. I didn't get to that." What are we going to do then too? We're going to totally encourage them.

"Hey, is there any way, because God showed you, that's what he wants you to do. Is there any way this week I could be praying for you? Is there any way I could come alongside you this week and maybe help? Maybe you need somebody to watch your kids so you can go do what you need to do. Do you want me to come help watch your kids? I'm in this with you in your accountability, and I care about you because I want to see you grow increasingly in your obedience to Christ, and I want to see you grow in the mission of Jesus Christ. What can I do to help?"

That's loving accountability. That means I care about you and I care about what God's doing in and through you. I'm not badgering you, I'm not bullying you. I'm not coming after you. I'm lovingly helping you be obedient to whatever Jesus Christ showed you he wanted you to be obedient to, which is not me telling you what you need to be obedient to. It's what the Holy Spirit's been telling you that you need to be obedient to. We'll talk about that here in a little bit.

We start with thankfulness, then we get into loving accountability, and then we're going to do this, we're going to state the mission. Have you ever gone somewhere and

you're sitting in a meeting of I have no idea why I'm here? I have no idea what we're trying to accomplish tonight. I have no idea what we're doing. I've been invited into several small groups over the years, and I've sat there and about half an hour in, I'm like, where's this going and when's this ending, and how long do I have to stay here until I leave? I have no idea what we're doing here. Am I coming just to hear you teach me something or are you just going to rant for an hour? What are we doing? We're going to state the mission and the mission of BRAVE Church will be the mission that we state, which you know already is to challenge BRAVE warriors for courageous kingdom advancement.

Every woman's group, every men's group, every co-ed group, every youth cadre, every single one that gets together, here's what they're going to say, "Hey, why are we here tonight? Hey Nick, why don't you tell us why we're here? Hey, Joe, why don't you tell us why we're here? Hey, Susie, tell us why we're here." We're here to challenge BRAVE warriors for courageous kingdom advancement, that's why we're here, which means this, even if I'm the leader of the group, I'm here to help challenge you and admonish you. Guess what you're here for? You're doing the same in my life. I'm coming to hear from you too. I'm coming to hear from God and I'm coming to hear from you. We're all part of the same cadre. We're all on the same mission. That's what we're doing. That's the first third, and that's what we're about.

Now, if you weren't at BRAVE and you were like, "Man, I'm going to the mission field. I'm moving to North Korea, how am I going to do this?" Well, you don't have to challenge BRAVE warriors for courageous kingdom advancement, you could just

substitute Matthew 28:18-20. Why are we here tonight? Well, we're here because Jesus told us to go and make disciples of all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit and teach them to obey all things, and he'll be with us to the end, so he's put us on a mission to go make disciples and be obedient to him. That's what we're going to do. We've just summed it up into seven words for you.

That's what it means to look back. Some people can come in and do that rather quickly. Some people take a little more time depending upon the week. Now, you may look at this and say, "Pastor Jeff, you mean it's the same format every single week?" Yes, but it's different content every single week because based on the dynamic of where people are and what the Holy Spirit is doing in and through the group, it's going to be radically different every single time. It means you're going to get to a place you don't have to think about this. If you changed cadres and went to another one, it's going to have the exact same format and everybody's going to be doing the same thing. By the way, this will be the first time in our church's history where our groups, which we're calling cadres, will be completely aligned with our mission. It's not just a mission on a wall, it's going to be a mission that we live. Amen? Which I'm super excited about. That's what it means to look back.

The second way we challenge BRAVE warriors is after we look back, we're going to do it by looking up. We're going to do it by looking up. There's an acronym we're going to use, a mnemonic device that can help you remember that really means word. There's three different Greek words for the word word in the New Testament, and the first one is graphe. Graphe means scriptures or the writings like this book from

Genesis 1:1 through Revelation 22:21. It's the word of God. It's the scriptures. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture, graphe, is God-breathed and useful for teaching rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." This written word is the graphe.

Then, there's another word used for word in the Bible in the New Testament, it's called rhema. A rhema word is a spoken word of God. Romans 10:17 says, "And faith comes through hearing and hearing through the rhema or spoken word of Christ." Then, there's a third word that's used. It's logos. Some people say logos. You can say it either way you want, logos. L-O-G-O-S. It's the Greek word that represents Jesus Christ in all of his fullness. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the logos." In the beginning was the word and the logos, or the word was with God, and the word the logos was God. He was with God in the beginning. John 1:14, "And the word, the logos, became flesh and made his dwelling among us." What is the logos? The logos is the resurrected living Jesus Christ.

Now, if you didn't know this today, I got great news for you. After Jesus Christ died on the cross as fully God for all the sin of the world and took all the wraths of his father and made a way for us to have a relationship with him, he rose from the dead. He ascended into heaven and he's alive as he's ever been. Do you know that? We're using the word logos to describe L-O-G-O-S for you to remember what we're going to do in these next two thirds, L-O-G-O-S. The second third as we look up begins with this, it begins with L, which means learn.

When you come into a cadre that evening or that morning, there will be a

scripture verse or verses that you will learn from, and we have all sorts of scripture sets. There's different cadres doing different ones all the time. Honestly, any part of this graph, any part of this word is a good place to study. But what does it mean to learn? It means what do you learn about God and what he's doing? Now, there's two things that are important if you're going to learn, you need to be humble and you need to be teachable.

There's too many times in small groups where people come together, and like, "I already know this," or the teacher thinks I already know this. When we're coming together, we're not talking about our seminary degrees, how long we've studied the Bible, how much we know, I'm coming humble and I'm coming teachable because I need God to show me something in his word. I'm coming to learn. If I'm the cadre leader, guess what I'm doing? I'm coming to learn. If I get to a cadre and that night we're doing John 3:16, I'm not going to say, "You got to be kidding me. Everybody knows this one." I'm saying, "God, because your word is living and active and you're always speaking, what is it about John 3:16 I need to learn tonight?"

When you come with a humble, teachable spirit, it changes the whole group. When everybody's coming to learn, it changes the whole group. Now, when we learn, here's what I'm going to tell you to do, three little things that'll be helpful. One, state the verse. Here's where we're going to be tonight. We're going to be in John 3:16-19. State the verse, read the verse, state it. Here's the verses we're going to look at. Number two, stick to the passage. Have you ever been in a Bible study before or a small group where a verse gets read and then somebody's like, "Oh, yeah, that totally

reminds me like Revelation 8, and that reminds me of Isaiah 53, and that reminds me of 1 Thessalonians 5." Everybody's go, "Oh, I just read this awesome commentary this week by so-and-so, and you need to hear this. Let me read this to you." Have you ever been there before? We're not coming to do commentary studies. Stick to the cotton pick and verse.

If that's where we're at, then see what you're learning from that verse that day. Here's why. Because if you're a new believer and you're coming and you start listening to Christians talk about all their Bible knowledge, it will overwhelm you and you will think I can't do this. If you stick to the verse, somebody that's new will say, "I think I could lead one of these things." And isn't that what we want is growth and maturity? State the verse, stick to the passages.

Number three, do this. Speak in sentences as opposed to paragraphs and tones. You can say, "I'm reminded tonight that Jesus Christ is a gift for the whole world." That's a sentence. I don't need to go into 75 things I know about John 3:16. Speak in sentences. Let somebody else speak so you're learning from the other people. You don't need to be the educated one that knows it all. You're going to learn, and the spirit of God is resident in every single believer. And so, every single person who's a believer has something they can share. State the verse, stick to the passage, speak in sentences. We're coming to learn what God is teaching us tonight.

Number two, the O of logos means opt in, means how can I opt in? What might God be asking me to do? What's he saying here? We use the acronym of spec. If you don't remember all this today, it's fine. You will when you go to cadre orientation. I'm

asking myself, does this passage show me that there's any sin I need to avoid, or is there a promise that I can claim, or is there an example I can follow, or is there some command to obey? It's really interesting because if you let the Holy Spirit show you, oftentimes in one verse, all four are taking place. Then, you begin to hear somebody say, "Yeah, I see the example I need to follow. I see the promise that I need to claim here. That's really speaking to me. That's where I'm at."

You begin to learn that God is speaking directly to you about something that you need. Then, you begin to think all those things through. I'm opting in now. Now, I begin to think there's a promise here I need to claim in my life. I haven't been doing this. There's an example I need to follow. Jesus is telling us to do this. I don't really do that. There's a sin I'm called to avoid, and I'm not really good at avoiding this sin. I need to avoid that. That's what we're talking about.

When we had some conversation over that, then we go to the G, which is grow. Grow is this. Based on what you've learned, what areas do you need to grow in? Based on this promise that you're going to claim or this sin to avoid or this example to follow or this command to obey, what's an area in your life you can focus that on? In other words, when you think about your life, you think about your physical health, you think about your finances, you think about your family, you think about your friends, you think about your singleness, you think about your marriage, you think about your neighbors, you think about your work, you think whether you're an employee or an employer. How does this apply to this area of my life? This is where I'm feeling

prompted in this area to claim this promise. This is where I'm feeling prompted in this area to avoid this sin. Whatever it is, I'm starting to think, God, how do you want me to begin to apply this to my life?

I'm learning, I'm opting in and I'm growing. Now, if you're in a good group, a lot of that stuff's already happening, but this is where we usually wash our hands and we're like, "Good. That was good today, wasn't it? Man, I really enjoyed that. Thank you." Then, we leave and that's it. But this is where a cadre differs. See, this is just the middle third. We've looked back, now, we've looked up, we've learned, we've opted in. Now, we're growing. Oftentimes here, some leaders will say, let's just take 30 seconds to a minute and let's just pray how specifically the Holy Spirit might want us to apply this to our life.

Because at the end of the day, when you talk about what you're going to be obedient to, it's not what the leader tells you you need to do, it's not what your friend tells you you need to do, it's what is the Holy Spirit telling you that you need to do. We're inviting the Lord, the logos, Jesus Christ, who's central to all cadres, to speak to us about how we can grow in our obedience. Not perfectly, but what's the next step of faith look like for me to grow increasingly? This is where we challenge BRAVE warriors, not only to look back or look up, but to, number three, look forward.

When we look forward, this is where we see the O and the S. These may be the two most important parts of a cadre. The first O is this, obey. Obey. Now, some of you're like, "That's why I didn't want to be part of a cadre. I don't like that O. That's not what I'm looking for." It may not be what you're looking for, but it's what Jesus is

looking for. Because when he said, go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to what? To obey everything that I've commanded you, to obey all that I've commanded you. You can come up to the platform right now if 100% of the time you obey all that Christ commands you to do. What is that? Well, he told us to grow in our obedience and the whole Bible's full of all sorts of passages that tell us what we need to look like to reflect Christ, and he sent us out on mission so that we're going out among the loss, sharing the gospel with everybody.

Because on this side of heaven, nobody's perfect, there's always a way to add the O to whatever I'm doing in my life. There's always a specific application that the Holy Spirit can make for us. When we get to O, now, we're going around sharing a specific. Based upon how I need to grow, this week, I will... And I'm going to make an I will statement. An I will statement needs to be specific and not generic. Here's some generic ones I've heard over the years. How can I be praying for you, brother? Man, just pray that I get in the word more this week. Hey, just pray that I pray more this week. Just pray that I treat my wife better this week. Pray that I'm better with my kids. Next week when we get together, how am I going to know that you did that? Yeah, I don't know. What are you looking to do? I don't know.

See, we talk about making SMART goals. Sometimes we talk to our interns about smart goals. S-M-A-R-T, you may have heard that before. SMART goals are ones that are specific, S. M, they're measurable. A, they're attainable or achievable. R, they're realistic. And, T, they're timely. You've got a week to get this done. If I'm in a

cadre and I say, "You know what? The Lord's put on my heart to read the Bible in a year." Fantastic. What are you doing this week specifically? You're probably not going to read the whole Bible this week. What are you going to do? Hey, this week I'd like to read one chapter in the Bible every day this week starting in the book of John. Okay, that's specific, that's measurable, that's achievable, that's realistic, and there's a timetable to it. When we come back next week, I can ask you, "Did you read five chapters or seven chapters in the book of John?" If it's three chapters a day, did you read the entire book of John? Because it's 21 chapters. I can ask based upon what you said you were going to do.

Here's what you'll learn. You'll stop giving platitudes of all the stuff you're going to do, and you're only going to share what the Holy Spirit told you to do, because everybody's going to hold you accountable to whatever you say. There's nothing wrong with saying, "You know what? I'd just like to pray one time out loud with my spouse this week. That's my obedience." That's maybe a huge step for you. Okay, great. I'll ask you next week, if you prayed out loud with your spouse one time this week. That's it. That's obedience. We want you to be obedient, not to the church, not to the pastor, not to your cadre leader, but to who? To the Lord Jesus Christ and whatever he shows you growing obedience looks like for you.

Then, we do this, because I've been in a couple groups that have done that fairly well, but I've never been in a group that does this final one. Because remember, it's not just about us huddling up for the sake of huddling up because we love each other,

which we will. It's about huddling up so we can do what? Go among the lost and be on mission. What's the S? The S is send. The S is send. You say, where do you get that? I get it from the Bible in Luke 10:2, he was saying to them, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to what? To send out laborers in the harvest.

What are we doing? Hey guys, we've met. We've heard from each other. The Lord's spoken to us. He's shown us how to be obedient. Now guess what? We're getting ready to break the huddle and go. We're getting ready to go on the mission field for the next 165 hours, and what's that going to look like? Send. How will I be intentional as I go among the loss is the question I'm going to be asking. Now, there's three ways we're going to teach in cadre orientation for how you can go among the loss. We broke them down into three categories. You ready? It's prayer, care, and share. You may see a diagram up behind me. If you don't, it's coming up soon. We'll show a cadre in the middle and we'll show circles coming off of prayer, care and share. That's what a cadre is.

If a cadre ends with you growing in your obedience with a bunch of Christians and never results in you prayer, care and share for the loss, it's not a cadre. You can call it whatever you want. It's just a obedience Bible study group on steroids, which is good. It's just not complete, because what does Jesus want us to do? Jesus commissioned his 12 to go. He commissioned the 70 to go. He commissioned all his disciples to go. He's commissioned us to go and told us we'll be his witnesses. Now that we're getting to the S and send, we start thinking about how am I going to be

intentional with prayer, with care, and with share?

When you go through cadre orientation, you'll learn about prayer. You'll learn about prayer times, which are, how can you pray individually for the people that you're writing down that are lost, that you're praying for? How can you pray corporately for the people that are lost? What's a prayer walk? Prayer walk is where you go amongst the lost and you're praying for them. We do this sometimes at malls just because we take people out and model it, but it's not so that you can go to the mall and start praying. It's so that you can begin a lifestyle that whether you're in an airport or in your place of work or walking down the street, you begin to build a lifestyle where I'm praying for opportunities that the Lord might bring my way.

Then, we're going to teach you about prayer moments. Prayer moments are when you're walking up to somebody and you're engaging in a conversation and you're asking them, "Hey, can I pray for you?" And they say yes. And you say, "Well, I don't know what to do now. Not good at..." We'll teach you how to pray for somebody. Prayer times, prayer walks, prayer moments. Then, we'll teach you how to care for the lost. We teach it through words, wonders and works. Words are really your testimony. I taught you a little bit about that last week. I was, but God, and now I'm using my words, or I'm using the scripture to care for people. I'm using wonders.

We will teach you at a basic level of what it looks like to prophesy, how sometimes when you're meeting with somebody, God will give you a word of wisdom or knowledge for them. It'll come right out of your heart. God will give you a word of encouragement, it'll come right out of their heart. Sometimes people are saying,

"Would you pray for me? I'm sick. Would you pray for my healing?" Sure, we'll teach you how to pray for healing. Or, maybe there's a deliverance ministry as you grow in that area as well, and praying for people's freedom from some of the bondage that they're in.

Then, we talk about works. Works. How do we come alongside and see a need like the Good Samaritan saw a need and was moved to action? How do we open our eyes so we can care for the lost so we're not just walking by them? Then, third is how do we share with the lost? How do we share with the lost? Last week, I showed you about the three circles, which is just one tool. It may not be the tool that you choose. It's a tool that I like. It's a tool that we're teaching. It's a tool that's been used all over the world to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. When you meet a person of peace, meaning that they're interested and they want to learn more, and they want to grow more, and they say, "Tell me about this Jesus," you'll have a way and a method like I taught you last week, how to share the gospel with them and lead them to a relationship with Jesus Christ.

When we're in the send part, we're talking about, hey, how are you going to be praying? How are you going to be caring? How are you going to be sharing for the lost? What's God prompting you to do? How can we pray for our eyes to be open for God to do that? Now, when you do that, guess what? When you come back next week and we start by looking back and we start giving thanks, and we start doing loving accountability, you've just told the group two things that you're going to be about, one,

that you're going to be obedient in your growth, and number two is how you're going to go about amongst the lost. You're going to come back and report in what you've been doing. This is not for passive people that are just looking for a Bible study to sit in.

You say, "Well, Pastor Jeff, I don't know that I want to be in a cadre." Okay, nobody's forcing your hand. But here's what I am telling you as your pastor, I believe that I have a responsibility before God to lead the church the way God's calling us to lead the church, and I know of no other way to help us be on mission for the way Jesus wants to do in a better way than this. I don't. I just don't. I don't know of any other way that we can help people grow in obedience or any other way that we can keep people on mission other than this. I've seen fruit from it, I've seen growth from it, and I'm not just preaching to you where I'm telling you I'll be preaching, but you guys go do that whole cadre thing, I'm not getting involved in that.

I'm getting in a cadre. I want to be about the mission. I want to learn. I want to opt in. I want to grow. I want to obey. I want to be sent by God. I want to be going among the loss. I want to be challenged by other people that are helping me grow as an individual in Christ and not just a pastor. That's what we are. That's what we're calling people to do. Those are three legs of our stool. Sundays, Tuesdays, cadres, and here's why some of you, even if you feel a little fear in your heart, something deep down in you says, "Yeah, but I kind of wish I could do that." Here's why. Because God created you for that, and God called you to do that, which means everything in you, this is what you were designed to be on planet earth.

Now, there's a day coming where the mission's over, where growth and

obedience is done, because when you meet Jesus Christ, you're going to be transformed into his glorious image. There won't be any non-believers there. It'll just be a glorious day that begins and goes through all eternity, and that's awesome. But in time and space now, God has called us to make a difference in our city, in our state, in our nation, and in our world. What our world needs is not different politicians, although it does. But what the world needs is not more education, which is better, which it does. What the world needs is Jesus Christ and living examples of who he is in this world. Amen.

As we're thinking about spurring one another on, stirring up one another towards love and good deeds, this is how we're going to do it. We're going to continue doing Sundays. We're going to be champions of the word of God and proclaiming it boldly and worshiping his name and praying and seeking after him. We're going to do Tuesdays. The first Tuesday of every month, we're going to gather and pray our socks off and trust the Lord as we worship his name for his spirit to unleash different fun things in our group so that we see more freedom and more deliverance and more healing among us. And, we're going to be in cadres. We're going to be a small group, a church filled with small groups that are on mission for the Lord Jesus Christ.

You say, how do I get started? You get started by going to membership because you can't be a BRAVE warrior if you're not brave. 90 minutes, we can teach you what it means to be a BRAVE warrior. Then, you can take the next step into cadre orientation. Then you can take the next step into being in a cadre. Then, we'll have future leadership structures. They'll teach you more how to entrust ministry to other

people, so when you meet a person of peace, how do you meet their whole sphere of influence, and how do you grow them in Christ, and how do you help set them up for success in the Lord?

Friends, I believe our time's short. I believe the day is quickly approaching. I have no idea when the day is, not making any predictions, I know it soon. I want us to be a church that no matter what, we're ready, that we're yearning to meet Jesus, that we're yearning to walk on the streets of gold, that we're yearning to be with him, but in the meantime, we're going to be a group of people that will challenge one another for courageous kingdom advancement, that we're going to encourage one another to grow in our obedience, not perfectly, but increasingly, that we're going to challenge one another to be about the loss and go for prayer, care and share.

I'm telling you, if you think, I don't think I can do this, I'm telling you on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, he says you can, and I believe Jesus. Now, then, the way we end a cadre is with what you saw, which is a commissioning prayer. Commissioning prayer is not a generic prayer, commissioning prayers to commission God's people to go and do what they just heard God do. If you'll stand to your feet, I'd like to pray a commissioning prayer over you this morning.

Father in heaven, we just pray for BRAVE. We pray for everybody who calls this place home. Father, they will continue to grow in your knowledge and grace and love that they would grow in their ability to hear and be obedient to your word, that Lord, they would grow in their ability to seek your face because you called your house a

house of prayer. And Lord, that many would be all about being in relationship for the purpose of staying on mission. And Lord, we commission all these people, we entrust every single person here to your charge to be part of a life giving cadre, to grow in learning, to opt in, to grow, to be obedient, and to share. And Lord, that we be a church, that when we think about our city that's lost and the millions of people that are facing a Christ-less eternity, Lord, that we would be serious about prayer, we would be serious about care, and we'd be serious to go and share.

Lord, do your work among us. And Lord, let us yearn for the day that you return. We love you and bless you. We commission everybody here to serve you the Lord Jesus Christ, in every way, in Jesus name, amen and amen. Can we give God some praise?