



# **Message Transcript**

## **Ministry Musts**

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Thank you for choosing to worship with us today. Would you do me a favor and let's welcome our Broomfield Campus who's worshipping along with us this morning? And as we continue our worship, let's pray and let's have our hearts prepared to hear the living and active word of the Lord. Would you pray with me? Lord Jesus, thank you so much for your grace to us. Thank you for allowing us the privilege of worshipping your great name. And Lord, we pray this morning that as your word is proclaimed, Lord, that you would be helpful to me to faithfully proclaim your word and Lord that you would do a work in each and every one of us. Lord, we believe that every time your book is open, you speak directly to your people.

And so Lord, we just pray, speak Lord for we are ready to hear. And now if you're one of God's people, and you desire to hear his word, and to believe what he says about himself, and to believe what he says about you, and to put into practice the very things that he shows you, would you agree with me by very loudly saying the word amen. Every spring, at graduation time, normally at the commencement exercises, someone is invited in to give a speech. And when they're called in to give a speech, normally what that speech entails is somebody who has been somewhat successful in their field or a graduate of that institution who has made a name for his or herself, and they're coming to talk about what it will take in this life to really embark as these students begin a new journey or new endeavor in their life. How many have heard a graduation speech before?

Yep.

Keep your hand up if you remember every point that they said, okay? I mean that's the whole point. Oftentimes these people have poured themselves into it. They're sharing from their heart, they're sharing what they've learned, they're trying to impart wisdom and knowledge so that it can be remembered and be used but oftentimes we don't remember what's actually being said. In the book of Colossians, this is exactly what Paul is spelling out. If you have your Bible, I encourage you to open Colossians chapter one, verse 24. We're going to finish the chapter this morning. And really what you're going to hear is the heart of the Apostle Paul as he's making disciples and what he says every disciple maker must have. There's really five must haves for a disciple maker.

Now, before we read the text, because I want you to see this, there's a difference between attending religious services, there's a difference between just being a convert or a Christian versus being a disciple maker. A disciple maker is one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ and is doing his or her best to impart what Christ is doing in and through them into other people. It means when you're a disciple maker, you know other people by name that you are discipling and your goal is for them to grow in their faith in such a way that they begin to disciple others.

At Brave Church, we have a breed of discipleship that we call Brave Discipleship, which means this, we want people to be bold in their faith, we want to be a community of people that encourages people to take the next step of faith. The hardest step of faith you'll ever take in your life is the next one. We want to be a community that encourages you to be bold in that, go ahead and take that step of faith. Second, we

want you to be resolute in your identity. We want you to be a community that comes alongside and says, "If this is what God says about you, then we want you to own that." We want you to believe what God says not what you see in the mirror, not what the world says about you, but who God says that you are.

Third, we want you to be authentic in community. Why? Because church can often be the most fake place on the planet where everybody's fine all the time even though everybody's not all the time, right? Or that you try to conform and be like everybody else. God doesn't call you to conform and be like anybody else, God calls you to be conformed to his son and wants you to be authentic in community. The V, we want you to be virtuous in your character. We want to be a community that encourages that, to have moral excellence as you grow in Christ likeness, and the E stands for being engaged. We want you being engaged in the mission of Christ. The way you're engaged in the mission of Christ is to be part of a local church and give your highest and best there.

Here at Brave Church, we tell you, get involved in community, be part of a small group, find a place for your gifts and serve the best. Now, if you do that, and you get involved in doing that, and you pour into other people that are doing that, there's going to be some challenges that you face when you do that. And so what Paul is writing back to the Colossian church is he's telling them about what he's learned about making disciples and how you can take these five must-haves that you'll need when you make disciples so that you can be effective in making disciples. So with your Bibles open to

Colossians chapter one, let me read verses 24 through the end of the chapter and then we'll look at these five must-haves for making disciples.

Paul says this, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh, I do my share on behalf of his body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. Of this church, I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God, bestowed on me for your benefit so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God. That is, the mystery, which has been hidden from past ages and generations but has now been manifested to his saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery of the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim him admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor striving according to his power which works mightily within me."

And here what Paul is spelling out is his heart for how he made disciples and what the Colossian church can learn from him as they begin to make disciples. These are ministry must. You must have these if you're going to begin to [inaudible 00:05:37] to other people, you must recognize these are coming and be ready to endeavor in them. And the first is this, and I'm going to say it this way. I'm going to say for the sake of Christ and for the sake of others, every point is made that way. Why? Because at the end of the day, every reason that we're here is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. So who's it for? For the sake of Christ and for the sake of others. For Christ's sake and for others' sake, this is where these ministry must come out of, you'll see it in the text, and the

first is this, "For Christ and for the sake of others, rejoice in suffering."

Notice what he starts this section by saying, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings," for who? For your sake. Now you might have been to church long enough to say, "Pastor Jeff, why do we keep talking about rejoicing and suffering all the time? Why do we have to revisit this? Because we need to be reminded of this all the time. When you engage in advancing the kingdom of God by making disciples, suffering is inherent in what you do, and the knee-jerk reaction when you suffer is not to rejoice. And yet, if you read through the New Testament... Just do a study on the word suffering, it's everywhere in the New Testament, it's all over the place in the New Testament, and yet, when these disciple makers are talking about suffering, they talk about their attitude. There needs to be an attitude with the expectation of what's coming. The attitude needs to be rejoice with the suffering that you're going to endure.

Now I played sports my whole young adult life or my young life and attitude was super important. I had great coaches that would say, "Mental is to physical as four is to one. So have a good attitude, or keep your lows high and your highs low, or notice that your attitude determines your altitude. How you view things when you go through difficulty, it's really important." But I never had a coach tell me this, "Hey, when you're really down, when you're really getting beat, when you're really suffering, just rejoice in the Lord, just celebrate him. That's what it's all..." I never had that. Nobody ever taught me that.

It is so counterintuitive to what you feel, and there's all sorts of different ways that you can suffer. I mean, there's multi ways that you can suffer. That's why James

has counted all joy when you face trials of various kinds, because you don't know where they're going to come from. Trials can come from within your family, within the church, outside your family, outside the church, they can happen at work, they can happen financially, they can happen with your health, they can happen relationally, they can happen in ways that you never even expected. You can get a call from the doctor and he tells you something you didn't even know was going on with you. You just never know where these sufferings are going to come. These are sufferings that are coming as a result of you letting Jesus Christ be the Lord of your life.

Now, suffering shouldn't be something that comes strange to us. If you study the person of Jesus, you'll understand that suffering was a part of his earthly ministry. I mean to understand Jesus is to understand suffering. Let me just read a few verses from Isaiah chapter 53 in talking about the coming Messiah and what he would be like. Starting in the middle of verse two, it says, "He had no stately form or majesty that we should look upon him, no appearance that we should be attracted to him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and like one from whom men hide their face. He was despised and we did not esteem him. Surely our griefs, he himself bore and he carried our sorrows, yet we, ourselves, considered him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted, but what? He was pierced through for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, and the chastening for our wellbeing fell upon him, and by his scourging, we are healed."

I mean, do you hear some of those words? I mean, here's what Jesus' life was

familiar with, suffering, sorrows, grief, affliction, pierced through, crushed, chased, and scourged. I mean, that's his life. So why do you consider it strange when something's happening to you? Peter understood this. 1 Peter 4:12, "Brethren, why do you consider it strange with this fiery ordeal is coming upon you as though something unique were happening to you? That's just part of what it means to be engaged in the mission of Jesus Christ when you make disciples." And I love that when Jesus taught his disciples, he didn't shy away from this. When Jesus was instructing his disciples in Matthew chapter 10, he didn't tell him, "Hey, it's going to be easy streak. You're going to go out and heal everybody, going to cast out demons. It's going to be awesome. People are going to put you on the speaking circuit, you're going to make tons of money, and everybody in the world's going to love you." That's not what he says.

In Matthew chapter 10, here's what he says. Verse 21, he says, "As a result of what you do, brother will betray brother to death and father his child, and children will rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death." And here's what he says, "You will be hated by all because of my name, but the one who has endured to the end will be saved." I mean, does that sound like somebody that's giving platitudes like, "Hey, this is going to be easy to go do my work"? As a matter of fact, in that chapter, it continues. In Matthew chapter 10, verse 34 he says, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword, for I came to set a man against his father and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's enemies will be members of his own household."



Yeah.

How many of you as Christians have had a hard time witnessing the gospel in your own family? You know what I'm talking about? It's hard, it's challenging, it's difficult. Jesus didn't mince words. He didn't say, "If you become my disciple, it'll be easy." As a matter of fact, we talked about this weeks ago, "Anyone who would come after me must what? Deny himself, take up his cross, be willing to die and follow me." It's going to be hard to be a follower of Jesus. That's why when Paul writes, as he's writing to the Colossian church whom he's never met, he says, "Hey, your attitude needs to be rejoicing.

You say, "Well, how do I do that?" You have to have an ongoing relationship with God so that it results in rejoicing rather than retaliation. Because when people treat you wrong, the knee-jerk reaction is to retaliate, or to go gossip about them behind their back, or to seek revenge on how you're going to get them at a later date, or when things don't go your way, you start to think, "Well, God, if you're so good, then why is all this bad stuff happening to me?" I mean, it's not knee-jerk to rejoice, but when you're walking in light of the Lord, when those things happen, here's what he tells you to do, "Rejoice that your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life, rejoice that all sin has been forgiven, rejoice that your time on earth is just temporary, rejoice that God is using what you're doing to advance his kingdom even though you don't see it right now. Rejoice." Rejoice in what? Sufferings.

Now what qualifies Paul to share this stuff? Well, he's writing from prison right now when he is writing to them. He's not complaining. As a matter of fact, he wrote

Philippians at about the same time and he said, "Rejoice in the Lord always." In case you forgot to read that part, I'll say it again, rejoice. I mean, he's constantly thanking God for who he is and constantly thanking God for what he's doing now. Why are we going to suffer in the flesh? Notice what he says. He says, "And in my flesh," I'm back in Colossians 1:24, "I do my share on behalf of his body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ afflictions." Now, what does that mean?

It doesn't mean this. It doesn't mean that Jesus' death on the cross was insufficient and we need more of that and that Paul's trying to help Jesus do what he did. No. When Jesus died on the cross, it is finished. It's done. All your sin that you would ever sin, past, present, and future was put on Christ that by believing in his name, you are totally forgiven, right?

Yep.

But here's what he's saying. What he's saying is this, "In my body, in my flesh..." And by flesh, it can mean your physical body, which can be physical torment that he's taken, but flesh can also refer to your mental, or spiritual, or other suffering that you go through. He's like, "I'm filling up what is lacking." What's lacking? Well, here's what you have to understand. When Jesus Christ descended into heaven, he became head of his church. We are his what? Body. We're his body. So Jesus is still his work doing on planet earth. But guess what? When Jesus was in his physical ministry, they went after him, they attacked him, they crucified him, they put him on the cross.

When he ascended into heaven, you can't go after Jesus anymore, who do you

go after? You go after his body. And in Paul's saying, "In the body of Christ, I fill up what is lacking." In other words, they can't get to Jesus so they're going to persecute me, and isn't that exactly what Jesus said?

Yeah.

"If they persecuted me, they will persecute you, if they listened to me, they will listen to you. Do not be surprised when this happens," right? So here's what's going on. Remember when Saul was converted in Acts chapter nine. A bright light shown, he saw the Lord, and he heard the Lord say this, "Saul, why do you persecute me?" Saul's answer was, "Who are you, Lord? I'm not persecuting you, it's just these Christian people out there." Here's what was going on, Jesus was saying, "Whatever you do to one of my people you're doing to me." One of the reasons that you don't understand why when you live for Christ that people come after you is because people hate God and they hate the Lord Jesus Christ, and when you're an image bearer of the light, they're going to come after you for reasons they don't even understand themselves, right?

That's what Paul was doing before he was converted. He was attacking Christians not realizing he was attacking Jesus. So don't be surprised when those things happen to you. And Paul says, "When sufferings happen as a result of me preaching the gospel, and making disciples, and doing all that, I'm just filling up in his body, the church, what was lacking in his ministry, because he's still on the earth through his body, the church, and even though people are attacking me, they're really attacking Jesus. So I consider it a blessing and a joy."

Where else do you see this? Remember in Acts chapter five, when they told the disciples to stop speaking in his name, and they said, "Well, we can't do that." And so they had him flogged and then released. And what did they do? In Acts chapter five, I'll just read you exactly what it says. Acts chapter five, they go skirting away from getting beat and here's what they say, "So they went on their way from the presence of the council rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for his name." When they were beat, when they were suffering, when they were doing all this, what were they doing? They went away rejoicing, praising God, "Lord, the reason they're coming after us is because you are alive."

The more you suffer for the name of Christ, the more you realize that Jesus Christ is truly who he says he is, the more you realize that he's alive, the more he's worthy of following, the more he's worthy of doing this. Now, why do we need to do this? Because we need to understand that the further you walk with Jesus, probably the more suffering you're going to endure. Now, I know what some of you are saying, "That's why I don't go with Jesus that far. I mean, I'm cool with just the salvation story. Man, I just believe in him, but I'm not going that way."

No. True believers will always take the next step of faith. You can't help but not do this. Jeremiah said, "I don't even want to open my mouth. Every time I open my mouth, I mean, it's like judgment coming on the whole nation. I don't want to preach that message. I want to be the flowery preacher that tells everybody peace, peace. But every time I open my mouth, there's a fire in my belly and I can't keep it in. There's

no way. It's got to come out." Why? Because he was living for the Lord. And if you're living for the Lord, you can't help but continue to live for the Lord, if you're his. And I want to encourage you, we don't have time today, but go back and read 2 Corinthians chapter 11, because Paul is not just writing this as someone that says, "Hey, you guys are going to suffer. I know I am." Paul suffered more than anybody.

Yep.

I mean, he was beaten, he was whipped, he was shipwrecked, he was stoned, he was left for dead, he was hated by people inside the church, he was hated by people outside the church, and all he did was love Jesus and care for people, right? I mean, so we're listening to someone who's walked the same path. Jesus walked the same path, Paul walked the same path, Peter walked the same path, you're going to walk the same path. So I'm telling you, as your pastor, don't be surprised when you suffer for only wanting to do good.

"So Pastor Jeff, how does that work itself up?" Here's how it works itself up. You decide, "Hey, listen. You know what? I really do need to get plugged into the church, I really do need to be part of community, I really do need to go." And you start going and you realize... I realize the title of the book says, "Everybody's normal till you get to know him, and then you don't like going as much, but then God starts calling you to lead a group." And I've heard this time, and time, and time again with people that start leading a group in our church, and they'll come to me and say something like this, "Pastor Jeff, I now hate who I used to be in the group. I was the one that didn't come if it was a bad weather, I'm the one that didn't come if I didn't feel like, I'm the one that

didn't come. Now I'm leading the group and everybody's doing that to me. I hate it."

And I'm like, "Yeah, God's just growing you." Or what about when you serve, and you're giving all your best, and you prepare, and then people are like, "I don't agree with what you said. I don't like it." Hey I'm telling you, discipleship is hard. Just preaching and proclaiming, saying, "Go be well," different. Discipleship is relational, it's one on one, it's one on five, it's growing people, you're doing all this. It's what Jesus spent his entire ministry doing. And here's what he says, "Rejoice in suffering." Why do you think in Jesus' ministry he was constantly pulling away to talk to his dad? Why do you think he didn't want to go with his disciples all the time? Why do you think very early in the morning and late at night, he went to solitary places where there he could pray? Because he had to get away from all he was seeing.

I mean with his own earthly eyes, he was looking and saying, "This isn't going so well. Dad, it's not looking good. Nobody believes anything I came down to do and all they do is hate me." If you start walking with the Lord in a way where you're making disciples, you'll have those same moments, where you're asking the Lord, "Why am I doing what I'm doing?" And you realize that your pain is causing you to realize to rejoice in who you are in Christ and what is ultimately coming. I'm just telling you Brave Church, rejoice in your sufferings. When you suffer, it's just a glimpse of the Lord saying, "Oh yeah, I know how that feels."

Yep.

There's nothing you could bring to Lord and say, "Lord, this is really hurtful, and

this is really painful. I don't really like this," where he would say, "I have no idea what you're talking about. Just smile." I mean, you go to the Lord and say, "Lord, I just feel like people are against me." And Jesus would say, "I know exactly how that feels.", "I feel like my ministry's really not accomplishing much.", "I know exactly how that feels.", "I feel relationally, like it just doesn't seem to gel.", "I know exactly what that feels like." I mean, anything that you would bring before Jesus, he's like, "I get it. I know. I'm human. I'm God, I get it all. I've been tempted in every way you are yet without sin. I can identify with you."

So I'm just encouraging you Brave Church for Christ and for the sake of others, as you're making disciples, rejoice in suffering. Number two is this, for Christ and for the sake of others, steward your best in the church. [inaudible 00:20:43] verse 25, "Of this, I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed upon me for your benefit," Right? Again, you see for the sake of others. Now, Paul hasn't even met these people, and yet Paul is saying, "The reason I'm doing what I'm doing is because, now I've led a path for us to the Lord and now [inaudible 00:21:05] has formed this church and I'm doing what I'm doing so that you can experience the fullness of who God is in your life."

Now, where do you get this whole idea of stewarding your best? Notice this word, stewardship. It comes from the Greek word [foreign language 00:21:18]. It's like a house manager. It means you manage everything. Why was Paul doing what he was doing? Because he had been giving a management responsibility from God that was bestowed upon him that he was going to give an account to someday. Do you realize

church that when you became a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, he imparted gifts into your life and there's certain things that only you can do, and there's certain ways he wants you to act, and there's certain things he wants you to be that only you can be, and you're a manager and a steward of those things, and you'll be held accountable to God for those things someday?

Now here's what that means. Think about this. Everything you have, every resource you have, every gifting you have, has all been given to you by God for whose sake? For Christ's sake and for the sake of others. Here's our knee-jerk when we're making disciple. We think that everything we have is first and foremost for us and anything that's a little extra or leftover gets to go to God and his people. The Bible says just the opposite, "Everything you have is God's. Manage it well in such a way that because Christ is in you, the way in which he would use all your resources is the way that you're using all your resources."

It means this, it's a refocus in our lives to recognize that everything we have is for God and for us to be his best for the benefit of others. This is what Paul is saying. Now there's other scriptures in the Bible that highlight the same truth. I mean, think about Matthew chapter 25 versus 14 to 30, we have the parable of the talents. And in that story, we have the idea of responsibility and accountability. Because in this parable, there was one man given five talents, there was one man given two, and there was one man given one.

Now a talent is an exorbitant amount of money. It would've taken care of you for a long time. The man who had five went and invested his five, and when the master



comes back, he takes it to the master. He's like, "Hey, you gave me five. I'm giving you more back than what you even gave me because these weren't mine, they're yours, and I want you to be blessed by them." The man with two did the same thing. He immediately went out and invested his, and when the master came back, he said, "Hey, you gave me two, I brought you back two more, because these aren't mine, they're yours." But what did the guy with the one talent do? He went and dug a hole. He went and buried it. And when the master came back, here's what he said to him. "I knew you were a hard man reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you didn't sow."

See, what was he saying? "Here's what I know about you. You're a hard guy, and I don't like you, and I don't care about what you gave, and here's your stupid talent back anyway because I never wanted it to begin with." That's what he's saying. Why? Because he didn't have a relationship with God, he didn't have a relationship with the Lord. He thought everything he had been given was from him and anything the Lord poured out, he didn't want anything to do [inaudible 00:24:04]. "I'll just throw that to the side, I don't need to do that." He lived his life completely for himself. And what does the master say when he comes home? "You wicked lazy servant. Throw him into the outer darkness where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth. And by the way, take his one talent and give it to the one with 10 for whoever has, will be given more." Right?

That sounds unfair? It's not unfair. It's Jesus saying, "You have a responsibility and accountability with everything you have to serve God at his best." You say, "Well,

how do you get that he's supposed to serve in the church? Where do we get this out of the text?" Notice this, Paul says in verse 25, "I was made minister according to the stewardship from God, bestowed on me for your benefit." Whose benefit? The Colossian church's benefit, right? Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." If you want to do things for the Lord, put your highest and best resources into the church. If you don't attend Brave Church, you're just visiting, you're out of town, go to your church and give your highest and best to your church.

It means this, be involved in community at the highest way you possibly be, be involved with your resources at the highest way you can possibly be, be involved with your time at the highest way you can possibly be, and use your gifting at the highest way you can possibly be. Because I'm going to tell you something. Christians, listen to me, on judgment day, there is a return on investment. There is not one of us standing here, including your pastor, that will ever say, "I gave too much. I gave too much of my time, I gave too much of my money, I gave too much of my resources, I love the church too much."

There's not one of you that will say that I promise you, but there may be some of you standing there that will say, "I wish I would've given a little more, I wish I wouldn't have been so about me." And here's the lie of the enemy. Here's what it'll tell you, "You don't have much to give yet. So just wait until you get a little older, wait until you get married, wait until you have kids, wait until you get a real job that pays you real money, wait until, wait until, wait until."

Here's what Jesus does. Have you ever seen stories in the Bible where Jesus just takes a little bit and makes a lot out of it? I mean they're all over the place. I mean the most popular one is the feeding of the 5000. Just bring God what you got now, give him everything you have, and see what he does with it. See, he's just looking for it today because this is the day the Lord has made. Let's rejoice and be glad in that. And for many of us we think, "No, I just want to attend services. I'm good with that. I love Jesus." God wants you to get invested in the lives of other people for his sake and for the sake of his church.

The best place you can give your resources is the church. Why? Because he established the church, he promised to bless the church, he's coming back for his church. Clear? Paul's giving his life for the church of Jesus Christ. So bring your highest and best to him. Let be crystal clear. It doesn't mean you quit your day job, go to seminary, and become a pastor, it doesn't mean you need to be a professional clergy man or something like that. It's not what it means. I mean, what was Paul? He was a tent maker. What was Peterman? Peter, he was a fisherman. Peterman. What was Peter? He was a fisherman, right? I mean, but what you don't read about is how Peter wanted to start best pro shops and do a little work on the side, and what you don't read about is how Paul wanted to start REI and do a little ministry on the side.

They used what they had so they could give their highest and best to the church, they're not remembered for their fishing expertise or their tent making ability. As a matter of fact, Peter wasn't a very good fisherman. In every story you read, it was Jesus caught way more fish than Peter ever did, right? You don't have to be good at

your job. Your job is just your missionary service so you can steward your best into the church. So just be who you are. If you work in the business sector, if you're a stay at home mom, if you're a coach, whatever you do, that's just your day job that you're using to make disciples. That's just paying the bills so you can make disciples because the most important thing you can do on this earth is make disciples. Amen? So steward your best in the church.

Ministry must rejoice in suffering, steward your best in the church. Why is that important? Because there's this knee-jerk thing that we think we get to figure out where we want to steward our best. "I don't know if I like the church, I'm just going to give some money over here. I like what they're doing over there, I think I'll just get involved over there. I don't know that I want to get involved in the church at the highest level, but I'll go to church." That's the knee-jerk. Spiritual training would say, "My highest and best goes to my local church and anything else is in addition to what I get to do there." That's what a spiritual man or woman would say. I'm going to give you number three. I'll be short on this. I'm going to do a whole series on it in the spring. "For Christ in the sake of others minister, the word of God."

Notice what Paul said in verse 25, "He's bestowing on me for your benefit so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word." What was Paul's calling? His calling was to be an apostle to the Gentiles. His calling was to preach the word, to preach Christ. All of us are called to minister the word. Why was Paul's ministry so effective? We could give a lot of reasons. One, he was faithful, two, he was filled with

the spirit. He did what Jesus wanted him to do, but it all centered upon the word of God. You study anybody in church history whose ministry have lasted the test of time or have bore great fruit, they're all based upon men and women who champion the word of God. I'll go so far as to say this, if your ministry is not founded upon the word of God, if it's not central to what you are doing, on judgment day, you can be assured your ministry will count for nothing.

I'm talking about the preaching of the word, I'm talking about the teaching of the word, I'm talking about the living of the word, just like this is consuming to who you are. You may not have the gift of teaching, you may not ever be able to open up a text in the Bible and expose it, and teach it. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about if you learn what it may means to be a godly man or a godly woman, and you know how to impart that based upon what the word of God teaches, that's what I'm talking about. Let everything flow from the word of God. And why do I say that? I'm going to spend a whole season next year talking about this because we have so much ministry that's done in our culture apart from this word. There's nothing to be said.

I listen to a lot of preachers. I appreciate men that open up the word of God and speak it. Even if they're "boring" or they're not entertaining, it doesn't bother me so much as long as they're faithful to this book. But how many get up and teach? And it's just like, "What are you talking about? Where are you getting that? God's not saying anything that you're saying, and all you're doing is sticking on a few scriptures to support what you're saying." Here's what that ministry will count for someday, nothing. Can God still use that? Yeah. God used the donkey in the Old Testament. I mean,

God can use anybody, anywhere, but if you want to have fruitful ministry, use the word of God, if you want to counsel people, use the word of God, if you want to teach people, use the word of God, if you want to shepherd your kids, use the word of God.

God has given us so much instruction here as to how he wants us to live. You want to learn how to do missions? Use the word of God. You want to learn what the church is supposed to be? Use the word of God. The word of God is everything. And there's a temptation everywhere to pump the word of God, there's a temptation everywhere to make sure that our ministries make other people comfortable. There's a temptation for me all the time, every single week to say, "I don't want to preach this one. This one's a congregational trimmer. I mean, people really don't want to hear this." But I've been preaching this book now for 25 years and I've been the pastor of this church for almost nine, and here's what I've learned, people that love Jesus want the fullness of the word of God.

Amen.

I mean, people that really love Jesus would just say, "Pastor Jeff, just tell us what God says. We know it's not you talking anyway, we don't really care what you have to say. Tell us what God has to say." Right? And I realize that's what our church is going to be built on. So it may never be the biggest, it may never be the most fun, it certainly won't be the most popular, you don't have a cool pastor, I'm just not cool. Right? But I want to be faithful in what Jesus says, right? "Use the word of God." We'll talk more about this as we go on. Why is this important? Well, the Bible gives us a reason. I mean, there's so many verses. I'll just give you a couple today. 2 Timothy

3:16 says that, "All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correcting, and for training and righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

And 2 Peter one, verse 20 and 21 says, "But you must know this, first of all, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation for no prophecy was ever made by an active human will but men moved by the holy spirit, spoke from God." In other words, these are not man's words, these are God's words, and every bit of them are God breathed, and they're useful for everything. Now, why is this important? Here's why it's important, and I won't say much on this. Just look at our culture for a minute. Just look at it. If you think it's going in the right direction, you need to read your Bible. Okay? It is going so far. I mean, just watch what's going on in political, I'm not talking in parties, I'm just talking... Just look what's going on in the political world.

But that's downstream from where our culture is, that's just all our culture saying, "That's what we want." I'm telling you, if everybody in our culture sat under the word of God like this for the last 40 years, we wouldn't be having those discussions.

Right.

But because we're having those discussions now, people and culture are trying to say that people like me that preach the word of God are fundamentalists, bigoted, and a danger to our society. I'm not a danger to our society. I'm a prophet of the Lord Jesus Christ and I'm telling you the truth. Amen? And we need more and more of that. So just understand if you go down that way, just make sure that your ministry is

centered on the word of God. I'm tired of watching talk shows with pastors on them. They're like, "I can't really believe the whole thing. No, I don't believe the whole..." I believe the whole thing.

Yes.

There's even parts of this book I don't quite understand yet, and I probably couldn't even explain them to you. I don't get it. I'll ask God when I get there, but I know it's true, and when he reveals it all, I'll be like, "I couldn't defend it, but I knew it was true." This book is true. You'll know it someday. Hang on to it, make it the primary part of what you do in your ministry. If you want to have effective ministry and effective service to the king, make the word of God foundational. Fourth, do this, for Christ and for the sake of others, reveal the riches of God's glory, which is Christ in you.

Notice what he says. These two verses are some of the two most powerful verses in the entire New Testament in my opinion. Paul talks about the preaching of the word of God at the end of verse 25. What's the word of God? That is, "The mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations but has now been manifested to his saints." So what's this word of God? What has been hidden in past ages and generations. Meaning, people in the Old Testament never got to experience nor see what is now reality and has been manifested in or made known to New Testament [inaudible 00:35:10].

I mean, there is a mystery. Mystery means it was not known, now it's experience. We didn't understand it, we didn't see it, now we're living it. What is that?



And here's what he says. Verse 27. I love this verse. "To whom God will to make known what is the riches of his glory." What's the riches of God's glory? Is he going to talk about money next? Is he going to talk about having a fat bank account? He's going to talk about the riches of his glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is what? Christ in you, the hope of glory. You didn't respond well enough. So I'm going to teach you how to respond when you hear this. Okay? So when you hear that Christ is now in you, the God of the universe that created everything, that sustained everything, that died for you, that rose for you, he's now in you, here's what you should say when you hear the end of that verse.

When you say, "Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory," here's what you should say very loudly. It's like, "Whoa," Okay? So I'm going to read it again just so you can get it. "So here's the glory of the mystery among the Gentiles, which is this, Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Whoa.

Whoa. I mean, there's no other faith that makes that claim. Muhammad never claimed he was going to come into his followers.

That's right.

Confucius or Buddha never claimed that because they wouldn't fit. I mean, there's no other faith in the world that makes that claim.

Yep.

Why do we make that claim? We make that claim because it's true that when you

trust Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of your sins, when you're repenting of sins and trusting in Jesus, here's the truth, the God of the universe comes to indwell you through his holy spirit. He's in you. Now think about this.

Whoa.

Thank you. In the Old Testament, where did he dwell? Dwelled in the heavens, then he came and dwelled in the tabernacle, then we see him in the Ark of the Covenant. God is so powerful that when they tried to roll the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem rather than carry it like they were supposed to, and put it on a cart, and the cart was going to fall, and Uzzah says, "I'll catch it," he died on the spot because God's so glorious.

Then we see him in the temple and only the high priests can go in there once a year. But when Jesus Christ died, what happened? That curtain from the temple tore from top to bottom, not bottom to top, nobody ripped it, God ripped it top to bottom and opened it up. And what happened? Now for everybody who believes. Where's that spirit of God live? Where's that glory of God at? It's Christ in you, it's Christ in us, the hope of glory. I mean, that's great news. It's not just that you got saved so you could go to heaven someday and experience God, it's that when you got saved, God came to dwell in you. He's the resurrected Christ living in you, he's the hope of glory because he's already in you. Where's God? He's in you. Where's Christ? He's in us.

Makes Ephesians 3 really powerful. Doesn't it? "Now to him who is able to do far more than all that we ask or think according to his glorious power that works within us,

to him be the glory." Where's his power? We read about all his power in the Old Testament, all the things he could do. Look at what God did. Where's he at now? Where's that God today? He's in us, in his church with the same power that lives in us. It's awesome. And here's what I want to ask you a question on, because this is where the rubber meets the road. When I started learning this, when I was 24, it changed my walk with Christ.

If I were to ask you, how's your walk with Christ? What would you say? I mean, just rhetorically. Just think about it. I mean on a scale of zero to 100, where you're at? Zero being, "I can't get anything right," 100 being like, "It's perfect." What score would you give yourself? Because I want to help you this morning. Okay? Now for most of you, if you have been thinking numbers, think about this. What would make it better? What would it help your score to rise? Here's what most of you would say, because here's what I hear in small groups, "I need to read the Bible more."

Right. Many times-

"I need to spend time with the Lord. I need to pray better. I probably need to become more of an evangelist. You know what? There's some besetting sins in my life. I probably need to work on those and get those things right." They're all things that you need to do. And if you do those things, then you think that you're a better Christian. So if this week for many of you that are in that mindset, you go read your Bible every single day, and you work harder today, and you go share your faith with every waiter and waitress that serves you food this week, and you go to your office, and you're really serious about it, and you do all this good stuff, and there were some sins, but

you confessed them quicker and all this, then you'll give yourself a higher score and you're doing better because we know in our society, if you do better, then you are better, right? So let me help you out. Here's what the Bible says, "There is no one good. No, not one."

What it says.

"There is one who seeks the Lord, for all of us like sheep have gone astray." So let me give you your score. Ready? You're a zero. The Bible says, "Apart from me, you can do..." Zip. Okay? So you're a zero. On your best day, you're a zero. Isaiah 64 says, "Your best works are like filthy rags. Go try to be a better Christian. Go try to perform better. You're still a zero." Okay? "So Jeff, that's not why I came to church." Yes it is. Hang with me, because that's performance based Christianity.

Yep.

But when you realize that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross, and was buried, and rose from the dead, let me tell you what he is, he's 100.

Yep.

He's 100%. By believing in him, and he lives in you, guess what you are by Christ power in you, you're already 100. It's who you are. "Yeah, but I still sin." Yeah, but you're still 100 in your identity. You can live according to your performance and behavior or you can live according to the one who lives in you. Now, if you live according to your identity with the one who lives in you, then he gets to speak about who you are rather than the world or the mirror that you see in front of you every

morning that says, "You're no good, you're lousy, you're terrible." You get to let God speak and be resolute in your identity about what he says.

Let me just give you a couple that he'll tell you about on your worst day, that you're forgiven completely, that you're blessed, that you're favored, that you're loved, that you're chosen, that you're cherished, that you're a co-heir with Jesus Christ in all of his riches. You're redeemed, you're reconciled, you're secure, you're hopeful, you're cleansed, you're adopted, you're beloved, you're honored, you're more than a conqueror, and that's just to name a few. That's who you are. My Christianity changed when I moved from my performance based to Christ's performance based, which is called identity based. See, I'm 100 because of what Christ already did for me.

That's right.

Christ is in me, the hope of glory. I'm not 100 based upon my behavior. On the side of heaven, I never will be. But when I start believing all those things that are true about me, it changes everything. Christian, listen to me. "Well, I'm really not that good. I don't know the Bible very well. I'm just lonely. I'm just this." No. If God is for me, who can be against me? I'm not lonely, I have one that walks with me every single day. I'm not stupid when it comes to the Bible. The one that wrote it lives inside of me. Right? And so when I begin to claim who I am in Jesus name, by the blood of Jesus on the cross, I start saying, "I have access and knowledge to everything that God would ever want me to know because he lives right in me." And when I start living the way by my identity rather than my performance, guess what? My performance starts changing.

I could do all things. Yep.

We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Amen?

Amen.

But it has to be Christ who strengthens us. It's not dependent upon our own strength, it's not who we are, it's not how good we're going to do for God. When I begin to say, "Okay, God, this is who I am," everything begin to change. I try to fix my drinking, I try to fix my swearing, I try to fix my relationships. It doesn't fix. I mean, if you screwed it up bad enough to get it to the place that you're at, you can't fix it. If you're depressed, you can't fix it. If you have unforgiveness in your heart, you can't fix it. But when you go to the one who's already 100 and you recognize it through Christ cross and your belief in him, he already dwells in you, "And Lord because you've forgiven them, teach me how to do that. Because I'm a forgiving person. I know I am. And I'm a loving person, and I speak clearly, and let my speech be full of grace and seasoned with salt, because that's just who I am and who you see me as."

And you start making those promises over your life for how God sees you, they start working themselves out. The devil's biggest lie to Christians is he's trying to get you to live a performance based Christianity because he knows you can't live it.

Yeah. That's right.

By show of hands, because Broomfield, I'm watching you too. Who here can live perfectly for Jesus 100% of the time by themselves? Okay? There's no hands.

Broomfield, I see there's no hands, right? But in Christ in you, the hope of glory, you

can be all that God wants you to be, because you already are all God wants you to be. And if you'll own who God says that you are, it will change your performance. I have a God of the universe, every miracle maker that's did everything I read about, he lives in me he's redeemed me, he loves me, he sees me as perfect. And when I say that, and I live that, and I begin to believe that, everything begins to change.

Amen.

Reveal the riches of Christ's glory, which is Christ in you. It's not getting others to change their behavior. Stop doing that. Do you know the law makes people sin even more?

Yep.

I mean I'll prove it to you. Ready? Don't think about a flying pink elephant right now, just stop it. Don't do that ever again. Don't think about it. Don't think about a flying pink elephant over my head that's just zooming around. Don't think about that. Right now. Stop it. Does it work? The law doesn't work. All the law points out is that you're a sinner, but by God's grace, what he points out is, "No, it's all forgiven. You don't need to worry about that anymore. It's not about your do's and don'ts, I already did it on the cross. It's done." Now, Let me about my life in and through you. The Christian life is not about what you do for God, it's what he's going to do through you, it's what he's already done for you, and it's allowing him to live the life. That's beautiful. Isn't it? No other faith makes that claim. That's why Christians, if you're a believer and you're living a performance based Christianity, that's a lie of the devil to try to get you to do

something he knows you can't do.

But he also knows that if you'll ever live out your identity, he can't stop it. Let me give you the fifth one. Not only do you need to reveal the glory of God, which is Christ in you, but notice this final one, we need to labor in God's power to see every person complete in Christ. Notice what he says in verse 28. We proclaim him admonishing every man and teaching every with all wisdom so that we may present every man completing Christ. Now notice three words that he's going to talk about. Proclaim, admonish, and teach. Proclaim means to report throughout with conviction. It's being an advocate for. Proclaim means, "I'm going to let everybody know that there's conviction in my heart that Jesus Christ is Lord." It may not mean that you're a preacher. It doesn't say preach. It just means that you're going to announce with conviction wherever you're at that Jesus Christ is the Lord of your life so that all people know that, okay?

Teaching is a way of instructing people in the ways of God. It can involve a classroom, it can involve one-on-one, it can involve anything, but you're bringing them along. But let's talk about that word, admonishment. Admonishment really means this. It means to warn or to advise of the consequences. Now let me tell you something, that's the word we don't like. You can get proclamation in a lot of places and you can get good teaching in a lot of places, but it's only in the local church when people really know you that you can get admonishment. I've been walking with the Lord for 30 years now, and walking with the Lord for 30 years, I grow best and I know you grow best when I have people in my life that I will allow to speak into my life. You cannot grow in



the Christian faith by yourself, by just hearing the word and hearing the word taught. You can't.

I mean, you can grow some, but when you take that word and then you get with others that are trying to grow in that word, and you're able to speak into their life, and they're able to speak into yours, that's what accelerates growth like nothing else. And when you look at the different one anothers all throughout the New Testament, like love one another, encourage one another, bless one another, honor one another, admonish one another, all the one anothers happen where? Relationally, that only can happen in the church. Because sometimes we think, "Well, I'm hearing the word, I'm doing this, it's none of my business what they do." For the sake of Christ and for the sake of others, oh yes it is. "Well, it's none of my business, because that would hurt their feelings." It is my business because they're a brother in Christ. They're a part of Christ's body. I care about Christ's body. So for the sake of Christ's body and for the sake of Christ, I need to point this out to them.

Now, if you're sitting here saying, "Thank God. Pastor Jeff, you taught that. I've been wanting to admonish everybody in the whole church. I can't wait. I want to set up appointments all week long," you missed the whole point of the message. Because if you live out your identity in Christ, admonishing someone is never easy.

Right.

It's painful. If God ever calls you to admonish someone else and tell them, "Hey, the way you're going, I'm just going to warn you, it's not a good way," it's not a fun

conversation, it's not one that you want to have and you better be prayed up and humble enough to recognize that that could be you, and your only purpose is to restore them. It's hard. If you think you have the gift of admonishment... And I just love it. I love telling everybody else that they're wrong. That's not the gift of admonishment. Okay? There's no such thing. It's loving people enough to let them know. Parents, you love your kids enough oftentimes to tell them, "Wrong way." If we need to do that with our kids, how much more do we need it in the body of Christ?

Yeah.

How much do we need to warn, and admonish, and help, and grow each other? Right? And notice what he says, "We proclaim him admonishing every man, teaching every man, with all wisdom so it maybe present every man." Now, didn't we talk about last week how Jesus Christ is going to present us fully before the father? So what's Paul saying? He's saying, "With every single man, every single woman, every single person, no one gets left behind." I want partner with what Jesus is ultimately going to do someday, and I want to help people get to the place on this side of heaven where they're living fully for the glory of God. That's my calling.

The church did not exist just so people can get saved, the church exists so that the glory of Jesus can reign on planet earth through his people. Amen? And so what we're doing when we come alongside people, and we encourage them, and we admonish them, and there should be times where we're admonishing others, there should be times that they admonish us. And if you can't receive admonition from another, you're not worthy to give it, right? But every single person. Who does Paul

want to see complete in Christ? Every single person. He says, "For this reason I labor and strive."

That word labor means to give great effort. Strive means intensity or a struggle. They're athletic terms. [foreign language 00:49:55], the Greek word, it's where we get the word agonize? Paul says, "I'm going to give my entire life and my best, and my strength to see people walking in the fullness of Christ and being complete." I mean, we get the heart of his message in Galatians 4:19. Let's read the verse to you. He said, "My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ has formed in you." Labor. Never been in labor, never want to be in labor. Hard work for a purpose. Right? And so what's Paul saying though, he's not just saying, "Look at all I'm doing for God," he says in verse 29, "For this purpose also I labor," striving according to what? "His power, which works mightily within me." Same concept he's been talking about all along. It's God's power. "So where do I get it?" Let me tell you, you get it in your weakness.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:9, "For my power is perfected in weakness therefore I will boast all about my weakness." So if you're sitting here today and say, "I have no strengths to offer the Lord. I'm not like that. I'm not like those other people." He delights in that. Just give him all your weakness. "Lord, I don't have a lot of time, but with the time I have, here's what I give you. Lord, I don't have a lot of money, but what I have here I give you. Lord, I don't have a lot of relationship skill, but here's what I do have and I, I give you. Lord, I don't have a lot of bandwidth for things, but what I do have, I give you." I mean the Lord delights when we just relinquish things to him and

we strive in his power so that he can get his glorious work done in and through us.

Amen? That's who we are.

We're people who are resolved that we're going to rejoice and have the right attitude when we suffer, we're people that are going to be centered upon the word of God, we're people that are going to reveal the riches of Christ, we're people that are going to labor in his power, and we're going to give our highest and best to his church. Why? Let me tell you why, because Jesus Christ is worth it.

Yep.

He's worth it. He's worth your best. Here's how you know, because he did every single one of those things for you.

Yes.

I mean, when he was on the cross, he wasn't complaining, he was talking to his dad, he was forgiving us.

Hallelujah.

Right? When he was getting mistreated and beaten, he wasn't looking over his shoulder saying, "Hey, you just wait one day, you're going to get yours," he took it in humility. Why? Because of his love for his dad and for the sake of us. Was he faithful to the word? That's all he ever spoke. Right? Did he reveal the glory that was to come? Yeah, he fulfilled it. Did he labor, and strive, and agonize? Yeah, in the Garden of Gethsemane he was praying so hard that literal drops of blood were falling from his

head. He modeled what we do so that as we're doing it, there's not one person on planet earth that can say, "Jesus never knew how to suffer. I know what it looks like." He's the model of all these things. And I'm just encouraging you as you go out and make brave disciples, and as you get engaged in the ministry that Jesus has for you, hold on to these things, write them down, go back and look at them, because when you do, you will see God's glory come in and through you. Amen? Amen.

The way I wanted to end our service today is by taking the Lord's supper as a reminder of all that he did on our behalf. I'm going to pray here in a minute as the usher dispense the elements. Take two cups, one's on top of the other, hold them in your hands. I'll come back here in Inglewood. Will take the supper together. Somebody will do that for you in Broomfield today, and let's just pray together. Lord Jesus, we give you all the glory, honor, and praise for who you are. And Lord, we pray that as we hold the cup and as we look at the bread and the juice that we're reminded of all that you did to give your life for us so that we could have life and we could have it in your name. We give you all the glory, all the honor, and all the praise, in Jesus name. Amen.