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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

**July 7, 2019**

**Jesus Meets With the Disciples**

**John 20:19-23**

**Prayer:** *Father, we just again thank you for this time that we can draw near to you. We thank you for the day, this day that is different from other days, this day in particular that's different from other Sundays, Lord, it's the day that we focus on you and the cross. And so we pray especially for an outpouring of your Spirit, that you would again accompany us, take us deeper into what it is you've done for us, we pray. We pray for the presence of your Holy Spirit to enable us to do just that and that it would be of permanent value. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, as I just mentioned it's the first Sunday of the month, the day that we remember Christ and his cross. And Jesus on the night before he died, he met with his disciples and celebrated the very first Passover supper, the very last Passover supper for him but new Passover for them and the disciples. And it's listed in Matthew 26 which says this, it says: *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."* And he took a

*cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." So Jesus took the bread and the wine and he offered them up as symbols of his flesh and blood and then he asked his disciples to take the bread and drink the cup in order to symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood, and then he asked them to repeat the remembrance of this sacrifice on a regular basis, and this is what we're doing this morning, this is what we call "the Lord's table." And we celebrate it once a month and we do that by meditating on what it is the Lord Jesus Christ did for us on the cross and then by examining ourselves, asking God's Holy Spirit to convict us of sins, by confessing those sins and then by partaking in the elements. John 6:53 says: So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."*

Well, we've been working our way, it's been a couple of years now through the Gospel of John and we're nearing the very end, and we've been spending some time looking at these confrontations that Jesus had with his disciples post resurrection. We've looked at a number of them so far. We've looked at his confrontation with Mary

Magdalene and the apostle Peter, we've looked at his confrontation with doubting Thomas. Last time we looked at this post-resurrection confrontation that Jesus has with this man named Cleopas who's on his way to Emmaus. And as you recall, the resurrected Jesus approaches a distraught Cleopas and his friend as they're walking outside of Jerusalem after Jesus's crucifixion and he's engaging them in conversation. We saw the last time that the reason why Cleopas was so downcast was that he saw the very person who gave his life meaning executed. So Cleopas and his friend are walking and they're extraordinarily unhappy, Cleopas says to this new guest who joins them: *"Our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel."* See, in Cleopas's mind, redeemers, they don't get crucified. Cleopas was downcast, he was distraught because his reason for living was dead. I mean he had -- quote -- "hoped that Jesus was the one." And now by dying, Jesus had failed to be that one.

And we spoke last time about the dots and we spoke about the dots that Cleopas should have been able to connect to trust that Jesus was simply who he claimed to be and that he actually had died the death that he told them he was going to die. And so we found Cleopas telling this Jesus he doesn't recognize that the same Jesus who has bitterly disappointed him was a powerful prophet in word

and deed who had been crucified and buried. Okay, that was a dot. And then he tells Jesus that he's heard that the tomb was empty and that was another dot. And that he's also heard that there were eye witness accounts that an angel announced that Jesus was alive and there was another dot. And then he heard that other eye witness accounts had said that friends had found the tomb empty, and there's yet another dot. Add to all those dots all the other dots contained in the scriptures about Jesus as the bearer of our sin and we wind up with this huge gallery of dots and a Cleopas who never connects them. Just think, isn't all of this so awful? And so Jesus has overtaken these two men and they're the ones who are silent, they're downcast, they're downtrodden and they're rebuking Jesus's feigned ignorance of the events of these past few days and now they find that it's Jesus's turn to rebuke them. *And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"* And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. Jesus is telling Cleopas that all the dots were there right in front of him all the time. He says, *"O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."* We pointed out last time those words are not just for Cleopas, those words are specifically directed at us. *"Foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe."*

I pointed out that we all have far more dots than Cleopas ever had. I mean, we have all the evidence that he had, we have the whole of scripture, the whole of history and all of the science and all of the failed attempts of skeptics to prove that the tomb wasn't really empty. So the logical question is well then, why doesn't everybody believe? Well, the answer is actually simple. We don't see things as they are, we see things as we are. We become this final filter that determines if it will accept things as they really are or as we choose to perceive them. And we've been looking at these confrontations that Jesus has post resurrection and we wind up seeing that in every one of these confrontations, he's changing the perception of the one that he's confronting and he's helping them to see things as they really are and not just as they've been perceiving it. I mean Mary Magdalene had her perception changed from seeing Jesus as strictly an emotional attachment to seeing this same Jesus as Savior and Lord. Thomas had his personal perception changed from that of being this dour doubter into one fully convinced that Jesus was his Lord and Savior through this loving rebuke that he receives from Jesus. And then we looked at Peter who has this magnificent confrontation with Jesus in which he's challenged about the love that he has for Jesus and for Jesus's sheep. And it ends with Jesus's affirmation of his love for Peter and it changes Peter forever. Cleopas we've seen is a model of our own inability to connect the dots unless God gives

us the grace because we, just like Cleopas, are so slow to hear.

Well this morning we're going to be taking a look at one final group that Jesus is addressing after his resurrection and that is the disciples. And we'll look to see how Jesus changes their perception. Our text this morning is *John 20:19-23*, it says this, says: *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."*

Jesus is approaching his disciples and they are huddled and they are clearly terrified. These are men who are scared out of their wits. Well, Jesus is about to sanctify them and then he's going to send them. They were scared because they had seen things not as they really were but as how they perceived them. And Jesus had made it clear to his disciples in the weeks previous to his crucifixion exactly what was going to take place. There was no

mystery there. There was no surprise. He made it crystally clear. And you know as you follow this whole process from the very beginning of his time with the disciples, Jesus had made these veiled references about his death on the cross, but as the day grew closer and closer, Jesus no longer spoke for instance about a good shepherd laying down his life for his sheep but instead he spoke specifically and explicitly about what was going to be taking place. *Matthew 16* says: *From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.* It went in one ear of the disciples and out the other. I mean, the disciples saw events go from Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem to his crucifixion in a matter of days and they were completely unprepared to respond. And so they're huddled in this locked room for fear of the Jews because they had just seen them effectively murder their Lord. And they probably assumed that they were next. And the reason they were huddled together in this room is probably because they had gathered to digest all these reports that are coming in that Jesus had risen from the dead. See this group, this group in this room here is actually the last group that's going to be confronted by Jesus. You know, Mary Magdalene and Cleopas and Thomas and Peter and John, they had already met the risen Savior and so clearly the disciples knew something was afoot. So they're all gathered in this locked

room, and suddenly in their midst appears the Lord Jesus Christ. *John 20:19* says: *Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.*

By presenting himself to the disciples like he did, Jesus accomplishes three things. Number one, he first of all positively identifies himself as the very one who had been crucified only days before. Secondly, he now stands before them as risen proof that he's no longer dead, he is risen from the dead. But more importantly to them and to us, thirdly, Jesus symbolically demonstrates the vast difference between the claims of Christianity and every other religion in the world in verse 20. It says: *He showed them his hands and his side.* See, God so identified with us as his people that even after he had risen from the dead he maintained the very marks of the crucifixion that put him in the grave. Jesus didn't just visit us for 33 years. He is in fact right now somewhere in this universe still in flesh. I mean his commitment to us was and is for now and for all time.

As Jesus was ascending into heaven, there were two angels speaking to the disciples who were completely befuddled and standing there watching Jesus go up, and the angels confirmed that Jesus is now in



heaven in bodily form. This is Acts 1:9, it says: *As they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."* In flesh he went up to heaven and in flesh he will come to judge the living and the dead. The only thing different about Jesus's flesh will be the very thing that Jesus was showing his disciples in our text this morning, it's this permanent gash in his side and these holes in his hands and his feet. They were proof positive that God himself so identified with us and the pain of our fallen existence that he was willing to endure an earthly existence, not of a king, not of an emperor, but as the reputed illegitimate son of a carpenter and a peasant woman, born and living in a backwater town that everybody including his own disciples mocked as pathetic. Jesus lived the hard life of a low class laborer when he was entitled to be treated as royalty. Instead of the life of a king, he embraced the life of a servant and he ended his time on earth choosing the worst possible way to identify with the worst possible circumstance. His experience of pain, suffering, humiliation and abandonment had to be greater than any other human who's ever walked this earth. And there's a biblical reason why. I mean, speaking of Jesus Hebrews says this

in Hebrews 4:15, it says: *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.* I want you to think for a second about that phrase "in every respect." I mean God's not saying that Jesus experienced every single form of our temptations, I mean, after all there was no sin whatsoever in Jesus and so he didn't have the same internal battle with sin that we all have. In fact, Jesus's temptations were all external, that is outside of his being. If it was an internal struggle with sin, then Jesus would no longer be capable of being our high priest as he, too, would be struggling with sin and no longer perfect. As John Piper puts it: "If Jesus joins me in my sin, he could sympathize as a sharer in indwelling sin and he would not be God. He would not be a high priest. And he would not be a Savior. So he does not identify with indwelling sin and he does not identify with deeds of sin. He never did one and he never had an indwelling sin." But Jesus so thoroughly identifies with us in our weakness that you can make the case that qualitatively there can be no one who ever walked this planet whose weakness exceeded what Jesus had to endure. I mean God is saying what Jesus had to have gone through, what had to have been the very worse experience that any human who had ever lived had or that term "in every respect" becomes essentially meaningless. If he hadn't endured the worst pain, than anyone whose pain had exceeded his, they'd be able to

come up to Jesus and say, well, you may be able to sympathize with some people's weaknesses but you certainly can't sympathize with mine because you never walked in my shoes. Jesus may not have walked in the exact footprints but qualitatively there is no one who has experienced the death of agonies that Jesus has. It is Jesus's identification with us in those agonies that separates Christianity from all the other religions in the world. I mean if you think about it, every other religion seeks to guide people in ways that they can work their way up to God. Christianity alone speaks of a God who was willing to come down to us. Like I said, he didn't just come down for a visit. I mean he took up residence on our planet as one of us, living out his life perfectly in the process.

And you know, one of the great questions that people always raise when they're having a discussion about the nature of God and whether or not God actually exists is this huge elephant in the room which is the problem of pain. You know, in many folks' minds the idea of pain rules out this idea of an all good and all powerful God. Folks, say well, if there's a god and he's all powerful, he must not be all good because he allows had so much pain in the world. Or on the other hand if he's good, he must not be all powerful because he's clearly stuck in a world where pain is normative. So folks claim that God can be either all good or all

powerful but he can never be both. And yet here's Jesus standing in front of his disciples showing them his hands and his side proving that that idea is wrong. Here is an all good and all powerful God who left heaven itself to become just like one of his creatures in every respect except one and that was sin. And he has and remained spotless through his birth, through his life, through his death and resurrection and now only because he has spotlessly endured his own sacrifice on the cross had he defeated death itself and is now standing in the midst of his disciples showing them the scars that he would bear for us for eternity. I mean again, we have the scripture. *Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.*

Are you glad when you fully see the Lord? Can you fully see the Lord? You know the apostle Paul in *1 Corinthians 13*, he says: *For now we see through a glass, darkly.* Have you ever picked up one of those brown beer bottles and tried to look through it? You see how hard it is, everything you see is dark and distorted and the best you can hope for is this poorly refracted image of reality. Well, Paul is saying that's just what life in this world was like and this also applies to the cross. The very best that we can hope for is a distorted glimpse of what Christ actually did for us. To

fully understand what the wounds in his hand and the gash on his side represents, we'd have to fully know the glory that he left. We'd have to fully understand what it is he gave up in order to be standing there with his disciples. And that's not going to happen until we see Christ face to face. Paul continues the thought. He says: *For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as also I am known.* So to fully grasp the death of what Christ did for us, we have to fully grasp who He was, and folks, this side of heaven that is just not going to happen. And so what do we do? We simply have to trust. So consider this morning a Christ way, way beyond any thought you are capable of thinking. Consider a humility that brings the king of the universe to a locked room showing a frightened group of his followers that he's risen just as he said, and showing them for all time that he's going to bear the scars of his sacrifice for our sakes.

As the elders begin distributing the bread, consider also God's warning about communion. *1 Corinthians 11:28* says: *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we*

*are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.* Just to repeat what we say each time that communion is extremely serious business and to enter into it in an unworthy manner as to court disaster. If you're not absolutely confident that you are one of the king's kids, if you haven't by faith trusted in Christ as your Savior, if you first need to be reconciled with your brother, then just do not participate. No one's going to look at you or think you strange, as we say. On the other hand, we can make the mistake of thinking you have to be absolutely spotless in order to be worthy enough to receive communion. The enemy loves that mistake as well. See, being a child of the King doesn't mean that you don't sin and that you don't fail. It means that you recognize your salvation is not something you've earned, it's a gift that's been given to you. I quote Dane Ortlund again: "In the kingdom of God, the one thing that qualifies you is knowing that you don't qualify, and the one thing that disqualifies you is thinking that you do." It also means that when we fail we are aware of the fact that we've sinned and the only reason we're aware of it is because God is now living inside us. And so we grieve as children who knows that we have a Father who longs to forgive and cleanse us and we thank God for *1 John 1:9* that says: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* So we recognize that being a child of the King

doesn't mean that we're spotless. It means we recognize that as sinners we have an advocate with the Father, someone up in heaven itself who's speaking on our behalf. *1 John 2:1* says: *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father -- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.* And that's the key. We recognize that we don't have our own righteousness, we're not standing before God parading what we've done and how good we are. We are standing before God parading his righteousness, his perfection, and because of his righteousness and his perfection, we are free to eat from his table. So don't deny yourself the privilege that Christ purchased for you. We say it all the time, he lived the life that we were supposed to live and then he died the death we all deserved to die in our place so that we could be made worthy of heaven, so we, too, could receive a gift that we can't fully understand. Think for a moment about what it is Christ has done for you.

*1 Corinthians 11* says this, says: *For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."* So take and eat.

Jesus's appearance to the disciples changed everything. They went

from being a scared bunch to being a joyful bunch. Now Jesus was going to sanctify them and send them. *John 20:21* says: *Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."* You got to remember the state that Jesus has found his disciples in. They are scared, they're holed up, they're waiting. Only days before they had all scattered when the Lord was at his greatest need and now more than ever they who needed great encouragement. Jesus gives it to them in a two-fold way. First he symbolically gives them the Holy Spirit. You also have to understand, this is not a new idea, this is not a new teaching, this is one that Jesus has been visiting frequently and more and more frequently as the end is approaching. In *John 14* he says: *"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."* As he is in us. In verse 26 he says: *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."* In *John 15* he said: *"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me."* And then in chapter 16 he says: *"Nevertheless, I tell you*



*the truth: It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you."*

So this is not something new that Jesus is just introducing and there he is breathing out on his disciples and what he's telling them is that God himself is going to indwell them and give them extraordinary grace and power. And all the while they're hiding in a locked room, and they're anticipating the very worst. I mean they couldn't possibly imagine that they're about to turn the world upside down not by their power or their giftedness or their strength or their courage but by the power of the Spirit of God that is now going to be inside them. And then Jesus says this in verse 23, he says: *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."*

Let me be the first one to say this is a difficult passage. This is obviously the passage that the Catholic church depends on to state that Jesus has given priests the power to forgive sins through confession. And at first glance that's exactly what it looks like Jesus is doing. But once again we find that context is everything. So we have to ask ourselves, okay, what is Jesus doing in this locked room talking to the disciples? Well, he's

authorizing this broken, scared group of disciples to boldly proclaim the gospel which is centered around the forgiveness of sins. In fact proclaiming the forgiveness of sins is absolutely central to this gospel, and Jesus is sending them out to proclaim this forgiveness in Christ. I mean the Greek tense of the word "forgive" that Jesus uses indicates an action that's taken place in the past that continues into the present. And so Jesus is actually telling his disciples that any sins that they forgive will have been already forgiven, not by them but by God in heaven. And any sins they retain would have been retained, again not by them but by God in heaven. They were in no way authorized to do the forgiving. They were, however, authorized and charged with doing the announcement of forgiveness to anyone who placed their trust in Christ. And we can prove that. The proof of that is understanding how the disciples understood Jesus. It's found in Peter's first sermon that he gave right after Pentecost. And again, remember Peter's this scared, ignorant fisherman, and now he's standing before thousands of people and he's declaring this brand new gospel. He says in *Acts 2*: *"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know -- this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of*

death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it." Then he goes on to say: *"Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."* Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, *"Brothers, what shall we do?"* Right here we need to pause and we need to note what Peter did not do. He did not tell the crowd that he was now authorized to forgive sins, that he and the disciples were going to hold the sacrament of penance through confession. He didn't tell them to form lines so they confessed their sins to a priest to receive penance and absolution. And it would have been the perfect time, the perfect place to do that if that's what Jesus was authorizing them to do. But that's not at all what Peter did. This is what he did, in verse 38, it says: *Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* What is Peter doing, he just reiterates what he's already told the crowd, and it was the essence of what Jesus was instructing the disciples that day in that locked room. Peter said: *'And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'* No priest, no confessional, no penance, no ceremony to clean the slate. Instead there's an invitation to radically reorient their lives. See, to repent means to do an about-face, to recognize our complete

inability to make ourselves worthy by any means other than the sacrifice of Christ, including the sacrament of penance. What the disciples demonstrated was the radical re-orientation of the focus of their lives, and it was based on the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit that Christ had given them. They were one scared bunch inside that locked room, but now they had been sanctified by the gift of the Holy Spirit and sent by Christ himself with the task of declaring that *"everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

As the elders distribute the cup, I have one big question that I'd like to ask each of us this morning. The question is this: Do you think that Jesus has any different instruction for us than he had for the disciples? See, I think one of the most prevalent attitudes that I find among Christians these days is the same one that Jesus found among the disciples. We are scared. We're scared where this culture is going. We are scared at the vitriol and the bitterness that we see expressed towards people of faith. We are scared at the wickedness that is now celebrated as virtue. Part of being scared is that we huddle in little locked rooms like this one, although the door's open, but we know this is the safe place. We're surrounded by fellow believers and not subject to the slings and arrows of a culture that is growing in its hatred for Christ and his gospel. So let's admit we are scared. We're scared just

like that group of disciples in that little room, but Christ is here among us as he was then. We are sanctified because he's given us the exact same gift that he gave the disciples, the indwelling presence of his Holy Spirit. I mean it's a remarkable source of extraordinary power that we seldom if ever attempt to tap.

Everyone who names the name of Christ as Lord and Savior has God himself dwelling inside them. And Jesus after breathing out on his disciples did what? He sent them out to turn the world upside down. And we, too, are sent. I said it before, I'll say it again, folks are not going to come into this little room in order to get the gospel. That is the only thing that can save them. We have to meet them on their turf, the backyard fence, the grocery store, the play date, the workplace, the schoolyard, any other place that God gives us a platform to share the good news. I don't think we realize the incredible gift that we've been given. We've been given eternal life. We've also been given the very same mandate that Christ gave his disciples. We've been given the task, the dual task of announcing to the world that in Christ Jesus they can find forgiveness of sins and we also have the task of warning the world that no sacrament, no penance, no confession will ever substitute for a relationship with Jesus Christ who alone can forgive sins. And that living even a morally good life outside of a relationship with Christ means only that you will die in your morally good sins and be forever separated from God. I mean this

task that Christ has given to us is way outside of our pay grade, and that in itself is good news. Because God has told us over and over and over again my strength is made perfect in what? In weakness. So you have no idea how much power you have simply by asking God for the ability to share his gospel and then just trusting in whatever happens next. I mean I know that sounds like a scary proposition only until you understand that you've been sanctified already. You have the Spirit of God living inside you just waiting to be unleashed. And you've been sent by that same Spirit of God to share the good news with whomever God sends you. And so take a moment to ask God where he wants to send you. Change your perception from scared to sanctified to sent. Think on that for a moment.

*1 Corinthians says: In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." So take, and drink.*

This is the time for our heart, hands and feet segment where we think of what practical things we can do to remember Christ and I want to devote this just to prayer. I want to put ourselves in that same place where the disciples were, were huddled, were in a room, were scared, were wondering what's going to happen next. And

say, Lord, I just acknowledge, it is frightening. You can't turn on the news, you can't look at a newspaper without seeing some kind of attack on what it means to love Christ today. That's a scary thing. But, Lord, I also want to acknowledge what I think we seldom think of is that inside us is the living God, that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and one of the things that I said is what would you do if God just said, told you to just blurt out whatever you know about the gospel. I love Jesus. Jesus is Lord. Whatever it is. And then just trust God for whatever comes next. I think so many of us say, well, I don't have the theology down, and I don't have this, I don't have that, and I'm afraid. If you just walked up to somebody that you knew or somebody that God put you in contact with and prayed, said, "Lord, give me an opportunity," and then just kind of blurt it out, whatever it is God gives you to say and then just trust for the rest, whatever it is, God's going to give you. Worst that could happen is you look like a fool and you'll get over that. Trust me. I've gotten over that numerous times. But God just wants us to be reckless about this spirit that is inside us. He wants us to overturn the world like the disciples overturned the world, because we're sanctified, because we have the grace of God within us, God is telling us you have this power you don't even tap. So I'm praying for each and every one of us here, Lord, that we'll have opportunities whether it's in the workplace or at school or over the backyard fence or at

Wal-Mart, wherever it is, Lord, that we would be sensitive and tuned in and say could this be the day? Could this be the person that you would have me share the good news with and take that risk, even if you don't know anything other than the fact that Jesus is Lord, and just speak it out and then just trust that God's Spirit inside you will give you the means to follow up what's next.

*And Lord, that's what I pray for each and every one of us here. Lord, that you sanctify us with the power of your Holy Spirit, you make us aware of and finally that you send us. Lord, we are the recipients of the greatest gift humanity could ever receive and so often we keep it bottled up in this safe little room, and the only way people can get it is if they come into our room and play by our rules and that's not the way you intended this to be, Lord. You intended us to take that gift out, outside of those doors, into the world, into a world that's becoming more and more scary every day. But Lord, you have sanctified us. And so now we pray that you would send us and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*