

The Way of the Church

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[0 : 0 0] I am so thankful for you to be here this morning. I will be in the book of Matthew, Matthew chapter 10. Matthew chapter 10 is where we're going to be this morning. We'll be in Matthew 10.

I'm going to start in verse 1. I'm going to be Matthew 10 verses 1 through 8, and then we're going to step down to verse 32. Matthew 10 verses 1 through 8, and then catching verses 32 through 39 following that.

I don't want to take it out of context, but we do not have to read all of the verses there to get it in its proper context. We'll set it up as we read those verses. But again, so thankful we're just continuing to make our way through this series on the church.

We've been looking at the last several weeks, and now we are nearing the end of it, probably be two more weeks following this, of kind of the core values of the church.

We began this series kind of casting the vision of what a biblical vision of the church is, and what the Bible standard for the church in its existence should be.

[1 : 0 1] And I gave you kind of my vision for the church. I asked if you wanted to, you could write it down. Many of you may have done that. Many of you may not have, but I'll read it to you in case you haven't got it.

But my vision for the church, according to the scripture that we can see throughout the New Testament, is that the church is to be the visible, properly functioning fellowship, reaching out into the community and world Christ has placed us in with the love of the Father.

It is to be the visible, properly functioning fellowship, reaching out into the community and world Christ has placed us in with the love of the Father. And we took that vision, and we've been looking at values pertaining to that vision.

Really, there are four core values, as I see it, that really hold the church together. These are the values that I hold personally, things that I had set kind of down in my Bible, and set down from my Bible study.

One of the very first things I had to learn as a pastor, because I was a very, really young believer to be called into the ministry. I don't know if you know my, kind of my background, but I came to Christ shortly before my 21st birthday.

[2 : 0 3] So I was still 20. Very quickly, God, somehow or another, I don't know if it was very wise on the church that I was a member of at that time, saw fit to put me in positions to make me study.

So shortly after coming to Christ, about six months after coming to Christ, I was leading an adult Bible study Sunday school class, only because they couldn't find anybody else to do it. So they said, well, here's one young adult class.

He's young enough. Let him do it. Now, I was a very new believer, very new even to the Southern Baptist Church. Some of you know my background and just really had no idea what I was getting into.

God saw fit and ended up, Carrie and I moved from the young adult Sunday school class and we began to lead the youth. And that was okay. We taught youth for a number of years because at 22 and 23, you're still cool, even if you're married.

So at 22, 23 years of age, we were cool with the teenagers. And somebody told me yesterday, they were hearing stories about me from the past. I said, listen, I'm an outgoing guy. We taught youth for about 12, 13 years.

[3 : 05] There are a lot of stories out there about me, okay? And most of them true because when you hang out with a bunch of teenagers, you tend to do things that teenagers do. But that's okay. We were able to do that.

And again, I had to study because one thing that I found out was that teenagers question everything. And that's not bad. So I had to study to be able to teach these teenagers both in Sunday school and then on Wednesday night.

And then God kind of pulled me away from that. I thought he was going to lead me into full-time youth ministry. But no, he decided that he was going to put me in pastoral ministry. So again, it seems like God worked things out out of desperation in the local church I was a part of.

The church was without a pastor. It had an interim pastor. And then the interim pastor's job schedule changed. And I didn't have anybody preach on Wednesday nights. So they said, well, Billy Joe, you've been teaching the youth. We're very small here. Why don't you preach to us on Wednesday nights?

We didn't have a lot of teenagers at the time. I'm giving you the nutshell. So I began to preach on Wednesday nights. So I was still working with the youth, preaching on Wednesday nights. Then they said, you know what?

[4 : 06] We need a pastor. And Billy Joe, we can't find anybody else. The interim schedule seems to get crazy. Would you be the interim to the interim? Now, that's desperation, right? And when you have eight people at church, you can do that.

So I became the interim to the interim. And I began to preach on Sunday mornings, Sunday nights, and Wednesdays. At this time, I was 25 years old. So I'd been a believer, you can put the math together, for about four and a half years.

They let me be the interim for the interim in December 2005. In October 2006, they said, Billy Joe, we probably need to ordain you and call you as pastor. So October 2006, at the age of 26 years' age, I was ordained into the ministry and called to be the pastor of the church that I was serving already.

I'll say all of that because at 26, you don't know what you don't know. You just don't. They tell you in a man's brain, a man's brain, and this helps understand a lot, a man's brain is not fully developed until he's 24 years old.

Brother Josh Shelton and I were talking just this past Wednesday, and I wished him a happy anniversary, 25th wedding anniversary. I said, Brother, you've reached the milestone. I hope you have. He said, What's that? I said, To the point where our wives may have forgotten all the dumb things we did when we were young.

[5 : 20] Look, you know, we've been married long enough now that those things that happened before our brain was fully developed, maybe they forgot about them or maybe we've outlived them, right? He said, I don't know, brother. I did a lot. But that's what happens is we kind of, we don't know what we don't know.

So at 26, I was looking at this very small church, but God began to move and do things, and the excitement grew, and we were still working with the teenagers. So I was preaching Sunday mornings, working with teenagers on Wednesday nights, and God did things, and all of a sudden I had to start setting down really what I believed because for the first time people were wanting to know, What do you think about the church?

So these things were birthed out of necessity, and if you're going to be the one who stands up, then you need to know what you know, right? You need to know what you believe and to believe what you know.

So I began to really dive into the Bible and really look at these things, not so much for preaching material, but just for settled convictions. And God laid these things out, so that's where that vision came from.

This is where these four pillars come from. This is just birthed out of my personal Bible study. These are the pillars that I adhere to. And we looked at that vision to be the visible, properly functioning fellowship of believers, reaching out into the community and the world that Christ has put us in with the love of the Father.

[6 : 34] And the first pillar was that we would be, that we value. The first value was that we value the weekly corporate worship of the saints. That is a value of mine, and it's a value of the church.

We value the weekly corporate worship of the saints. Why? Because the best way the church can be visible is by worshiping together. Jesus says, we're two or more gathered together.

I am there as well. And if you want him to show up, the best way to do it is to be present and to worship together. There is something to be said about the worship of the saints. Martin Lloyd-Jones, D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, who pastored many years in Westminster Church in England, used to say, never discount the weight and the power of God present in the worship of the saints.

That God can do things. You can be preaching a message that has nothing to do about the cross. Well, you can't say it has nothing to do about the cross, but it is not specifically evangelistic. And God can take the worship of the saints and bring it together and begin to work on people's hearts.

It is the presence. So that goes to the visible. And we value that. And then we looked at the second one. Not only do we value the weekly corporate worship of the saints, we value a growing knowledge of God's word in every member.

[7 : 46] I really value that. I want everyone to grow in God's word. From the youngest to the oldest, I think we all have a lot of opportunity to grow. And I know I'm doing a long introduction, but I want you to see where we got here, how we got here, and why we're here.

And I value that. Why? Why? Because without growing in God's word, we will never be properly functioning. You cannot do what you're called to do until you can grow in God's word, until you know what God's word says.

So that's the second part of that vision, to be properly functioning. And then we looked at this past couple of weeks, we've looked at every part functioning in the role that God has called them to. Again, you cannot properly function with just a few parts running.

If you have a car or a vehicle that you came in, and even if you rode a bicycle, I have a bicycle at home that I stripped some of the gears out. I used to ride bikes. I would ride it from here to Normandy, and it was not bad.

And I hit a hill one time, and I was going up that hill. Man, I was younger back then, right? And I was really getting into that hill. And about that time, one of the gears broke. You know, and if you've ever been going up a hill as hard as you can, and the gear break on a bike, it's not a fun experience.

[8 : 46] But anyway, so now that bike isn't operating as it should. Why? Because one tooth on a gear broke off, so now if you hit that gear, things just don't work. How much more so in a body of believers called the church?

Unless every part is doing what it's supposed to be doing, it cannot be properly functioning. And now we get to this last one, because that last one in the vision statement is to be the visible, properly functioning fellowship of believers.

What? Reaching into the community and world that Christ has placed us in with the love of the Father. So this morning, we're going to look at value number four. And value number four is this. Value number four is that I value prayerfully, and we value prayerfully sustained missions, including both church-wide and personal evangelistic efforts in our surrounding ministry fields.

Let me read it to you one more time in case you're writing it down. We value prayerfully sustained missions, including both church-wide and personal evangelistic efforts in our surrounding ministry fields.

With that in mind, we're going to Matthew chapter 10. And I will tell you that I believe that this point, we will be on for three weeks this week and two more weeks. But we are in Matthew 10, verses 1 through 8. So let me pray with you with all that in mind.

[9 : 55] Let's pray together, and then we're going to stand together and read the Word of God. But let me ask, if you're physically able, would you stand with me before we read the Word of God? I want us to stand in prayer, and then we're going to get into the Word.

So would you stand with me? If you're physically able and desire to do so, let's stand together and pray. God, we thank you so much for this place called the church. We thank you for your body.

We thank you for the way you work and the way you move. And Lord, as we've been studying this thing called the church, it's really your idea. It is your work. It is your ministry. It is your people for your glory.

Lord, we pray that you'd help us to have insight and understanding. And Lord, as we open up your Word, we pray that your Word would open our lives up, that it would grip our hearts, that it would change us, it would transform us, it would do something in us.

Even maybe we may not be seeking to have done, but Lord, your Word would have power and authority over our lives to move us to live for your glory and honor. And we ask it all in the sweet name of Jesus.

[10 : 50] Amen. Stay standing with me, if you will, and if you desire to. Matthew 10, starting in verse 1. I'm going to read verses 1 through 8, and then I'm going to step down to verse 32 and read verses 32 through 39.

Matthew 10, starting in verse 1, says, Jesus summoned His 12 disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Now the names of the 12 apostles were these.

The first Simon, who is called Peter, Andrew his brother, and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector, James the son of Alphaeus and Thaddeus, Simon the zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who was to betray Him.

These 12 Jesus sent out after instructing them, Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans, but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the leper, cast out demons, freely you receive, freely give. Now go over to verse 32. Verse 32 of the same chapter says this, Therefore, everyone, again, this is still the words of Christ.

[11 : 54] If you have a red letter edition, it is in red letters. Mine is not, and I did that intentionally to make me slow down and pay attention to who is speaking in one of my Bibles, but this in verse 32, still Christ speaking.

Therefore, everyone who confesses me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven.

Do not think I came to bring peace on the 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 the members of his household.

He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.

And he who has found his life will lose it. And he who has lost his life for my sake will find it. Matthew 10, verses 1 through 8, 32 through 39.

[12 : 51] You may be seated. We are looking at core value number four of the church, that we value prayerfully sustained missions, both corporately and personally, in the ministry fields that we are involved in.

We are looking at this thing of missions activity. But I want to tell you right now from the very beginning that what I am bringing to you, what we are talking about, is something really that is not even recorded in all of Scripture.

Do you know that the word mission is nowhere to be found in the Bible? You never find missions mentioned. You don't find the word mission.

You don't find mission trips. You don't find mission activities. You do not find missions endeavors or even missions groups. As much as I believe in the corporate work of the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board, those entities are not to be found anywhere in Scripture.

You can do a word study and you can look it up. And from any translation that is of accurate literal translation from the Greek or the Hebrew, the word mission does not exist in Scripture.

[13 : 58] Because missions as we defined it is not by nature biblical. It is not that it's wrong. Stay with me because some of you are already throwing up red flags. It is because we define missions as an event or a time or a place or something we do.

And that is not biblical. I was reading a book recently by a man whose last name is Dukes. And it is a very small book. And it is said Living Scent. And he said in that book, he said, While I was at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, one of my professors of church history came to me and asked me a very simple question.

He asked me a simple question. This kind of helps to apply what we're looking at. He said, that gentleman asked me the question. He said, Who would you think is the most influential figure in the church in the 20th century?

He said, I sat there and I thought for a minute. And he said, Of course, the obvious answer was Billy Graham. Billy Graham probably had more influence and impact on the church in the 20th century than any other person than I could personally think of.

And he said, But I knew this professor. And I knew that if I said Billy Graham, that would be such a kind of boxed answer that it would be wrong. But he said, I couldn't come up with anything else.

[15 : 05] So I finally looked at the professor and said, I know it's probably too simple, but I'm going to have to say that the most influential person in the church in the 20th century was probably Billy Graham with all the crusades and everything that he did.

He said, The professor looked at me and said, Well, that's interesting. He said, Well, who would you say it is? He said, I would say that it was the communist dictator who took over the reign of China during that time.

He said, What do you mean? The communist dictator who took over the reign of China during that time? He said, Because before this particular communist regime came into power, Christianity had just been introduced to the Chinese people.

And at the introduction of Christianity to the Chinese people, there were a few people who accepted this. You may know the study of the Chinese people that that really... He said, Well, wait a minute. The communists come in and they shut down the church.

Right. They shut down the institution of the church. He said, This gentleman came in and Christianity had just been introduced into the Chinese culture and a few people had accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior.

[16 : 05] When this communist dictator came in and set up his power and his rule, he closed down what is called the establishment of the church and the church, as we know it, went underground. At the end of this communist regime, the Chinese church came out of it the largest church in the world.

More believers in China than anywhere else in the world. He said, Do you know why that happened? And the man said, No, I'd just love to know. He said, The case study you take in connection with that would be the church in Russia.

The church in Russia had existed for a number of years. If any of you know history, know how the church came about, I don't have time to get there. By the time the communist regime moved into Russia, the church in Russia was well established, had a lot of cathedrals, had a lot of buildings, had a lot of ornate things, and the communist regime came in and shut down the institution of the church and completely annihilated it.

He said, The difference is, in Russia, church was a place you went. In China, the communists moved in before the church had a place to go, so the church was just who you were. Think about that just for a minute.

As long as a church is a place you go and something you do, then the world powers have the ability to take it away from you.

[17 : 24] But when the church is who you are as a people group, even if they tell you you can't meet, you are the church, and you will continue to be the church. And that is exactly what happened to China in the 20th century and into the 21st century, and that is why the church there is millions and millions and millions strong, even though they do not have buildings to meet in, and even though the government still says they cannot do it, it is because it is not a place, it is a people.

And he brought that definition over and said, Missions is exactly the same thing. Too many times we have defined missions as something we do, or somewhere we go, rather than something we are.

Because, see, the reason New Testament does not have the word mission in it is because the believers in the New Testament, you may know, before they were called Christians, they were referred to as what?

The way. So I want you to see this morning the way of the church. Paul himself in his testimony said, I thought for many years I must persecute those according to the way.

Always with a capital T and always with a capital W. And then later on he testified and said, I do belong to the way. And all throughout the writings we see this reference to the way. Because what we define as activities was just really an everyday life event for the believers found throughout the New Testament.

[18 : 45] What we define as an event, what we define as something we're going to go do was something that they did just naturally because it wasn't something they scheduled, it was just something that happened to them and it was something that they lived out on a daily basis.

It is the way that they existed. We see that in the book of Acts where it says that they began to sell their possessions and all things had in common. And we're not trying to say we're building up a commune or anything like that here.

We're not doing that. We're just talking about they lived this out. They didn't just go do events. So when we talk about this missional living, I want you to define it as the Bible does as a way, not as an event.

And I want you to see here how we get that from Matthew chapter 10, the way of the church. Number one, we see that the way of the church is full of provided power.

The way of the church is full of provided power. It says in Matthew 10, starting in verse one, Jesus summoned his 12 disciples. He said, well, yes, this is just for the apostles there. Well, really the scripture doesn't say apostles until you get down to verse two.

[19 : 48] Why? Because the apostles are those who are sent out. Right now he's calling himself the disciples, right? So disciples are what all of us should strive to be. We should be disciples. I don't believe in the biblical position of apostleship anymore.

I'm not the biblical position. I don't believe that there is the office of apostles any longer. I think those found those with those who are sent out. But you are an apostle being sent out as a missionary, if you want to use that word.

But we see here, Jesus summoned his 12 disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. We're looking at this truth that the way is full of provided power.

First of all and foremost, the way that Christ has called us to live is always birthed from being in his presence. It says, Jesus summoned his 12 disciples and called them to himself.

I want to tell you just a really quick secret here. You will never live the way God has called you to unless you hang out in the presence of he who calls you to himself. I don't care what trip you schedule.

[20 : 50] I don't care where you go. I don't care where your plane ticket takes you. I don't care what work you do. The only way we can live according to the way is by hanging out in his presence.

He called them to himself. Before he ever sent them out, before he ever commanded them to go, he first called them to himself. And this is the beauty of the gospel, that Jesus calls us to himself. And he calls us to himself to do something in particular, right?

He called them to himself knowing that he was about to send them away from himself. But he first called them near so that he could give them what they needed. And it says, and he gave them power. And it gives this listing of power.

Now, I'm not here to tell you that God's going to give you the power to cast out demons, to heal sicknesses, to do all these things. But what I want you to know, and what I hope you saw in scripture, is that the power that Jesus gave them is the very thing he commanded them to do.

Did you notice that? It says here that he called them to himself and he gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out, to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Now, go on down with me here in verse 8.

[21 : 53] And he tells them to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the leper, cast out the demons. What are you seeing here? That Jesus provided the power they would need to fulfill the purpose he was sending them out for.

He may not call you to himself to send you out to cast out demons. He may. You say, Pastor, you mean you believe in demons? Well, I would be anti-biblical if I didn't.

It would be anti-scriptural. You believe in people being possessed and all those things? Well, Jesus saw it and Jesus professed it and Jesus taught it and I want to follow the way of Christ.

It doesn't matter if it makes sense to me. I believe man has a way of defining things to remove God from the equation because we think if we acknowledge the fact that there are some things we don't understand, then we have to lean on him who understands it all, right?

But what I have found is that whatever he is sending us out to do, he first calls us to himself to provide us the power we need to do it. People say, I can't live missionally.

[22 : 54] I can't live this way. I don't know if I can do it. And you are right in one sense in that you can't, but you're also forgetting the fact that Christ calls you to himself to empower you to do it.

It is a way of life. And the way of the church is always full of provided power. My friend, if you do not have the power to live life on mission, if you do not have the power to live life, let's just say scripturally, according to the way, it is not because of a lack of power.

It is because of a lack of time spent with Christ. I hate to say that because it seems kind of harsh, but I'm speaking to my own reality. It is because we are short-cutting our time in his presence, and therefore, we have cut off the provision of our supply of his power.

Jesus doesn't just give us a box or a gas station and say, anytime you need something else, come fill up. He says, no, come know me, come spend time with me, come hang out with me. There are things I want you to do, but before I ask you to do them, be sure to come to me so that I can give you the power to do it.

Friend, listen, Christ has all the power you need to do everything he's calling you to do. And you say, well, I don't know about that. Test him and try him and see.

[24 : 08] See if you can't hang out with the Savior for a little while and fill his renewed energy to fulfill the purposes he's called you to do. The way of the church is full of provided power.

Number two, the way of the church follows the pattern of Jesus. So where I want you to understand this and why I'm taking you kind of through this history because this message really introduces the next two messages is why we value the church prayerfully sustained missions is because the way of the church follows the pattern of Jesus.

And if there is a pattern we are to follow as a church, it is the pattern of our head. That is Jesus Christ. He is the head of all things. He's been given as head of the church, right? And I want my body to follow what my head is doing.

I get into trouble when my head thinks I'm doing one thing and my body begins to do something else. The body always is to follow the head because the head dictates what the body is supposed to be doing.

At least it should be. And Jesus is the head of the church. So we want to see the pattern he has. Do you know that all four gospels record for us the sending out of the twelve? All four gospels record this event that Jesus called them to himself.

[25 : 17] He instructed them. He empowered them and he sent them. All four gospels record that. Luke adds another sending out where Luke not only has the sending out of the twelve, Luke also records the sending out of the seventy.

Now what's unique about the sending out of the seventy is the seventy were not told to stay particularly in Israel or in the Jewish provinces. They were told to go to the cities before Christ got there and he was going to go with them too.

So they all four record the sending out of the twelve. Luke records the sending out of the seventy. Some Bible scholars think it's seventy-two. They all went two by two. Matthew chapter 28 gives us what we call the great commission.

So now we have the gospels giving us the sending of the twelve and the sending of the seventy and then Matthew chapter 28 is the great commission. It is a commandment that has been given to us that we are to go and make disciples.

By the way that means Jesus has sent out all of the church through all of time. Acts 1-8 and following not only gives us the sending out of the church but it gives us the model the church is to follow as it goes and how does that model read?

[26 : 19] The Acts 1-8 model says you should be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the world. What is Jerusalem? That is the city you're in. What is Judea? That is the place that contains the city you are in.

So it's Ward Trace, Bedford County, Samaria, that's Tennessee, and to the uttermost parts of the world which means that as Jesus sent his church he never just sent his church to one location. what we find here in scripture and what we find so rampant is that Jesus has a habit of sending people.

Those he calls to himself he has a habit of telling them to go. Right here we see that Jesus sent them out from himself and he says as you go that word all of a sudden should resonate because Matthew 28 says what?

As you go. It says go therefore and make disciples but it literally reads as you are going in your everyday life. Jesus, friend listen to me this is the pattern I want you to see.

There will be a day where we gather around the throne and we worship. We're 10,000 years it's like we've just begun. But even in heaven do you know we're given occupation?

[27 : 33] The scripture tells us in heaven we're given stuff to do. We have totally disconnected the scripture if we think that all Jesus wants is for us to make a decision and then to live our lives.

He calls us to himself so that we can be fueled from being in his presence so that he could send us away from his presence to serve a world just to come back to his presence to get sent back out see the pattern of Christ is come to me now go to them come to me now go to them come to me now go to them come to me now go to them here let's draw away for a little while and be renewed now go back to them it is always this pattern Jesus has a pattern of refreshing renewing and rescinding refreshing renewing and rescinding so when the church stops doing that the church is not following the pattern set for it by its head that is Jesus the clear teaching of scripture is Jesus says don't just hang out it's go out and by the way let's just be clear on this it doesn't say just join organizations that are sending other people out it says us we are to go out it is the disciples responsibility it is a clear call it is a hard call it is a difficult call but it is the pattern we see and the way of life that is why

Paul says I was persecuting people according to this way and now all of a sudden I am a member of the way Jesus himself met Paul in the Damascus remember that and Jesus says why are you persecuting the way what is he saying the believers he says Paul you are going around getting all these people and the only reason you know they are my people is because of the way they are living and the question begs to be answered would people know we are his people because of the way we live not just of the things we say because Jesus says your life in him is full of a way of missional living and if we do not value that then we are not valuing the pattern he set for us number three not only is the way full of provided power not only is the way followed the pattern of Jesus the way of the church ensures a public profession the way of the church ensures a public profession verse 32 now I'm not intentionally skipping over this part where Jesus gave them specific instructions about their missional activity they were to be living out they were to go preaching they would be they would face those who oppose them all that's true okay it is but I want us just to kind of see another survey here of this passage so that in the next couple of weeks we can dive into verses in scripture that really point to us as we look at it verse 32 says therefore everyone who confesses me before men

I will also confess him before my father who is in heaven but whoever denies me before men I will also deny him before my father who is in heaven now what did the scripture say verse 7 says as you go preach saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand in Luke where Luke records the sending out of the 70 same thing Jesus tells the 70 go and preach the kingdom of heaven is at hand Matthew 28 go and preach baptizing making disciples teaching them everything that I have taught you Acts 1:8 go therefore and make disciples teaching preaching sharing and proclaiming the name of Christ and then we see here in verse 32 and 33 therefore everyone who confesses me before men I will also confess him before my father who is in heaven but whoever denies me before men I will also deny him before my father who is in heaven friend I want to tell you something the way of the church ensures a public profession because Jesus says public professions are important and you say well friend you say pastor listen to me it's all well and good and you're really outgoing but you don't know me

I don't like to talk in front of people and I don't like to offend anybody I don't want to offend anybody either I don't want to be pushy here's the good news listen to me when you live according to the way you will have an opportunity to profess the name the scripture says live in such a way that others may see your good who's that woman walking away this is my bride that is my gorgeous wife she is beautiful I love her I don't have a problem professing the love for my wife

[32 : 33] I try to kiss her in public every now and and she say well four men and Jesus is professing your name before the father who is in heaven it is a great testimony the testimony of the church I had the blessing of being the pastor of this church who made a decision on a business meeting to financially support the school in one of his sports programs I took that check I called the coach I said hey can you meet me before my bus so I can't believe it I said I know I said listen all I did was brought it up I said the church went with it and he said this is insane I said it's great isn't it I love your daughter or love you

I know churches don't love their pastors much but they must really love your daughter I said it has nothing to do with me or my daughter the church just loves Jesus and the church wants to serve Christ and wants to love the community and the church wants to be visible in the community he said yeah that's wrong that's going on your head gets a Christ and we did all that and what are these and then later somebody came up all I did was give a check right that you guys made a decision about but I cannot count the number of times I had the opportunity to publicly profess Christ because of a check friend listen to me your life lived according to the way will cause people to ask questions which does give you the opportunity to make public profession which all of sudden gives

Christ the opportunity to make a heavenly profession and I didn't take any of the credit for that as a matter of fact I told everybody it blew me away I never would have guessed I never I didn't even ask the church to do that as a matter of fact I cautioned!

church and it's just the! it's a profession of the church and love for Christ and those things have nothing to do with me and nothing to do it's just a matter of being in love with the Savior for him listen to me but Jesus also whoever does not confess me before men or denies me before men whoever denies me before men I will also deny him before my father who is in heaven do you know the surest way to deny Jesus before men to not live according to the way to say well I believe what I believe and I'm going to hold on to my beliefs and I'm just going to keep them near and dear to me now I hope they're near and dear to you but friend listen to me Christ has called us to live differently!

because of the near and dear I'm not telling you not all of us are called to be evangelists some of you may be called to stand on the street corner and to publicly and that's great not all of us have done that but we have all been sent out to live according to the way which will cause people to ask questions it will I want to know why you're!

[36 : 17] doing that! where are you going here I wore some of their church shirts at the barbershop had people ask how many times I've had church shirts on what in the world what does that mean what does that mean give you an opportunity to make a public profession it is just the opportunity to allow Christ to profess your name now I've got one more fourth and final one and!

here's the critical one okay the way of the church is a personal choice the way of the church is a personal choice because see we have this tendency to say well the church is doing and the church is doing and the church is doing and you're right the church is doing but if you really want to bring the rubber to the road you say am I doing because the way of the church is a personal choice you see what Jesus says here do not think that I came to bring peace on the 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 her and a!

man's enemies will be the members of his household he who! the Bible says that you are to honor your father and mother and I agree and I agree and I agree you say well the Bible says that I must honor my parents and you are absolutely right Jesus is not saying that you hate your parents but Jesus is saying this if you love your parents more than you love him you're wrong as a matter of fact Jesus says your devotion and it's a high standard it's a high calling and listen I have four kids I get it I understand it and I want to be involved in my kids lives!

But if my kids love for the Savior needs to be so great that the love that they have for me is almost like hatred I want them to love Jesus so much that compared to the way they feel about me it's almost as if they really don't care because when they love Jesus that much they cannot help but care about me Jesus says by comparison your love for me ought to super exceed the love you have for anyone else J.D.

Greer put a picture like this J.D. Greer said it recently in a sermon he said the way to see it in pictures like this someone breaks into your house and you have your child and your dog you have a child that you love dearly and you have a dog that you love dearly I have a dog at my house her name is lady she is a German shepherd she is getting old but I love her dearly he says someone breaks into your house and this man has a gun and he comes into your house and he has a gun in his hand and he says somebody is going to die here either the dog or the kid who is going to die and you get the choice JD said that's a no brainer he said I love my dog but dog has got to go why because the love I have for my child is so much more than the love I have for my animal it's got to go he said that's the picture that Christ is given Christ is saying your love for me ought to so super exceed your love for anyone else it's a no brainer you wouldn't even have to stop and think about it you wouldn't have to go give me a minute to think about it because Jesus here is now bringing it to the personal level right he's bringing it to you and I individually look at what he says here verse 38 by the way is the most quoted saying of

[40 : 08] Christ in the New Testament I told you that before it is the most quoted saying of Christ in the New Testament if you want to know what Jesus said people talk about how much Jesus talked about money how much Jesus talked about heaven how much Jesus talked about hell how much Jesus those things all exist but if you want to know the most quoted saying of Christ in the New Testament it is this one right here you can have it underlined you can have it circled he who has found his life will lose it and he who has lost his life for my sake will find it what is Jesus saying is that the way that he calls us to live really boils down to a personal choice and Jesus says this and it's so hard if we're not willing as individuals to choose to take up our own cross and what follow him we're not worthy of self consumed that we think we have found our best life now and we're not willing to choose to lose our life in

Christ we've already lost it all anyway friend I want to tell you something if you get lost in serving Jesus you'll be surprised how much you find you'll find sleepless nights you'll find worn out bodies you'll find mental fatigue you'll find a lot of!

lot of battles you'll find a lot of struggles you'll find a lot of turmoils you'll find some people that you thought liked you that don't like you anymore but you'll find peace you'll find joy you'll find glory in his presence you'll find comfort you'll find a hand that travels with you my friend I'm going to ask you something real quick and I'm closing this thought of missions really boils down to the matter of personal choice because as individuals if we choose to take our cross and follow him as individuals if we choose to lose our life in him and I can promise you people will look up and notice that church values the way it's doing it it's doing it and we have I mean it's a testimony what a testimony this church has of missional history and I'm not belittling that testimony at all as a matter of fact

I'm helping to magnify it we read cards this morning of that testimony those ramps being built are opportunities to profess Christ weeding fences opportunities to profess Christ people see you struggling in the community opportunities to profess Christ those are all the way for his glory Let's pray Lord I thank you so much that you've called us to this time at this hour this moment Lord I also know you called us to yourself that you may empower us to live for your glory so we say here we are we're weak vessels willing tools God asking that you would have your way in our lives that we would live according to your call upon our lives for your glory or maybe there's some here who don't know you they've never accepted you as Lord and Savior they must first make that step of coming to you to be empowered so

I pray that you bring that Lord maybe there's those who know you so many times we tried to keep our life to ourselves God would you move us for your glory we just ask Lord that you would have your way in each and every one of us in Jesus name Amen daddy