

Bro. Jimmy Gray

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[0 : 00] If you got your Bibles, turn with me to the Gospel according to Matthew, and go to the very, very, very last of Matthew.

Oh, they tell me of an uncloudy day. Matthew 28. Matthew 28. Oh, I love to hear people flipping their pages.

That's a good thing. Matthew chapter 28. Oh, do, do, do. Well, that one slipped out. I'll just have to guess where to go next.

Oh, Matthew chapter 28. Jesus is speaking the last words of this Gospel. And, you know, last words mean a lot. My cousins and I, my cousins, we always had a game.

And when we would visit them or they would visit us and we'd get ready to leave, one of us would reach over and get the other and holler, last tag and run and get in the car before they could tag you back.

[1 : 04] You ever play a game like that? Last tag. My cousin is now right at 80. She's been a college professor for over 50 years. And the last time I saw her, she gave me a hug.

And then she tapped me and hollered, last tag and ran off. Just things like that bring you back, you know. And we all have these things that we like to do and some things we need to do.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is saying, Well, look, I'm leaving. But I'm going out on a high note. I'm going out.

The world thought they'd get rid of me. They nailed me to a cross and there I was. They stuck me in a hole and buried me. But guess what? I'm back. But he said, Now, right now, even though I'm back, I'm going to have to leave you for a while.

But I'll be back. But I've got something I want you to do. He said, Now, verse 18, chapter 28, the Gospel of Matthew, All power is given me in heaven and earth.

[2 : 13] No matter where you go, God's in control. Amen. No matter where you go, high or low, no matter where you're at. Now, I know people look in the day and they look at the newspaper and they listen to the news and they say, Oh, Brother Gray, Brother Gray, the world, the world, the world.

I said, The world's right on time. Our Lord said it would always be this way. Amen. He said it would get worse and worse and it does. But that's fine because that just means you and I have a job to do. You and I have a job to do. He said, All power is given me. Now, I've got something for you. I want you to go speaking to the church, speaking to everyone that's a member of God's church, every man, every woman, every older person, every younger person.

He said, I want you to go and teach all nations. Go everywhere. Go everywhere.

And I want you to baptize them, make disciples of them, and baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Now, that's a job, isn't it?

[3 : 27] How many of y'all have tried and tried and tried and tried to get some of your own family in the church? The hardest field I ever plowed was my own family.

I remember when I was a Christian, I was talking to my daddy. I said, Daddy, I want to talk to you about Jesus. And he just wouldn't even look at me. And I sat there and I said, Daddy, I love you and God loves you and I want you to know Jesus.

And I'm sitting there talking. My daddy's looking straight ahead. He never would look around. And I talked to him through tears in my eyes. And when I was through, he said, Thank you, and that was it.

Thank God, years later, my daddy got saved. Oh, but it took a while. It took a while. It took a while. Now, God said, I want you to go and I want you to go here and I want you to go there.

And part of your team is, what are they, in Utah right now? Oh, that's a beautiful state. If you ever get a chance to go out there, you'll love it. But they're out there and they're doing some work and you're here.

[4 : 38] And most of us have got plenty to do right here, haven't we? What's your own mission field? Now, how many of you ever been turned down when you invited somebody to church?

How many of you ever been, uh-uh, I had the door slammed in your face? How many of you ever been saying, blah, blah, blah, blah, they got a thousand reasons why they can't go to church?

Amen. Oh, they might have more than that, but a thousand I quit counting.

Now, Jesus said, now look, I'm not asking the world to do this. I'm asking you to do this. So this is your job and my job. And you've got the best start right here. I want to tell you, this is the nicest little church in Bedford County.

Amen. Amen. You've got a place you can come together and you can worship and you can sing and you can pray and make prayer requests known. Get strengthened up and get all excited and go back out into that world.

We need places like that. Jesus said, I want you to go and I want you to share the gospel. What happens when they don't want to listen?

[5 : 42] Well, you know the old saying sometimes that a pitcher is worth a thousand words. You ever hear that? I remember one time I was doing a revival up in Paint Lick, Kentucky.

Y'all ever been to Paint Lick? Oh, it's a nice little town. They call themselves the Paint Lickers. And they say, we're Paint Lickers from Paint Lick. And I was at the church and I remember that first night I sat down on the front pew and this elderly gentleman, I think he was ancient, but he's probably younger than I am now.

But he sat beside me and he introduced himself and he said, who are you? And I said, I'm the evangelist. And he said, well, glad to have you, boy. And I said, well, I want to tell you now, I can preach a little, but I can't sing at all.

He said, I can't sing either. Let's go at it. And they started that first hymn and we stood there, boy, and me and that old coot, we let it rip. I'm telling you, we were going to town.

And I'll never forget after that first song, we were standing there and people were closing their books and he looked at me and said, by God, you weren't lying, were you? And he went and got on another pew.

[6 : 58] And he sat there and laughed his head off. I said, sometimes it's not enough to say it. It's not enough to say it. You say, well, God loves you.

I don't want to hear it. God loves you. I don't want to hear it. Jesus died for you. I don't want to hear it. Then you go on and on and they just don't want to hear it. So I'll tell you what to do in something like that.

Quit talking. Quit talking. Quit talking. If they don't want to hear it, guess what? Maybe you don't need to say it right then.

Right then. You'll find out God has a time and God has a place. Now Jesus said, I want you to go into all the world. And right now, it's a dangerous place out there.

And Christians right now are suffering more worldwide than they probably have at any time in history. I was reading an article the other day of a group of Christians who had gone into a Muslim land.

[7 : 57] And all of them were beheaded. All of them were beheaded. Now we're not going to face anything like that right now. But it will come.

But if you really want to win people and you talk to them and you talk to them and they haven't responded, what do you do next? Remember what I told you. A picture is worth a thousand words. Sometimes the best way you can share Jesus Christ is with your hands and with your actions. Now if you have your Bibles and you want to flip back to Matthew chapter 11 just a little bit.

Jesus is talking to his disciples and he just told them what to do. And John the Baptist pops up.

Verse 2, chapter 11, the gospel of Matthew. Now John the Baptist, you remember him? He was a fiery preacher. He was a good preacher. Oh, he was a great preacher. He was so good he wound up in jail. I'm telling you, it seemed like a lot of preachers in those days wound up in jail, didn't they?

[9 : 02] Well, old John the Baptist is in prison and he's really, really, really, really excited about the kingdom of God. He had preached it. He had said, get ready. When Jesus showed up, he said, there's the Lamb of God right there.

That's the one we've been waiting for, boys. That's the one. And now he's sitting in jail. And I don't know how many of y'all spent much time in jail. But don't answer that right off.

Don't answer that. But everybody I know has spent time in jail say one thing. You know, it's a boring place by and large. You think church services are bad.

Try spending some time in jail. I found a bulletin when I was here one time. It was near the back. I think Kayla was sitting back there. I'm not sure.

And I saw the bulletin was left in the pew. And some child had written, Mama, is he almost done? I'm pretty sure I know who it was.

[10:00] But I never said anything. John the Baptist had been sitting in prison. Now, John the Baptist, you've got to remember, he was the original wild man. Amen. He lived out in the desert.

He wore old rough clothes. He ate bugs and honey. And he just was a wild. Never had a haircut. Never had a shave in his whole life. He was a Nazarite. And he's looking for Jesus to come.

And Jesus wasn't quite measuring up to his expectation. So he sent a couple of disciples to him. And John, verse 2, when he was in prison, he took two of his disciples. And he said, you go ask Jesus a question for me. And they said, okay.

He said, here's the question. Are you the one I'm looking for? I've got to go look for somebody else. I'm tired of waiting. That's John. Amen. He said, Jesus, get with the program.

[11:00] I'm tired of waiting. Now, Jesus said, no, you go back and tell John something. You go back and tell John about that great sermon on the mount I preached. You go back and tell him about the parables I've done.

You go back. He didn't do that. Now, I've told you it's good to talk about Jesus to those you love. It's good to talk about Jesus to those who don't love you.

It's good to talk about Jesus to strangers. Amen. But when they don't want to hear, sometimes you have to not just talk about it. You've got to show them something. And when John said, Jesus, are you the Messiah?

Jesus didn't tell him about his great sermons. He didn't tell him about all the crowds that came to hear him. He said, you go tell John this. The blind receive their sight. The lame walk.

Lepers are cleansed. The deaf hear. And the dead are raised up. And the poor have the gospel preached to him. The last thing he mentioned was his preaching. In other words, he's saying this. If you really want to win the world, you're going to win them by the things you do.

[12:04] Amen. You're going to win them not just by what you say, but what you do. I hear so many people say, oh, I don't go to church because so-and-so goes there and they sing and they do out.

And then they go out on the week and they act all kinds of ways. I want to tell you, your actions speak louder than words. Amen. And sometimes you don't even have to mention Jesus Christ, but it'll come up.

It'll come up. I remember years ago, I was going to church and I stopped to get a Coke. And the lady was there and I said, you look a little sad. She said, I'm having to work on my birthday.

I said, well, that is a bummer, isn't it? That's a bummer, you know. And I went to church and we were having a dinner that night and they had big desserts and I just cut off a big slice of pie or cake. And I went back down to that little market right down from the church. And I said, here, happy birthday. And she started crying.

[13:09] I said, oh my gosh, that didn't mean to me. She said, that's the only cake I've had on my birthday. She said, my kids didn't fix me one. My husband didn't fix me one. Now, a few years later, I'm in Murfreesboro.

And I stopped to get another Coke. And I get to the counter and the lady says, oh my God, it's you. I said, I didn't take it.

I promised. I didn't do it. I said, what? She said, you gave me a piece of birthday cake and I've never forgotten it. I said, ma'am, I didn't give it to you.

The Lord had that cake here. I didn't cook it, I promise you. But what I'm saying is this. When you do something for somebody, when you minister to somebody, it makes all the difference in the world.

Words are one thing and there's a place for them. But God said, right now is the time for you and I to prove the love of God is real. Amen. Right now is time for you to prove. Your mission team is out there.

[14:14] They're going to do a lot of not just preaching or Bible school. They're going to do some hard work this week, aren't they? They're going to work. And you think it's warm here. You go out to

Utah and try working out in that sun.

They know what it's like. And God said, I want people who will follow me and do what I say and share what I want. But what the world needs right now is proof that God is real.

And it's not just through your words. It's through the life that you and I live. The best ministry and the best sermon on the world is not when you just say it, but when you live it.

When you live it. Oh, in the book of James, the writer James says, pure religion and undefiled.

That means just as sweet as it can get. Just as good as it gets. Pure religion is what? Getting your name in the paper?

[15 : 13] Getting famous? No, pure religion is this. Visit the fatherless and the widows in their time of need. God said, if you want to know pure joy and you want to share the true love of God, you go minister to somebody that's hurting.

Jesus said, I heal the sick. I open blind eyes. I raise the dead. I clean lift. You say, well, Brother Gray, I really, I really, I don't have the gift of healing.

I can't do this. I can't do that. And we can all make excuses about what we can or can't do. But I want to promise you this. Listen very carefully to me. Every one of you can do something.

Every one of you can do something. One day on a great judgment, when we stand before God, we're not going to be judged for our sins as Christians, but we are going to be judged for our actions, what we've done.

You know what I'm looking forward to in heaven? And I'm looking forward to just getting behind some bushes, you know. And when I see some people walking down the street, I'm going to jump out and see how surprised they are to see me there.

[16 : 25] I'll never forget the first Sunday I went to church. I was 25 years old. And I had gone to Sunday school class. And I was as nervous as this could be.

I was new at this church stuff. And I'm sitting there. And I leave. And I'm going down the hall. And somebody grabbed me. And they took my arm. And they spun me around. And they said, Jim Gray. And I said, well, hey, what are you doing here? And they said, what are you doing here? I said, well, it's church. Can't anybody come? They said, yeah, but what are you doing here? I want to tell you something, friend.

When God said grace is free, he meant it. Amen. And when Jesus said anybody that can come can come, he meant it. Amen. And the world out there doesn't believe it.

Some people out there think nobody wants them. They think this church would not receive them. It's up to you and I to let them know the love of God for every man and woman. And the best way to do that is go out into that world and be a friend to people that are lost and dying.

[17 : 27] They don't need one more person to tell them how bad they are. They already know that. They don't need one more person to tell them this or that. They need somebody to love them. Jesus said, I heal the sick.

I raise the dead. What can you do? Well, sometimes it's a lot simpler than that. In the Gospel of Matthew, still in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 25, Jesus said one day God's going to gather all the people of the world together.

And he's going to separate them like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goat. That's Matthew 25 verse 33 if you go in there. You can imagine all the world, red and yellow, black and white, brown, everybody, every woman, every man, every boy, every girl.

God said, I want some of you over here and I want some of you over here. And the ones on his right, he's going to say, come here, verse 34.

I want you to have my Father's kingdom. Oh, I've been in some nice places. You ever been to any nice places? When I was a high schooler, I went to the governor's mansion.

[18 : 46] Frank Clement was governor. Some of y'all remember him. He had our football team in. And I walked around and we lived in a not really a big fancy house where I was at.

And I walked into that governor's mansion. I'm going, my gosh. His wife's closet was bigger than most of the house that we live in. Can you imagine what heaven's going to be like?

This is probably the prettiest little church around. But you can imagine what heaven's going to look like. Maybe once.

Maybe just once, Miss Gray won't want something changed. She'll say, this is perfect. You know, we bought a house and we've been there 30 years. And for 30 years, she's been telling me what needs to go here and what needs to go here and what needs to go there.

But Jesus is going to say, the Father is going to say, come over here. Come over here. I want you to share my heaven. And then he's going to say, look, verse 35.

[19 : 55] I was hungry and you gave me something deep. You want to know how to win people to Jesus Christ? Minister to real needs for real people. Amen. It's not enough to say God loves you if you're not willing to show it.

If you're not willing to get in there with them. Now, you say, well, I can't raise the dead. I can't perform miracles. I can't do this. You can feed somebody that's hungry. Amen. You can give a bite to somebody that needs something to eat.

I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was preaching a little church one time, Martha, between Mount Juliet and Lebanon, Tennessee.

Oh, it was hot. It was a little startup church and they didn't have air conditioner. In those days, I'd really get going good. I was getting a little dry. And all of a sudden, this little girl comes up and she's got a mason jar of glass of water.

And she sets it down right there. Oh, that was sweet water. And I said, I hate to drink in front of y'all, but I'm going to. A simple glass of water.

[21 : 05] I was a stranger and you took me in. And I promise you right now, there's people all in this community, all in this town, all up and down these roads. They think nobody cares about them.

You need to take the love of God to them. Maybe you need to mow their yard. Maybe clean out a gutter. Maybe see if they need a trip.

Somebody drive them to the doctor or the grocery store. Just simple things. Simple things. Anything God has given you, God's given for one or two reasons.

One, to take care of yourself and your family. And two, to take care of other people around you.

Anything other than that is extra. This church is a wonderful little church.

And I thank God that I hear y'all doing so well. And y'all doing missions there. And I know you're doing work here. But I want to encourage you that every person here needs to be a missionary for Jesus Christ.

[22 : 06] And it's not just enough to say God loves you. You've got to be willing to show them that God cares. I was hungry. You fed me. I was thirsty.

And you gave me a drink. I was a stranger. And you took me in. I was naked. And you clothed me. Sick. And you visited me. I was in prison. And you came to me. Every one of those people has a need.

Now, do you know somebody around you that has a need? Let me ask you, what are you doing to meet it? God said, I want you to go into all the world.

And I want you to preach the gospel. But more than that, I want you to go into all the world and live the gospel. Be a man or be a woman that makes the person you run into better because they met you.

Amen? Now, some people are grumpy. My wife, a while back, she was in the grocery store. Some lady went, achool! And Miss Gray said, God bless you.

[23 : 09] Y'all ever do that when somebody sneezes? God bless you. And that lady turned around and said, I don't need his blessing. Well, then I should have came along and I gave her some more advice.

But luckily, I wasn't there. Not everybody's going to love you. But you're doing it for God, not for yourself.

You're doing it for the kingdom of God, not for the pat on the back you get down here, but for the pat on the back you'll get up there. Amen? Amen? I want you to ask yourself right now, Are you living the gospel through your actions and deeds?

That's the greatest challenge. It's easy to say, I love God. It's hard to love your neighbor. It's hard to love that other person.

But God says, do it anyway. Do it anyway. Do it anyway. I want to challenge you to be a church that meets every need you can meet in the name of Jesus Christ.

[24 : 12] When people say, well, thank you, and you just say, oh, no, thank God. Because I wouldn't be doing what I was doing if God hadn't already done something in my heart. I wouldn't be caring about anybody else if God hadn't cared about me.

So you do it. And when they thank you, you make sure you give a credit where it belongs. And you'll find out a glass of water is a great sermon. A pat on the back is a great sermon.

A visit to a lonely, sick person is a great sermon. Sit down with somebody that nobody else wants to be with is a great sermon. One of the best ministers I've ever seen in this whole county, in this whole city, you know who it is?

He's right here with you today. He's Johnny back there. For years, everywhere I go for years, I'd see Johnny, and he'd have a little bitty gas can and a little push mower, and he'd be going all over this town.

Then I'd see him with his stick, and he'd be going, and he visited more people and saw more people and checked on more people. Johnny doesn't have a car. But Johnny's got the love of Jesus Christ in his heart.

[25 : 32] Amen. Amen. I want to challenge you. Be a church full of Johnny's. Be a church full of Johnny's. I'm going to ask you to bow your heads just for a second.

Do you know somebody right now that needs a visit?

Not a sermon, but a visit. Somebody that might be struggling. You can go by and see their yard's not been mowed.

Maybe you need to go by and mow it. Or any of a thousand different things.

Being a Christian means being sensitive to those around you. In a world where other people don't care and other people use you and abuse you and walk right on by you.

[26 : 34] Be somebody that cares for other people. Do you know somebody right now that could use a lift, use a visit, use a helping hand, use a friend?

Would you ask God to make you that person? And say, God, I thank you for all you've done for me and I appreciate it and I thank you for my church.

God, I'm so thankful for that church. But God, this week I want to be your servant and I want to minister to people around me.

I want to take time to listen to those that are hurting. I want a time to serve those that have needs.

God, make this church a church that's famous for what it does to minister to this community.

I ask in Jesus' name. Amen. As a song leader comes forward, as we stand together, as we stand together, as we stand together, as we stand together, as we stand together, Thank you.

[28 : 53] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.