



Exodus (Part 29) – Understanding Glory: Part 1

Matt Chandler – May 7, 2017

[Video]

From darkness to light, this is the story we all share as the people of God. The story of Israel is the story of us today. We are God's people. He draws us out to draw us in, and, like the Israelites, we still await the Promised Land in the midst of our sin and suffering, yet God is with us.

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Good morning. How are you? Doing well? Excellent. If you have your Bibles, we're going to read the first 16 verses of Exodus 37. I think when I'm done reading that I probably won't need to say anything else. It'll just be evident how to apply that and how to walk in the fruit of that in your day-to-day life. Let me just catch you up on where we are. We've been preaching through the book of Exodus since August. This weekend, we're going to look at chapter 37; next weekend, chapters 38-39; and the weekend after that, chapter 40, which will be our last weekend in Exodus.

Immediately following that we'll do three weekends on marriage, and then from there we'll get into the summer months. I'm going to go off script, and just whatever the Spirit of God leads me to preach on, teach on, I'm going to do that rather than get into another summer series, which I get excited about since I turned in this outline over a year ago. It'll be fun to just go, "Okay, Spirit of God, where are we going?" I've already felt some press from the Spirit on what we should be chatting about, so I'm eager for that.

Before I read this, I want you to remember that where we are and where we've been for the last four months is that God is making his people a distinct people among the nations. He is forming them and shaping them and creating a people that are going to reveal to the rest of the nations, the rest of the world, his wisdom, his power, his might, and his beauty. God has not just saved us out of

slavery from nothing. He has freed us from our bondage to sin and death and now is making us a distinct people for our joy and his glory.

That's God's big plan: your joy, his glory. All God is after in working in our lives is about our joy and his glory so that the nations might see that he is good, that he is God, and that salvation is found in him and him alone. So that's where we've been. We talked about the fact that that revolves around the presence and power of God in our lives. One of the things that makes us distinct is that the presence and power of God is active in our lives in a way that's not true for those who have not put their faith in Jesus Christ.

We said that plays itself out in a lot of different ways. One of the ways is that we believe and embrace that some of the more significant things God is going to accomplish in our lives he's going to accomplish over a long period of time in everyday faithfulness. We are not a people who disdain the ordinary. In a culture that wants it big and loud and fast, with video and great music underneath the video, we are a distinct people in that we understand God is at work in the everyday ordinariness of Monday and Tuesday. We just believe that.

We don't need fireworks all the time. We know that when we faithfully love our wives, faithfully engage our kids, faithfully live the way God has asked us to live that God is accomplishing something in us and through us for our joy and his glory. This past week, Lauren and I went out to Longview. Her grandmother had died, went to be with the Lord. She had wrestled with dementia for about a decade. She was a strong believer, so it was a sweet funeral.

I was confronted yet again with this 90-year-old woman who had faithfully, in the highs and lows of her life, tried to follow the Lord, and I looked at the legacy of faith behind her and saw children and grandchildren in ministry, saw great-grandchildren being raised in a fear of the Lord, and that wasn't a lot of fireworks. That was everyday faithfulness through some really difficult things and some really beautiful things.

We believe that, but we're also people who have embraced and believed that the Holy Spirit of God will oftentimes break through the ordinary and do spectacular things. He will heal. He will deliver a word. He will do these things that are outside of maybe even our own comfort zones, and there's what's called *breakthrough*. What I want to try to shape here, as the people of God at The Village Church, is not a group that tries to pick one of those. "All there is is the ordinary. All there is is the supernatural." No, no, no.

Ordinary faithfulness day in, day out. No fireworks. I'm just going to get up. I'm going to get in the Word. I'm going to pray. I'm going to live faithfully, love my spouse, raise my kids, watch my money, work hard at work, and I'm going to do that decade after decade after decade. Then I'm going to pray and plead with God over and over and over again for supernatural breakthrough all across my life. We want to be a people that embraces both of those.

We talked about not only are we walking in the presence and power of God working itself out in ordinary means and supernatural means, but we're also a people marked by generosity, motivated by God's generosity to us. That's what makes us distinct. You don't need to be a Christian to be generous. It's not just Christians who are generous, but the motive behind our generosity is not that we're trying to make ourselves feel better about something.

It's not that we're trying to curry favor or buy favor. In being such recipients of God's grace, we extend generosity as we have received generosity. By the way, if you're like, "Oh man, I loved that sermon on generosity; I'm still not quite sure how to work it out," remember what I said. Can you imagine a congregation unleashed to meet every need they saw in the community? You want to talk about a distinct movement of the Holy Spirit.

You let loose just Flower Mound, Lewisville, and Highland Village. You let loose 5,000 to 6,000 people on a community who are just going, "Where's a need I can meet? Where's something I can give to? Where's something I can help with? Who can I come alongside of? How can I encourage?" Just think about what that alone would do. That brings me to Exodus 37, starting in verse 1.

"Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood. Two cubits and a half was its length, a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. And he overlaid it with pure gold inside and outside, and made a molding of gold around it. And he cast for it four rings of gold for its four feet, two rings on its one side and two rings on its other side. And he made poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold and put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry the ark.

And he made a mercy seat of pure gold. Two cubits and a half was its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth. And he made two cherubim of gold. He made them of hammered work on the two ends of the mercy seat, one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end. Of one piece with the mercy seat he made the cherubim on its two ends. The cherubim

spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, with their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat were the faces of the cherubim.

He also made the table of acacia wood. Two cubits was its length, a cubit its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made a molding of gold around it. And he made a rim around it a handbreadth wide, and made a molding of gold around the rim. He cast for it four rings of gold and fastened the rings to the four corners at its four legs.

Close to the frame were the rings, as holders for the poles to carry the table. He made the poles of acacia wood to carry the table, and overlaid them with gold. And he made the vessels of pure gold that were to be on the table, its plates and dishes for incense, and its bowls and flagons with which to pour drink offerings."

From there we get into the making of the lampstand, the making of the altar of incense, the making of the altar of burnt offering, the making of the bronze basin, the making of the court, and then finally the materials for the tabernacle. Like I said, I could just pray right now and dismiss. You could apply that in your life, and your world would be transformed.

Let me talk about Exodus and decisions that have to be made if you're going to preach through the book of Exodus. What we just read in Exodus 37 is nearly verbatim what we've already read in Exodus 25. When you decide to preach through the book of Exodus and you're kind of outlining how you want to approach it, you have to figure out how you want to teach Exodus 37-39, because Exodus 37-39 are almost verbatim Exodus 25-27.

A lot of times, when someone is teaching Exodus, they'll teach chapter 25 and then go forward to chapter 37, and then they'll teach chapter 26 and go forward to chapter 38. What happens is you're seeing both of them. You're seeing them *receive* the Word and *do* the Word. Instead of approaching it that way, what I wanted to do with us here at the end of our series is to re-embed what's happening here. Rather than walking exegetically through Exodus 37, what I want to do is take Exodus 37 and re-embed it in the narrative. I want to put it back into the story.

Here's my outline, just to encourage you "type A-ers" so you can rest and just be with me the rest of the time. "Where's he going with this?" I just want to help you. Here's what I think you're seeing in the narrative that makes us a distinct people among the nations. In Exodus 25, the people of God

hear the Word. In Exodus 32, they wrestle to *believe* the Word. Then in Exodus 37, they *do* the Word. What makes us distinct as the people of God is that we hear the Word, we believe the Word, and we do the Word, and there's my outline.

I want to say there are probably going to be some awkward moments between us today. I love you and I'm for you, but because I understand that I have to stand in front of God and give an account, that means I'll have to say some bold things. I'm not trying to do anything other than help us understand, serve, and submit all the more to the God of the universe.

When you start talking about things like obedience, adults immediately shift into what children should do. Like, who am I supposed to obey right now? I'm a grown man. If my mama calls me and is like, "What are you still doing up?" I'm going to say, "What are *you* still doing up? It's like 8:30. You ate dinner at 3:00. Shouldn't *you* be asleep right now? I haven't even eaten dinner yet." Seriously. When we think about obedience and what it means to obey and we're grown-ups...

In the playground growing up there was a phrase if a kid tried to tell you what to do. You'd say, "You ain't my daddy. You ain't my mama." With the rise of the autonomous self and you know what's best for you and only you get to decide what's right for you and there's no truth outside of you that can bear its weight on you, it has left us, as adults, as grown-ups, outside the blessing and joy that is found in obedience.

So I'm telling you it's going to be a little awkward today, because what I'm saying is there's a truth outside of you that gets to tell you what to do. You can fight against that truth and in the end it leads into deceit and brokenness or you can submit to that truth outside of yourself and walk in blessing, and I'm no prosperity guy. With that said, I want to read you this quote, because I love it. Henry Blackaby: "What an incredible witness it is to a lost and fearful society when the Christian acts like a child of God, living under the loving sovereignty of the Heavenly Father."

What a witness it is, what a beautiful thing it is, for a lost and fearful society (and that's the world in which we live...angry, afraid, confused, lost, unhinged, unanchored) when the Christian actually lives happily, filled with joy, in obedience to their sovereign King. This is what it means to be salt and light to the world around us. We don't tend to think that way, do we? What it means to be salt and light is to obey? We have a long list of things rather than obedience.

Let's just talk. You're looking at me a little confused, so let's just chat about it. The first thing is *hear the Word*. I want to just lay this before you. The Christian hears the Word of God differently than the non-Christian. We're not hearing it the same way, which is why you can turn on Discovery and listen to a New Testament scholar or an Old Testament scholar who's not a Christian, who talks about the Bible, who is way off base in regard to historic Christian orthodoxy.

Do you know why? Because he or she is approaching the Bible as a hodgepodge of different literary devices and does not have the Holy Spirit of God inside of him or her creating clarity, doing the work of illumination, and leading that person into life. Let me show you this in Hebrews 4:12. **"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."**

As Christians, we approach the Bible not for principles but for power. We're not approaching the Bible like it's a textbook. It's alive. The Spirit of God inside of us does the work of illumination, and the Word of God begins to transform us, change us from the inside out. The Spirit begins to testify to us that the Word of God is true. There are mental effects. There are physical effects. There are spiritual effects, because the Word of God is alive.

We're not studying some dead, ancient literary book. It's alive. You don't approach the Bible like you approach *Pride and Prejudice*. I know some of you men are like, "I'm not going to approach that book anyway," but here's what I'll tell you. You might just be a better man if you read some fiction like that. You might be a better husband, you might be a better daddy if you tap into Mr. Darcy. That's for free. I don't have time to unpack that. Don't watch the movie. Read the book. You'll be a better person for it.

The Spirit of God illuminates the Bible, and the living, active Word starts to do its work in us. That's why here at The Village we're going to preach the Bible, we're going to sing the Bible... Have you noticed that every time we sing a song we're putting verses on the screen? We're like, "Hey, we're not making this up. These are the words of God. This is where we pulled this truth. This is where we got this from." We want to sing it. We want to read it together. We want to be rooted in the living, active Word of God.

It is not enough for us that you simply come and hear *us* do it. We want to prepare you, disciple you, wire you, train you to be able to dive into this living, active Word yourself, to be trained to dig in

and not have to wait for a podcast or wait for the gathering, but you can actually open the Word of God, hear the very words of God to you anytime you want to. I know that's so intimidating to so many of us, and there's something going on here. Every kind of metric imaginable says that Christians know their Bible less and less and less.

If this is God's revealed Word to us, it's where we figure out who God is, his nature and character, and what that loving God would have us do as his people, what makes us distinct, then we must hear the Word of God, and not just in the gathering. It's to be woven through our lives. That's why this coming Thursday night on May 11 in this room, all of our campuses, the people who want to come... We're going to do from 7:00-9:00 in this place just a forum on how to know the Bible, and it's going to be more like a lab. Jen Wilkin is going to join me, and we're going to teach a little bit.

It's going to be lab-like. We're going to do this together. My end goal at the end of the night is not that you would have some hermeneutical language but that you would leave going, "I can do that." If you're here and you're like, "Golly, the only time I even open my Bible, Pastor, is when you tell me, and I still have to check the page number," then my goal is when you leave Thursday night you'll be confident in your ability to open up the Word of God and feed on it, to let the living, active Word work in you.

What's happening in chapter 37 is that they heard the Word of God in Exodus 25. We hear the Word of God, and we hear it in a distinct way because the Spirit of God is inside of us. We hear the Word, and then we believe the Word. If we're just going to be straight with one another, a majority of the time it's pretty easy to just believe what we've heard from the Word of God. "I can believe that. Sure, I can see that." But there will be these moments in our lives, brothers and sisters, that are disorienting, that are discombobulating, and we will begin to wrestle with whether or not we can believe what we have heard.

If we think back to Exodus 32 and what went on with the golden calf and the worship and the ascribing of glory to where glory was not due, you see a people who were afraid, who doubted, who questioned, and who ultimately did not believe what they heard from the Lord. I think you see this all the time. I think a lot of times we don't like what the Bible says because it's confrontational. The Bible rebukes and corrects, and I've yet to meet the man or woman who really enjoys being rebuked or corrected.

Once again, I want to point back into the day in which we live that wants to tell you there's no truth outside of you and that whatever you think is good and right you should be able to do, and anybody who puts pressure on you to do anything other than that is a bigot and a fool, and only you get to decide for you. That's absurd, but it's the air we're breathing. You can't hide from how culture is trying to disciple us in this direction.

What happens is the Word of God confronts us. It says, "No, you're wrong. *This way.*" God is not passive-aggressive. He's just gently aggressive. He's not showing up like, "Hmm, it's interesting that I see you doing that. Maybe I know something, maybe I don't. How about maybe *this?*" That's not how the Lord works. The Lord is not your passive-aggressive friend, mother-in-law, sister, or whatever. He just comes and says, "No. *This way. That way,* death, brokenness, and despair. *This way,* joy, life, and hope. Cling to it. Grab ahold of it. Follow me."

So you have this struggle to believe because you've been confronted. Our drift is toward self-reliance and ease, never toward difficulty and submission. The natural bent of your heart is toward ease and what your stomach desires regardless of whether or not it's going to make you so sick you die. It is not toward submission and obedience. That's not our drift. That's no one's drift. If you have kids, you are with me. If you only have one kid, that firstborn type-A kid, he doesn't count. It's like you don't even have a kid yet. Wait for the second one, and then we'll talk.

Another thing that can really make us struggle with believing what we've heard is, if we're really honest about a Genesis 3 world, really dark, horrible, awful things happen. Can we just be honest about that? I never want to paint a picture of reality for you that's inconsistent with the one the Bible itself paints. How many of you, just as a means of testimony, go, "Man, if I had to be straight, there are some really dark, awful things that have happened to me in my life"? My hand is up as a testimony that I've lived some of that.

Keep your hand up for a second. Look around. We didn't all grow up in Barbie Fairytopia. You can just see it right now. A lot of us have hurt. There have been some really grotesque, broken things happen. One of the reasons the Bible helps when you get jammed up in this space is so consistently you see that the message of the Bible is not if you give your life to Jesus nothing bad ever happens but that if you give your life to Jesus God will be with you regardless of circumstances and you will find that to be enough.

I just want to point out how often things don't go the way you think they should in the Bible. Moses, who, by the way, has been the main character, kind of the picture of Christ who was to come throughout the book of Exodus... Where is he leading these people? To a land flowing with milk and honey. That's where he has them. He's leading these people.

So his ministry at this point is to wander around in the desert with grumbling, complaining people for 40 years while he waits for them to die off so he can go into this promise the Lord gave him back at Mount Sinai, back before he even came before Pharaoh, back in the early parts of Exodus, back in September. Do you know how the story ends? Moses goes up on the mountain. The clouds part. There it is: the land flowing with milk and honey. You've made it. Then God goes, "Yeah, you don't get to go in. You're going to die on the mountain. I'm going to let Joshua take them over."

I bet you haven't heard *that* preached much. Now to be fair, Moses will show up on another mountain a little bit longer, the Mount of Transfiguration (if you're church folk, you're with me), where Christ is revealed as the Son of God. There are Moses and Elijah, another bum, and they're in the presence of Christ. One of the reasons I would constantly want to say 10,000 years from now the struggles of today will seem smaller is on the Mount of Transfiguration Moses was not like, "Man, I missed out on that honey, though." That's not what happened.

This is one of the more heartbreaking and one of my favorites, because it reorients me around God's sufficiency. Jesus says of John the Baptist, "There has not been a greater man born of woman," and John is arrested for calling out an evil leader's promiscuity. He's arrested and thrown in prison. John the Baptist has been the one going, "Hey, the kingdom of God is at hand. You'd better repent. The King of Glory is coming. I'm not even worthy to tie his sandals. Here comes the kingdom." Everybody is geeked up. Rome is done. King Jesus is on his way.

John the Baptist ends up in prison. He sends a messenger to Jesus. "Ask Jesus if he's the one or if we should expect another. This is not playing out quite like I thought it was supposed to." So the runner gets to Jesus and says, "Hey, John wants to know if you are the one or if he should expect another." Jesus responds by quoting the prophet Isaiah about the coming of the Messiah. "Tell him what you see, that the blind see, that the lame walk, that the poor have good news preached to them." Then Jesus stops.

Isaiah in that passage finishes with, "And the captives will be set free," but Jesus does not quote that part of Isaiah to the messenger. Think about it. The messenger runs back to John the Baptist in

prison, soon to be beheaded, and says, "Okay, here's what he said. He quoted Isaiah, one of your favorite passages. You've actually preached from this passage, John. It's excellent. The blind are seeing, the lame are walking..." You have to think at this point John the Baptist is like, "Okay, yes! I'm about to get out." "The poor are having good news preached to them. That's all he said."

"No, no. That can't be all he said." So Jesus says back to John the Baptist, "I *am* the one, and you're going to die in prison." Again, is that the first time anybody has ever pointed that out to you? You just don't say stuff like that, because it's hard to grow a big church, but it is our reality, so it is cruel to not point out that giving your life to Christ doesn't mean you won't struggle, suffer, or experience brokenness. Rather, God will be enough in whatever that circumstance is.

It has been the testimony of the saints for 2,000-plus years now. In fact, all the way back... The Bible is a story of God at work in the mess. So we hear it and wrestle to believe it, which finally leads to us actually *doing* the Word. That's what you're seeing in Exodus 37. Remember, we're embedded back in the story. In chapter 25 they heard the Word, in chapter 32 they really wrestled to believe the Word, and now in chapter 37 they are joyfully doing the Word.

Let me send you to James 1:21-26. Again, my goal today is not to exegetically work my way through chapters 37-39. I want to show you two things that are present in these chapters that are how God makes us a distinct people. James is the half-brother of Jesus. Just an apologetics note. What do you have to do to convince your half-brother that you're the Son of God and eternal? My guess is die and then be resurrected. I'm just throwing that out there. Selah. James 1:21-26:

"Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.

For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless."

When we get to hearing the Word, believing the Word, and doing the Word... Now you have James, the half-brother of Jesus, creating these two categories for us that I think will be really helpful as we

consider being a distinct people. The first is that there is a type of person who hears the Word but does not do the Word, and that person is deceived. What happens in that deception... It's beautiful language here.

He says they're like people who check themselves out in the mirror and realize that something is off. They're looking in the mirror and they're like, "Oh gosh, I need to clean that up. I need some more cover-up on that mug right there. I probably need to get somebody to cut that... That mole wasn't there a couple of... That has to get cut off there; that could be cancer. I don't know what that is, but it needs to move." But the second they turn away from the mirror they forget.

What happens when you hear the Word... We have this conversation. I just want to keep laying before you that I have this conversation all the time. My friends who pastor a church in Dubai, in New York City, in San Francisco, in Seattle do not struggle with what I think *we* struggle with, because to follow Jesus in their context, to say "Yes" to join a church, is immensely costly. There's no cost here, so what you get is a bunch of people who look in the mirror and absorb religious platitudes and don't ever apply them to their lives.

They're deceived, because they've heard enough to talk about it but have never applied it. They're like a person who looks in the mirror and says, "That needs some work," but doesn't look intently enough to make any changes, and they just leave. They are a repentance-less people. They hear the Word, they believe the Word, but they will not do the hard work of the application of the Word, internally and externally, to be distinct among the people.

What you get is salt that has lost its saltiness and, according to Jesus, is worthless except to be trampled upon by the feet of men. Remember when I said I had to say some hard things? That was part of it. I think, Christian, you have to consider whether or not you are a doer of the Word or simply a hearer. Here's how that looks on a practical level. Let's take last week's sermon. Last week we talked about generosity.

We talked about what it meant to be a generous people and how that made us distinct among all of the other peoples on earth, those outside of our faith. What it would be like to be a hearer of the Word but not a doer is to listen to that... Everybody loves the idea of generosity. You're not going to find the person who's like, "Hey, the problem with the world is generosity." Everybody loves the idea of generosity, but they don't necessarily like the application of generosity on themselves.

So to be a hearer would have been last week to hear that and go, "Oh, that's good. Yes, we need to be a generous people," and then just walk out the door and not consider in any way how that would actually be lived out in your life, among your Home Group, among the people you interact with, in this community. It's simply more platitudes and religiosity for you to kind of regurgitate to others who ask questions. You're self-deceived. You think you believe it, but you don't believe it, because you don't do it.

I always want to push that because we live in a disenchanted day, all that's really left is cynicism or intellectualism. When I say *intellectualism*, I'm not saying that the life of the mind is bad. In fact, I would testify that the life of the mind is necessary and good and that the Bible commands that we have a robust intellect, that we be the most sanctified version we can be in our intellect. When I'm saying *intellectualism*, I'm saying to know is to be transformed. That's not true, because you know all sorts of things you don't actually believe.

This is probably the most helpful illustration. You know that the speed limit is 35, but you only believe that when there's a police officer around. See what I'm saying? You know the speed limit, but it has not transformed your life...unless there's a police officer there, and then you love that speed limit in a hurry. That's intellectualism. To know is to be transformed. That's not necessarily true. That's why we're in such deep need of the Spirit of God to help things come alive, to do the work of illumination.

The second category is to hear and to obey. James, the half-brother of Jesus, says to do that is to be blessed. Let's be careful with *blessed* there. James is no prosperity guy. In fact, he's martyred. It's hard to be a prosperity guy when you get your skull crushed in with a club for not denying Christ. When he talks about being blessed, he's talking about some of the things *we've* been talking about. To be blessed as you submit all the more to the reign and rule of Christ in your life and experience all the more the presence and power of God in your life, the beauty of God's path to life laid before you via the Word of God.

Tim Keller says, "If cultural Christianity means identifying as a Christian without fruit or praxis, then secularism may be God wiping this malaise away." Tim is smarter than all of us combined. We can just put that on the table here. I mean, this man is better than all of us in regard to mental capacity, which is fine. We need brothers like this, because there are brothers like *us*. We need a guy like this that we can just hear that and go, "Oh, what does that mean?"

A good way to understand this is that what we're seeing in our day is winter rolling in. Springtime has faded, the fall is gone (I'm speaking spiritually), and winter has arrived, which means things have gotten really cold for the believer in Christ. We're marginalized. There are things caricatured. I mean, there are things laid on us right now that I find so absurd, and yet they're just part of our culture's vernacular.

We're the really scary religious group in America. We're hateful and bigoted. This is winter. God help our kids and grandkids. Yet one of the things Keller is pointing out is maybe the rise of secularism is to wipe away this weak, sad, un-Christian version of Christianity that has no real fruit or practice in everyday life but is just kind of a cultural, "Yeah, I'm a Christian. I was born in Texas. I'm a conservative. I vote Republican."

Tim is saying maybe the rise of secularism is God wiping away that malaise, that pain, that disease, that brokenness. Maybe he's right. I hope he's not. I want to talk about this, and then I want to talk about what it would look like for us to be unleashed yet again. I love the gathering. I love preaching, teaching, singing, being together as the community of faith, and yet the good work of the church happens outside of these walls Monday through Friday.

The real work of the church is you in your neighborhood, at your workplace, in your domains in which you operate, so that *this*, being defined as the *church*, is the church gathered; it's not the church active among the world and the people who are outside. Being a distinct people involves us being outside these walls, not just inside these walls. Before I talk about being unleashed, I want to talk about obedience and how perfect obedience to the Father actually is brought about in the gospel.

The Bible says that when we give our lives to Christ, when we submit and repent of our sins, when we become Christians, we are filled with the Holy Spirit, sealed with the Spirit of God inside of us, and what that means is our ability to obey all that God has commanded... That switch has been set to the "on" mode. Before we were Christians, that switch didn't even exist. It wasn't like on/off. It wasn't there.

When we became a Christian, the Spirit of God indwelt us, and we now have the ability to be perfectly obedient, but because of our flesh and foolishness, that obedience will always be imperfect and messy. So then the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the blood of Jesus, covers our

imperfection so that we have the ability to be obedient and the grace of God covering us when we fail. That's incredible. You are always delighted in by the King of Glory.

So what does it look like to be unleashed as a people? First, if we hear the Word, believe the Word, and do the Word, we'll be a people marked by wisdom. In my 20 years now of pastoring and coaching and leadership, what I've found is a lot of really high-capacity men and women who end up being CEOs and CFOs in their domain are hitting it out of the park and lack simple, basic wisdom.

Their relationships are a train wreck. They make tons of money and can't ever seem to have money. They just lack wisdom to flourish as a human being. So although they've scored a touchdown in what the world calls *success*, all of the ancillary aspects of their life are broken, because it's the Word of God that lines us into wisdom. So you set loose on a city, on a town, on a nation, a group of people who walk in the wisdom of the Lord.

The second thing is you unleash on a community those who are committed to the path of life. I'm just going to say this until you stop coming or I lose my voice. Every command of God in the Bible, from the "Don't do this" to the "Do this," is about God inviting you into the deepest life possible. Every one of them. God is not interested in your begrudging submission to a slate of rules. He's not. Christ says, "I have come that you might have life and have it to the full."

When the Bible says, "Don't go this way," it's not because down that way is this really beautiful, rich life that you're going to get to experience if you head down this path. Death is down there, so God is saying, "No, no, no. Don't go that way. Come *this* way, because *this* is what you really want. It's down *this* path." That's hard for us, because in our day and age, feelings are facts. That's not true. Feelings are not facts.

Our feelings must be brought into line with truth. To feel something doesn't mean it's true. If you want to argue that, think of how much must be true about you and how different... Your truth is always all over the map. Your truth one day is that life is awesome, and your truth the next day is life is terrible. Your truth one day is "These people love me," and your truth the next day is "These people hate me." Aren't you exhausted?

I love feelings. I'm a feely guy. I feel deeply. I'm a hugger. I love going to our Acts 29 guys in England. Oh gosh, I just grab them. Sometimes I even nuzzle in to make it more awkward. I am a human golden retriever. I'm just always glad to see you. "Hey, how are you?" If I had a tail, it would always

be wagging. But my feelings constantly betray me, so I have to bring them in line with the Word of God and submit to the truth of God's Word, not the impulse of my feelings.

What gets unleashed on a community, what gets unleashed on a city are these men and women, filled with the Holy Spirit, walking in the presence and power of God, loving the ordinary, faithful in the Monday-through-Friday get up, take the kids to school, try to cram some breakfast in our face, try to make it work, and praying all the while for supernatural, powerful breakthrough, who are generous. If they see a need, they step in and meet it. It makes us a distinct people who on top of that are serious about obedience to the Word of God, because at the root they're hedonists.

My greatest joy is found in full surrender to Jesus Christ. I'm ultimately about his glory and my joy, so I'm going to say "Yes" whenever the Word of God bears its weight on me. When it confronts me, when it rebukes me, I'm not going to argue. I'm not going to look for an asterisk. I'm not going to try to explain away 2,000 years of orthodoxy. I'm going to submit, as difficult as it might be, because God is leading me to life, not death. That's what marks us as distinct, and that leads me to the last thing.

People who hear the Word, believe the Word, and do the Word are unleashed on the world to do hard things. I never want to paint a picture of reality for you that's inconsistent with the one we see in the Scriptures. Some other verses that people never really bring up are verses like this: "In this world you will have trouble." "If they hated me, they will also hate you." Is that anybody's life verse? Does anybody go, "When I'm really down, I like the one about how people are going to hate me and falsely accuse me and..."

As I seek to love, because that's what salt and light means, that we don't step into our culture's feelings or facts and go, "You know what? You just need to do what you want to do in regard to how you think about sexuality, in regard to how you think about money, in regard to how you think about war..." That's not what we do. In fact, the reason we're hated is because we are salt and light. We're purveyors of the truth.

We go, "No, you can't do that, because death is that way. I know you feel like that's not true, but I'm saying thousands of years of history and the Word of God says *this* way to life. So I'm going to love you. I'm going to walk with you. I'm going to invite you in. I'm going to show you hospitality. I'm going to be a generous man or woman, but this is not true." That's just not going to be popular. You can already see. It's getting worse, not better.

Now look. I know at any moment the Holy Spirit of God... I mean, just epic great awakening occurs, and all of the concerns that are front of mind right now dissipate in the overwhelming power of the Holy Spirit bringing renewal and revival. We're praying for that at our church here in Flower Mound. We'll meet tonight, elder-led prayer at 5:00, and we're going to pray. We're going to ask God to do that.

Winter coming is not, "Yay, winter is coming." Winter coming is, "Okay, let's prepare our kids. Let's prepare our grandkids. Let's be prepared to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to make a defense, and be bold in a world that hates us." We're going to pray about that tonight at 5:00. You should join us for that here in Flower Mound, unleashed on the world, men and women, family units and friends, who walk in the presence and power of God, embrace the ordinary, pray for the supernatural, live generous lives, who hear the Word, believe the Word, and do the Word.

If you would just use your imagination on what that would do in the DFW Metroplex if we actually lived that out, if we didn't just look in the mirror and go, "Oh gosh, if that was really going to happen, then I'm going to need to get that cut off," and then just leave and not think about it ever again but actually hear the Word and apply it and leave here today to do and not just have a spiritual platitude to share with a buddy over coffee... Can you imagine what God might do, what God has promised he would do in that space? Bless.

All the applause of men is empty and vain compared to the blessing of the creator God. He *will* be enough. He *will* draw near. He *will* accomplish his purpose. Like Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration, in 10,000 years from now no one will look back on life in 2017 and think, "Man, I wish I would have picked my own way, my own desire. My feelings *were* fact. I should have given into that." No one is going to do that. Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for these men and women, just an opportunity to be together and let your Word bear its weight on us. I pray even now, as we've looked into the mirror of your truth, that you would stir up our hearts to be doers of the Word and not just hearers only. Will you shake us out of deceit and line us up with what is true? Where we have given our feelings power to be fact, will you help us repent of that and trust in the unchanging Word you have given to us? You are gracious and kind. Help us. We need you. It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.