

Evangelism seminar Part 1: Evangelism is for Everyone

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[0 : 00] But no, it's a joy to be here. I also want to introduce my friend Kevin Bennett, who is from the Southerton Church, the sister church. It's another Philadelphia suburb, so I'm grateful to have him with me.

And if you have any questions about evangelism, he'll be able to help you as well. But no, thank you so much for just coming to this. I love being able to be here and get to know you guys.

And especially just to talk about evangelism. This is one of the hardest areas in the Christian life, if not the hardest area, to obey the Lord and to obey what God commands us to do.

And so it's great for us to be able to talk about this and study it and look at it. And that's what we're going to do this weekend. So what I'd like to do is I'd like to start out with just a message.

You don't have notes for this message. It's called Beautiful Feet. It's out of Isaiah 53. Sorry, 52. And in this message, just to try to capture the heart of Christ and stir our hearts toward evangelism before we get into the practicals.

[1 : 12] I know a lot of us want to get to what do I do? What do I say? How do I do this? We'll get to that. But it's really important that we kind of capture God's heart for this and see that in Scripture.

So I'm going to try to do two messages tonight. So the first one will be this one out of Isaiah that we'll do that kind of stirs our heart. We'll take a break and then we'll come back and start getting into the culture.

And I want to talk about just the culture that we live in and what I'm seeing, what we're seeing. And I want to ask you guys and draw you out. Hopefully we'll have enough time for Q&A.;

So if you guys want to open to Isaiah 52 in your Bibles. Isaiah 52.

And let me start as you guys are turning. Let me start with this story. In 1949, a man named John Currier was found guilty of murder and he was sentenced to life in prison.

[2 : 24] Later his sentence was commuted and he was transferred from prison and paroled to work for a wealthy farmer near Nashville, Tennessee. In 1968, his sentence was terminated.

State Correction Department records show that a letter was written to the prisoner, to John Currier, and to the farmer that he worked for.

So he was a free man. That's what the letter said, but Currier never saw the letter. And he never knew that it had been written. So one year went by and then two years and then five years and finally ten years went by and he still did not know that he was free.

He was, his life was very hard. He was making almost nothing. He made a tiny little allowance for his personal needs. His life was filled with hard labor. He slept in a drafty trailer.

He took baths in a horse trough. His life had little or no promise of hope. And this went on for over ten years until in 1979, a state parole officer found the letter and drove to the farm and delivered it to John Currier.

[3 : 47] Now it was suspected that the farmer liked the cheap labor and never told him that he was free.

How would you feel if you were that prisoner? How would you feel about that? Or imagine if you had a letter.

Imagine if you had a message that important and you never delivered it. Imagine if you had news that good and you kept that to yourself.

Let's look at what it says in Isaiah 52 in verse 1. It says,

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, Your God reigns.

[5 : 48] Now Isaiah is prophesying about the future when Babylon would rise to power, destroy Jerusalem, and then carry God's people into exile.

This is devastating news. Jerusalem is the city of God. But the Babylonians would come and tear down the walls and rip apart the temple.

They would kill the defenders and enslave the rest, leaving only the weak and the poor and the sick behind. So Isaiah pictures these stragglers waiting in the ruined city of Jerusalem as a future battle is being fought.

Not in front of the ruined gates of Jerusalem, but the battle is being fought like a few miles away over the mountains. And Isaiah pictures these dejected people in the city breathlessly awaiting the news of this battle.

If the news is victory, they're delivered. If the news is defeat, all is lost. Now I don't know if you picked this up, but listen to the tone of Isaiah 52.

[7 : 01] It's full of triumph and joy and celebration. Verse 1, awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion, put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city, for there shall no more come unto you the uncircumcised and the unclean.

Shake yourself from the dust and arise. Be seated, O Jerusalem, loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion. So God is telling them, He's saying, awake, guys, get up.

Summon your strength. Get your best clothes on. Take those rags off. Why? Because the city has been delivered. There are no more enemies. They've been defeated. Stop laying around in the dirt. Get up. Dust yourself off. And sit down and take the chains off. Undo the shackles from your ankle. Take the chain off your neck. You're no longer a slave.

Your captivity is over. And then in verse 3, it says, for thus says the Lord, you were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money.

[8 : 05] In other words, the Babylonians just came and took God's people for nothing. And Egypt did the same thing. And Assyria, that's mentioned in verse 4. In other words, the Lord didn't get anything when they went into captivity.

No payment, nothing. And this makes God look weak. Like the big bully Babylonians just came and took his lunch money.

God surrendered his people for nothing. And the Israelites felt completely let down. They're convinced they shouldn't have trusted God.

He didn't come through for them. So they lift their voices in crying and wailing. Look in 5b there. It says, their rulers wail, declare the Lord.

And continually, all the day, my name is despised. How could God let this happen?

[9 : 04] Well, their captivity, for one thing, came about because of their own sin. This is what they deserve. They're being disciplined for centuries of defiance and rebellion and betrayal.

It was their fault, not God's. But God breaks in on their complaints and anger with verse 6.

Verse 6 is completely unexpected. God just got done saying in verse 5 that Israel is continually despising his name all day long.

They despise who he is. They complain and doubt and condemn God. And then in verse 6, God says, therefore, my people shall know my name.

That's amazing. I mean, Israel was saying, God, how do we know that what you said in verses 1 and 2 will happen? How do we know you're going to do this to the Babylonians?

[10 : 09] Why should we dust ourselves off and put our best clothes on? We've been in captivity for 70 years. What would change that now? How do we know that what you say is true? And then in the rest of verse 6, he says, therefore, in that day they shall know that it is I who speak.

Here I am. In other words, God, how do we know that this is all going to happen? How do we know this is true? And God says, because I'm the one that said it. Because I spoke.

I'm the one that has declared this. And you know what that reminds me of? Remember in Luke chapter 1, during the birth of John the Baptist, remember when Zechariah is in the temple and the angel Gabriel appears and tells him he's going to have a baby?

And this is why Zechariah is burning incense in the temple. And remember Zechariah says, how can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.

And do you remember what Gabriel says to him? He says, I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God. I stand in the presence of God and I've been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.

[11 : 33] You know, there's something in us that doesn't naturally believe good news. God is telling Israel it's incredibly good news here and they don't believe it.

It seems too good to be true. They're thinking about all the ways that God has failed them. And so like Zechariah, they question if what God says will come to pass.

And it's not wrong to question things. Except when God is speaking. Gabriel wanted Zechariah to understand we are talking about God.

We're not talking about the empty promises of man. We're talking about God's word. I stand in the presence of God. And here in Isaiah, God is speaking another promise of good news.

But it's hard to believe good news when we're going through trials. When things aren't going the way we want them to. So we can doubt God. And we can not believe his promises.

[12 : 43] And when we do that, we despise him. Israel was wailing against God, charging him and blaming him. So what is God going to do?

Well, look at verse 5 in chapter 52. Verse 5 is kind of interesting. Where it says, now therefore, what have I here declares the Lord. And that kind of reminds me.

That's kind of like God saying, well, well, well. What do I. It actually reminds me of a line in Karate Kid. When Dutch says to Daniel LaRusso, well, well, well.

What do we have here? If it isn't our little friend Danielle. What's the matter? Danielle. Is it mommy going to. Okay. I can't go into movie lines because I have these memorized. But it's kind of like you feel that a little bit like God saying, okay, well, well, well, well.

What do we have here? What am I going to do with these people who are despising me all day long? And God says, I'm going to show them my name.

[13 : 45] I'm going to show them who I am. I'm going to come to them. Here I am. This is amazing.

God is once again going to show them who he is. He's saying, despite your constant rejection of me, I'm going to come to you. I'm going to deliver you.

I'm going to speak to you. I'm going to comfort you. I'm going to restore you. And then I'm going to dwell with you. This reminds me of the song. You guys know the song, How Deep the Father's Love for Us.

You know that song? I love that song. And my favorite line is in the beginning, which is how deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure, that he would give his only son, and I love this line, to make a wretch his treasure.

To make a wretch his treasure. It's amazing. It's grace that God would do that. And I remember when, you know, this song, Amazing Grace, it says, that saved a wretch like me.

[14 : 54] Right? Amazing Grace that saved a wretch like me. I had a friend in high school that actually was the guy that reached out to my brother and I and shared the gospel with his name is Alvaro.

And he grew up in a Christian church. He grew up in a Baptist church. I did not. I did not grow in a Christian home. Grew up, started out in Irish Catholic, then went to Episcopalian. So we didn't know the gospel.

Didn't know Amazing Grace. Didn't know what grace meant. And, but he said when they used to sing Amazing Grace in his church all the time. And when they were kids, like he and his friends, when they would get to the part that said, that saved a wretch like me, they would all go, that saved a wretch like you.

And they'd point to other people in the congregation. Right? So they would not me like other wretches that God saved. And so, but I, and I always laughed at that. But, but there's something in us that doesn't like to think of ourselves as wretches.

A wretch. Right? And even as those kids, they wanted to say, save the wretch like you, not, not like me. Because we, we don't tend to think of ourselves that way. It's not, it's not natural.

[16 : 04] But we are wretches. And we have despised him. Right? You know what his response is? I'm going to come to you.

I am going to come to you with grace. Here I am. I am. This, this therefore in verse 6 makes no sense.

It makes no sense. We are wretched, but God makes us his treasure. He takes us back. And he shows us his power. And he gives us himself.

He reveals himself so that we know him and we don't doubt him any longer. There is a big difference between Israel's story as we read it here in Isaiah and ours.

God couldn't just take us back the way he did to Israel. In their case, he didn't pay any money to the Babylonians.

[17 : 06] He just took his people back. But with us, he had to pay. He had to make a payment to get us back.

And it was a price beyond anything that has ever been paid. It cost God dearly. To get us back, it cost God his son.

Our sin against God put us in an infinite debt to God. And this is a debt that he can't ignore. Our sins must be paid for.

We must be punished. For all the times we've despised God. How are we going to escape this? We have chains on our necks. We're lying in the dust. Our captors and oppressors are walking our streets.

Is there any hope? Well, in comes verse 7. What an amazing verse. In verse 7, it says, How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news.

[18 : 06] Who publishes peace. Who brings good news of happiness. Who publishes salvation. Who says to Zion, Your God reigns. Now, remember when we talked about God's people sitting in this ruined Jerusalem in bondage and slavery.

We have this battle, right, that's taking place. It's miles away. And the watchers on the walls are eagerly looking for any news of the battle. When suddenly on a distant hill, a runner is seen.

And he runs quickly down the hill and then out into the open plain. People start to gather on the wall. What's the news? He's yelling something. What is he saying? He's saying, Good news.

Good news. There's peace. There is happiness. We're saved. God reigns. Let the celebration begin. God was right. Put on your beautiful garments. He was right.

You can take off those bonds of slavery. We're saved. Lift up your voices and sing. Sing for joy. We've all been rescued. Now, I tried to think of what this would feel like.

[19 : 14] And what would bring this level of joy. And the best illustration I could come up with was when I was a kid, maybe say like 10 or 11 or 12 years old. Apart from Christmas, the greatest joy that I experienced is when we had a big snow and school was canceled.

Okay? A snow day. A snow day. A snow day, right? So you're all with me on this. That, as a 10-year-old boy, there is nothing that would bring more joy and just pure happiness than being informed that you did not have to go to school.

It was a snow day. It was a snow day. Unfortunately, my kids can't really understand this because most of them were homeschooled and it doesn't work that way. But think about this.

When we had a snow day, in a sense, we were saved. We were saved from the prison of our school, right? And we were delivered from our captors, our teachers, right?

And peace came. There was no more forced labor, homework. I mean, it's just freedom. Just pure joy that happened. And I think that's just what we, that's like what they would have been feeling here.

[20 : 38] That kind of joy, just pure joy. And I like how verse 7 emphasizes the feet of the guy bringing the good news. How beautiful are the feet of him who brings good news.

How beautiful are the feet of him who publishes peace. The feet of him who brings news of happiness. How beautiful are the feet of him who publishes salvation, who says your God reigns. Now, the irony here is that feet aren't beautiful, right? They're not beautiful. They're dirty and nasty and smelly and ugly. Especially in biblical times when they wore sandals or went barefoot.

You know, they, we have to wash our hands before dinner. Back then they had to wash their feet. Like, hey kids, come, it's time for dinner. Wash your feet and come to the table. I mean, feet were just a mess in biblical times.

And even now, people in our society do not like feet. Some people are excessively grossed out by feet.

[21 : 43] But listen, when you're bringing news this great, when you're bringing the gospel to someone, even your feet are beautiful.

The feet of my mom in her old slippers coming up the steps to tell us it was a snow day, they were beautiful feet.

That those feet were welcome to come into our room and tell us that it was a snow day. Listen, the feet that run over the mountains and down the road to deliver the good news of the gospel, they are the most beautiful feet in the world.

They are feet worth celebrating. Guys, we have news that's greater than any news that anyone has ever heard.

And we have the joy and privilege of bringing this good news to those who desperately need it. We're God's messengers.

[22 : 51] We're his runners. We're the ones that are supposed to come down out of those hills and run and tell people the gospel. We're God's feet. There's a great story in 2 Samuel 18 that actually talks about this.

And so David's men were in a big battle and Joab was the commander of David's army, was in this big battle and they didn't know who was going to win. David was back in the city just like waiting to hear this news.

And so Joab had won. They had defeated their enemies. And so Joab sends this Cushite and says, Go run and tell David that we've won.

Tell him about this victory. And there's this other guy that's there and his name is Ahamaz. And he says, Oh, let me run and tell him.

Let me run back. And Joab goes, No, you don't need to run. You know, I already sent him a while ago. Like, you don't need to run. Like, there's no special reward for you. You know, you're not going to...

[23 : 52] And this is what he says. Ahamaz keeps saying this. Well, come what may, let me run. And Joab argues with him and he says this. Come what may. Let me run.

And so Joab finds this. Go ahead and run. And Ahamaz just... I don't know what it is. Just the joy of the victory runs and passes the Cushite and runs to tell David this good news.

That's a great picture. We have an amazing message of good news. And we should be dying to get this message out. We should be saying, Oh, come what may.

Just let me run. Just let me run and tell others this good news. Now, let's look for a few minutes at the good news that God wants us to share.

So first, number one, the gospel is news of peace. So the gospel is news of peace.

[24 : 49] So there in the beginning of verse 7, it says, How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace. Peace. Peace. Peace.

Peace. This is what everybody wants, right? We want peace in our relationships. We want peace in our world. But we don't know how to get it. In the 70s, Cat Stevens told us all we need to do was to get on the peace train.

John Lennon said all we need to do is give peace a chance, right? They were talking mainly about the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War when it seemed like the world was a very divided place.

Unfortunately, not much has changed. The world seems maybe even more divided now than ever. But part of the reason that we can't have real peace is that we can't have real peace until we have peace with God.

We're all born into a war, a war that we're fighting against God. From the moment we're born, our sinful nature tells us that we should be God. We should be the king. We should be in charge. We should make the rules and do what we want.

[25 : 57] That's what sin is. It's doing what you want to do and not what God wants you to do. It's pushing God's authority down in order to push our authority up. And this is where all our problems come from.

Being at war against God is not a good idea. If God is against us, we're not going to have peace. But the gospel is a declaration that peace has come. Romans 5.1, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have, what?

Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus made peace between us and God.

God had declared war on sin. And Jesus stepped in front of us and took the full assault of God's wrath that should have been ours.

[26 : 56] He took our punishment, cleansed us of sin, and then brought us to God. And because of this, we now have peace with God. And that's the message that we proclaim to the world, that they can have peace with God.

And we have to find ways to tell them about this peace. Now, did you notice how in verse 7 it says, How beautiful are the feet of those who publish peace.

So this is kind of weird, like as the guy is like running down the mountain, he's out into the plain, he gets about 100 yards away from the city, and he stops and starts setting up a little printing press, and he starts taking some people from the wall, like, Hey, what's going on? Tell us the news. Hold on, let me get the typeset finished. I'm going to be printing the papers in a second. What is this talking about, publishing peace? Well, he's not setting up a printing press. The word publish can also be translated to herald or to proclaim.

It's actually someone that's entrusted with a message. We are all called to herald or proclaim to those who are not Christians.

[28 : 03] We're entrusted with a message that we are to declare to others so that they can find peace with God through Jesus Christ. So the gospel is news of peace.

Number two, the gospel is news of happiness. In verse 7, again, it says, Who publishes peace who brings good news of happiness. Now, religions all try in very different ways to bring happiness to people.

But they don't do a very good job. They usually bring a lot of duties and requirements and rules that leave people feeling guilty and just aware of how far short they're falling.

Jesus is the only one that can bring true happiness. All of the ways that people in the world are looking for happiness, they will ultimately fail. Jesus is the only one that can bring true happiness. Why? Because he's the fountain of happiness. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have been happy for all eternity, loving and adoring and worshiping and celebrating one another in perfect joy.

[29 : 13] And so when we repent and trust in Jesus to save us, we're joined to this happy, joy-filled trinity. We're united with God himself, and we become the objects of his love and affection.

See, the world is desperately looking for happiness, but it can only come when we're united with God. Psalm 1611 says, Happiness can only come when the Holy Spirit lives inside of us and unites us to God.

When God comes into our Jerusalem, into our ruins, into our mess, he sets up his throne, he takes ownership of us, and then we become happy in God.

Now, most people don't see God this way, but God is full of happiness and gladness and laughter and joy.

That's why he's created things that give us joy. He's created things that bring happiness. God made laughter and tears of joy and clapping and singing.

[30 : 32] Read the book of Acts. The book of Acts is marked by joy. It's marked by happiness and celebration.

And it's different. In the Gospels, it's more tense and conflict. There's conflict and those sort of things in Acts as well. But there's a spirit of joy there. There's more happiness and celebration.

Now, the apostles didn't just decide to get happy because Jesus rose from the dead. No, the Holy Spirit came into them and filled them with the very presence of God.

God now dwelt inside his people. Listen to this short quote by A.W. Tozer. He says, The moral happiness of the Creator had taken residence in the breasts of redeemed creatures, and they could not but be glad.

The work of the Holy Spirit is, among other things, to rescue the redeemed man's emotions, to restring his harp, and open again the wheels of sacred joy, which have been stopped by sin.

[31 : 49] Isn't that good? To restring our harps so that we can sing and experience that joy and bring that praise to God.

We have a message of happiness to share with others. Let me ask you a question. Does the message of the gospel make you happy?

Does it make you happy? If it does, you should be eager to share that happiness with others. It shouldn't be a chore or a duty.

It should be a delight. We have an incredible privilege of bringing happiness to a world that just can't find it. Number three, the gospel is news of salvation.

There in verse 7, it says, Who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation. When that messenger was running across the plain, he was yelling, We're saved! We're saved!

[32 : 47] The Babylonians are defeated! We're not going to die! We have a message of salvation for those around us. And it's more incredible than anything we could ever imagine.

Our message, think about this. This is our message. No matter who you are, no matter what you've done, no matter how badly you have sinned against God, no matter how much you've despised Him and doubted Him, no matter how much you've railed against Him and disobeyed Him, you can be forgiven of all your sins and join to God.

That's crazy. That's amazing. That you can be saved from the punishment of hell through the blood of Jesus.

You do not have to suffer the wrath and punishment for your sins. Salvation has come. You can be rescued. And it's all because God reigns.

Because He won. He's won and He's defeated sin and death. And God has given us this salvation, this victory, and now He calls us to run and spread the good news.

[34 : 05] But it's hard, isn't it? Sharing the Gospels, as I mentioned, is probably the most difficult area of the Christian life. It's difficult for me. And here's the problem.

When we tell people the Gospel, they don't respond with joy and singing. Right? They don't kiss our feet when we're trying to bring them the Gospel.

Right? When we run down the mountain with the message of good news, people think we're crazy. People think that we're outdated and intolerant.

Some people assume that we're self-righteous and hateful and judgmental. Our news doesn't seem that great to the rest of the world. And there's a reason for that.

One reason is that our good news has some serious bad news attached to it. Right? And people don't want to hear the bad news.

[35 : 04] People do not want to hear that they are sinful, that they are wretches, that can't save themselves. But we have to share the bad news so that they can then understand and receive the good news.

But that's not easy to do. There's risk involved, especially in today's very hostile environment. I read a statistic recently.

I don't know if it's true. Maybe only part of it is true. But it said that 50% of Christian millennials, so this is, I think it was talking about millennials and Gen Z, so basically people in their 30s and their 20s, so 20s and 30s right now, that 50% of Christian millennials do not believe that we should share our faith.

Think that it's wrong. These are Christians, you know, confessing Christians, that believe that we should just keep that, we shouldn't share our faith.

Why would they think that? Well, I understand why they think that, because it's risky. It's scary.

Right? We're afraid of what people are going to think. Number one obstacle to sharing the gospel is fear.

[36 : 18] It's a dangerous job. You've heard of the saying, don't shoot the messenger. The reason the saying came out is because the messenger is bringing some bad news. They're saying, listen, don't shoot me.

I'm just telling you this news. It was the preaching of the gospel that got Jesus killed, despite the fact that he had the most beautiful feet in the world.

Think about how the beautiful feet of Jesus as he walked these long, dusty roads. I'm going to talk on Sunday about John chapter 4. Jesus went from Jerusalem all the way to Samaria.

It's long. It's miles, 20 miles. And walked these roads. And he constantly was walking these roads in his sandals or in his bare feet, just trying to bring the gospel, bring healing.

Think about those beautiful feet of Jesus. That's why a woman kissed his feet in Luke chapter 7. Remember, this story is so beautiful. I'll read it to you in Luke 7, 37.

[37 : 26] You know it though. And behold, the woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar, a flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet.

So remember, like in biblical times, they would eat on these couches and the table would be in the center. And you'd lay on this couch. Your feet would be behind you. You'd kind of be laying out. And so she's back behind that couch to where his feet are.

And it says, Standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.

And then he tells that Pharisee, he says, She has not ceased to kiss my feet. And what a beautiful picture. Even the feet of Jesus were so beautiful to her when she was forgiving him all that sin and

she couldn't stop kissing his feet.

And I think about his feet coming to me and just the beauty of those feet. But even though Jesus had the most beautiful feet in the world and brought us the greatest news in the world, they still pierced his feet.

[38 : 43] They put nails through his feet. They nailed him to the cross. Some people kissed his feet and some people pierced his feet.

Some people will love your feet and some people will hate them. One of the reasons this is so dangerous and the reason it's so difficult is because people don't realize the danger that they're in. They don't realize that they're lost and need salvation. Because of this, our message doesn't seem like good news. It'd be like when my mom was coming to wake us up for school and tell us there's a snow day and she would come up to wake us up.

And what if we were just so tired? We're like, Mom, I don't want to go to school. Just go downstairs. Just leave us alone. And we just reject her.

We didn't believe her because we didn't want to go to school. The world thinks that Christianity is like going to school. Christianity is a bunch of rules, restrictions, and boring work.

[39 : 50] They don't realize that we have joy beyond their wildest imaginations. We have an eternal snow day to tell them about.

If they could only see, if they could only see the danger that they're in, if they could only see what their real problem is. See, the real problem that people have is not politics.

It's not lack of money. It's not bad relationships. Those are problems, but they're not our greatest problem. Our greatest problem is that our sin has separated us from God, and we can't get out of that.

J.C. Ryle says, Till men and women are brought to feel their sinfulness and need, no real good is ever done to their souls. Think about that.

Until men and women are brought to feel their sinfulness and need, no real good is ever done for their souls. Unless people see their sin and their need for forgiveness, you can't help their souls.

[40 : 59] We need to remember that people, they just don't see this, and we have to find a way to help them. And God is going to help us to do this. This is why we're gathered here this weekend.

God wants to remind us as we start. He wants to remind us through Isaiah how amazing and beautiful and powerful the gospel is. And you know what? We know how beautiful the gospel is, don't we?

Don't we? We know how beautiful it is. Do you remember? Do you remember when you were lost? Do you remember what your life was like? Do you remember when your heart was hard and closed to the gospel?

Do you remember when you first heard the gospel? Do you remember when the gospel broke in and changed everything? This is why we come together on Sundays and worship with all our hearts.

We're reminding ourselves of the power of the gospel that has saved us. In Romans 1.16, I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it's the power of God for salvation.

[42 : 03] The message of the gospel is power. We don't have to be powerful or clever or wise or perfect to share it. We just need to get this message out and watch God go to work.

We have the power of the gospel and we've been changed by it, right? You know what it means to be forgiven of your sins.

You know what it means to be adopted into the family of God. This does not mean that your neighbor is going to come bounding over the fence to ask you about what God has done in your life. But God can use us even as we take small steps, right? I know you don't want to offend people or you don't want to come off like a weirdo.

Please don't come off like a weirdo. We don't have to. We just need to be ourselves to be sincere, to care about people. Maybe you haven't talked to your neighbor in years.

[43 : 02] God can use you. God can use a friendly greeting or a plate of cookies. He can use an invitation to a co-worker or a classmate to go to lunch or to grab coffee.

Did you know that Paul actually quotes this passage in Isaiah in Romans 10, 14? He says, How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?

And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching, someone proclaiming or heralding? And how are they to preach unless

they are sent as it is written? How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news. In other words, Paul is saying, How are they going to hear about Jesus if we don't speak to them? How are they going to believe the gospel if we don't share it with them? They're not. They're not. It's like not delivering the letter to John Currier. They need us to open our mouths and tell them about Jesus. And God is sending us to do this.

[44 : 03] He's sending us into our neighborhoods, into our workplaces, into our families, into our classrooms. That's what he's calling us to do. Remember in Luke chapter 9, Jesus sends out the 12 to proclaim the gospel.

Then Luke chapter 10, he sends out the 72. And then in Acts, he sent the church throughout the world to be his witnesses. And he gave them the Holy Spirit and he gives us the Holy Spirit to help us overcome our fears in that.

And now the baton has been passed to us. It's gone from one generation of believers to the next. Now it's in our hands. And God is sending our feet into a world that desperately needs the good news.

I mentioned earlier that sometimes people don't see our message as good news. But there are some people that do. Not always at first, but they do come around.

Let me close with this story. When I was in high school, as I mentioned, I did not grow up in a Christian home. And in high school, my brother and I were in a chemistry class and we had a friend in class that we had known for a couple years and his name was Alvaro Rivera.

[45 : 18] And his dad was Colombian. His mom was from the U.S. And his mom was a Christian. His dad was not. So he grew up in the Baptist church. And he was a friend. He didn't do some things. Like we had, my brother and I had some like party friends in sports and that sort of thing.

He was more on the intellectual side of things. And he wouldn't do that stuff. Like he wouldn't drink or curse or do those kinds of things. But we didn't know he's Christian.

We had no idea he was a Christian. And we knew him for like a couple years. And one day in chemistry class all of a sudden he just said to my brother and I, he said, do you guys think you're good enough to get to heaven?

And we're like, yeah, of course. I mean, just look at us. I mean, of course we're going to, I mean, we're good guys, right? We're going to get to heaven. And he started to quote the Bible.

He said, you know, that it's impossible to get to God by being a good person. We're like, well, we didn't know what we were talking about, but we're Irish, so we're good at arguing even if we have no idea what we're talking about. And so our argument was a lot of like, well, nuh-uh.

[46 : 21] Uh-huh. Nuh-uh. Like we didn't know what we were talking about. And so I remember my brother and I went home and asked my mom if we had a Bible.

And we had this big, huge Catholic Bible. It was like, you know, this mushroom cloud of dust came up and I'm like, open this up. There was like a press flower, a press fern, a \$2 bill.

Like, what is this, a museum? It actually had a framed picture of Jesus was on the front of this Bible. And somehow, I don't know how this happened, somehow we found John 3.16. There must have been something in like, go to John 3.16 or something.

And we're like, oh, hey, we got this. So we came back in the chemistry class the next day to Alva and we're like, hey, guess what? We were reading the book of Johnny and it says, it said, if you believe, you're in.

And we believe, so we're in. So there, take that, you're busted. And he said, well, it also says in James chapter 2 that even the demons believe in God and shudder. And we're like, crud, how did this kid, how does he know all this stuff?

[47 : 22] Well, that was the very beginning. That was my first real encounter with the Bible. And that was the beginning of God using my friend Alvaro to share the gospel with us.

He gave us a Bible and my brother and I fought over that and he gave us two Bibles and so we could read it. And we started to read the Bible and we would talk to him and he would share, he would help us to understand his mom would share the gospel with us.

And it wasn't long after that that I went to college, that was my junior year of high school, my freshman year of college that God saved me and then he saved my brother Bob who's also a pastor in Sovereign Grace. And you know what I think?

This is what I think. I wonder what made Alvaro all of a sudden decide to share with us. Because he hadn't shared any of that for a couple years.

