



**Made Right with God-Part 7**  
**Living the Christian Life**  
**Pastor Mike Fabarez**

It was September 8th, 2011. It was a Thursday afternoon at 3:38 p.m., September 8th, 2011 and I am sure if you live in Southern California back then you remember that day. You may not remember the date but you remember the day. It was the day our electricity went out, all of our electricity went out, not just in Orange County, in San Diego County, L.A. County, Riverside County, Imperial County, San Bernardino County, big swaths of Arizona went out and, even I learned recently, a million homes down in Baja California went out too. It went out everywhere. I mean an amazing outage. We had a really bad afternoon, we all spent the evening in the dark that night, or around our flashlights that night, and it took hours to get everything back on line. Matter of fact, Capo Unified here canceled all of its classes the next day, we still were without power in the morning. Down in San Diego, throughout the districts, they canceled classes the next day. We took a long time to get everything back and up and running and people wondered what kind of sabotage this had been. Was this like a rogue nation that bombed our power plants? Was this some well-coordinate, you know, cyber-attack on our infrastructure? I mean what kind of terrorism, what kind of sabotage was this?

Well, if you remember, it was nothing of the sort. No, nothing of the sort. It really came down to, believe it or not, one employee sitting in one building not far from Yuma, Arizona, out there in hot Arizona, not thinking through the consequences of what he was about to do when he flipped one little switch between two substations. He didn't follow protocol, flipped that switch and when he did that, it started a series of dominoes, so to speak, falling because transformers then were overloaded, started to fail, one after the next, parts of the power grid shifted in terms of trying to deal with this outage and eventually came right down here, down the freeway, this is before San Onofre was decommissioned, it took on so much of the overage in that blackout that within minutes it had reached 170% of its capacity then, bam, it was taken off-line and everything shut down, everything shut down. It was a mess all because of the lapse of judgment in one employee who sat there, you had lawsuits came as a result of that. The restauranteurs in the food service industry, they sued for all of the spoiled and lost food. You had snarled traffic, people missing appointments, you had hospitals where their backup generators had failed and you put people's lives at risk. You had several sewage treatment plants that could not treat their sewage and it actually contaminated the water source and you had people in several water districts then trying to tell people through the radio that you are supposed to boil your water before you drink it. I mean this is a big, big deal back there in 2011, and all because some guy, sitting in one little station, flipped a switch when he wasn't supposed to.

You know what he thought of after that all happened? I thought, I don't want to work for the electric company. That's just too much pressure. I mean, I can see myself coming in one day, not feeling all that well, doing what I think I'm supposed to do, flipping a switch and, you know, the world blows up because I'm not paying attention to what I'm supposed to be doing. I thought that's a lot of power. I wouldn't want to do that. I think a lot of people would want to quit. Well, I skimmed through the 158-page executive report that went out to all the people who worked in the industry, for the leadership there of the power companies that dealt with this problem and, you know, they didn't run for the door. Matter of fact, they didn't say, "Well, we don't want to do this anymore, too much responsibility." Certainly they said that incident on September the 8th, 2011, taught us to recognize how big a responsibility we have to do things the way we're supposed to, to do it right. They stepped it up. They said, "We're going to put this safeguard in place, we're going to make sure



we do things right by doing this with our employees. We've got to make sure all these things are in line, because we cannot fail at our job because too much of our society relies on us doing our job well." I certainly appreciate that from responsible workers, who learn from their mistakes and recognize what an important role they play in society.

Well, if you sit here this morning and you say you're a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, I've got to tell you, your role in society is far more important than any utility worker, far more important than any kind of industry provider in terms of electricity or water or anything else. You and I do in this society something so pivotal that if we don't take our job seriously you will not only have repercussions throughout our society, it's going to have repercussions into eternity.

That is a very, very sobering lesson for us to learn. It's one that Jesus wants to leave you feeling the weight of that this morning, with hope and optimism, but knowing the responsibility we have.

He's teaching us about this in Luke Chapter 19 verses 11 through 27. I invite you to take your Bibles and turn there, as I read for you from this text that's very important for us to catch it in its context, don't fail to catch the context of this particular passage that will help us to see how it ties in as part seven of our series that started when Jesus told a parable about a Temple Mount where you had a Pharisee and a tax collector go up to that Temple Mount, and we saw this in Chapter 18, and one went home, for the first time in the book we have this word, he went home "justified" made right before his maker. We've called this series getting right with God or "Made Right With God." We're going to wrap this up today by what I really think is the book-end between that parable and all that we've seen intervening between the two, including people like the rich young ruler walking away from the offer of salvation, saying it's too costly, don't want to do it. His lessons about what real faith is like. I mean, his teaching to us about what it means to follow Christ and then these stories as he entered into Jericho. And you had this man, this Bartimaeus, this blind poor beggar who gets saved at the end of Chapter 18.

And then last time we're together we saw that tax collector, we saw Zacchaeus have his life radically transformed. Jesus says, "Salvation has come to your house" and we watched his life transform with a short testimony about how this man who worshipped money is now going to be generous and give away his income and then make right his life, his ethic at work had been so bad, but he says I'm going to make restitution fourfold to all those people. And then Jesus ends with these words in verse 10, look at it. Luke Chapter 19 verse 10, he says, you know what, this is what it's all about, this is why I came, "The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost." That's where we ended last time. That's what he's here for. Now, of course, he's got to go to Jerusalem where he's going, if you drop all the way down after our text this morning to verse 26, we get into the familiar territory of Palm Sunday.

He comes into Jerusalem and he's ready to present himself as a sacrificial lamb, "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." He's going to die. The only way he can save us is to pay the penalty for our sin. But he's all about the message, he's all about the good news, you can be made right with God. We got a sin problem, we have to honestly deal with, which has been the lesson of this series. But after saying that, "I've come to seek and save the lost" on my way to Jerusalem, as he's saying those things and after those people witnessed a radical transformation of a poor blind beggar in Jericho, and then a rich, filthy rich, tax collector in Jericho, it says in verse 11, "As they heard these things he proceeded to tell them a parable." Now here's why he told that. Because he was near Jerusalem, 17 miles, he'd finally come to the biggest city before you get to Jerusalem, and he was passing through, you saw all the teaching, you saw the conversion of Zacchaeus and Bartimaeus, and now, as we're moving out and heading on the last journey, 17-mile walk, to get to



Jerusalem, the Bible says, "He was getting near there," and all the anticipation was high, "they supposed that the Kingdom of God was to appear immediately."

Now Luke knows from his perspective, of course, looking back on this, that it wasn't going to appear immediately. And if you read the teaching of Christ between the lines, you can see Jesus had dropped many hints, it's not going to happen immediately. As a matter of fact, what they didn't know in the Old Testament with any clarity is that the coming of the kingdom was going to come first by the king arriving as a suffering servant to pay for sin and then him to come back a second time. You see this delay of the kingdom. Now we've got to realize that gap between the two comings of Christ, we're going to celebrate here as it comes around again, Christmas time, will be the celebration of the First Advent, the first arrival of Christ. And then there's the Second Advent, the second coming of Christ. And between those two advents, we know we've got this period of time that we're currently living in. And in that period of time, Jesus is going to talk about that delay and that's why he tells this parable. With all of this conversion and life transformation unfolding before their eyes, and with his declaration, "I came to seek and save the lost" he says, listen, I know you think the kingdom is going to come immediately. I'm going to go into Jerusalem and I'm going to see all the fulfillment of that Isaiah Chapter 9 prophecy that we looked at last week, that "The government is going to rest on his shoulder," he's going to sit and ascend the throne of his father, David, "and the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end." And they said it's going to be time. No longer is Rome going to have their heavy hand on our backs and its hand in our pockets, taxing us. We're going to have the king, now. It's going to make everything right. Peace, no more war.

I look forward to that great day that was coming. But he said, no that's not going to come immediately and I'm going to tell you the story so that you understand that you got a job to do. Verse 12. And it's an important job, a critical job. It is, really, the essence of the Christian life in this age.

"He said therefore, 'A noble man went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return.'" Now, that sounds weird to us that a nobleman, which literally in Greek is a compound word "eu," which I often point out to you because it makes many English words, "eu" is good and then birth, "genes" to be born. It's a good birth, someone who is of good birth, someone is, in this context and sometimes in vocabulary, it simply means someone who is born of a king, someone who was born of royalty, he's a prince, he's going to be the king. Someone of noble birth, who was well born, who's going to inherit the kingdom, he goes away into a far country to receive a kingdom for himself and then return.

Now that's not unfamiliar to them, because if you think back to the beginning of the story of Christ in Matthew, Matthew Chapter 2, you remember that Jesus was born under the heavy hand and leadership of Herod. Herod, we call him The Great. He'd been given the right to rule over Judea, the southern part of Israel, and he was in charge and was threatened. You remember the wise men came to him and all that unfolded and he got angry and he got duped by them and he says, "I'm going to kill all those babies in Bethlehem because I don't want to rival king, I certainly don't want anyone born with the title King of the Jews because I'm the king of the Jews." Well, he dies, he dies soon after that narrative there. As a matter of fact, it's embedded in that narrative, in verse 22 of Matthew 2, it says, when Herod died, his son took the throne and his name was Archelaus. He was one of many sons of Herod and that particular son, Archelaus, was given at least the provisional leadership of Judea. The problem is people didn't like him, the Jews did not want to follow him. Matter of fact, when Joseph heard, after he had fled to Egypt because he was running from Herod the Great, he goes to Egypt, when he hears that his son Archelaus is ruling in his place and he was heading back

to live there in the southern part of Israel, in Judea, God warned him and said, "Don't. Go back up north and you'll have him raised in Nazareth and he will be called Jesus of Nazareth," which was a fulfillment of prophecy, of course, but he was going to now live up north in Galilee. Well, that was because Archelaus, this son, was in charge but all the Jews feared him and hated him because, much like the story of Solomon's son, Rehoboam, in the Old Testament, he tried to be even more heavy handed than his father, and so, in trying to prove himself, he ended up really alienating himself from his citizens, they didn't like him. So he went off to Caesar, he went off to Rome. He got in a ship with his entourage and he went off to get the authority to come back without any kind of dispute and rule in Judea. That was what was expected.

The problem is, the Jews hated him so much, historically, they tell us, they sent an entourage out to go follow him so that he wouldn't sit there, unchallenged before Caesar, and say, "I should be the king and you should somehow grant me the kingdom in a way that is so obvious and clear." We need the Jews to be represented there so they sent an entourage and they said before Caesar, "We don't want him to rule over us." And so, this going away to receive the kingdom and come back and exercise that authority, they had just seen that ripped from the pages of their newspapers and certainly the recently printed history books of the day, saying we know what this is like, a man who is a prince, who's supposed to be king, he has to go away to get that authority, now he's going to come back and rule, and that's how this illustration is played out. I know we know nothing of it in our day. In the ancient monarchies of the Near East and other places in the world, it would be much more familiar. But certainly, that story of Archelaus is fresh in their historical minds.

Well, there was something else going on, as that even happened in Archelaus' day, that there were servants who were left behind. Got to rule through proxy, you've got to have some kind of representation. Of course, the whole goal of Archelaus going back to Rome was for him to come back to Judea and have everyone bow to his leadership and so he left people in place who would do the business of the king and ingratiate the citizens to himself, so when he came back there would be many people who would say, "Yeah, Archelaus isn't that bad and he's got all this authority now from Rome. We will all bow to him and he'll be our leader." And so in this parable even, it's very familiar to them, he calls ten of his servants and he gives them authority. But in this case, it's given in the illustration in terms of a monetary unit called the "mina." The mina was a hundred drachma, a drachma was one day's wage, like the denarius in the Jewish mindset, the Hellenistic Herodian mindset, you had the drachma, and the drachma, ten of them, if you just take an average, you know, wage of a worker today, I don't know, it's probably around nine to ten thousand dollars. [One drachma as the rough equivalent of a skilled worker's daily pay in the place where they live, which could be as low as \$1 or as high as \$100 -- [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek\\_drachma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_drachma)] So not a lot of money, so to speak, to do the work of the king. Nevertheless, you've got these servants who are faithful to the king, were supposed to now, here it is verse 13, it would be worth highlighting, to "Engage in business until I come." I'm going to come back and I'm going to come back with power and authority, but I want you to do work. Represent me.

And of course, we knew that Archelaus, or any other king who was going to leave servants in charge, wants those servants to be good representatives of him, so that when they come back the citizens will like him. The problem is, verse 14, his citizens hated him and they sent a delegation, as I said happened historically to Archelaus, to say after him, "Listen, we want to tell you, we want to appeal to you, we don't want this man to reign over us. We don't want that kind of leadership. We don't like this guy."

Now so far, we've got three players in this. You've got a prince who soon to be the king, but he's gone away on a long journey, a faraway place. You've got his servants there who are doing his



bidding in the place where he's going to come back and reign. And then you have all the citizens and the citizens don't want this king reigning over him. Those are the three characters in this story.

Verse 15, "When he returns, having received the kingdom," so he gets the authority, he comes back and when he comes back with all this regal power now, he orders the servants to come before him who he had given the money to, to be called in, that he might know what they gained by doing business. "The first came before him and said, 'Lord, your mina has made ten more,' so that's about \$10,000. I got \$100,000. 'I've done your business. I've multiplied your interest. And here it is.'"

"And he said to him," verse 17, "well done, good servant. Because you've been faithful in a very little, you'll have authority over 10 cities." Wow, that's an amazing response to taking \$10,000 and parlaying that into something positive for the king. Now he's going to be in charge of ten cities. I mean, multimillions and millions of dollars of leadership you are now going to exercise in the sovereignty under the ultimate sovereign. You're going to be a manager, a leader, you are going to reign as a co-region, in some way, with this king.

Verse 18, "And the second came and said, "Well, I didn't do as good as that, but Lord, your mina has made five more minas." Now we don't get the repeat of "well done" but, nevertheless, that's a decent thing and he says, well, that's great, you're going to be rewarded according to what you've done, you're going to have reign over five cities, "You shall be over five cities."

But then there was another. "Another came and said, 'Lord here's your mina, I kept it laid away in a handkerchief; for I was afraid of you because you are,' now this is an insult, it's a big strong biting word, "you're a severe man," an austere man. You know, in the language of the playground, you're a meanie. We don't like you. You're a mean man. "What do you mean?" "Well, you take what you did not deposit, you reap what you did not sow." And "He said to him," the king did, if that's what you think, "I'm going to condemn you with your own words," if that's what you think, I'm going to say right now, "you are a wicked servant," a wicked slave. "You knew that I was severe man," at least that's what you claim, and if that's what you're claiming, let's just evaluate you based on your claim. You're saying, "I took what I don't deposit and I reap what I don't sow," well, if that's really what you believed about me and you were afraid of me, then "why didn't you put my money in the bank?" I mean that would not have been a lot of risk for you. You wouldn't have done a lot of representation of me, you wouldn't have gotten into a lot of conflicts, you could have very mildly tried to multiply it, because that's what I asked you to do, to do my business. "And then, at least at my coming back, I could have collected my mina back with some interest. And he said to those who stood by," the king did, "'Take the mina from him, give it to the one who has ten minas.'" So you got a guy with \$100,000, take that \$10,000 and give it to him. Everyone said, "Whoa, wait a minute, the guy's already got ten minas. He got \$100,000. Verse 26. And he says, "I tell you, to everyone who has, more will be given, but the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away."

So apparently there's a distinctive difference between these two servants and, in that sense, I guess we could turn this into four characters. You've got a prince who's going to come back as a king, you've got servants, and in that you've got two, you've got some who are faithful in varying degrees, and then you've got some who are just servants in name only, they're not serving the king. And then you've got the citizens. And the citizens don't want to have anything to do with this king, which probably has a lot to do with what this servant is saying to his king, and that is, he's got the same perspective on the king, on the master, as the citizens have. Clearly, he doesn't seem to like this master. So he's not serving the master, he's even calling the master names in this passage. How about those enemies? Verse 27. "But as for these enemies of mine, who do not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me."



You came on a good Sunday to hear a sermon, didn't you? There's your passage. That's rough. I understand it's rough. I told you this is a sobering reminder of your job and mine, but let's try to take it in here this morning. Let's just make some simple observations based on the first four verses.

Let's make this first observation when it comes to the scene that is painted for us, you've got, let's just not divide the servants in half yet, we'll do that in a minute, but you got the coming king, you've got the servants, you've got the citizens. The king is gone on a long journey. The servants now are out there trying to do the bidding of the king and then the citizens, this is what makes it difficult, they have to try to somehow conduct the king's business while the citizens are rebellious and defiant. That makes this hard. Now, I'm just going to ask you where you are in this scenario. You're not the prince who is soon to be the king. Jesus takes that spot, you can't have that role. You can be the citizen who says, "I don't want anything to do with Christ." I don't know why you're here this morning. You might be listening on the radio. But, I'm thinking to myself, OK, if you're that person, you're just here checking things out. But most of us I would think are in this category of the servants, we're servants. We call ourselves followers of Christ. "I come every week, this is part of what I do, I come to church, I study the Bible, I listen to my pastor." That's what you do. Well, OK, great. Well, then you right you're a servant of the king. But you need to recognize, as a servant of the king, you are doing the work of God, at least you're supposed to, in a very defiant culture. You represent him there.

Let's just jot it down that way. Number one, if you're taking notes and I wish that you would, jot this down, number one. You need to "Represent the King In A Defiant Culture," which, even in saying it that way, represent the king in a defiant culture, you immediately can tell by the statement that we have a tough job. We are not representing the king in a receptive culture, we're not representing the king in a culture that's very amenable to our message. We've got a culture that, by and large, the proclivity of their hearts, I mean the leanings of their minds, is not going to be favorable to what we have to share.

Now, with men it would be impossible for anybody's minds to be changed, but we've just come off of two very exciting transformations of lives, Bartimaeus and Zacchaeus, and we know God can change lives. Though the rich young ruler walks away and Jesus says it's impossible with men, he says it's possible with God. So your life has been changed, if you're a Christian, and God can change the minds and hearts of other people as well. Nevertheless, it's not going to be easy. It's going to be a challenge.

Turn with me, if you would, to Second Corinthians Chapter 5. I want to remind you that when it comes to what we're called to do, it is an optimistic responsibility within a difficult and challenging context. I don't want us to lose sight of that. Because if you just take the story that we heard and reminded ourselves of last week in Luke Chapter 14, you might say I don't want to be those servants who have to go out there and compel people to come into the master's banquet hall. Remember that story? "Compel them, go to the highways and byways and compel them to come in, that my house might be full." And you say, "Well, I don't like that. It's like selling, you know, I don't know, timeshares for people who are on vacation. I don't want to do that. It's just so uncomfortable." Well, I want to remind you that when it happens, like it did with Bartimaeus and Zacchaeus, it's the most exciting thing ever. Matter of fact, to see the transformation of a man or a woman or a teenager, it is going to get their life right with the living God, I mean, it's an exciting thing. As a matter of fact, it takes me to this passage in verse 17 of Second Corinthians 5, a very familiar text, I hope for you, that reminds us that "If anyone is in Christ," and it's possible, God's pulling people into Christ every day, "that person then is a new creation. The old passed away." Like, the last passage we were

dealing with, you've got that tax collector, he loves his money, he loves ripping people off, he's all about himself, he is all about amassing wealth and power in his job, and all of a sudden, now, God gets a hold of his heart and, in a snap of a finger, here he is, ready to give away half of what he owns to the poor, to live much more generously, humbly, to take all of his remaining wealth and whoever he's wronged, to try and make it right. I said the Bible said you had to give 20 percent above what you had wrong someone in the Old Testament, if you'd stolen from them, he's willing to give 400% back, I mean, that's a changed heart and a changed life. He proves he's no longer bowing to the idol of material wealth and, I mean, that's an amazing transformation. "Old things pass away and behold the new has come." And we all stand back, I hope, in verse 18 and say, Wow, "All this is from God." It's amazing what he does in people's lives.

"Who through Christ." Now that's, of course, what the Bible's all about, Christ has to be the center and the active agency of all this, "He reconciles us to himself." That's what it's all. As a matter of fact, our series title, "Made Right With God," that is the great concept of reconciliation. We're not right with God, we're born alienated from God, we're born at odds with God, but it can be fixed. There's a big problem that stands in the way. Matter of fact, let's go quickly to the end of the chapter, verse 21. It says, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin." In other words, the problem is my sin but God is going to somehow treat his son, Christ, as though he was the sinner, he's going to absorb the penalty so that I now, in him, might become the righteousness of God. God's only going to have fellowship with the righteous, not relative righteous, absolute righteousness. I need that forensic legal declaration, the imputation of the perfect righteousness of Christ apply to me. What does that mean? Human life lived exactly how it ought to be lived, in moral purity, to somehow be credited to Mike Fabarez. That has to happen when Christ now lives the life I should have lived and then he dies the death I should have died, suffers at the hands of a just God, so that I could be made right.

For our sakes, out of great love for us, he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. We can all throw up our hands, go, "That's great, isn't it great to be forgiven, it's wonderful to be a Christian. Now look at my changed life, the Spirit has invaded my life, all things pass away, new things come." Fantastic. That's the part we can all celebrate. It's the next phrase in verse 18 we don't like, bottom of verse 18.

"All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and....," yeah, gave the missionaries and pastors "the ministry of reconciliation." Underline those little two letters "us." He gave us, he gave us all. Who? Those who have been reconciled.

"He gave us," the reconciled, "the ministry," which is a big word and it's big in the terms of what it costs, I mean, it's the word serving, he gave us the work, the service, of reconciling everyone else. Just like Jesus is saying, "Follow me, let's get reconciled and I'll make you reconcilers. I'll make you fishers of men, come and follow me, be reconciled to me. Then I'm going to make you someone who's got the service or the ministry or the job description of reconciliation." That, in a nutshell, is the definition of the Christian life in the present age. You are a person serving the message of reconciliation.

"That is," to be specific, "that in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself," verse 19, "not counting their trespasses against them." And again, we can cheer and say, "Isn't that great? God changes people's lives. Sins are forgiven. Oh, I love that. Let's sing a song about sins being forgiven, it's great, I feel so good, my sins are forgiven, separated as far as the east is from the west. Yay, that's great." Yeah, you're right, it is awesome to be reconciled. Oh, and here it comes, it's like a servant being entrusted with a mina, here's the word, "and in trusting to us," highlight it, "the



message of reconciliation."

If you know what it is to be reconciled to God, you know enough to reconcile someone else to God. That's your job. Matter of fact, I ought to think of myself differently, verse 20, you ought to think of yourself, maybe, in these terms, "Therefore," if that's true, "we are ambassadors." Just like someone who's gone away to a faraway land, he's going to come back riding a white horse, he's going to be, as it says in Revelation 11, it's going to come "Time for him to judge the dead," the lost, "and for him to reward his servants, the saints." We're his servants. The king is coming back. When it comes to that return, we recognize that he has left us as his ambassadors for the time being. Yeah, when he was in the world, he was the light of the world, as Jesus said in the Gospel of John. But now, he says to us, "You're the light of the world. Now you're my ambassadors. I came to seek and save the lost. Now I'm going away to a faraway country. I'm going to come back as the king, I'm no longer to be scraping my sandals on the ground as I come through the gates of Jerusalem on a donkey, on this humble beast. I going to come back on a white horse and it's going to be time for me to reward my servants and time for me to judge those citizens, but right now, you're the ambassadors."

And what do ambassadors do? They represent the interests of the king, and in this case, this is great, verse 20, "God making his appeal through us." Has he been making that appeal through you this week? What appeal is that? Here it is, you can put this in quotes if you want to, "We implore you," this is the appeal, "on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

You need to be right with God. You need to be made right with God. And then, of course, the theology of it all, in one of the most terse and compact, efficient statements in all of the Scripture of the Gospel, verse 21, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." If anyone is in Christ, new creation, old is gone, new has come. "All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that is that, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are his ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

The question isn't if you are a representative of Christ. It really is if you're any good at it. You and I are called in this world to get at the representation of the king. "Yeah, but Mike, you don't understand, the people in my little circle don't want Christ to rule over them." It's the same in my world. Same thing. I understand that. That's the forecast. It's going to be hard. You're going to live in a Psalm 2 world where people say, "All those constraints from your king and all that binding, all those strictures, man, I want to burst the bonds of that. I don't want his anointed ruling over us." Yeah, but we're supposed to warn them.

No, I understand it may seem antiquated for you to go to a book to find your sexual ethics. I know it seems constrictive to you to see God as your pilot and not your copilot. I understand it may be hard for you to submit yourself to Christ, but one day he's coming back and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. You need to get right with this king, he's coming back, he's receiving the kingdom right now as we speak. He will come back and he will set up that kingdom and it will be time for him to judge the lost and the time for him to reward his servants. But right now, that rewarding is based on your ambassadorship in the present life.

Now I preach this message often because it comes up often in the Bible and you've heard me say this unless you're brand new to the church. And I just wonder, before we leave this point, what are we doing about it? I mean, really, how are you doing in this regard? I'm afraid that most of you may





look at this and say, this is someone else's job, it's not my job.

Let me help you with four points. None of this is like life changing but it be worth writing down these eight words. OK? Eight words. First two. You want help with this? Under point one, here it comes.

Letter A. You need to be "Persistently Praying." If your job is to be an ambassador in this world, you have to represent Christ in your workplace, in your neighborhood, in your sphere of influence among the other parents at your kid's soccer team, you are the representative of Christ. If you want to be a good representative, it starts with prayer. The Apostle Paul could have relied on his training, his laurels, his insight and yet he says to the Colossians, in Colossians Chapter 4, "Pray for us, that God would open up a door for the word," "that we can make this mystery of Christ clear as it ought to be made." You ought to be praying for that, praying every day, persistently praying. Do you have some section of your prayer list? There's no reason for you not to have a prayer list, guys. I mean, it's so easy now, so many apps, so many ways to do it on your computer. So many ways to have a list. And on that list, there ought to be some names, there ought to be some people who you say, "Here are lost people I rub shoulders with every single week. I am the representative of Christ to those people. God, open up a door for the word. Let me make it clear to them as I ought to make it clear."

Paul then turns that in Colossians 4 and says, you guys, "You ought to be wise with outsiders, be wise in your dealings with outsiders, and make the most of every," here it is, "kairos" in Greek, "every opportunity, every open door, every time you see the door cracked open, make the most of every opportunity.

Do you pray for lost people? I mean that's got to be fundamentally job number one. You've got to have that on your prayer list. You have to spend time, with your eyes closed, and your head bowed, praying on a consistent, persistent basis, "God use me to see people in my sphere of influence saved." Pray for open doors. I mean I love the modern ways to keep track of prayer lists. You know, I can plug their faces, which are generously supplied by social media, right in to my prayer list. Bam! Here's a lost person, someone I know, save them. I'm praying for you, like Paul said to pray for him, I pray for you, I pray for myself, I pray for the lost people that I'm surrounded with. I need to be praying, persistent praying.

Letter B, next two words. You need to "Selectively Engage." Selectively engage. I'm not going to fit you for a sandwich board, give you a bell to ring, give you a megaphone. I know you picture that, that's why you say I could never do that. I'm not asking you to do that.

I don't want you to go out indiscriminately just shouting the Gospel to people. You need to selectively engage in conversation with people about Christ. There are some people you need to not engage with. OK? And the way you're going to know that is by engaging with them and they're going to have a response, and if you get this response, stop engaging. If they put their hands up and they say I don't want you to talk to me about this, then you don't talk to them about that. I mean that's really what we see as a pattern in the Scripture. Jesus told it to those who went out and said, "Here, go take my message to those villages. If they will not hear you, he says," what? "Move on, move on.

Acts 13, when Paul and Barnabas came to cities and they said, "We don't want to hear this anymore." He said fine. I mean he had to put in a little dig before he left, he said, "If you don't count yourself worthy of eternal life, fine, we'll move on to other people." But he moved on. I'm not



telling you to sit there and pound people. People say we're jamming our religion down their throat. If you follow my instructions, you will never be... Well, you'll be accused of it, but it will never be true. Because if people put their hands up and say, "I don't want to hear it," you're not jamming anything down their throat. Fine. If you want to put in one last little dig and say, "Well, if you don't count yourself worthy of eternal life, we'll move on."

You can say that, Biblically, but I'm just telling you, you're not going to jam it down their throat. You may continue, by the way, to persistently pray for those people. But when it comes to this Letter B here, first one is when you have those people who say "Stop, stop." Secondly, when you have people here under Letter B, who are going to mock you, then it's time to stop. I'm not here to give fodder for the critics. If I'm going to talk to someone about Christ and they start mocking me, I'm done, as Proverbs says, I'm not going to speak in the presence of the fool because they are going to use my words to do nothing but mock me. I don't want to do that.

That's that image of pearls before swine. If they're just going to snort at it, make fun of us, I'm not going to talk to them, it's fine. Obviously, you're not interested in this. I'll move on.

Or how about this one, those that you engage who just do nothing but make you angry and you find yourself arguing with them. I'm all for debating and discussing and disagreeing and having a civil conversation, but as Second Timothy Chapter 2 says, Paul says, "Listen, Timothy you're not to be a quarrelsome person." And the anger fuels those kinds of quarrels. I'm not here to quarrel with you, I'm not about arguing, I'm not arguing about religion, I'm not cramming my religion down your throat, and I'm not here for you to make fun of me. I'm going to engage you but I know when to selectively stop engaging you. And here's the thing, it just gives us opportunity to move on to other people.

Because the good news is, you don't live in the middle of nowhere. Right? I know you complain about the lines at the store and the traffic on the freeway, but you have endless opportunities to share the Gospel with people.

Persistent praying, Letter A. Letter B, selected engagement. Letter C, "Strategic Discussion." Strategic discussion. I want to emphasize both of those words, but let's just start with the word "discussion." I'm not asking you to go through some app on your phone or some flip chart or some diagram.

I know we teach you those things. I guarantee we'll teach you those things, we teach you a method to declare the Gospel because you need to know all the components and make sure that you hit all the components, or the Gospel may degenerate into something it's not. But when it comes to what you're doing, you want to start a dialogue with someone, you want to discuss this with someone. And to strategically discuss this, all it takes is you just got to start by asking them some basic questions. Use questions as the beginning of some strategic dialogue. That's what we want.

Jesus asked about a hundred and seventy some odd questions of people in the red letters of the Gospels. Right? So in the Gospels and the recorded statements Christ, he was masterful about asking questions and those questions always tried to surface things that he then wanted to discuss. Not in every case but so many of them. He's sitting there with people and he's asking questions, it's a great conversation starter. And I'd say, good for you just to do what he did. Matter of fact, you can even do what he did by using the words that he used. Change the pronouns but he said things like this: "Who do people say that I am?" Of course, then he'd parlay that into "And who do you say that I am?" Not a bad question.



Having lunch with someone at work? "Hey, by the way, what are people saying about Jesus Christ? What do people say about this Jesus of the Bible? What have you heard?" Then at some point, "What do you think about the Jesus of the Bible?"

You may feel completely unprepared for a dialogue. You'd much rather do some kind of presentation. I want you to start with the dialogue. Yeah, every one of these may not end the way that you want it to. You may put your foot in your mouth, you may back yourself in a corner, but just start the dialogue. Simple. "Who do you think Jesus is?"

Jesus asked a question, we saw this question in Luke 6. He said, "Why do people call me Lord, Lord, and not do what I say?" That's a great thought provoking question, especially if someone says, "Why, I think Jesus is the Son of God." Great. "I just wonder why you think so many people are worshipping Jesus in our society, calling him Lord and boss and king and all those words, but they don't do what he taught." I mean, what do you think that's all about?" Start an honest discussion just with a simple question like that.

I love this one, certainly when it comes to any discussion we get in about the Bible. Jesus says, "What's written in the Law? How do you read it?" I love that question. "Hey, what's the Bible all about? I mean, how do you understand the message of the Bible?" A great conversation starter. And just start a conversation.

Where is it going to go? Well, certainly we're going to talk about something significant, more important than sports and the weather. Let's have a conversation and see what happens.

Jesus asked this question. People standing around in the house, lame guy, paralyzed guy, gets lowered on a mat, they have a little debate, Jesus says, "Which is easier for me to do? Which do you think is easier? To heal a paralytic or to forgive sins?" I mean there's a thought provoking conversation starting message. "You know Jesus in the Bible did all that healing stuff. Do you think it was easier for Jesus to heal someone? How about raising Lazarus from the dead? Do you think that was harder for him to do than it was for him to forgive sins?" Immediately, we're starting a discussion about the forgiveness of sins and what that's like. And of course, the world may think that God just says, "Oh, forgiven," and it doesn't cost anything. We, of course, know the Gospel means that God has to "Make him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God." It cost the cross. Well that's a great conversation starter, just to talk about the forgiveness of sins. And it would be interesting to hear what your friends think about the fact that Jesus says which is easier.

Talk about the afterlife, my dad's favorite question. What do you think happens when you die? What do you think happens to you when you die? That's a great conversation starter. We're going to talk about something significant and we don't even know where the conversation is going to go, but it's going to be opportunity, it's going to give me an opportunity to talk about eternal things.

Or James Kennedy, there in Florida, before he died, he popularized the question, "If you were to stand before God when your life is over and he would ask you, 'Why should I let you into heaven?' what would you say?" That's great conversation. You can start with this one, "Do you think you're going to heaven when you die?" "Yeah, I think so, I hope so." Great. "When you stand before God, when he says, 'Why should I let you in?' What would you say?"

You are going to hear a lot about their thoughts about good works and the use of good works and



how they're better than other people. Great opportunity for you to talk about what it means to really be that tax collector on the Temple Mount who says, "Have mercy on me, a sinner."

You got many opportunities. You know more than you think you do about the Gospel. If you're saved, you know a lot more, probably, as to how to respond to how people think about the Gospel, forgiveness in Christ. You just got to start the conversation.

Don't do it without the first point, persistent praying. Don't do it with just with anyone and everyone, if they're putting their hands up, don't start more questions, just say, "Fine. I'm sorry to bother you. We'll move on." But ask some strategic questions. Engage in strategic discussion.

Let me give you two more that maybe a bit of a comfort to you. How about these two words, "Team Work," Letter D, team work. I love that in John Chapter 1 when Philip is being convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and he comes to Nathaniel and he says, "Hey, I think I found the Messiah." And Nathaniel starts going, "Right, right, right, right, right. No. Don't think so. Nazareth? No way. Nothing good comes out of Nazareth." I love Philip's response, "Come and see."

Jesus wasn't there by himself, he had other people around him but, "Come and see, the Jesus people are meeting over here. Come and check it out." Here's the teamwork. I hope everyone of you is in a small group at Compass Bible Church, if you're looking at me right now. OK? Small group? Great. I bet there's no one in your small group is going to object if you bring a non-Christian friend to your small group. Just tell him, "Well, we've had some interesting discussion here about life after death, about sin, about forgiveness, about God, about Jesus, about the Bible. Why don't you come check out some of my friends? We meet in this house, at this particular time, this night. Come on over and just... Got some more of these Jesus people over here, come and see, come check it out." And if you're really audacious, say, "We got this guy who comes to our church and talks every weekend for an hour. It doesn't feel like an hour, but he talks for a long time and he tells us about the Bible. Come and see. Come check it out. You never know, and then I can take you out to lunch afterwards and we can talk about it."

We'll do this together. Come and see. Starts with you persistently praying, start with you knowing that we're not just to sit here and jam our religion down anybody's throat, we want to have a really selective kind of engagement with people but then it's going to need some strategic discussion. Follow that up with some evangelistic team work, which is them getting to know more of us, who believe and know the truth and represent him as ambassadors. No better thing than for you to get your non-Christian friend in a room full of ambassadors of Christ. That would be a good thing. Represent the king. It's a defiant culture, I understand that.

Well I'd like to end on the positive note of verses 15 through 19 so let's swallow the difficult verses here real quickly first, verses 20 through 27. There is a servant who is really not a servant, he's a servant in name only. When the king comes back and tries to give an accounting of his servants here, there's one who sits there and argues with him. He claims he didn't do anything with what God entrusted to him because he thought he was a meanie, a mean man, a severe man. The master says, the king says, "Well, I'm going to condemn you by your own words, if you really believe that, you would have done something, but you didn't do something, so you don't even believe that. You're making excuses, you're lying." So like a lot of people in this room, I'm sure, who say they're followers of Christ but they never follow Christ. You've already written off this sermon because you know it's one of those sermons that's too hard for you and so you're not going to do it. People like that, they sit there with the label "servant." They say they're Christian, they go to church their whole life, but they're not Christians. They're like this guy.



But like this guy, who has what they've been entrusted with, they'll have it taken away. You got all that knowledge of the Bible? Taken away. You have all the blessings of being a part of a church? Taken away. One day it will be taken away, you going to meet Christ and he's going to say, "What did you do?"

"Well, I was afraid. I was afraid because all those citizens, they didn't like Christ, so I didn't want to speak up at work. Too costly for me. I didn't really want to be known as a Christian so..." What happens to them? Well, Jesus has said this repeatedly, "You confess me before men? I'll confess you before my father. You deny me before men? I'll deny you before my father." Very simple.

"Oh, you're saved by works then? You're saved by evangelism, right?" No, no, I didn't say that. I'm just saying anyone who is a new creature in Christ, they now have this changed, rewired heart, and guess what, they're going to do the hard stuff and they are. The hard stuff. Doesn't seem all that hard, it was eight words when it comes down to it. Persistent praying, selective engagement, strategic discussion, and team work when it comes to evangelism, but they're going to say, "Yeah, I'm going to do my best at that." Now some may have tenfold success, some may have fivefold, some may have twofold, but you're not going to have someone who hears all that and says, "Nope. Nope, not for me. No thanks." Not if he's a real servant. This guy is a fake. And what he has is taken away. And all these people who he was afraid of, all these people who he was afraid to offend, these enemies, look at verse 27 again.

Basically, he is doing the same thing they're doing and that is, "I don't want this man to reign over me. I'm not going to do what he says." That's the definition, is it not, of being submissive to a monarch, doing what they say. He doesn't do what they say and he shows himself to be just like them.

And God's response is, "Fine, they will be destroyed." Just like in Revelation 19 when the king comes back riding on a white horse and it says, "Out of his mouth comes a sharp two-edged sword." Again, as Revelation says, it's time for judging the dead and rewarding the servants. When it comes down to it, there are some "servants" who will be a part of the judgment because they are not true servants. They claim to be salt, but like Jesus said, if salt is not salty, if salt becomes tasteless, if salt makes no difference, then it is good for... nothing, except to be thrown out. He doesn't throw his kids out. His real kids are going to be salty. Some are a little more salty than others, but they're going to be light. They're going to let their good works shine before men. What men? The citizens, who don't want him to reign over them.

I know it's hard for us to live out our Christian life, not just in our deeds but in our words before other people, but that's what ambassadors do. They're not afraid of those who oppose our king.

Number two on your outline, let's just put it that way, "Don't Let the Opposition Shut You Down." That is the temptation, even of true servants, they are scared sometimes to speak up for Christ. They are afraid when the world keeps telling them to "Sit down and shut up," and Christ is saying, "Stand up and speak up." And sometimes we're afraid, you're tempted. Don't fall to that temptation. Don't be conformed to the world. They want you to stop talking about Biblical truth. Don't let them win.

It's our turn to fill up the sufferings of Christ. Do you know that passage in Colossians 1? That's a great text. Colossians Chapter 1 verses 21 through 29. Again, the Apostle Paul gives us the wonderful news, the life changing news of the Gospel, he says, "You know, my message came to Colossae and you guys, so many of you, were saved. It transformed your lives." He said, "I'm glad



to do it. I'm glad to fill up what was lacking in Christ's afflictions." Has that passage ever made you scratch your head? Anytime you start talking about something Christ didn't do completely, you think, "Oh man, his afflictions weren't complete."

Well, on the cross they were. All that affliction for our salvation, all that suffering complete, bought our salvation. He yelled it out at the end, "Paid in full, tetelestai." What affliction wasn't filled up? What was lacking? Well, like he said in John, "While I'm in the world I'm the light of the world, but now you guys are the light of the world." There's more light to be shown, there's more salt to get out there and to make a difference. There's more ambassadorship and representation. How much affliction did he incur by stepping up and speaking up about the truth? A lot. Now it's his disciples turn. And Paul says, "I'm glad, I'm happy to fill up. I rejoice in filling up the afflictions that are lacking in Christ." Now, I'm going to go do that. Why? Because the next verse, verse 25, "because I am now a servant," same concept, "according to the stewardship of God that was given to me so that I could make the word of God fully known to you."

The people in your sphere of influence are there because God wants you to make the word of God fully known to them, at least until they straight-arm you and say, "I don't want to hear any more." Then you can shake the dust off your feet or your hands or whatever you're going to say and you are going to move on. But we have a stewardship. We're not going to be afraid to fill up the afflictions that are ours. Salt and light have to shine and be tasty or there's no reason for it.

Christian life, in many ways, can be seen through this dimension of us representing Christ. There are so many things we can say about that but we're out of time. The thing I'd like to just underscore before I leave it is, why would we want to curry the favor of a world that's going to end up in verse 27, and be ashamed of the king who is going to come back and reign? Jesus isn't Archelaus. Archelaus was a bad leader. Jesus is the perfect leader. And every knee will bow and every tongue will confess.

So let's end with a good note here, verses 15 through 19. He returns and there are servants there of varying degrees of faithfulness, who take this one mina, this is not the parable of the talents, this is not people getting different amounts of investment, this is the same investment, entrusted with, as it says in First Timothy 1:11, the blessed Gospel of God. We have the good news. All of us have that same message. Some will parlay that into much more fruit than others, but nevertheless, when they do their work, God says, especially to those who work hard at it, "Well done, good servant, you are going to be rewarded." They get the affirmation, the commendation, they get the applause of God himself and with it is always reward. The second one, reward, according to what he's done.

Number three on your outline, you need to "Aim For The Approval That Matters Most." I know we're afraid and tempted to shut up and sit down when the world says stop talking about your God and your Bible. And when it comes to it, I'm not going to shut up and sit down, I'm going to move on, but I'm not going to shut up and sit down. Just like in Acts Chapter 4, they said, "No longer speak in this name." and what did Peter and John say? "You tell me if it makes sense to you, does it make any sense to you, that I would obey you rather than God? It just doesn't make sense to me. So thanks for your advice but I'm going to do this." Now they paid with their lives for that.

Don't come back and say I want my money back for that sermon if you do what I ask you and you lose your job, you lose your friends, you're not popular in your cul-de-sac any more. Don't come back and ask for your money back.

I'm going to say it's exactly what the passage says. It may happen. But that's the cost of being an

ambassador. Why don't you come to me in a hundred years and ask me if it was worth it? That would be better. Then we can talk about whether or not it was worth losing a few friends, not being invited to the block party, having people make fun of you because you're a Jesus freak. Aim for the approval that matters most. Here's a great passage for you, Galatians Chapter 1 verses 9 and 10. There's a kind of gospel that tucks away the hard edges that are often preached from this platform about. It says if anyone does that, man, don't listen to him. That's an accursed gospel. What he says is now this, verse 10. Paul says, "If I'm seeking the approval of man or of God," you've figure it out. "Am I trying to please man? If I were trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ."

That's the problem with those who shut down because of the opposition of the world. They prove not to be servants of Christ. But if you're a servant of Christ, then I'm saying you've got to value more the opinion and approval of God than you do those around you. He rewards you.

I read a snarky article this week about the Christian's view of heaven. They quoted passages like this, that they were talking about the rewards that were coming for us. Of course they said, and here's how they put it, "The Christian heaven is more hellish than heavenly," because they thought, when it comes down to it, not only is going to be filled with, you know, people they don't like, like me and others, but this article was all about all these things, "They don't seem too exciting to me. Where's the risk? Where's the fun?" They even put this in the article, "Where's, you know, where's the thrill of fornication, you know?" Well, OK. Well listen, if you think that the God of the universe who's created every cell in our body, who knows everything about everything as it relates to human appetites, desires and hopes, can't create for us a world when he comes back, this place he's promised to prepare for us, and when he returns take us unto himself, to give us that kingdom, if you don't think he knows how to reward his servants, then you need to even look at the author, who's trying to make his deadline for that blog or that Internet site or that article or maybe originally appeared in a magazine, whatever it was. And I thought, you're going to hurry to finish this work so you can go off and enjoy some of the imperfect reflections of the kinds of good gifts that God gives. Right? Because every good and perfect gift comes from God. I'm going to work for that approval, not only that approval, but I'm going to be motivated by those rewards.

Anyone who's going to draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him, Hebrews 11:4. I believe that God is going to reward me and you for standing up and speaking up for Christ this week. I believe that you and I, if we're willing to be his ambassadors, will be richly rewarded. The Bible's very clear on this. Second Peter Chapter 1 verse 11, "There will be a richly provided entrance into the kingdom," for those who are winning the approval of our God and not our peers.

I struggle putting these sermons together sometimes because I think, man, they've heard this, they know this. I mean, I don't want to be in an Athenian but I like to tell you something new and, you know, dig deeper and here's an insight you didn't have before and I thought this message, aahh... Not only that, I thought to myself, when this message is all said and done, if they do what I'm asking them, based on the authority of this passage, to do, they're going to be less popular, they're going have more problems, they're going to have people not like them.

They're going to be like so many that testify, "You know, before I knew Mike, you know, things were going well for me. I was popular, I was rich, climbing the corporate ladder, then I started listening to Pastor Mike." I just fear, if you're going to look at a message like this and you're going to struggle. Because, frankly, if you want a better life, don't do what I'm saying. You want to be popular at work, don't follow these instructions. You want to have that kind of rapport in the cul-de-sac that I don't have when I walk up to the circle of my neighbors trying to talk over the mailbox,



then don't do what I'm asking you to do. You want people in that Soccer Mom row to sit there and think, "Hey, she's one of us," then don't start asking those probing questions, certainly don't pray for their souls every day. You want things that I think, everyone in our flesh, we want, this is going to imperil those things.

And yet, Jesus put it about as clear as he could put it, "You know one day, the last will be first and the first will be last." The dark cloud that hangs over the ambassadors of Christ in this world, they don't like us. That dark cloud that hangs is going to be replaced, I love this, Daniel 12, "With light, they're going to shine brightly like the lights in the sky." And by the way, that sheen and that glow and that glitzy look that everyone in this world is trying to please and fit in with, the pastors of megachurches will go and sit on their talk shows and when they're asked a hard question about the truth of the Bible, that's an easy question that any third grader could answer, that they fold and get the applause of everybody in the audience. Some of the you know what I'm talking about. Just happens almost every fourth, fifth week, but it happened again this week.

You want the approval of those people? You really want to be invited back to that talk show? You want everyone to praise you for your positions? All that glitzy shine of the elite of our culture that sets the tone for our society, it's going to be replaced with an encasement of darkness the Bible says. Outer Darkness. Darkness that's so dark, never will there be light. Weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, outer darkness.

This takes me back to where we started. September 8, 2011, 3:38 in the afternoon. Lights went out everywhere. All the Ferraris and Lamborghinis snarled in traffic. All the traffic lights went out. People trying to get home. The Ritz-Carlton, dark. Hotel Del Coronado, dark. Mansions in the Ritz Cove, dark. All the happening places, no light.

Interestingly enough though, the news reported there was one place that still had light. I'm not lying, I'm not making this up, look this up. There was one city that had light. And it was just kind of described as, well, it was an anomaly, it was different. I'm not saying it was anything miraculous, but there it was, a city in one little valley, but the one valley they described, but then there's one city and it was the anomaly, it was shining brightly.

It was hot in those desert towns, Imperial County and San Bernardino County and Riverside County. They were burning up hot. They had no air conditioning. They were fanning themselves, "Don't open the fridge, you're going to spoil the food," as this thing went on and on, people very uncomfortable. But there was one little town, lights were on, AC's were buzzing, they were watching TV, their satellites going on. They're opening up the freezer, getting their popsicle out. Everything was great. You know what city had light on September the 8th, 2011. You won't believe it. Blythe, California. The brunt of my incessant joking. Blythe, California.

I never researched it long enough to know why. Probably things were miswired when they set up the town or something. They had light. It was working for them, while all these happening places were dark. Yes, the last will be first, and the first will be last.

The world is going to try to shut you up, tear you down, shut you down, but the king is coming. You're his ambassadors. It'll cost you. But I hope you say with me, "We can't be silent. Come what may, we're going to speak up for the king and we will shine brightly in eternity." We just want a few more people to shine with us. Let's speak up for the king this week.

God help us, please, in the day when we're tempted to be ashamed of your name, to be ashamed of





your truth, be ashamed of what your Bible says about sexual ethics, about right and wrong, about the exclusivity of the Gospel, about Jesus and his atonement on the cross. And help us to realize, when we feel like the minority, that all of heaven is rejoicing when we stand up and say what is right. Not to argue, not to be angry, not to shove anything down anybody's throat, but because of our eyes for the harvest, we reach out with questions and we ask people, "Hey, let's think about things that are important eternally." And start discussions that may end with someone putting their trust in Christ. God, I pray we'd have more and more of that experience here in our congregation as we go to our workplaces, our neighborhoods, our kid's teams. Help us not to be so embarrassed and yet, God, I to want to separate the anxiety that even the Apostle Paul had when he went to his mission fields and sometimes he said he went there with great trepidation, there was that sense of uneasiness, very different than his declaration that he wasn't going to be ashamed of the Gospel. God, help us make the distinction that we can have sweaty palms and have our heart beat a little bit faster when we start talking about things that matter for eternity but, help it be true, with the Apostle Paul, that we're not ashamed of it. We're not ashamed of the Gospel because it's the power of God unto salvation for all who believe. Could be that we're talking to the next Bartimaeus or Zacchaeus and that their lives are about to be radically transformed. So God let us speak up, after we've prayed persistently. And I pray we can work together in this church to see more and more people won to Christ. God, help us open our mouths, give us courage and boldness. Let us look forward to the day when you reward your servants for their ambassadorship here on Earth. Let us hear from you, "Well done, good servants."

In Jesus name. Amen.