



Presenting Christ-Part 3 Dealing with Objections Pastor Mike Fabarez

It is part three; we're digging through Luke chapter four. But before I take you back to Luke chapter four, I have to turn you first to Romans chapter 10. And I have to do that because of my concern about this whole series and what it may or may not do in your life.

So grab your Bibles, turn to Romans 10. Love to talk about Luke four in presenting Christ. But we've got to deal with what this is all about. I'm just concerned—and I've been transparent, have I not already?—with you about my concern about people listening to this message series and doing very little about it. That's a problem. And I know we don't want to be the person we imagine ourselves to be if we take this series "presenting Christ" and put it into practice, because we don't want to be accused of what our culture loves to accuse us of when we start talking to them about religion, right? We don't want to be preaching to anybody. We don't want to get all preachy—Madonna, "Papa Don't Preach," right? Did I take you back to the '80s there for a second?

We don't want to preach; that's a bad word. It's a bad thing—but rightly understood, in a passage like this in Romans chapter 10, it's essential. Can't get around it. I know you think I'm the preacher. But you do understand the Great Commission sends us out to do the—if we rightly understand the word—the preaching. As horrific as that sounds to our modern 21st-century ears, this is our calling. Why? Because we're supposed to have enough compassion in our hearts to care about the big issues in the lives of our friends, co-workers, and family members, and that is where they'll spend eternity.

Take a look at this text—familiar words. If you grew up in church, hopefully you memorized them as a kid. Drop down to verse 13. Romans chapter 10, verse 13: "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Now you've got to—I hope you've been around long enough here to know we have to define that word biblically. This is not "saved" from loneliness or purposelessness, or, you know, poverty. This is being saved from the penalty of your sins—that you and I before a perfect God, before his tribunal one day, will stand before the God to whom we must give an account. And the perfect God who does no wrong, who's always just and always holy and always righteous, will look at us—unjust, unrighteous, unholy people—and he will either sentence us to the due punishment of our sins, or he'll grant us a pardon, forgive us, and more than that—if we're saved from that penalty—he will endow us with all the righteousness and credit and benefit of Christ so that we become objects of his blessing and favor for eternity, and not incurring the punishment that all of our sinful decisions have incurred.



People can call on God—it's a quote from the Old Testament—but obviously Paul is quoting it here very positively. It's the same for us, not just from physical salvation, but the salvation he's been talking about for the last 10 chapters. And this is how they're going to call—look at verse 14. If they haven't believed, if they don't have trust and faith in him, how are they going to have faith in him, trusting him, if they've never heard? And how are they going to hear without someone—there's the nasty word. It's a great Greek word, by the way, *Caruso*—it means to publish, to proclaim, to herald, to get the message out. They're not going to hear it if you and I don't get the message out. How are they going to hear it unless someone preaches to them?

And how are they going to preach—people like us—unless they are... introduced—now, series to Luke four, six weeks long at least, and you hear it all the time around here—unless you're sent. The Great Commission is about sending us with this message of reconciliation to your lost neighbors, friends, and co-workers. And unless you're sent to do that, you're not going to be saved.

We'll see how God looks at this—bottom of verse 15. “As it is written,” quoting the Old Testament, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.” Now I know the world will say, “Stop preaching at me,” and that's a nasty, terrible thing for you to do—to be jamming your religion down someone else's throat; they'll pejoratively say all of that. But God looks at you when you are gutsy enough to stand up and to publish, proclaim, to make known the message of the gospel—that people don't have to die and stand before the tribunal of God and hear, “Depart from me, I never knew you,” but they can hear, “Enter into the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” When he sees you publishing that message, preaching it to people, he goes, “That's beautiful.” Now, of course, it's not just your feet, right? This is your whole person. That's a beautiful thing to God.

Problem is—and here's why we don't like to do it—verse 16: “But they have not all obeyed the gospel.” I know it's beautiful to God, but it's not beautiful to people because they respond negatively to it. For as Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” This message is met with incredulous people who don't want to hear it.

Here's the problem: when you meet the people that don't want to hear it, if they shut you down from speaking about this message to people, you'll never get to the people who will receive it. You'll never get to the people who will respond with repentance and faith. I understand this is something that we are prompting you to do because the Bible prompts you to do it, because Christ has commissioned you to do it. But if you shut down because of a negative reaction from people, you'll never get around to sharing this with the people who need to hear it.

Did not Jesus say in John 15, “No servant is greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they'll persecute you”? The next line is great: “And if they kept my word”—and some of them did—



“they’ll keep yours also.” So that’s the thing about the gospel. It is received by people that God has prepared and called and gotten ready for the message, but it’s rejected and opposed by people that aren’t there. And here’s the deal: you’ll never get to the people that are ready to hear this if you shut down because of the people that are not ready to hear this scare you off. Persecution, keeping our word; opposition, repentance. I mean, we’ve got two alternatives here. And unfortunately, when we have unpleasant experiences—like Jesus has here in Luke chapter four—sometimes we’re done with this whole thing. Some people haven’t even started with this whole thing called evangelism because you envision what’s going to go on here in Luke four. I mean, I hate to even preach this; this third installment of the series makes you go, “That’s why I don’t do it. I don’t want to be treated like Jesus was treated here.”

Well, here’s the deal: if Jesus didn’t continue publishing the good news after this experience, none of us would be here. And if someone hadn’t shared the message with you because of some negative experience in that evangelist’s past, well, then we wouldn’t be here—practically—even if Christ was obedient to publish the good news. I know it’s scary.

I couldn’t help but—prayerfully preparing this message—thinking of Joshua going into the Promised Land. And right before he goes in, remember there in Joshua 1, God says to him in verse number 9, “Do not be afraid; be bold and courageous, be very courageous, for the Lord your God is with you.” Isn’t that really, in essence, what we’re hearing in the Great Commission—that last line of the Great Commission? When he sends them out into all the hostile territories of the world—which is every territory of the world, because people are going to oppose us when we share the gospel—and he says, “Go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.” That sounds pretty preachy to me. He says, “And I’m with you always, even to the end of the age.” I hope we’re near the end of the age; but the good news is his promise of going with us into this battle. He promised to be there all the way to the end.

Luke four—let’s study this this morning, and understand: yes, you’re going to have objections, you’re going to have opposition, you’re going to have people that think you’re too preachy and you talk too much about Christ—I get that. But let’s learn not only from the encouraging situations that we’re going to see in the next series, where Jesus calls his disciples and they leave their nets and follow him; let’s learn something about how to handle the opposition and the objections, and watch what Jesus does. Because if no servant is greater than his master, then we ought to look to the Master and see how he responded, and see if we can do likewise in our own evangelism.

Luke chapter four—have you turned there? You remember where we were: in the middle of the scene in Nazareth. Nazareth was the city that Jesus grew up in, as you’ll remember. He’s opened up the Isaiah scroll that was handed to him. He looked for the place in Isaiah 61 that talked about the good news of the Lord’s favor being granted. And he sits down to preach—that was verse 21—after he says, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”



Now, verses 22 through 30 is what we're going to study today. Let's look at verse 22: "All spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words," or literally, the words of grace, "that were coming from his mouth. And they said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?'"

Now that sounds very positive so far—spoke well and marveled at his preaching. And they said, "Well, isn't this Joseph's son?" That almost sounds like, "Isn't that fantastic? One of our own has made it good, is a great rhetorician, a great orator of truth." It's not what's going on in their hearts. That may have been what was coming out of their mouths, but Jesus, as he always does, goes right for where they're at. And he reveals the concerns in their heart. And he addresses it in verses 23 and 24.

"He said to them, 'Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, "Physician, heal yourself."'" What does that mean? Next line: "What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well." "Now, we heard you did some fancy things over there—do them here." That's what "Physician, heal yourself" means, as we'll look at in a second.

Verse 24—he has another little proverb where he says, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown." Oh, you know, you're talking about "Isn't this the son of Joseph," and the parallel passages in Mark and Matthew go on, "Don't we know his occupation? He's the carpenter. He's the son of the carpenter. Don't we know his brothers and sisters?" They name some brothers and sisters. They're changing from "Wow, look at the authoritative word this guy is speaking," to "Wait a minute, who is this guy to tell us all of this with such authority? What's he doing preaching to us? We know this guy." So he quotes the proverb: no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.

Then he makes it even worse, verse 25: "But in truth, I tell you..." You want to talk about "Why don't you do in Nazareth what you did over there in Capernaum?" Let's talk about that. "There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah—" we've been reading about that in our daily Bible reading— "when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land; and Elijah was sent to none of them," now there were many widows he could have gone to, "but he didn't go to any of them in Israel... but only to Zarephath in the land of Sidon," the Phoenician widow, "to a woman who was a widow."

"And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha"—that was the successor to Elijah, as you know—"and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian," the commander of the armies of Damascus. "When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were



filled with wrath.” If you don’t understand the illustration, what purpose it’s serving—they certainly understood the illustration. We’ll try to untangle that.

Verse 29—they had a violent response: “They rose up and drove him out of the town.” I’ve had a lot of bad responses to sermons in the past. This one is severe—more than any I’ve ever experienced. “They brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, he went away.”

Understand a little bit about this in four parts. I know four-point sermons from Mike Fabarez scare you a bit. We’ll jam it all into the allotted time, I assure you. But let us just look at what’s happening here to Jesus, and then let’s see how he responds. So we’ll look at these simple statements: when they do this, and when they do that, and when they do this—then here’s our response to that.

Let’s talk about what’s happening in the phrase “Isn’t this the son of Joseph?” and the proverb, verse 24, when he says, “No prophet is acceptable in his hometown.” Why is that the case? Think about it—why? I could ask you: Why are the most godly people you know either dead for 100 years or live at least 100 miles away from you? I never thought about that, but you’re right. I mean, think about it. If you think about the greatest whatever, they’re usually people you don’t personally know. The people that you grow up with and know...

I got a good friend who’s made it real big on the PGA Tour, and I know he’s just a knucklehead—because I grew up with him. Everybody revered him—and why? Because if I hailed him the way everyone else hails him, what am I saying about me? Because we grew up around the block from each other, right? We’ve known each other; we played with the same toys in the backyard and went golfing together as kids. What does that say? See, that’s humbling for me. So it’s helpful for me to call him a knucklehead and to belittle him, because it makes me feel better about me.

Here’s the thing—whether you understand the psychology of it all, the bottom line is: when they start saying about someone preaching authoritative messages, “Well, who are you to say that? Aren’t you this person? And don’t we know you? And don’t we know your occupation?”—they start asking all those kinds of questions. In essence, we could put it all under the rubric or the title, if you will: the kind of belittling of the messenger that happens all the time in evangelism.

Number one on your outline—just put it that way: when they belittle the messenger—and they will; they did it to Christ, and they’ll do it to you—they will say all kinds of things to make you look bad. Or let’s make it a little bit broader for our everyday evangelism: they’ll make all the Christians look



bad. And that's the way they kind of rebuff the message. And hasn't that happened to you? Smile at me, evangelists who have experienced this. You start talking about the gospel, and they start saying, "Oh, Christians..." And now they start filling in the blanks: "All those Christians—I know Christians this, and I know Christians that, and Christians are just hypocrites..." Whatever they say—fill in the blank. They start to disparage you and your ilk and your kind, because, "I'm not—I don't think I'm interested in this. I don't like you telling me about you having the solution to my life and heaven and hell, because I know Christians are jerks."

When they belittle the messenger—and they will... Which, by the way, let me just underscore the authority part, because I looked up the verses to "Papa Don't Preach." I didn't know the song—it was never on my Walkman back then. My daughter asked me not long ago, "So Dad, what kind of iPods did they have when you were a kid?" Never bought a Madonna album, I'm proud to say. But here's the thing—I had to look the lyrics up. Those of you that memorized... There's an interesting line in that song. And if you don't know the story, this girl—she gets pregnant; she comes to her dad, and her whole thing is, "Papa, don't preach at me." But she says something interesting in the line of this song—Madonna didn't write the song, but the lyricist said, "What I need right now is just some good advice."

I thought to myself, that's the problem with the gospel: it's not advice; it's preaching. It's authoritative. It's the instructions for heaven and hell—it's binding. There's no wiggle room in it. As others have said—and I like to quote—truth has hard edges. Advice is really soft. It's nice, rounded edges. It's fine—you can take it or leave it. That's what advice is about. The gospel's not advice. It comes with authority; it's commanding. And so when it comes to them belittling you—you want to give advice, and proper advice—they'll listen to that, because it's a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. But truth is different, and that's when they start to belittle the messenger.

Well, what do we do when that's the case? Let's find the solution in the context. Now, I understand it precedes it, and it's not in our text for today, but if you glance back up here in Luke chapter four, remember what Jesus is doing: he's unrolling the scroll, and the scroll in Isaiah 61 that he reads—it's interesting that the passage that he's talking about is talking about the issue of the gospel. He's focused on that. He didn't even really read a passage that says much about him, other than "the Spirit is on him" and "he's the Anointed One." But he goes on to talk about spiritual poverty, spiritual captivity, spiritual blindness, and spiritual oppression, and that the year of the Lord's favor is there, and you can be released from all of that. We looked at that last week.

Now, I just want to take that as the starting point, knowing that you're not the same kind of messenger Christ was—and I'm not either. He's the Messiah. It doesn't matter what they think about him; it really doesn't matter a lot about what they think about us. But certainly even the pattern of Christ—focusing on the message of the gospel in the reading of the text—helps me to come to this conclusion: when you and I get belittled as messengers of the gospel (let's fill in the



second half this way): when they belittle the messenger, point to our urgent message. That's what we do.

Now listen—you want to call all Christians a bunch of hypocrites—fine. That doesn't change the proposition of the truth of the gospel. And that is: you're going to die one day, stand before the tribunal of God, and either be forgiven and pardoned or sentenced and indicted. Which will you choose? The message is urgent. That's what matters. And I will even go so far in evangelism to say: does it really matter who gives you that message? If really this is true, it doesn't matter if we're all a bunch of idiots and fools and nerds or whatever you want to call us. Call us what you want. The messenger in that regard doesn't matter much. No—no, it matters for Christ because he's the mechanism of salvation. But for you and I, does it really matter? No matter what you think, do we care about our reputation? We started the series that way. Of course, we want to bring integrity to the message with a good life—we looked at Titus 2 and all of that. Very important to adorn the gospel with good behavior. But when it comes down to the opposition and the objection we get to the gospel—that Christians are a bunch of idiots, or a bunch of hypocrites—it doesn't matter.

If you're dying of a snake bite and you go to the ER at Mission Hospital, and you find that the nerdy, dorky kid you hated in junior high is the ER doc and he has the antivenom—are you going to not receive the antivenom because he's an idiot? No, of course not. I wouldn't want to admit I got help from the dork in junior high, but I need the solution. My daughter comes up to you—10 years old—in the lobby and says, "My dad bought a bunch of Apple stock when it was just really super cheap, and he's just giving a bunch of it away. Here's 200 shares of Apple stock." My daughter says that to you—are you going to snap, "What do you know about stocks? Who are you to tell me I should take—" You take them and run quickly to your broker! I mean, that'd be a good thing for you to do. Why? Because it doesn't matter who brings you the message. It doesn't matter who the conduit is. It doesn't really matter.

When it comes to the gospel, we got to get past all these objections about the Christians and what jerks they are, dorks they are, hypocrites they are—or how stupid they are—fine. At the end of the day, you're still a mortal being that will die one day, stand before God, and you've got to deal with that. Now, the message is either true or it's not true, but let's stop struggling with the messengers.

Jot this down—we won't take time to turn there—but 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verses 26 through 31. I trust you know that passage. It speaks to you; you'll recognize it when I start quoting it. Remember the passage that says, "Listen, not many of you were of noble birth; not many of you were powerful by worldly standards; not many of you were wise. You were weak; you were low; you were despised." Fine—doesn't matter. But they'll shame the things that are strong and intelligent and the things that are—why? Because they grabbed onto the truth: the truth of the wisdom of God, the righteousness of God, and the holiness of God. Because they embraced that message, it doesn't matter—the caliber of person, the nobility of the person, the wisdom and



intelligence. It doesn't matter if they're in Mensa. It doesn't matter. What matters is whether or not the truth of the gospel is true.

We've beat that lifeboat illustration into the ground, I get it. But, I mean, all that matters is whether the boat floats. That's all that matters. Doesn't matter who invited you to step into it. So when they belittle the messenger, just keep pointing to our urgent message.

Now, it's funny—in that passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, which I didn't make you turn to but you wrote down—just above that, it starts to talk about other objections that people have. And one of the things it says is, "The Jews are always demanding a sign. The Greeks always want some high level of wisdom." Interesting. As you read through the Gospels, you'll find that all the time. They want a sign—which is exactly what verse 23 of our passage is referring to when they said, "Hey, Physician, heal yourself." They didn't say it, but Jesus knew they were thinking it. And he says, "I know you're thinking, 'Why don't I do some kind of proof here the way I did it over there? You heard that I did it over there. You want some extra proof here; you want some kind of convenient proof—maybe a miraculous sign, some kind of magic show—and then you'll...' I know that's what you're thinking." He says, "I know that's what you want—you'll quote that to me." But as we read in the passage, he doesn't do it.

Number two—let's put it this way, and I know it's stated in a very extreme way, but let's at least write it down and then we'll back off from it a bit: when they want miraculous signs—when someone you're sharing with wants some kind of extra proof—"I want God to show it in some spectacular way." It may not even be a miracle they want; they just want more proof. More proof—obvious, convenient, easy to swallow, teed up, tied on a silver platter—"Give me some kind of proof." People are going to say that. Let me underscore something I think I've said a lot. Every time we talk about evangelism—when people talk to you about proof—I always want to test that request. I want to test that request with this question, whether it's intellectual proof, apologetic answers, miraculous signs, you know, whatever. Because when people ask for them in the Bible, you find—think about Gideon's fleece. Remember that? Did that work for him? Not at first—"Well, you made it wet and that one dry; let's do it—do it again." It's funny that the things people ask for in terms of proof usually reveal proof is not what they want.

Here's how I test the claim. When someone says, "Well, if I just could get over this whole thing about creation/evolution—I get it—just... now, when you tell me about that, I just need proof on that." And I say to myself, "Listen, I need to test whether or not this is a genuine, bona fide, sincere question," and I do it with this diagnostic question. And that is: "If I could right now, with me and you sitting here, give you answers that are as perfectly satisfying as any answers you've ever heard, and really answer this all and package it up tight, put a bow on it, and hand it to you to where you are intellectually convinced right now of that issue of creation—or whatever it might be—would you right now give your life to Christ?" And the answer to that question nine times out of ten in my evangelism is—what do you think?—No.



Why? Because the issue is not the issue. We always talk about intellectual questions—this is usually an issue of our will. We often talk about the mind—it's usually an issue of volition. We often talk about "I need more evidence"—in reality, what we're dealing with is the unwillingness to say, "Christ is going to be Lord; I'm going to follow him."

Most people, when it comes to the gospel, aren't really needing miraculous proof. They're needing to get over the obstacle they have about giving their life to God. And do you not, in honest evangelism, when you've been there—and if not, let me tell you what you're going to encounter. When it gets down to it, people say—probably what you said before you became a Christian—"I'm not sure I want to do this, because I understand something (at least intuitively I understand something) about the implications for my life. And I kind of want to be the pilot in my own life, and I don't want to give a bunch of stuff up." That is the reality—as the rich young ruler in Matthew 19 aptly demonstrated. People don't want to give stuff up. "I want to live my own life the way it is, with all of its foibles and problems and all the threats of hell. I just don't want Christ to be my boss." We deal with that all the time.

So understand that when people want miraculous signs, a lot of the time that's not the case. And if you're doing our Bible reading—if you do it at night, you'll read this tonight; if you did it this morning—our New Testament reading was in John 7. In John 7:17 Jesus said something very interesting. When they were questioning him basically about his authority, he said, "Listen, if you're willing to do God's will, you'll know whether my teaching is true, whether it's from God or not." Now that's not Mormonism, by the way—some burning in the bosom. This is not mystical stuff. It's that there's enough evidence already on the table for you to make this decision. The problem is a matter of the will, not a matter of the mind, that some miracle would convince you of.

Not to mention, we've seen before in Scripture: when Jesus does do those miraculous signs—when they seek a sign from him—they often say, "Well, I don't know—either sleight of hand," or "I'm not sure," or, when it's a bona fide miracle they cannot get around, what did the people that are unwilling to follow Christ say? "You did it by the power of Satan." "It wasn't a God thing." Even when he does the miracle, they often say, "You're doing it by the power of Beelzebub." It's not God. Why? Because they're unwilling to submit to the truth and the authority of Christ.

"Yeah, but I got someone who's sincere. You talk about nine times out of ten—I got the guy; it's one time out of ten. And I really—I feel like, and I've even asked him, and it is really sincerity it seems—and he says, 'If I could just get over this; if I just had more proof, I would become a Christian.'" Great. Then here's the answer for him—number two, second half of the point: when they want miraculous signs, or whatever heightened proof, or whatever—say they already have them. You already have them. You have proof.

Now, once you jot that down, turn with me to Matthew 12, and let me underscore this. Even Christ, in his lifetime, said the same thing in essence. And we could look at other passages. One of them would be Matthew 16, when the same question is asked of him—when they say, “We want a sign.” But in Matthew chapter 12 he’s going to add something that, from our point on the time spectrum here, was yet to come when he spoke it, but it’s past tense for us now, and is the proof that he says, “I’m going to give everybody.” And this is something you guys should focus on.

Matthew 12—drop down to verse 38. And, by the way, when Paul said in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, “The Jews seek a sign,” take your concordance sometime and just look through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John at how many times they’re coming to him, saying, “We want a sign. We want you to do a miracle. We want you to prove yourself. We want to know what authority you have. What are you going to show us that’ll prove this authority that you have?” They were asking that all the time. Well, here’s one of the instances where this happens.

Verse 38, Matthew 12:38—are you with me on this? “Then some of the scribes and the Pharisees answered him”—Jesus—and said to him, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.” But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign.” Now, that’s not a blanket statement that applies to all people, because that’s not a uniform response from Christ. But the kind of sign that they wanted—the evidence that was already on the table for them that they were unwilling to swallow—as I said, Matthew 16 is a great example of that, in that they had enough on the table. They had enough there for them to see; they just wanted more shows. They wanted to test God. It was a lot of what went on in the wilderness with Christ—“Get up on the pinnacle and show everybody; do this miraculous sign.” He says, “Listen—no sign will be given it.” I mean, your perverted motive isn’t really to be convinced—that’s not true; this is not your real motive. “But there’s going to be a sign, and it will be given. It’s not that you’re not going to get that—but here it is—except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a great fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

And here’s the point: he hasn’t died yet; he hasn’t resurrected yet. But he says, “Listen, everyone’s gonna get a sign—a sign so overwhelmingly convincing that everyone can look to that.” And he says, you’ll have that, and you’ll have that for all eternity. When someone says to me, “I need more proof,” I point them to the resurrection.

By the way, I should sidebar this for a second because I’m going to get the emails anyway—Jonah, “three days and three nights in the belly of the fish,” “Son of Man—three days, three nights in the heart of the earth.” He wasn’t three days and three nights if he was crucified on Friday and he was resurrected on Sunday. That’s part of three days, but it’s not three days and three nights. I get that—read the rest of the verse. Neither was he “in the heart of the earth.” Earth doesn’t have a heart. He wasn’t in the core—he wasn’t melting in the magma of the middle of the planet. What’s the point?



He was in a sepulcher. This is the kind of poetic language that is used sometimes in Scripture to speak of things that clearly are understood, and that is: when someone spoke of “three days,” it could be like it is in our life. When we talk about things that happen on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, we don’t have to add all the hours up to come up with—what would that be—72 hours. We’re just saying it happened on, you know, part of those three days. Like my grandpa—“Is it Tuesday?” “All day and half the night.” I mean, there are phrases we come up with sometimes to speak in dramatic, poetic ways to talk about the reality of “three days.” Three days—he was three days in a sepulcher: part of Friday, all of Saturday, part of Sunday. That’s just so you don’t need to email me. But you can if you want.

But you’ve heard of these guys—whether it’s Josh McDowell, Simon Greenleaf, Chuck Colson—whatever it is, you get these smart guys who want to, at some point, look at the validity of Christianity. They all drift to focus on the resurrection. And I say the same thing to all the people that say to me, “I need proof.” I say, “Great—let’s just spend the next few weeks just thinking through the resurrection.” Now we don’t have time in this sermon to do it. But if you look on the back of the worksheet—and though we’re trying to cover a lot of topics with the sermons, suggested sermons and the suggested books—there are some books there and a couple sermons that may be worth looking at. Craig’s book—William Lane Craig’s book on the resurrection—is a good starter. Habermas—maybe a bit more readable? I don’t know; they’re both fine. “Did It Really Happen?”—sermon 1114. And if you want to talk about why God isn’t doing magic shows for every generation, look at 0425—“When God Breaks the Rules That He Makes.”

Now, keep reading in Matthew 12—if you have your Bible still open there. Here’s the deal: you don’t even need the resurrection. And I’ve quoted now Matthew 16 several times. But in Matthew 16, the beginning of the chapter, when they asked him about signs—“We want a sign”—he says, “You know how to tell the weather, right? Red sky at night, sailor’s delight; red sky in morning...” You know that. But they had the whole red-sky thing to figure out what the weather was going to be like. He says, “And you don’t understand the sign of the times.” He’s going to now talk about the generation of Nineveh and the generation of Solomon, and he’s going to say those guys are going to say, “You’re a bunch of losers, because you had way more proof than they did, and they repented.”

The point here—as we looked at last week—you want proof? There’s not only the historic resurrection that we can look at and analyze from any direction you want to figure out whether it happened—which the Bible says is the centerpiece of validation for the message of the gospel—you can look at predictive prophecy. And you did your homework this week, I hope, which was part of looking through the predictive prophecies of the coming Christ that is forever inscribed on paper—proof; the imprimatur, I often say, of God, proving that he’s the God of the universe, who’s put down in writing before it ever happens, things that come true to a tee in the history and coming of Christ, that he says too in Matthew 16. You ought to know—you ought to be able to see the signs of the times. That Christ, and the coming of Christ, was not only on the time schedule of Daniel chapter 9, but with all the details that all the prophets of old talked about.

So—and I guess I’m building a sub-point outline here—someone says, “I want more proof.” Say, “You already have it. You’ve got the resurrection—do your homework. You’ve got predictive prophecy—do your homework.” But look at this: neither did they have predictive prophecy in Nineveh (verse 41), or the resurrection. But the Bible here says, or Jesus says, “The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation”—they’ll all stand before the tribunal of God—“and they’ll condemn you guys.” They’ll stick their tongue out at you, and they’ll say, “You’re a bunch of losers.” Why? “Because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.” They had no predictive prophecies in their writings in Nineveh to say, “Jonah is going to come and get spit up on the shores from some big fish and preach to us, and of course we should listen to him.” They didn’t have any of that.

Or how about this, verse 42: “The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.” Now, that is something—always—current. Two things here. One is the conviction of conscience. In Nineveh they repented because what Jonah said struck their heart. And you want to talk about evidence? You got all the proof you need. You got the resurrection. You got predictive prophecy. And you’ve got something in your own heart called a conscience that, according to Romans chapter 2, was designed by God. And the gospel—when it hears that, as long as your conscience hasn’t been so calloused over—you’re going to hear the resonance of God in the gospel. That’s why I always say: God goes before us in our evangelism—even with people that he hasn’t prepared—because he’s designed them all. And when he’s designed them, when I speak to them about judgment before a holy God, guess what—there’s a connection there, because the God who designed them has made it clear to them that they’ll stand before him one day. And so the people of Nineveh—they didn’t need prophecy; they didn’t need a resurrection. All they needed was the preaching of Jonah, speaking to their behavior and their culpability and their guilt before God—and they repented.

Or how about the queen of the South? She looked at what Solomon said—and it’s funny, because if you read this in context, she’s asking about all the things of the world. She asked him about all kinds of things in zoology and biology, in geology—asking all this: “Why is this man on earth?” at that point. And what happens? She’s convinced, “God is God—Yahweh is God, and you’re the true spokesman here of God.” Something else that’s spoken of in Romans chapter 1—Romans 2 talks about conscience; Romans 1 talks about natural revelation—and that is that in this world the attributes of God are clearly on display. And when we preach to people—or when Christ preached to people—clearly they understood that there was this kind of complement between the truth of the gospel and what’s revealed in natural revelation.

Now, there’s four quick things—I didn’t mean to build a sub-outline here, but proof you want: how about study the resurrection; study predictive prophecy; just listen to your conscience in this regard; and study natural revelation and see if we don’t see corroboration between the message of the gospel and what Jesus is preaching and the truth that lies all around us in our world.



When someone says, “I want more proof,” say they already have it. When they want miraculous signs, say they already have them—and send them on a quest to do that. And if you want to know why God’s not doing a magic show in every generation, just remember: they don’t do much good anyway. Even when people see the works of Christ—if their heart isn’t there, if they’re not open, they’re not willing to do the will of God—they reject it. They assign it to something else. Or, as we read last week, did we not, in the parable about the rich man and Lazarus—he said, “Even if someone comes back from the dead, if their heart is not willing to do what the prophets say, then it’s not going to convince them.”

Verses 25 through 28 is an interesting couplet of stories from Elijah’s ministry and Elisha’s ministry—this is Luke 4 now. Again, I’m back to Luke 4. He talks about the widows in Israel—none of them got help; only the one from Sidon. And a lot of lepers in Israel (verses 27 and 28), and none of them got help except for Naaman the Syrian.

Now, what’s he driving at here? Well, he’s building on what’s being said there in “Physician, heal yourself.” I should say this because some of you have this remaining question—and I meant to say it; I just looked at it; I saw it on my paper. Bad preaching, okay? But here it is—let’s go back to that point to understand this phrase, “Physician, heal yourself.” “Heal yourself”—you’d think they’re saying, “There’s something wrong with you—fix yourself.” That’s not what’s being said. We know that by the second half of verse 23, when he says, “Do what you did at Capernaum—do it here. We heard you did something there; that’s what their thought is—do it here.” It’s kind of like when you’re the plumber—you’re the great plumber—and I come to your house and wash my hands in your guest bathroom, and it overflows because the drain is clogged. And I come out of the bathroom and I say, “Physician, heal yourself.” What’s the point? This is not personally about you and your life; it’s about you and your domain. It’s about you in your home. If you’re the Orkin man, and I come to your house and there’s cockroaches all over the ground—even if you don’t work for Orkin I’m going to have a problem with that either way—but I’d really have a problem with it if you did. I’d say, “Hey, Orkin man, heal yourself.” And it’s not about you; it’s not “you have lice in your hair”—these are terrible illustrations coming out of my head right now—it’s that your house is infested with rodents. “Physician, heal yourself.” In other words: why don’t you do in your hometown—here in your own house of Nazareth—what we heard you did there?

Okay—now we’re at point three, that I missed, that I’m coming back to now. Elijah and Elisha—he’s driving this home because of the comparison of “You did stuff in Capernaum, and you’re not doing it here.” His indictment on them is much like why the widows didn’t get helped by Elijah in Israel—only outside of Israel, one of them—and why the lepers in Elisha’s day didn’t get healed in Israel—but only one outside of Israel. Why? Because if you read the context of the Bible in 2 Kings, it was a terrible time in Israel. They didn’t trust God. They were idolaters. They had turned away and apostatized from God. And so there were people who had trust in God that God identified outside of the country, and the prophet of God went to them instead.



How does that make the Nazarenes feel here? I'm from Nazareth—I want you to think that I'm worthy of your ministry. And he's saying, "This is maybe something—I'm saying something about the people that could hurt them." And what I'm saying is: it's much like Naaman and the Phoenician widow—they had something: a willingness, a faith, a willingness to trust God that you guys don't have.

Here's the thing about the gospel—and Jesus rushes right to it; he doesn't mess around. We often mess around and we hem and haw and kick the ground and finally get around to it. But the gospel will always make our evangelistic prospect feel belittled. They're going to feel belittled.

Number three: when they feel belittled—and they always will if you're preaching the biblical gospel. If you're going to preach some fabricated, plastic gospel, you'll never make anybody feel bad with your gospel. But the real gospel will always come and make us feel low. Why? Because, as we learned last week, you cannot be seeing unless you're willing to admit that you're blind. And to admit that you're blind—that makes you feel bad. Or, as the story is told (and we'll look at it when we get to it in the Gospel of Luke), when the Pharisee and the tax collector go to the temple mount to pray—which one goes home justified? The tax collector. Why? Well, because he was the only one willing to admit that he was a lousy, rotten sinner. And the Pharisee wasn't. And yet, they both were, and they both needed to admit that. But it's those who don't want to feel like they're a bad person—they don't get saved until you're ready to admit that you're a bad person. And by that, I mean measuring against the standard of God—you don't measure up; you're sinful; and you are worthy of punishment. If you don't get to the place of humbling yourself to admit that, you never get the benefits of the gospel.

He drives right to that with these two illustrations. And he says, "You know what? Naaman and the Phoenician widow—they were willing to admit their need and trust God for a solution." Not, by the way, that it was easy—it wasn't easy. Matter of fact, the thing that needed to happen in Naaman's life—this will be the complement to point three now—is that he needed to learn to swallow his pride—something that most people in Israel weren't willing to do.

Let's put it down that way: when people feel belittled by the gospel—and they will—tell them to swallow their pride. In other words, tell them, "You're on the right track." Now this is it. You will not be exalted unless you're humble. You cannot be saved unless you admit the problem. So you're on the right track here—you're there; just swallow your pride and humble yourself.

Now, once you write that down, turn with me—if you would—to 2 Kings chapter 5, and let's read the account of Naaman. This is a great story. And we read it not long ago in our daily Bible reading. If not, I'm going to catch you up right now on at least the fifth chapter of 2 Kings.

Naaman—he is the Syrian commander of Ben-Hadad, king—the king of Syria—Ben-Hadad’s army. He’s an important guy. And what prefaced this is this in the beginning of this story: they’ve had great success because the Lord was giving them success. Interesting—there was no success in Israel because they were idolaters and they were sinning against the light that they knew. But here were the foreigners, and God was blessing them. And the commander of Ben-Hadad’s army, Naaman, on one of his raids had collected a young Jewish slave girl; and they captured this girl, and the girl was working for Naaman’s wife.

Well, Naaman comes down with leprosy, which was, you know, the death sentence in the day. You’d have to go to a separate colony—you know the stories—and say, “Leper! Unclean! Unclean!” Well, in Damascus it was no different—it was a bad sentence to have. Well, the slave girl says to Naaman’s wife, “Hey, you know what? Too bad you don’t live in Israel, because we got a prophet in Israel. And that guy does amazing things—he asks God for stuff and it happens.” And Naaman’s wife gets wind of this, and she starts talking about it. And finally she goes to the king and says, “Hey King, I’d like to get your, you know, chief of the armed forces here—I’d like you to get him healed. He needs to get to this prophet named Elisha in Israel, and they’ll fix the problem.” And so Ben-Hadad writes a letter to Joram and says to King Joram in Israel, “Hey, I hear you’ve got a way to fix leprosy.”

And if you know the story—or you just glance through it; I’m trying to summarize eight verses; it’d be faster to read it, I suppose—but I’m trying to summarize it with a little color here. What happens? King Joram says, “What—do you think I’m crazy? He’s setting me up; he’s trying to pick a fight. Who am I—God? I can’t heal leprosy.” Well, Elisha hears about it, and Elisha says, “Fine—send the commander Naaman from Damascus—from Syria—if you send him to me…”

Pick up the story—verse 9: Naaman willingly goes, with all the regalia of his position, all the pomp of his authority. He comes with his horses and his chariots, and he stood at the door of Elisha’s house. Now he’s at the pastor’s parsonage—picture this now—the holy guy’s house. He’s ready: “Need to be healed; I got my leprosy; it’s breaking out on my body. I hear you can help me.” Problem is, verse 10—Elisha didn’t even come to the door. Look at this: “Elisha sent a messenger to him,” and said, “Go tell him to wash in the Jordan—the Jordan River, that is—seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you, and you shall be clean.”

You can just picture this—there’s like a chain on the door like in the movies, you know; the servant says, “Elisha says, ‘Go wash in the Jordan seven times and you’ll be clean.’” Shut. Naaman’s there with all of his, you know, uniforms and his chariots. He gets ticked—as you would too.



Verse 11: “But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, ‘Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of Yahweh his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.’” “That’s what I expected—something spectacular. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus—aren’t they far better than all the polluted, stinky, muddy waters of Israel? Come on. I could have washed in any of them and be clean. Good night—come on.” “So he turned and went away in a rage.”

Love this—now, it started with the servant girl saying to the wife of the commander, “Hey, you should think about Elisha.” The servant steps up to Naaman and says, “Hey, can I talk to you? Hey, my father, boss—would it be great, think about it: if you just follow the instructions. Isn’t it a great word that the prophet has spoken to you? Why don’t you do it? I mean, come on—do what he said. Has he actually said, ‘You wash and be clean’? Didn’t he say you can be clean? Just do it.”

So there’s a lot going on between verse 13 and 14—and you just wrote it down—and that is: Naaman swallowed his pride. He said, “Okay—I’ll follow the instructions of the prophet.” So he went down to the muddy waters—not quite as good as the Pharpar River in Damascus—and he dipped himself in it seven times. By the fourth time—think about how humiliating this is—“I mean, do it again; do it again; do it again.” Seven times in the Jordan River. Why? Because he humbled himself to do “according to the word of the man of God.” “And his flesh was restored, like”—I love this—“like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.” His wife wanted to go wash in the Jordan after that. I mean, really—it’s amazing.

What’s the point? Naaman—unlike all the other lepers in Israel—had a willingness to humble himself to do what the word of God says. That is the problem with every evangelistic conversation you’ll ever have: will they humble themselves and do what the message says—in contrition, cling to Christ as a sinner who cannot save himself, as someone who needs the forgiveness of God that only can come through the death and life and resurrection of Christ? Are you going to take it, or are you not? Are you going to turn away, or are you going to humble yourself?

The gospel is going to make people feel small. It’s going to make them feel belittled; it’s going to make them feel like sinners and all of that. You got to tell them to swallow their pride. And I get it—man, we’re sharing the gospel with executives in Orange County firms and gals that have, you know, master’s degrees—your next-door neighbor—and you’re telling them to do something, then they turn on the news and they watch the little show and they watch some prisoner in an orange jumpsuit in the jail or the penitentiary trusting in Christ and reading a Bible. They’re saying, “You’re telling me I have to do the same thing that creep does?” I mean, think about it. There’s something humbling about this. Tell them to swallow their pride.



Verses 29 and 30, Luke chapter four. Verse 28 says they're filled with wrath—they'd had enough of this story. They felt belittled, but they weren't willing to humble themselves. So "they rose up and they drove him out of the town." And that started with a riot in the church—to take him out of the church and run him out of the town. "They brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him off the cliff. But passing through their midst, he went away."

Now—look at the commentaries on it—here we all scratch our head: "What happened?" I'm thinking if you're going to try to stone this guy and kill him, he's the guy everybody's eyes are on. How did he get out of this? Some commentators are willing to say, "This is so amazing—maybe this was a miraculous escape." And I thought, "Well, this is great—that's what they wanted—a miracle. They got one." It didn't change anything—that's not the kind of miracle they wanted. I don't know if it was a miracle or not. I don't know if this was just Jesus, in a town that he grew up in, knowing the brow of the hill and the cliffs because he climbed them as a kid—knew how to get out of this thing. But whatever—he gets out and splits, and the last three words: "He went away."

Number four on your outline: when they push you away—and there will be people like the people in the synagogue at Nazareth—when they hear you talk about sin and judgment and their need for repentance, they're going to push you out. They're going to straight-arm you. They're going to say, "I don't want to hear this. Stop talking about your religion and your narrow-minded bigotry," or whatever they say to you. They're going to put their arm out and push you away. Hopefully they won't throw you off the brow of the hill or off the cliff of your office, you know—whatever. You need to follow the cue of Christ.

Now, I know this is hard, and there's a caveat and an asterisk and a footnote to it if you're talking about a family member or whatever. But Jesus—not only by example left when he hit obstinate people—but he taught his disciples to do the same. It wasn't just when his life was threatened. The disciples were told to go to villages, and when they shared the message of the gospel, if they would not receive it, they were supposed to do something dramatic to show that they were moving on. And what was it, Sunday school grads? Kick the dust off their feet—shake out the dirt: "Oh, you can keep the dirt off the bottom of my sandals as well. You don't want our message—we're gone. We're going somewhere else." That is a pattern you see throughout the Scriptures.

Number four: when they push you away, pray for them—I'm all for that, and I see that in Paul's ministry. He prays for those that reject him—and move on. And if it's a family member, I understand it doesn't mean we give up. But when the conversation shuts down, when they push you back, when they reject your message—our goal is not to send you into "evangelistic" situations that are nothing more than you arguing with people who don't want to hear it. That's what scares a lot of you about evangelism—I'm not asking you to do that. I'm asking you to invest in the receptive, which means you need to know when they're not receptive—and move on to someone else. Isn't it good to know I'm not sending you out into, you know, the town center to start yelling at people



about the gospel and incur all that vitriol from people? That's not what I'm saying to do. I'm not asking you to do that. I'm asking you to talk about Christ, and when you have opposition, you move on.

Let me give you three sub-points on this—and I did intend these three. Real quick reasons that you shut this down when you know it's time to move on.

Number one—I'd just put it this way: when you're not making progress. There's no progress being made—talked to that neighbor; you've talked to that co-worker; you talk, talk, talk—there's no more progress. Let me give you some passages to jot down from Proverbs. Proverbs chapter 26, verses 4 and 5—Proverbs 26:4–5. And I quote these all the time—it's a great juxtaposition of two contrasting principles. Let me start with the second one in verse 5: "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes." What's that assuming? That I'm making progress in opening his eyes—that he's saying things about the Bible he knows nothing about (in this case, in our application in evangelism). He's saying things about God he knows nothing about. He's talking about how the Bible came to be—he knows nothing about. So I'm trying to clarify this to him and talk about the need for Christ in his life—and I'm making progress, because I don't want him to be wise in his own eyes, thinking he knows the answers to this when he doesn't.

Verse 4: "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him." Now think about this: do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him. Here's the fool—he's being foolish (his folly). You're speaking true and reasonable words to him, and he's not listening to reason. You start to look like him trying to reason with the unreasonable—how unreasonable is that? You're acting just like the fool. When you can no longer reason with someone about the gospel, then you're starting to be irrational. So you need to stop. Verse 4—no longer making progress. Verse 5—making progress. Between verse 4 and verse 5 in Proverbs 26—when you're not making progress anymore, that's the time to stop.

Number two: when they start mocking you—when they start mocking Christ, or they start mocking the gospel—I'm done. I'm done. I'm done. Unless my flesh gets the better of me and I put in two or three more jabs before I leave the conversation. But on good and godly days—I'm done. You want to mock? Over in Proverbs chapter 9, verses 7 and 8—let me have you write this down as I read it for you. Proverbs chapter 9, verses 7 and 8: "Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse; he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury. Do not reprove a scoffer, he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you." What's the point? That comes back to "progress" again, but the key word there is "scoffer, scoffer, scoffer"—the mocker, the one who wants to make fun of it. I don't want to heap up on you more penalty for hell by having you mock the very thing that could save you. You're mocking the One you're going to stand before one day—I don't want to do that. I'd much rather end the conversation and move on to someone else.



Thirdly, 1 Peter chapter 3, verse 15—and I guess you can add 16 as well, because it summarizes what's in 15. It says I've got to "be ready to give a reason for the hope that's in me; yet I've got to do it with gentleness and respect." We'll put number three this way: when you're arguing—or to put it in the inverse—when you know there's no longer gentleness and respect in this conversation. When the vein pops out in your neck—you can write that down if you'd like—or your forehead starts turning red—however you know you're arguing. When it becomes an argument—and I mean we're not reasoning anymore; we're not making progress anymore. There may not be mocking going on, but there's clearly no rational discussion happening. When that takes place and you're arguing—done. And when someone is just engaging me in an argument—I'm done. I'm willing to debate; I'm willing to discuss; I'm willing to reason and rationally talk through this. But according to verse 16, I've got to maintain my good behavior; I've got to maintain a good conscience. And that means that my conversations need to stay within the realm of gentleness and respect—which means I'm not arguing.

I want to invest in the receptive—and that's good news, isn't it? That's the goal. I'd like to invest in the receptive. Some of us are working so hard with people we just imagine would be the ideal converts. In reality, there's someone just down the hall in another cubicle; just another house down; just another neighbor across the way; another parent from the ball team—whatever. And if we just stop beating our head against the wall with this conversation, there's receptivity down over here. Pray for the person that won't hear it—and move on.

You dog owners—and I used to be one—you know your dog is smart enough to figure out that when he sticks his nose in various places and you give him that nice slap on the snout (or you don't do it with your hand because you're too good; you use a rolled-up newspaper—whatever), you do that enough times and it doesn't take much for even a stupid dog to figure out, "I'm not going to stick my nose there anymore." Slap the snout—they keep their nose out of that. May take some time, but eventually even the stupidest dog figures that out.

The problem with our evangelism is, most of the time, you're going to get your snout slapped—just going to happen. And people are going to tell you, "Keep your nose out of this." Now here's the deal—I'm all for you recognizing that may be the time for you to move on. But it isn't time for you to stop. And the problem with us is that we often get our hands slapped—our snout slapped—we get our feelings hurt, and we don't want to talk about it anymore.

In Acts chapter 5, the early church was excited about the Great Commission—as I hope Compass Bible Church will be. And they were out there sticking their nose, if you will, into people's business as it relates to their beliefs in God and their eternal destiny. And, well, people have said the same thing to them they say to us: "Get your nose out of my business." The slapping got intense by the fifth chapter of Acts. The leaders got thrown in prison. Decrees went out from the council and the senate that said, "You cannot any longer speak in the name of Jesus." Think about that—you want to talk about opposition and getting slapped hard. They got slapped down hard in Acts 5.



Three things: they responded to that with three things. Verse 29—they responded this way by saying, “Listen, you figure it out for yourself—should we obey God or man?” People are going to tell you to shut up and stop talking about Christ. In your mind, you need to do what they did in Acts 5: “Hey, the question really is—am I going to obey your slapping my snout, or am I going to obey God, who’s commissioned me to share this message?”

And verse 40—at the end of that chapter (it ends after 41 verses)—but verse 40: another very bizarre and counterintuitive thing happened. After all that opposition—their pastors being in prison, all the decrees coming down for them to shut up—it says this: “They rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.” That’s amazing. They went back and said, “Wasn’t it great that we were considered worthy before God to get our snout slapped?” Praise God. That sounds like a glutton for punishment—it sounds like some kind of masochistic mentality. It’s not. No one likes to be called names. No one likes to, you know, lose a promotion because they’re the “Jesus freak.” No one likes that. And in your life, you’re not going to like it when you get persecuted for saying things about God—I get that. But the Bible says—as Jesus often said—we ought to count it a privilege for us to be in the camp with Jesus and all the other prophets of old who bring a message to people and often get their nose slapped for sticking their nose in business people say you have no business talking about—“my personal beliefs or my religion.”

And lastly—I said there were three things they did in Acts 5—verse 29: “We’re going to obey God.” Verse 40: “It’s a privilege for us to get our nose slapped.” Verse 42—I’ll just read this one for you: “Every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not stop teaching”—or here’s the great word (Madonna!)—“preaching that Jesus is the Christ.” They didn’t stop. They published the news wherever they went.

I just hope that the objections and the opposition that you get for sharing the message of Christ in South Orange County, or wherever you might live as you listen to this message—it may make you move on from that individual conversation, but I hope it never shuts you up. We’ve got a message to share with the world. The return of Christ is waiting on us finishing this job. God’s waiting for people to come to repentance.

Why don’t you stand with me; we’ll dismiss with a word of prayer.

Let’s pray. God, thanks for this crew. And I don’t know what percentage of them—I can only guess—but I don’t know, are up for doing what you’ve called them to do, and that is to share the message of the gospel. I know we feel inadequate. I know some people think they don’t have all the answers; they can’t respond to the objections. But it’s why I’ve provided a lot of books on the back



for them, God—that maybe they can do some homework in that regard, too. But we just need to practically know that when we get this opposition and receive these objections, we need to know what to do. We need to keep pointing them to the urgent message of salvation. We need to tell them that there is proof in the resurrection, and then predictive prophecy, and just even the corroboration of our conscience and natural revelation.

God, we need to recognize how important it is—just even in our own lives as we think about the people that we deal with every single day—to recognize there is a time when we get that opposition, that kind of resistance, to move back and to step back and to move on to someone else—never to stop talking. Because we know the message is going to bring people to a place of feeling sinful—just like we did when we became Christians. And, God, I pray that we would be willing to share that message, because when we see—through our faithfulness to being ambassadors for Christ—people see their sin for what it is and repent, they have their names written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. They have the security of knowing that when they die, they are right before their Maker. And, God, a hundred years from now—I wish I could just take the clock and move it forward and we could just live for 10 minutes in the future—a hundred years from now, we’re all gonna look back at this life. I doubt there’s going to be a single person regretting that they talked about Christ too much or they shared the gospel too many times. Our regret will be that we didn’t share it enough and we didn’t speak up enough.

So, God, give us—as you said to Joshua there at the front door of the Promised Land—boldness and courage, not fearing, never being afraid, because we know that you’re with us in this great task of evangelism. We pray this now in Jesus’ name. Amen.