

## EVANGELISM

### SPRING CLEANING

Isaiah 52:1-7 // Craig Smith

March 20, 2016

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**CRAIG:** Welcome back to the third and final week of our Spring Cleaning Series where we've been trying to sort of push aside some of the stuff that can just accumulate in a church, especially, a church our size. And we're gonna focus in on the three things that the church has to be about, the three things that God says, "This is what makes a church a church." And we've talked about worship, we've talked about discipleship. And the third one is evangelism, which means today is all about evangelism.

I mean, did you get just a little bit nervous when we talk about evangelism? Let's be honest with each other. Yeah. Here's the interesting thing, though. You know, we've been using the analogy that these three things are really like the three legs of a three-legged stool. Meaning that if you take one of the legs away, you don't have a stool. And the same way, a church that doesn't have all three of these and give them the right emphasis, really isn't a church as God describes the church. But having said that, evangelism, I actually think is the most indispensable of the indispensable things. It is indispensable-r, okay, if that's a word. Okay.

Well you know, why do I say that? Well, think about this, we defined worship last week this way. We said, "Worship is saying to God, 'You're God and I'm not'" and then living our lives in light of that in every area. Okay? So really, so worship, it's recognition of who God is, and then it's submission to His will for our lives. But what's His will for our life? It's actually to be transformed into the image of Christ, it's to become more like Jesus.

But if you were here a few weeks ago, you remember me as we talked about discipleship, we said that the discipleship is the process of becoming more like Jesus so that we can join Him in His mission. Okay, well, what's the mission of Christ? Well, in His own words He said this. He said, "The Son of Man," His favorite phrase for Himself. This is Luke. He said, "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Well, when push came to shove, that was His statement about His mission. Matthew, he said, "I didn't come to call the righteous, I came to call sinners." He's looking for the lost. His last words to His disciples, His followers, those people who are engaged in becoming like Him, He said this. He said, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."

Now you might go, "Well, that last part, that's discipleship." Yeah, but you see the first part is evangelism and evangelism leads to discipleship. As we as we evangelize to people and they become Christians, the Christians learn to do everything God has commanded them. And one of the things He's commanded them is to go back out into the world and share the good news, which brings to discipleship, which leads back to... They're two sides of the same coin. And the whole thing, I think, is actually fueled by worship.

And that's why I say discipleship is indispensable. Maybe even a little bit more indispensable than the other ones because Jesus Himself said that was the core of His mission. And as followers of Jesus, we have to follow Him on the mission.

So I'm gonna go a little farther, I'm gonna say it this way. Discipleship or evangelism is not one of the ministries of the church, it is the central purpose for which the church was called into existence. Just sit with that for a second. Evangelism is not one of the ministries of the church, it is the central purpose for which the church was called into existence. Now, I'm not saying that discipleship is not important, but I'm saying that you can't be a disciple without following Jesus on a mission.

And here's the other interesting thing to me. Discipleship, that's becoming like Jesus. Wouldn't it be easier for us to become like



Jesus if we were actually with Him? Like if we sat down, and then like He was right there, and we could like watch how He eats his spaghetti. We're like, "Okay, I'll follow that, right?" And how He interacts and how He talks in his life. I mean, if we were actually physically with Jesus, it would be a lot easier to become like Him, but God hasn't taken us to Heaven yet. He hasn't taken us out of the world. He hasn't put us in that literal face-to-face relationship with Jesus right now. Why not?

Because apparently, He's more concerned about the fate of the lost and He's left us here to follow Jesus' example in reaching the lost. Discipleship will be accomplished much more effectively if we were already in heaven, but if God hasn't taken us out of the world, then apparently, He has work for us to do in it.

And that's why I say evangelism is indispensable. But in spite of that, evangelism is also scary, isn't it? Can I get an Amen?

**CONGREGATION:** Amen.

**CRAIG:** And just so you know, I'm with you. You might think, "Well, as a pastor, you probably love doing evangelism. You probably love sharing your faith with people." Not at all. It's terrifying, it's absolutely terrifying. And it's no less terrifying now than it was 25 years ago when I got in a van with a bunch of guys that were part of a ministry called Campus Crusade for Christ. And the guy who was leading our Bible study and disciplining us said, "Hey, we're gonna go down to Daytona Beach, we're gonna do beach evangelism." And I'm gonna be honest, I only heard the word "beach."

I got in the van because there was a beach at the end of that drive. But we got down there, I realized they're serious about that and they put us in this big tent. They had college students from all over the country and they put us in this big tent. And then they gave us some instruction on how to share our faith, how to do evangelism on the beach. They just like said, "Go do it."

And I remember standing there on the beach going, "What?" And I happened to look at all these college students that I knew were not there to hear about Jesus. On the contrary, probably were not gonna be thrilled to have Jesus injected into that week. And I had to go, "Okay. Well, I'm not gonna share with that person, he's huge, and I'm not gonna talk to him." And then just having to muster the courage to go up and go, "Hey, can I talk to you about Jesus?" And even as I said it, I was like "This is just terrifying." And I'd love to tell you that by the end of that week, all my fears about evangelism had dissolved. Not at all, not at all. It was terrifying at the end of the week, it remains terrifying to this day.

I've seen God use it. I've had the tremendous privilege of being able to lead the number of people to Christ over the years, but it remains terrifying. Even today when I'm in a coffee shop, or I'm on a plane or...and I'm talking to somebody. We're just having a conversation and it suddenly takes this like weird turn into a spiritual territory. I'm like, "I didn't try to make that happen, it did." And God is like "Yeah, I did that, go." I'm like "No! Can we go back to talking about...?"

And it's frightening, it's terrifying, and I think most people have some of that kind of anxiety when it comes to evangelism. And I think there's several reasons for that. I think one of the reasons is this. We have seen really poor examples of evangelism. We've seen bad examples and we don't wanna be associated with those. I mean, if you have ever seen a really bad example of evangelism and you think "Yeah, please that's not me, that's not who I am."

I'm thinking about, you know, the guy on the street corner in a big city with a little portable amplifier and a microphone. And he's screaming at people as they go by "Repent or burn!" And you're like, "Man, if that's evangelism, I don't think I can have anything to do with that." Or maybe you've seen the pictures of the people that are maybe picketing the Gay Pride Parades with signs that honestly, say some pretty hateful things. And while we wouldn't say, you know, that's evangelism, in our minds, we often associate that kind of thing with evangelism. We go, "I don't want any part of that." So we're a little afraid of evangelism.

I think another reason people are afraid of evangelism is the exact opposite. They've seen really good examples of evangelism



and they go, “I can’t possibly live up to that.” You know, I think about Billy Graham crusades. Billy Graham was a household name for years. More and more people today have no idea who he is but he was huge for years. Even non-Christians knew who he was because he did these big evangelism crusades. And when he gave the Gospel, when he invited people to come to Jesus, thousands would do it.

When I was a youth pastor it was Josh McDowell. He would do these youth crusades and thousands of kids would come to Christ when he gave the invitation. And some of us, I think we’ve seen that and we go, “Okay, I can’t live up to that. Therefore, if that’s evangelism, I guess I don’t do evangelism.”

And then I think another reason that probably hits most of us is we understand that we should do it, but we just don’t know how to do it. And I think part of the problem there is that we’ve built evangelism up into something that’s so complex and it’s so...I don’t know. So otherworldly that it’s hard for us to figure out what it even begins to look like to do it in our own lives, in our own relationships.

And what I wanna do today is what we’ve been doing in this, throughout this series is, I wanna go to God’s word and I wanna boil these concepts down. I wanna get down to just the essence. Push aside the clutter and go, “What does God’s word say about this thing that He says His church is supposed to be about?” So if you have a Bible, and if you don’t, I’d love to have you grab one from the seats in front of you.

But I want you to turn to Isaiah Chapter 52. Now, if you’re not sure where Isaiah is and you’re kind of new to the Bible, hey, just kind of go to the middle, you’re gonna get a bunch of Psalms, and then just kind of keep going forward. You’ll get through Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, some little books, and you’ll hit Isaiah. And Isaiah is hard to miss, it’s a really big book. And we’re gonna jump in at Chapter 52 because I think in this chapter, which is one of my favorite chapters in all of Isaiah, there’s some powerful words that are spoken that really, I think clarify God’s heart for evangelism.

In Isaiah Chapter 52, he’s gonna use some language that might seem a little strange. You’re gonna see the word “Zion.” Zion was the hill in Jerusalem and Jerusalem was the capital city of Israel. Israel is the people of God. And so Zion and mentions of Jerusalem, these are just sort of symbolic ways of talking about God’s people. And really, the heartbeat of what Isaiah is gonna say here is that God’s people are supposed to respond in a certain way to the good things that God has done for them. And so we’re gonna read it with that lens in mind.

He says this. He says, “Awake, awake, Zion, “ And again, people of God. He says “People of God wake up, clothe yourself with strength! Put on your garments of splendor, Jerusalem, the holy city. The uncircumcised and the defiled will not enter you again.” And that language is referring to the enemies of God’s people, those who have kept them in captivity, the oppressors of God’s people. He says, “They’re not coming into you again, so shake off your dust, rise up, sit enthroned to Jerusalem. Free yourself from the chains on your neck, Daughter of Zion, now captive.”

If we boil down what Isaiah is saying here, it really just kind of comes down to this idea that God’s people should live in a way that demonstrates the reality of their rescue. That’s the heart of it. God’s people should live in a way that demonstrates to the world the reality of their rescue. He uses two metaphors to emphasize that truth. He uses the metaphor of clothing and then the metaphor of posture or position. So he says in clothing he says, “Clothe yourself with strength, put on garments of splendor.” And both of those kinds of clothing were in contrast to clothing of mourning. When you are mourning, when you are in sadness, which was appropriate because you were held captive. Because you were oppressed by these enemies, it was appropriate to wear clothing of sadness. And so that was dark clothing, not clothing of splendor. He says, “Stop wearing the dark stuff, put on the bright stuff.”

He says, “Put on the clothing of strength,” which is in contrast again to the clothing of sadness and weakness that was often rough cloth, sackcloth. He says you need to take off those kinds of clothes because that’s not where you are anymore. And you



need to demonstrate visibly what God has done for you. So you need to put it on so that you can demonstrate to the world that God has rescued you, that you're no longer in that place.

And in the same way, he uses the metaphor of posture. He says "Shake off your dust, rise up, sit enthroned to Jerusalem." Because in the ancient world, one of the ways that you expressed grieving, or mourning, or sadness was you literally sat in the dust. And he says stop sitting there because you're not in a place of sadness anymore. God has rescued you so rise up, shake that dust off, sit down in the seat of victory. But again, what he's saying is just this, he's saying you've got to demonstrate to the world that your God has rescued you.

But here's what's really interesting, he hadn't rescued them, not yet. He was promising to but it hadn't happened yet. You see at the end of this bit in Verse 2. He says, "Free yourself from the chains on your neck, Daughters of Zion, now a captive." Their rescue hadn't been accomplished, it was just anticipated.

Isaiah was a prophet. He's just speaking about what's coming, what God's about to do. But you understand what he's saying to Israel is, "Stop living in sadness and grief, you've got to put on the good clothes, you've gotta get up out of the dust, and you gotta celebrate. You gotta demonstrate to the world a rescue that is coming."

Here's the interesting thing, they were anticipating what has now been accomplished. We're not anticipating rescue anymore because the cross has already happened, the empty grave has already happened. Our rescue, forgiveness of sins, freedom from captivity, to sin, and to darkness, and to death, it's all accomplished.

And here's the thing. If Israel was expected to celebrate what was anticipated, how much more does God expect us to celebrate what has been accomplished? Are you with me? If Israel was expected to demonstrate to the world the reality of a salvation that was coming, how much more are we expected to demonstrate to the world a reality that has already been accomplished?

Jesus is pretty clear that His disciples are to be characterized by joy, by joy because of what God has accomplished. Listen, we celebrate, we demonstrate to the world our salvation in two ways. Well, number one, we stop living as slaves and number two, we start living with the joy that Jesus says is supposed to be our defining characteristic. We stop living as slaves. You notice he says, "Free yourself from the chains on your neck." And he's not saying that you need to accomplish your freedom, you. He doesn't say break the chains, he just says, free 'em, and literally, it's like shrug 'em off. What he's saying is, when God breaks the chains that bound you to sin, and to death, and to darkness, why would you continue living as though you're weighed down by this? No, no. They're broken, shrug them off, and begin living in the victory that God has given you."

That's one of the ways we demonstrate to the world the reality of our salvation. We stop living as slaves and then we start living with joy. Jesus is so clear that that is a defining characteristic. When they came to Him, His enemies came to Him and they said, "Really, we don't get this thing, your disciples, your followers, they're way too happy. They're supposed to do what we do. They're supposed to have regular days of mourning, they're supposed to fast as a mourning for where Israel is." And Jesus looks at 'em and goes, "How can they mourn when the bridegroom is with them? How can they mourn when I'm there with them?"

Now, He did say there's gonna be a day coming when they're gonna mourn like you guys do. But the interesting thing is that day, He doesn't say days, He doesn't say a period. He says day, one day. And I'm confident the day He was talking about was the Saturday between Friday and Sunday, in what we call Easter weekend. He said, "Yeah, there is a day coming when they put Me on the cross and they put Me in the ground. Yeah, that's Saturday. They're gonna grieve and they're gonna grieve hard but Sunday is coming. And when Sunday comes, they're not gonna be grievors anymore because they will know beyond the shadow of a doubt that their salvation has been secured. And so it's a continual call to the people of God to demonstrate to the world the joy of our salvation.

And here's the thing. I am not at all sure that the average non-Christian thinks of Christians as joyful people. You're laughing.



You're laughing because probably you don't even think about that as defining characteristic of Christians. And there's something wrong there. There's something wrong there.

Now, listen, I'm not talking about plastering fake smiles on our faces. But I'm talking about living in light of a joy that really colors everything else that we face. If I wrote you a check for a billion dollars today, and you got caught in traffic on the way home. Do you think you'd arrive at home in a bad mood because of the traffic? My guess is not so much because the joy of what you've been given would so outweigh that momentary trouble. In the same way, we're called to move through. Yes, there are moments of grief, there's moments of struggle and sadness, but we're called to live in a way that acknowledges constantly what is waiting for us at the end of this road. A God who welcomes us with open arms and a God who walks with us every step of the way, and that's gotta change stuff.

I had a friend who once he said, "Why is it that Christians talk a lot about being born again when it really seems like we're all born against? We're against that, we're against that, we're against that, we're grumpy about that, we're really upset about that."

Listen, listen to me, you cannot tell somebody that you have good news for them, unless your life demonstrates that it's been good news for you. You hear me? You cannot call somebody and say, "Hey, I've got good news for you." And they look at you and go, "You've had this good news all along? I never would have guessed." You cannot give somebody good news if your life doesn't demonstrate that it's been good news for you.

And really, that's the first key to evangelism. First key to evangelism is a life that demonstrates the reality of our salvation. But it can't just demonstrate, it also has to declare it.

We're gonna skip down to Verse 7 here to focus in on what God says about evangelism. He says this, "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'" And there's two phrases that I wanna focus in on. If you've got a physical Bible, I'd love to have you underline the phrase, "who bring good news" and then the phrase, "who bring good tidings," which really is the same as the first one. It's literally, who bring good news of good.

Both of those phrases really are just one word in Hebrew and that word is "basar." Basar means bringing good news or one who brings good news. Don't worry, there's not gonna be a quiz later. But the reason I tell you the Hebrew is because if you follow me for a second, I think I can tell you something that might be helpful when you're thinking about evangelism. So bring good news is the word "basar."

Now we can pop this up here. When the Greek translation of the Old Testament was made, they translated basar, bring good news, with the word to "euangelidzo." Now if you look at that last word for a little bit, you might think that it looks vaguely familiar. Thanks for nodding heads. Especially when you realize that in modern Greek, that second letter or the "U" got turned into a "V." So "euangelidzo" got turned into "evangelidzo." That's where we get the word evangelism from. The word evangelism just means bring good news. They used it for all kinds of things. They used it when they won wars, they used it when, you know, there was a surplus of crops and they were able to feed people who might be starving. They used it when captives, who had been enslaved, were allowed to go free. It was all good news.

Evangelism really, to do evangelism is to declare good news to those in captivity. You notice that again, it's being said the people who were still in captivity. They're still oppressed by their enemies. And he had good news for them because you are saying it's not permanent. You don't have to continue living these ways. There is another life available to you. That's evangelism.

Now, what he's talking about here is not demonstrating good news, he's talking about declaring it. We have to declare good news because they have to go hand in hand. Listen, if you demonstrate that you have good news by your life and you don't also declare how other people can become part of that, that's called torture. That's cruel. That's like the guy who found a way out of



the prison camp and realized that the guards can't touch him once he gets out. And so, he's walking back and forth in front of the other prisoners kind of mocking them going, "Yeah, I'm free." And all the time he could be telling them, "Yeah, there's a hole in the wall that's over there and once you get out, they can't touch you again."

Demonstrating the reality of the good news in our lives without also declaring how other people can experience it, that's cruel. And so really evangelism is demonstrating and declaring the good news of freedom to those still in captivity. That's all it is. That's all it is, demonstrating and declaring the good news of freedom to those in captivity.

And here's the real irony for me. I struggle with it. There's something in me that goes, "Oh, you know, here's a moment where I could do that but there's still something in me that struggles with it, which is weird because I like giving good news." Like, I kid you not. Like if I was home today and Publisher's Clearinghouse came to my neighbor and my neighbor wasn't home and so they went over they told me, "Hey, he won like you know, \$10 million. Would you mind letting him know when he gets home?" I would love to let him know. Like that would be the most amazing thing in the world to be able to deliver that kind of news. But I would be delivering the news of something that it is passing, it is transient, it is ultimately meaningless.

Whereas what I have the opportunity to do, literally every day, I don't have to conjure up some weird circumstance. I have the opportunity every day to speak good news to that neighbor, that far transcends any money they're gonna ever win in a lottery. Evangelism is demonstrating and declaring the good news of freedom to those who are still in captivity.

So how do we do it? I'm gonna ask Gary and Blake to join me. Gary is a consultant here at Mission Hills. He's been with us for a couple years talking about evangelism. Now Blake has been doing a lot of work with him. Blake is on staff in our discipleship department. One of his primary areas of responsibility is equipping our people to do evangelism because again, this is one of the central purposes of the church. And when I say the church, I don't just mean Mission Hills as an organization, I mean the people of God here. As the people of God, we are called to declare and demonstrate the good news to those who are still in captivity. And so we're gonna talk a little bit about how we do that here at Mission Hill. So thanks for being here, guys.

Let's just jump into it with the first question. We've touched on a little bit here in this message. But you know, in your opinion, what's the root behind why, as Christians, we're supposed to be doing evangelism?

**GARY:** Well, in my opinion, I think there's many reasons why we should be doing evangelism, but a couple of them. One first off is that Jesus commanded us or commissioned us to do the work of evangelism.

2 Corinthians 5 talks about how we are committed to the message of reconciliation. We're Christ ambassadors. So if you're here and you're a follower of Jesus Christ then by default, you're his representative, you're an ambassador, as though God were making his appeal through you. So it's an incredible opportunity. I mean, I also think of Matthew 9, where Jesus was our example, our model. You know, when He looked at the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. And then Jesus looked at His disciples and He said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send workers into My harvest field." We're called to go into the harvest field.

**PASTOR:** Yeah. Yesterday, as we were getting ready for the weekend, the services, the team meets together and we pray together. And Mike, the head of our tech ministries, shares a little bit of thinking and he said some that really caught me yesterday. He said, "You know, probably most of us, if not all of us are Christians. We're here today because somebody shared the good news with us, right? Maybe it was a pastor, maybe it was a teacher, maybe it was a parent, it was a friend." But certainly, that's true for me and I think it's true for most of you. We're here because somebody did evangelism for us.

And then I realized you know...and whoever shared the good news with me also had the good news shared with them. And that person had the good news shared with them, and it goes back. There's an unbroken line of evangelism going all the way back to Jesus, Himself, resulting in my salvation. That is a chain I don't wanna break.



You know I get nervous when I get those emails that say, “Hey, pass this on to 10 people or you’ll have bad luck.” How much more concerned should we be of breaking a chain of evangelism that I can trace back to Jesus, Himself. And now, 2000 years later, I’m in a relationship with Him because He shared with somebody, who shared with somebody. I don’t want that to end with me.

**GARY:** You know one other thing to just think about it, it’s kind of curious to me. Blake and I are just passionate about evangelism and we’re passionate about helping all of you to be inspired and be equipped to do the work of evangelism. But one thing that motivates me is, I think of the fact that evangelism is not something that we’re gonna be able to do in heaven. You know, we can worship in heaven. We can become better followers of Christ in Heaven, but evangelism, sharing our faith with someone who does not know Christ isn’t gonna happen in heaven. But we have an opportunity here and now to make a difference in the lives of those who do not know Christ. So this is our one and only opportunity in our one and only life.

**PASTOR:** Okay, so we need to, right?

**GARY:** Yeah.

**PASTOR:** There’s all kinds of good reason to do it but, you know, I think that people have different reasons why they begin to hesitate. And I think one of them is a really...it’s sort of a theological question. And as we’ve heard about the gift of evangelism, and then we go, “I don’t think I have that.” So what if I don’t have the gift of evangelism?

**GARY:** Yeah, I like to say, well, welcome to the club because very few of us have the gift of evangelism. We’ve done studies on this and in most congregations, the average congregation, less than 5% would say or admit that they have the gift of evangelism. And so that’s okay because everyone can get in the game. Everyone can be a part of this process of inviting people in a winsome, positive way and so we’ve come up with a plan and we wanna share that with you, and Blake is gonna explain the 3D1 concept.

**BLAKE:** Yeah. So we have this strategy at Mission Hills called 3D1. And I think we’ve got a visual for us. In 3D1, the “1” stands for one person, one person in your life who’s far from God where you live, work, or play. And then engage that one person with the 3Ds, and the 3Ds are simply this, develop friendships, discover stories, and discern next steps.

And we love this strategy because it’s Biblical and it allows people to participate in the process of evangelism. I mean, if I talk to anybody in this audience and I said, “How many of you here can develop a friendship?” Everybody would say, “Yeah, I can do that.” And then if I asked you, “Well, can you ask that person what makes them tick, their hopes, their fears, their dreams?” Say, “Yeah, I can ask my friends some really thoughtful questions.” And then, “How many of you here can discern next steps? How many of you can pray to the God of the universe who saved you and ask Him to guide you through the power of the Holy Spirit in order to engage that person’s life with the gospel message of Jesus Christ?” Every single one of you could say, “Yeah, I can do that.”

So we really want to empower you to do the work of evangelism, which God has called all of us to participate in, and it’s a privilege. And so this is our strategy and we want to train you in this. And so we have some opportunities coming up over the next month and a half or so through the month of April. And so it’s a onetime, two-hour training that Gary and I are gonna be doing, and other people in the church. And we want you to go through this, we want you to be familiar with the basics of the Gospel. We want you to be familiar with this strategy so that you can engage in the Great Commission that Jesus has called you to.

**PASTOR:** And we’re all gonna go to a beach... Not so much.

**GARY:** No, not true, not true at all. But it sounds like a good idea. So no, what we want to say though is the studies have shown



also. That one of the top reasons why people don't do evangelism is they don't feel equipped, and we don't feel ready or we don't feel prepared. And so, this training is designed to prepare you, and equip you, and give you confidence to be able to share your faith or to build a relationship with people who are far from God. I mean, another study has shown that... You know, statistics say that, "The longer you're a Christ follower, the fewer non-Christian friends you have." And so we want to help you to be intentional with identifying at least one person who is far from God that you can build a genuine friendship with. Not to view them as a project, but to view them as a person who matters to God and matters to you. So we wanna invite you and encourage you to sign up for this training.

**BLAKE:** So and how you sign up for that...

**PASTOR:** Hang on a second. I'm gonna go a little step further, you're gonna invite them. I'm gonna give a pastoral directive, I don't do this very often. I'm not gonna invite you to do this, this is something you need to do. If you have never been trained on how to share your faith with the people that God has brought in your sphere of influence, please sign up for one of these opportunities. It's that important. It's not an invitation, it's a directive. Now, you can you can tell 'em how they can do it now.

**BLAKE:** So that's great, thank you. So how you sign up...

**GARY:** So now, you all have to, okay.

**BLAKE:** So on your worship card, the information is right there. It's the second paragraph on there. It says missionhills.org\3d1, that's how you sign up for the training. You can go there. You can view all the different dates and times that we have that available and choose the one that best fits your schedule. So you can sign up online, you can sign up through the mobile application if you have that. Or Gary and I will be available in the lobby. If you exit these doors and go to the left, we'll be at that little kiosk there signing people up on iPads.

**GARY:** So we have one other invitation or directive and that is, if you're here and your heart is beating fast for evangelism. You're like "Yes, this is important. I really wanna be a part of this." Or you have the gift of evangelism, Blake and I wanna meet you. So we want you to stop by that kiosk, and talk to us, and give us your name. Because we're looking for people who really wanna help us in training and coaching with apologetics in all these various areas of evangelism. So we can raise the evangelism temperature of our church.

**PASTOR:** Okay. But let's say that everybody does this. We get some training, we actually start being intentional about finding those opportunities to speak truth, speak the good news, demonstrate it, declare it. What happens when they come back with questions? And what happens if they ask a question that I don't have an answer to? Am I doing more harm than good?

**BLAKE:** Okay, I love this question, this is my favorite question. Are you doing more harm than good? I would say, no. That's the simple answer. In fact, I would argue that you actually have greater opportunity to introduce that person to Jesus. But the response I would say is just as important as the answers that you might give to them. And the reason I say that is because I can't tell you how many people I've talked to in my life who have left the church and they've said you know, "I went to my priest, or I went to my pastor, or I went to my Bible study leader, with a really...you know, one of those burning questions. And then they either rebuked me or they said, 'You know what? You gotta have faith, that's the key there.'" I mean how many of you have had an experience like that? I know that I have and it was it was crushing to me.

So instead of responding in a way like that or being nervous that they've asked you a question. Just simply say, "You know what? That's a great question and it honors a really thoughtful response, it honors a really thoughtful answer. Would you be okay with me spending some time looking into that and maybe asking some people I really respect and trust to get an answer?" And I guarantee that person will say, "Yeah, that sounds great."



In fact, I just talked to my best friend this last week and he met a guy who just came to faith in Christ because someone responded that way. When that Christian said, “You know, that’s a great question Is it okay if I look into that?” He said, “This person must know God. This person must know the truth.” So that response is key.

But then the church is here to equip you. Like we spend our time researching these things. We love it and we want to give you the resources necessary in order to give answers to these thoughtful questions that people have.

**GARY:** Yeah, it’s okay to be honest and say, “I do not know the answer to that question.” And just the fact is, just like Blake said, the fact of being honest, and open, and say, “I don’t have all the answers.” In fact, if you waited until you had all the answers to all the questions to share your faith, we would never share our faith. So it’s okay to be honest.

In fact, somebody came up to me right after one of the services and said, “I have a passion for apologetics,.” you know, which is the study of defending your faith. And he said, “I’d like to make myself available to come alongside people who are wrestling with these tough questions.” And so if you’re here and you say, “I love studying these kinds of things and I’d love to make myself available as a resource to the rest of the church, to help answer these tough questions,” we can do that.

**PASTOR:** Okay. So still, a lot of people don’t feel very confident about this so let’s boil it down. How do you get started?

**GARY:** I would say three simple steps for all of us to take. The first one is to just simply pray. Pray and ask God to grow your heart for people who are far from God. Ask God to give your eyes to see people through the eyes of Jesus, and to see people who are lost and distressed, or harassed and helpless because they’re like sheep without a shepherd. Look around you, and pray that God can open your eyes to see who in your world, in your sphere of influence, that you can reach out to.

Second step is to just simply be intentional and identify your one life. Identify one person, not as a project, but someone that you can become a genuine, authentic friend to and grow in that relationship. Hear about their story, ask them questions, listen, be a positive influence. And then the third step is simply come to our training and we’ll give you ideas, and tools, and resources to help you be effective in your sharing of your faith.

**PASTOR:** So in light of that identifying the one person, Blake, you wanna talk about an opportunity here?

**BLAKE:** Yeah. So I got the tips of my fingers very dry and cracked this week because I was pasting these little one-life stickers onto your worship cards. So if you take that out, you can write somebody’s name down who... You know, maybe you’ve thought of a name already, you’re thinking, “I wanna be praying for this person.” Put that person’s name down and we, as a staff, at this church will be praying specifically for those people. That they will come to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. And so that’s one of the first steps that you can take in identifying a person in your life who’s far from God. So you can tear that off and then drop it in those boxes at the back of the of the sanctuary. And then you can also drop them off with Gary and I when we’re out there in the lobby.

**PASTOR:** So two pastoral directives, it’s a big day. If you don’t have training, if you haven’t gone through some kind of training that allows you to be just equipped to be able to share the good news, to demonstrate it and to declare it, sign up for training. Second directive, take that card off right now. I’m serious, take it off right now. That’s what I wanted to hear.

We’re gonna pray in a moment and during that prayer, I want you to ask God to lay one person’s name on your heart. And you’re gonna put that person’s name down. You’re gonna drop this off. But you also might notice that on the back side of it, there’s an opportunity for you to commit to one very simple step, and that is, invite them to come to Easter. During this Easter series, especially on Easter weekend, they’re gonna get an opportunity to hear the Gospel.

We don’t think, as a church, it’s our job to do all the evangelism, but we absolutely wanna support you in your developing that



relationship and helping people move to that next step. And so put the name of that person down that you're gonna be praying for and that you're gonna maybe take a step of inviting them to come to church with you over the Easter break. And then when the whole thing is done, you're gonna drop them in the plates on the way out, or in the boxes in the back, or you're gonna go see Blake and Gary. You're gonna see someone at the visitor center or somebody with a Mission Hills shirt on, hand those off.

Let's pray for those people right now. Jesus, thank you, that we are recipients of good news. Would you make us proclaimers of it? Would you show us what it looks like to demonstrate that with our lives so that they know we really have good news? And would you give us the courage and the confidence to declare it as well? Not because people are projects because we're looking for numbers but because people are people? They're created as your image and you love them, so we need to love them as well.

Let's speak to each heart right now about that one person. Maybe it's more than one but at least one person, and give each of us the courage to write that name down. And in that way, take the first step to speaking good news into their lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

