

# PALM SUNDAY

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## The Real Jesus

John 12:12-19 // Craig Smith

March 25, 2018

**Craig //** Hey, welcome to Mission Hills on this Palm Sunday. If you have no idea what that means, that's cool. Don't worry about it, I'll explain it. About 2,000 years ago on the Sunday before what we call Easter, Jesus road into Jerusalem for the last time. When he did that, a huge crowd of people came out, and they greeted him with palm branches, hence, Palm Sunday.

Because of that, Christians have done weird things ever since. How many of you grew up in church, and you remember, you have memories of at some point as a small child being led on a small parade through the sanctuary, hitting each -- waving, palm branches? Anybody? Anybody? Palm Sunday.

What's a little more interesting about Palm Sunday to me is not like the whole palm thing. We'll actually talk about that in just a minute why they did that, but it's something that John says as he describes this event, so I would love for you to grab a bible and join me in John 12:12 so we can take a look at this together, and when you get there the first thing you are going to see John say is "the next day." The reason he says that is because what he's about to describe took place on the day after the events that we looked at last weekend.

Last weekend we saw the event John describes where Jesus had his feet washed by a woman who then wiped his feet with her hair as an incredibly sacrificial way of honoring him, and as Pastor Kip told us, what we get from that is that when we choose sacrifice and reject selfishness, powerful things begin to happen. Great message from Pastor Kip. If you didn't get a chance to listen to it, I really encourage you to go online, listen to it with the Mission Hills app or listen to it on any of your normal podcast platforms, but a really powerful truth that we need to embrace there, and what John says that happened, and then the very next day, this happened. It says the next day, the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem. The festival he's talking about is the Passover. If you don't know what Passover is, you probably know about a story called the Exodus. You don't have to spend a lot of time in church to know pieces of the story about the time in Israel's history where they had been slaves in Egypt, and God set them free.

If you know the stories of the Red Sea parting and those kinds of things, and almost everyone has heard bits and pieces of that. What the Passover Festival was, it was a week they celebrated when God set them free from Egypt with the parting of the Red Sea and all those other miracles. It was one of those popular festivals in Israel, which meant that in festival week, Jerusalem was packed. It was just filled to the brim and spilling out of the city with people that had come to celebrate this. When John says the great crowd heard that Jesus was coming to town, it's actually kind of an interesting thing, because we have to ask the question, how did the word about Jesus spread so quickly? How did they find out that Jesus was on the way? You have to keep in mind, nobody was tweeting, Jesus is coming. There was no Instagram feeds. There was no Facebook posts. There was no mass media of any kind, so the idea that the city is full to the brim with all of these people, all of these people heard that Jesus was coming, we have to ask the question, how did the word about Jesus spread so quickly? How did that happen? I would argue that what John wants to tell us here is really the answer to that question, how the word spread so quickly.

That's really his primary focus. But like any good storyteller, he doesn't immediately answer the question about how the word spread so quickly, instead he tell us what the crowd did when they heard that Jesus was coming. Verse 13 says they took palm branches and they went out to meet him, and they were shouting Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the King of Israel. They did what they always did when they greeted someone. It was really important. They greeted him with palm branches. Again, that's why we call it Palm Sunday. That was sort of the way of greeting a V.I.P., palm branches. I had someone ask me earlier, yeah, but why palm branches? I have no idea. It was their version of confetti. It is just the way they did it. I don't know why they used palm branches. I don't know why we use confetti when we have big parades to welcome somebody big to town, right? Because it's a weird thing by itself, right? Let's take a piece of paper, cut it up into really small irritating pieces and spread that everywhere, and that's how we say, we are so glad you are here. I don't know why we do it. I don't know why we use palm branches, but they did. It was their way of saying, Jesus is a V.I.P.

Beyond that, John says they went out to meet him. They had come out to meet him before they even got to the city. That was another indication of how important they thought Jesus was, because when a really important V.I.P., like a V.V.I.P., a very, very important person came to town, you didn't just meet them in the streets. You actually left the city and went out to meet them before they got out to the city. So what we are seeing the crowd basically say, Jesus, we get it. You are a really big deal. We also see that reflected in what they said when he came, right? They said three things. The first of them was Hosanna. Hosanna, it's two Hebrew words thrown together, and it means, basically, please save us. They are begging Jesus to save them. That's a big deal, right? Because they are saying, we think you can. We think you are able to save us. Jesus,

you are a really big deal. They also said blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. We believe you are the one God sent. We believe God Himself sent you to us. They are saying, we believe you are the Messiah, you are the Savior that we have been waiting for all of these years. We think you are him. You are a really big deal. The third thing they say is blessed is the King of Israel. What we need to understand is that was a really dangerous thing to say. It was a dangerous thing for this crowd to meet Jesus and proclaim him their king because they already had a king. His name was Tiberius Caesar. He was the Roman Emperor. For them to declare Jesus their king was basically to say, we want you to be our king, not that other guy. When they called out Hosanna, when they called out, please save us, what they were probably saying was, would you save us from that other guy? What John is telling us is that this huge crowd was making a dangerous declaration of their faith in Jesus. They were saying we think you can save us. We think you have been sent for God, and we think you are the king that we have been waiting for, but that was a dangerous declaration.

Rome did not have what we call a policy of tolerance when it came to rebellion in their territory. In fact Rome's typical policy was, okay, everybody dies. That was their more typical policy. In fact we have ancient historians that report that when Rome thought that rebellion was stirring, they would execute, they would literally crucify hundreds if not thousands of people in order to put that down. This is a very dangerous thing that the crowd has done. They have come out to meet Jesus as a V.V.I.P., and they said would you please save us? We think you are from God, and we want you to be our king over and against that other guy, which raises an interesting question. How did the crowd get this deep confidence in Jesus? How did they get to the place where they went, it's worth taking the risk to acknowledge you as our king? It's worth taking the risk to greet you in this way. It's worth risking the furry of the Roman Empire, because we think you are worthy of it. We think you are worth our faith. How did they get this deep confidence?

Again, I think John is writing this largely to tell us, both how the word spread so widely and how confidence had gone so deep, but again, like any good storyteller, he doesn't hit us with that quite yet. He has a few more things to tell us before we quite get there. What he tells us next is how Jesus responded to their faith, their deep faith. Verse 14 says that Jesus found a donkey, and he sat on it, as it is written, do not be afraid, Daughter of Zion, see your king is coming seated on a donkey's colt. So, Jesus saw the crowd come out. He heard their cries for saving them, for delivering them. He heard their statement that he was the one that they had been waiting for. He heard their faith that he was the king. He was like, get me a donkey. What's interesting to me is that John doesn't give a lot of details here. Some of the other Gospels go into detail about how he got the donkey.

John keeps it super stripped down. It's just, he sat on a donkey, a young donkey colt, he just did. But in that one statement there are two very important things that we are told. The first one is, we are seeing that Jesus accepted their faith. By sitting on the donkey, Jesus was accepting their faith. He wasn't rejecting it. He wasn't shying away from it. He was saying, okay. You are right. John tells us by quoting from Zachariah 9:9, do not be afraid Daughter of Zion. See, your king is coming seated on a donkey's colt. That's from an Old Testament prophesy, Zachariah 9:9 where God says when the king that I'm sending to you arrives, he will come in riding on a young donkey, on the colt of a donkey. And so what Jesus is saying is, you guys are right. I am the one who can save you. I am the king you have been waiting for. I am the one that God promised. He's accepting their faith, but Jesus also challenged their expectations. That's the second thing we see happen. Jesus challenged their expectations, because keep in mind, the kind of king they were looking for was a military king. The kind of savior they were looking for was a military savior, somebody to ride out to lead the rebellion against Rome, to fight the Roman oppressors out of the nation of Israel, right? And I don't know about you, but when I think about a fierce warrior, a young donkey is not exactly what I think of as an appropriate steed, right? Like that's a weird mental image, is it not?

*[Laughter]*

It was as weird for them as it is for us. It's not the appropriate mechanism of transport. I mean, it should be a war horse, or at the very least, it should be a camel. Camels are a little weird, but at least they are big. It's not just a donkey, it's a donkey colt. And we are supposed to feel a little bit of unsettledness at this image, because what Jesus is beginning to help them understand is, yes, I am the king that you have been waiting for, but I am not coming to save you in the way or from what you think you need saving from. What he's basically saying is that the thing that you think is your big problem is really not your biggest problem. See they thought that the biggest problem was Rome. They thought the biggest problem was that they had foreign oppressors in the land, and Jesus didn't come to get rid of that. Jesus came to save them from their sin. Jesus came to go to the cross to take the weight of their sin, of our sin, and so set them free from it, to set us free from it so that there is nothing that separates us from God. That's what Jesus came to deliver them from, but that's not what they were looking for.

I think we have to step away from the text for just a moment and acknowledge how often we make the crowd's same mistake, don't we? That we have some kind of a circumstance going on in our life, some kind of a difficulty that we are facing, and for us that thing becomes the thing, that's the big problem, right? That's the big obstacle in my life, and that's the thing that we are praying, we are desperately asking God to deliver us from, and sometimes he doesn't. Sometimes we find ourselves going, God, I thought you were good. If you are good, why wouldn't you deliver me from my biggest problem? And I think what we have to begin to understand is that sometimes what we think our biggest problem is, is not what God knows our biggest problem is, and so Jesus has to challenge our expectations too. We were talking about this on Tuesday at our service planning meeting, and Matt Willy, pastor of our Dove Valley Campus said, you know what that reminds me of, it reminds me of a prayer I heard from an Egyptian pastor once. What you need to understand is that in Egypt, the church is persecuted, meaning they are really not free to follow Jesus. To follow Jesus in Egypt often means that you could be killed. You could lose your job. You could lose your family connections. Churches

are regularly burned or raided. Christians are regularly killed in Egypt.

That's what we mean by "the persecuted church." My reaction to that thing is to want to pray that God would get rid of the persecution, right? Isn't that how you feel about it? I feel compelled that I need to pray for my brothers and sisters in Egypt. I need to pray that the persecution would end, and Matt shared this prayer from the pastor in Egypt. This is what the pastor said. He said if you pray for us, you will pray for the wrong things. You will pray that the church will be safe. You will pray that persecution will cease. We are not praying for these things. We ask God for the salvation of Egypt. We ask that he draw millions of Muslims to Christ. We ask that we will be bold and clear when sharing our faith with Muslims, and we pray that when the inevitable persecution comes, that we will not run away, that we'll be faithful in that persecution even if it costs us our lives. Will you tell your friends to pray these prayers with us? Wow. That's a humbling prayer, right? I don't think that's what I would pray. I would pray for the end of the persecution, but what this pastor understands is that persecution is not their biggest problem.

In fact, it provides one of their biggest opportunities, so his prayer is not for the end of prosecution, but his prayer is that God would make them courageous in the midst of it, that the persecution would lead to bravery, and that bravery would lead to the salvation of many. This is a pastor who doesn't need his expectations challenged, but you and I often find ourselves in a very different place. We look at our biggest obstacle and we say, that's it. That's what God has to deliver me from, and sometimes God says, no, because sometimes that's not our biggest problem. In fact, some of the biggest things God is going to do in our lives are going to come because of that defect thing we face. We looked at that a few weeks ago. We said sometimes God is so good that he won't allow us to shortcut through those hard things and to miss out on the good things that he's doing because of them.

Here's what I'm beginning to learn, and I'm not going to claim that I have nailed this one down. This is not my default setting, but this is where God is leading me. If God isn't answering your prayer for deliverance to realize that maybe, maybe I'm asking to be delivered from the wrong thing. Maybe that's you today. I have been praying for God to get rid of this thing in my life, to deliver me from this difficulty, and he has not done it. Maybe the problem is not God's goodness, or his faithfulness, but maybe the problem is your expectation. If God hasn't delivered you from it, then I encourage you, I challenge you to try to step back and say, is it possible that the reason God hasn't delivered me from this thing is because that thing is not my biggest problem, and I'm praying to be delivered from the wrong thing.

Jesus accepted their faith. At the same time, he challenged their expectations of what he was going to do with that faith, and I think we need to recognize that we can fall into that same category really easily. Then he says this, at first his disciples did not understand all of this. It was only after Jesus was glorified that they realized that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him. I love that John said that. It makes me feel a little better about myself. I mean you understand what he's saying, right? He's saying in the midst of Jesus doing these things, fulfilling Zachariah 9:9, the disciples, they didn't get it. They didn't understand that was what was happening. What John is saying is that the disciples didn't get when they were in it, right? They didn't get it when they were in it. I'm glad he said that because I have that exact same experience all the time.

I don't understand what God is doing when I'm in the middle of it. It's hindsight, right? It's when I'm on the other side of it that I look back and say, okay, I see what you did there. Yeah, that was worth it. I wish I could see that in the middle of it, but I don't always. I love the fact that the people that were closest to Jesus, they were walking literally in the flesh, step by step behind him, they didn't always get it. They didn't understand. What he's saying is, like when Jesus fulfilled Zachariah 9:9, when he sat down on this colt and went into the city fulfilling this prophesy, the disciples weren't behind him saying, Zachariah 9:9. For this is how the prophet hath foretold it. This is awesome. They weren't doing that. They were probably wandering around behind him going, what is he doing? This is a little embarrassing. Because here's the thing, I don't know how tall Jesus was. We are not told, but I know how big donkey colts are. They are not big animals, which means Jesus feet are probably dragging on the ground, right? That's your best-case scenario. The other option to keep that from happening, he's riding side saddle with his knees pulled up, and that's awkward.

So, I think what's probably happening is the disciples are behind him going, should we tell him he looks ridiculous? I don't want to do that, but he kind of does. They didn't get it when they were in it. We have that same issue, right? Here's the thing you have to understand is that God is always in our circumstances. If we have given our lives to Jesus, if we have put our faith in Jesus, God's always with us. He's never ever looking at our circumstances going, I don't know. He's always bringing good. He's always putting pieces of a puzzle together, and we don't always see that, but we will. There will come that moment that we look back and we say, okay, I get it. I see what you did there. And here's what I'm beginning to understand, and again, I'm not all the way there, but I'm beginning to learn this. It's that understanding comes faster when I live in anticipation of understanding. Understanding comes faster when I live in anticipation of it. That when I'm in the midst of the circumstance and I go God, what's going on here? Why are you letting this happen? What are you doing here, when I begin to go, I don't get it, but I will.

I'm definitely going to get to see it. I'm anxious for that moment. I'm anticipating that moment for when I get it. That when I live with that anticipation of understanding, it tends to come faster. It's like -- and I hope you had this experience as a kid, when you were waiting for somebody to come to your house. Maybe it was dad coming home or mom coming home, or maybe it was an aunt or uncle or grandparent coming to visit or somebody, but you were so excited that they were coming that you were listening, and you were at the window constantly watching, and the interesting thing is, that when you are living like that, you don't miss it. They don't sneak up on you, right? Those tires sound like they are slowing down. Are they turning? Is that them? You are anticipating, and so you don't miss any of it. They don't show up ringing the doorbell, and you're like, whoa, I had no idea. No, because you are living in anticipation, you are there the very moment they arrive.

And what I'm discovering is the same thing is true about understanding what God is doing in our circumstances. When I live with this idea that says, God, I don't get this, but I know I'm going to, and I can't wait for that moment. Is it this? Is it this? What are you doing? That the understanding comes faster. If you don't get it when you are in it, take comfort in the fact that you will, and when you do get it, you will look back and be like, yeah. I wouldn't have traded that for anything. I'm so glad we did that together. It may not feel like that in the midst of it, but looking back, you will have a very different vision of it. Now John tells us what I think is the very most important part of the story because here is where John answers the questions. The questions, how did this huge crowd know that Jesus was coming, and how did this huge crowd have such a deep confidence in who Jesus was? He says this, now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb, and raised him from the dead, continued to spread the word or literally, had been continuing to spread the word. Many people because they heard that he had performed this sign, they went out to meet him.

Did you see what John did there? It was a little bit of a mic drop moment. He really could have said that at the beginning of the story. What he's saying is that basically, people have been talking. That when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, people didn't watch that and go, well, that's interesting. I'll file that one away. No, they went back to Jerusalem and went, you are not going to believe what happened. You have to hear about this. They had been spreading the word, and John has been sort of raising curiosity as he tells the story. Like, how did this huge crowd, Jerusalem is filled to the brim. How is it possible that they had all heard? That's because people had been talking. How is it possible that this crowd of people was willing to declare confidence in Jesus as their King and their Savior in spite of the fact that was going to raise Roman attention, and potentially, Roman fury. Why did they have that deep confidence? Because people had been talking about what they had seen Jesus do.

How did the crowd get so big? How did their confidence go so deep? It's because people had been talking. I want to get a little technical, so you would bear with me for a second. They weren't just talking. They were testifying. There are some churches in this country where when pastors are speaking the truth, and it's really beginning to -- people are like, that's true, that's true! People say something like, testify! We are not that kind of church. That's okay. That's okay. I like preaching in those kind of churches, but when they say, testify, they are saying, tell it. Bring it. John is saying that this group of people, they were not just talking, they were testifying. The literally the word he uses means testify. It's kind of a technical word. The N.I.V. that I'm reading translates it as that they were spreading the word, and that's a perfectly fine translation, but the term is a little more technical than that. It's a term that was usually used in a court of law for testimony.

They would invite somebody to testify, to speak formal declarations of truth. It's the kind of language that you would use. You wouldn't use it to say, hey, did you hear what happened? That's not testifying. It's when somebody goes stop, stop, stop. Slow down. I have to tell you this. It's so important that you understand what I saw happen. That's testifying, right? There is a weight to it. There is a gravity to it. That's the word that he uses. It's a very important word for John. John actually uses the word so much that scholars write articles about the importance of testimony in the Gospel of John. John uses the root word here. He uses it more than twice as often as all of the other books of the Bible combined. He fills his writings with the importance of power testimony and of testifying. In one of his letters to the church John 1:2 he says this. The life appeared -- that's Jesus. Life appeared. We have seen it and we -- we what? We testify. We don't just talk a little bit about it. We testify. We declare the truth. We proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and has appeared to us.

John uses this word over and over again. Here, he does something more than just using that powerful word. He gives an emphasis to it. In the original Greek, the word testify is actually the first word in the verse. It doesn't come across in English because there is no way to do that. In our grammar, the word order makes a big difference. In Greek, the word order doesn't make any difference. You can put the words in whatever order you want, so when you put something at the beginning of the sentence, you are usually doing it to say this is the important thing. This is the keyword. This is where we need to camp out. He uses the word testify at the very beginning. Literally he says something like testifying had been the crowd who had seen what Jesus did in calling Lazarus out of the tomb. What John is doing, he's camping out on the power of their testimony, the power of that crowd's testimony to change minds and capture hearts. Why was the crowd so big that went to meet Jesus? Why was their confidence in Jesus so deep? Because their testimony had changed minds and had captured hearts. That's the power of testimony. How powerful was it?

Verse 19, the Pharisees said to one another, the religious leaders who had been such opposition to Jesus, who had been so worried about Jesus. They said to one another, see, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him, which is a little bit of an exaggeration, but the point is, they saw Jerusalem empty out. They saw so many people go to declare him as king, they went the whole world is following after this guy. Why? Because of the power of the testimony of those who were testifying about what they had seen Jesus do.

What John is trying to help us understand, that is not something that just took place then. That is something that continues to reverberate through history. He's saying that our personal testimony is incredibly powerful. Our personal testimony is incredibly powerful. It changes minds. It captures hearts. It transforms lives. Your personal testimony. Your personal testimony of what you have seen God do has the power to change everything. As I study this, this week, I came to a point where I went, okay, God, I get it. I understand what you inspired John to point us to. You are helping us understand that personal testimony is incredibly powerful. Testifying to the truth of what we have seen God do, that's incredibly powerful, but -- it's not always a good idea to tell God, but, but sometimes it happens. I said God, I get it. That's what you are saying. It's a Biblical truth. Personal testimony is incredibly powerful. But I said, the problem is that our culture has changed. In our culture, I don't know that, that's necessarily the way it plays out anymore. I don't know think personal testimony has that same kind of power anymore. We are a less trusting,

we are a cynical culture, and so I was wrestling.

I said I have a Biblical truth, but I have a cultural reality. I started praying. I said God, would you show me how to bridge the gap between those two, and God said, no. Because there is no gap. I went, I kind of think there is. What the Holy Spirit reminded me of was, the reality that personal testimony is one of the most powerful forces that we deal with, and we deal with it day in and day out. Here's what he showed me. How many of you have ever gone to a restaurant expecting it to be good because somebody told you it was good? Power of personal testimony. It happened to me a couple of weeks ago. One of our staff here, Wren, she's been telling me about Torchy's Tacos since I got here a year and a half ago, and I was a little skeptical, but she kept telling me how good it was, and I like me some good tacos, so I went to Torchy's Tacos, and she was right. It was fantastic. It was awesome, but I went entirely because of her testimony.

How many of you have ever gone on a diet because somebody you knew told you it worked? Come on. Come on. Yeah, yeah. Power of personal testimony. How many of you have ever bought something on Amazon because of the reviews? Gone to see or decided not to go see a movie because of the rotten tomato's score. Chosen to book a hotel or not book a hotel based on the yelp reviews. You understand what all of that is, right? It's personal testimony. The reality is that we experience the power of personal testimony every single day. The Holy Spirit said, I'm not going to show you how to bridge the gap, because there is not a gap. The reality is, this is every bit as true today as it was back then. Personal testimony is powerful, and the thing is we forget that when it comes to spiritual truth. We understand it when it's hotels and tacos and diets, but we forget it when it comes to spiritual truth.

We begin to think, yeah, yeah, yeah, but if I don't go to an evangelism class, then I'm not in a position to share the Gospel with somebody. If I don't have a nice packaged Gospel presentation, then I'm not in a position to share the good news of Jesus. If I haven't memorized a bunch of evidences and proofs of the Christian faith, I'm not in a position to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Listen all of that stuff is fine, but let me ask you a question, how many of you have ever been afraid to share the Gospel with somebody because you get like you didn't know enough? Can we be honest with each other? How many? A lot of hands. Evangelism classes are great. We do them here on a regular basis. Gospel presentations, fantastic. You hear them here on a regular basis. That thing I do with my fingers you may have seen me do on numerous occasions. I say there are five things in coming to a relationship with Jesus Christ.

We have to say I have done wrong. I'm sorry. Jesus, I believe you died on the cross for me. I believe you rose from the dead. I accept your gift. Those five things when we bring them together, we grab a hold of the promise of salvation. You could do it right now. That's how simple it is. If you don't have a relationship with Jesus Christ, and you want one, right now you just say to him, I have done wrong. I have sinned. I'm sorry. Jesus, thank you for dying for me on the cross. Thank you for rising from the dead. I accept your gift. Right now. If you prayed that right now, there are cards on the seats in front of you. Grab one of them. There is a box to let us know that. Drop by the welcome center. They have a gift for you and next step materials. That's awesome. That's powerful, right? That's a powerful presentation. That's great. I love those. There are lots of different ways to do that. Those are great. Evidences and proves of the Christian faith, awesome stuff. You know what blows that out of the water? Your unpolished and honest story of what God has done in your life.

Listen to me, your unpolished and honest story of what God has done in your life is your greatest tool of sharing the Gospel. How many of you feel like, if I had to share the Gospel with somebody right now, this very moment, I would be hesitant to do it? Can we be honest with each other? Yeah. And how many of you it would be because I'm not sure I would know what to say? Absolutely. How many of you feel like you could tell somebody what God has done in your life pretty easily? A lot more hands, right? Listen, the good news is, that's where so much of the power in our sharing comes from. That's what moved the crowds out of Jerusalem and gave them a confidence in Jesus that honestly, doesn't even make any sense, but it was based on the testimony of those that had seen what God did and they testified.

Your unpolished and honest story about what God has done in your life is your greatest tool for sharing the Gospel, and yet studies indicate that between 50 and 75% of born again Christians that have relationship with Jesus, that have taken hold of that salvation, between 50 and 75% of us do not share the good news of Jesus on a regular basis. Why? That's because we have forgotten the power of our testimony. I was trying to figure out how to make this sing, how to make it dance, how to make it connect in a way that no one forgets it, and I realized that homeland security has already done it. Because we have already got it. Here's what you need to walk away from here today realizing, if you see something, say something. I know that was written for a really, really different purpose --

*[Laughter]*

We are just going to rip that off and make it Jesus', and that's what I want you to walk out of here remembering. If I see something, I need to -- say something. If we see something we need to -- say something. If we see God moving in our life, if we see God doing something transforming us from the inside out, we need to be quick to say something about it, and let God do incredible things with that. And do you know what he does with that? Do you know what happens when God does something in our lives and we don't keep it to ourselves, but we say something about it, four things that happen. First thing is that it gives God glory. You are giving God glory for what he has done in your life. That is your worst-case scenario. You share it with somebody and they are like, yeah, that doesn't really affect me. They don't buy into it. They don't believe. Nothing else happens. Nothing else happens, the only thing that happens is you gave God glory for what he did in your life. Is that worth doing? Yes, it is.

That's a pretty doggone good worst case scenario in my mind. That happens every time. That's your worst-case scenario. Second thing that



happens, it stirs people to come and see for themselves. They begin to go, if God has done that, if Jesus has done that, if being part of Mission Hills or some other Bible-driven church has done that in their lives, if that's how God has used it, I kind of want to feel that for myself. It stirs up this desire for them to come and see for themselves. I want to be really careful. I'm nervous about connecting the Gospel and tacos too closely, but the reality is, when somebody tells you they have great tacos, what do you want to do? You want to go get a great taco, right? This is what testimony does. It stirs the anticipation to see for themselves. If that's true for tacos, how much more should it be of the incredible, life-altering eternity transforming work that we have seen God do in our lives when we share it? Yeah?

Third thing that happens, it creates an openness to the truth of the Gospel. Arguments and proofs and evidences, that's all great. Sometimes we have a need for those, but honestly, the average person, they need to hear that the Gospel is true because it's impacted your life. And when you can speak to what God has been doing in your life they say, maybe this is true, and they are open to that. The fourth thing happens is that it changes minds, it captures hearts, and it transforms lives. Our testimony, our unpolished and honest story of what God has done in our lives it changes minds, it captures hearts, and it transforms lives. That's what we are all about at Mission Hills. We exist for the purpose of transforming lives period. So how do I do it? Three easy steps. Get ready. Get set. Go. Okay? Get ready. Ask yourself this. What are three big things that I can testify that God has done in my life? We need to have them in mind. I encourage you to sit down this afternoon or sometime this week, sit down and write down three big things that you can testify that God has done in your life recently. You might find that three is way too small. You might find 30, and that's great. But get the ball rolling. What are some things that God has done in my life. Get ready.

Second thing to do is get set. That means pray and expect that God will give you chances to testify. Pray that God will give you an opportunity to testify. I added it to my list this week. I have a daily prayer list. I added a new thing on there, and that is every day I now pray, God would you give me a chance today to talk about what you have been doing in my life. I pray for God to open up those opportunities, and then I expect that He's going to because He answers those prayers, and I'm ready. I see it. It's there. It's there. Now's my chance.

Third step, what do you do? Go. Testify. When those opportunities come up, speak your unpolished, honest story of what God is doing in your life. See what God does with it. You might be going, okay, that might get a little awkward. Actually, you know what? That's right. It's going to be awkward. It is -- at first. You know the best way to deal with awkwardness? Be awkward. You get past it. You get through it. Let me help you do it. Let's get awkward for a second. We don't usually do this. If you are new here today, I don't know that I have ever done this before, and now everybody is getting nervous. In just a moment, I'm going to ask you to do something. I'm going to ask you to find somebody, maybe somebody you came with, maybe just someone sitting around you, and I would like you to share one thing you have seen God do in your life recently. Awkward? You are afraid to say it now. Even the question is awkward at this point.

30 seconds. We have some Chatty Cathies. Don't do that. 30 seconds, this is what God's been doing in my life. Then they get their 30 seconds. We are just going to go, that's the awkwardness because here's the thing, if we can't do it in here, we are never going to do it out there, but out there is where we are called to live. Out there is where we really put our faith in Jesus into practice. Out there is where we follow Jesus on mission. If we can't share what Jesus is doing in our lives in here, then there's no way we are going to be able to do it out there, so we are going to practice doing it in here. Now, I would just say this, if it's super, super, way over the top too awkward for you, here's what you want to do. Go ahead and get your phone out and get an important text that you really have to deal with at this moment. That's okay. We will understand. For everybody else, you are going to share one thing that God has done in your life. You are going to say this is what God has been doing in my life lately. 30 seconds, you are going to give them a chance to do it. Ready? Get set. Go.