



Spirit Life (Part 6) – Fulfilling the Mission

Pastor Jonathan Drake – July 16, 2017

Good morning. Good morning to those that are watching online, those that are at our Lockport campus, here at the CrossPoint Campus. We're glad you're here today. Turn to the person next to you and say, I prayed all week that I would sit next to you in church on Sunday. And then turn to the person that for some reason you chose second, say sorry about that.

Hey so, we're wrapping up our series that we've been in for a few Sundays called Spirit Life. What the role and the ministry and the nature of the Holy Spirit is in our lives as followers of Christ. And so as we wrap that up today we're going to be answering the question, how does God fulfill his mission? And what part do we have in that? And so what I want to do is show you that God has always been on a mission. He's always been on a mission to restore what was lost in the garden. Where Adam and Eve rebelled against God and did their own thing, severing the relationship that existed. God has been actively pursuing humanity. And that this is something that runs throughout the pages of Scripture.

And I want to show you that - that there's a principle that's at work that really isn't explicitly stated in chapter and verse like maybe we're used to, but that is something that I think is evident if we pay attention. And that principle that I want you to take note of is this - the invisible God is made known through visible people. The invisible God is made known through visible people.

Now what I want to do today is show you this in four different acts. So maybe if you remember high school English or if you'd care to forget, that's fine, but if you remember high school English class, and you were studying Shakespeare and and you had maybe the Merchant of Venice or Romeo and Juliet. And maybe you saw that how Shakespeare would build a five act play, right? And so what I wanted to do is show you this four act play as it were. I want to show you how God accomplishes this principle in four different acts throughout the Scripture. I want to show you what he does, why he does it and what relevance that has for our lives today. Draw some application. And I want to show you this principle, that God has always been on a mission, And one of the ways that the invisible God has made known is through visible people.

So let me give you this. Here's Act 1. Israel. Act 1 is Israel. So if you're familiar with the Scripture, you understand a little bit of this story, but maybe I'll catch everybody up just so that we're all on the same page. What God does is he encounters this man named Abram who we would later discover. his name has changed to Abraham. But when God intersects into Abraham's life that's how he's known Abram. And he tells Abram that he's going to give him a specific purpose. That it's going to be through this one

group of people that he is going to make himself known. God is going to make himself known in the world.

And so God tells Abram this prophetic promise in Genesis chapter 12, beginning in verse 2. God says, I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse, and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. So God says, I'm going to bless the world through you. That it's going to be through this one group of people. Through you and your offspring, Abraham, that I'm going to bless the world. It's going to be through one delegate. That God is going to choose Israel ultimately, that's Abraham's descendants, to be the beacon of hope to the surrounding world. That it's going to be through Israel, through them, that the world is going to be blessed.

And so, in order for that to happen, in order for all of the world to be blessed, God's going to create a huge nation out of Abraham out of Israel to be able to reach the world. But that new huge nation isn't for the purposes of just self aggrandizement or self fulfillment for Israel or Abraham, but rather because God has his eye on reaching the globe with this truth. That he is the restorer of what was lost in the garden. That he is the one true God. That there aren't many gods or thousands of gods. There's one God, and he is the one who restores the relationship between humanity, giving them their God-given purpose and destiny.

And so what God does is he chooses Abraham to be this beacon. He chooses Israel to be that beacon. And what God does is he covenants with

Israel. He makes a covenant with them. And he covenants with Israel that his presence is going to reside in their midst in a specific and unique way, so that they can be that beacon of hope. Because they themselves can't do it. They don't have anything that they can bring to the table. But God's presence within them can accomplish that purpose.

So God covenants with Israel and says, I'm going to, my presence is going to be with you. And ultimately they construct a temple. Solomon, a Jewish king, he's the first person to build a brick and mortar temple in Jerusalem where God's presence resides. There it is in the center of Jerusalem, which is the capital as it were of Israel. And here's God's presence in this specific location for this specific purpose.

Now when they complete the project of the temple, when they finish building the temple, they bring the Ark of the Covenant, signifying God's presence in that place. And they bring the Ark of the Covenant into the temple and then 2nd Chronicles five records for us what takes place. Take a look at this. The priests then brought the Ark of the Lord's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and they put it beneath the wings of the cherubim. The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the Lord and saying: He is good; his love endures forever. Then the temple of the Lord was filled with the cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for glory of the Lord filled the temple of God.

Why do I share this with you? Because God established for Israel, my presence is going to dwell here, so that through you, I'm going to be able to bless the world. That through you, this message of hope is going to be transmitted and disseminated. That through you and through my presence here among you, you're going to be the light that this world desperately needs.

In fact, God said as much several centuries after the temple was completed in the bBook of Isaiah in chapter 49. Take a look at what God says. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. I will make you a light for the Gentiles, so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. In other words, God's proximity to Israel was not just for their own fulfillment and enjoyment. It was for them to be that beacon of hope to the surrounding world. It was for them to be able to share that with the world.

But in an age before social media, in an age before a web presence, in an age before live streaming sermons, let alone an age before a printing press or publishing company, how does a message like that there is one true God who is the restorer of humanity, how does a message like that get disseminated? Slowly. Very slowly.

And so what maybe happened? How did that happen? Well perhaps there was a traveling businessman who was navigating his way through Israel. And seeking shelter for the night he ends up in the home of an Israelite. And perhaps he's there during one of the festivals that we studied in the Feast on Jesus series a few weeks ago. Perhaps he's even there during the

Passover. And so as a guest, as an outsider, he's brought into the table as a spectator. And maybe he hears about God's deliverance of his people. This one true God who delivers his people out of slavery. And he comes from a village of like dozens and dozens of gods. And he's maybe gripped by this message of a one true God. And so he's there. And he embraces this message. He converts. Now they don't call him Jewish, because he's not, but they call him a God fearer.

So he becomes a God-fearing man. But what does that mean? What does that mean for him? Well, it means a few things. The first is that he's about to undergo some surgery. Because the sign of the Covenant was circumcision. You thought your conversion was difficult. All you had to do was go to the Fireside Room. I mean this guy has I mean, come on. Right? So okay. So he takes the sign of the covenant and he goes back to his hometown. He tells his family. He tells his neighbors. He tells everybody he knows about this one true God. And maybe maybe a few more embrace that message.

But would we say that salvation had reached the ends of the earth in that time? No we wouldn't. There certainly were pockets of God-fearers around the world. And there were certainly pockets of transplanted Jewish people throughout the world. But would we say that Isaiah 49 verse 6 had been fulfilled? We wouldn't. You see, in addition to everything that went on in being a devout Jewish person, if you wanted to be near God, if you wanted to encounter God, if you wanted to find forgiveness, you had to come to a temple.

It would look like this. Everybody would travel the various distances to the temple. Because if you wanted to encounter God, where did his presence reside? Alright Lockport are you with me? Anybody? Alright. I'm hoping. Where did his presence reside? The temple. Thank you. Awesome. A plus. So everybody who had to come here. If you wanted to encounter God, that couldn't just happen anywhere. You had to come here. And you had to come to Israel, specifically Jerusalem, and even more specifically the temple, where you would make animal sacrifices for forgiveness of your sin. To encounter God, to be near him.

And so, that's what the old covenant looked like. Everybody coming to this geography. But you know, Israel was unable to fulfill their destiny as a light to the Gentiles. Like so many of us are prone to do, they turned inward instead of turned outward. Became a light to themselves instead of a light to the world. And not just that, but they were wrecked by their own sin, their own rebellion, their own need of a savior, their own need of that light, in as much as the world needed it. And they had their fair share of spiritual compromise and other forms of compromise to go with that.

So as we turn the page as it were from Act 1, we come to Act 2, which is Jesus. Act 2 is Jesus. You see, the invisible God is made known through visible people. Now, ironically or maybe sadly would be a better word, the very people who were called to be that visible witness, they've missed God and they're calling in the process. But God is merciful. And so what God does is he doesn't scrap the plan, he steps into the plan.

You see, what God did is he came himself in the person of his son, and John the Apostle records for us why that was so significant. Look at John chapter 1 verse 18. It says this. No one has ever seen God. Why? He's the invisible God. But the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. The invisible God is being made known through a visible person, his Son, Jesus.

So in Act 2, we see Jesus picking up the mantel, the destiny of Israel, as the faithful Israelite. And what ends up happening in this tiny country miniscule hickville town known as Bethlehem, where maybe there were a couple of hundred residents maybe, like one blinking stoplight. That's it. Here's Jesus born. This baby is born to a couple of nobodies. But it turns out that he was somebody who could save anybody. How's that? He's born to Joseph and Mary. They're low on the totem pole. They're nobodies. But he's more than just the son of a couple nobodies. He's the Son of God. God in the flesh. Nobody can see God. He's the invisible God. But the invisible God, he's going to be made known, and he's going to be made known through visible people. And in this case specifically, a visible person, his Son.

So Joseph and Mary take this boy child Jesus in arms to the temple, like every Jewish family would. And they have this incredible encounter in the temple, which i think is so significant. Look at what Luke 2 records for us, which we sometimes miss in the Christmas narrative, but watch what happens here. Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that

he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. So moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents, Joseph and Mary, brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God saying, Sovereign Lord as you have promised, you may now dismiss me your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations. Listen to this. A light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.

Now if you're paying attention, where have we heard that before? Isaiah 49. I will make you a light to the Gentiles, so that my salvation may be known in all the earth. And now Simeon, by the Holy Spirit, speaks a prophetic word over Jesus by which he says, he is the light to the Gentiles. He is the light to make God known. He is the light who's going to extend make known, distribute, disseminate God's salvation to the uttermost parts of the world. He is that light.

So fast-forward 30 years or so. Jesus is standing in those same temple courts that his parents held him in, but now he's an adult. He's a well-known rabbi in his day. And he's standing in one particular scene in the temple court, specifically the area of the treasury. And he's standing there during the Feast of Tabernacles, which we talked about in our Feast on Jesus series. And in the area of the treasury, there's four 75-foot light towers that would be lit, like a menorah. Seventy five feet tall. Huge. Four of them. And Jesus is standing in the area of the treasury where those light towers are when he says these words in John 8 verse 12. When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows

me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." I am the light of the world.

Okay. So get this. Jesus is standing in this area of the treasury in the temple courts in Jerusalem. Now you need some background information if you don't know this already. Jerusalem is an elevated city. So it was built on a hill. And so that's why when you're reading the Gospels, if you read that and they went up to Jerusalem, even if they're coming from north to south, it's because of the change in elevation. So it's an elevated city. And so you've got in the temple courts. I mean picture this as a, you're a sojourner, you're a God-fearer or you're a transplanted Jew to another part of the world, and you're coming to Jerusalem, you're coming to Jerusalem for a feast, like you were supposed to do. Because if you wanted to encounter God, you had to come to the temple. And so as you're coming maybe hundreds of miles on foot mostly, and you see in the distance a city on a hill. And there's no light pollution like we have today. There's no car headlights or street lights or anything like that. It's a city up on a hill and you've got 75 foot light towers around the temple. And you see those lights. What are you thinking? We're almost there. Your heart is full of hope when you see the lights of the temple, because you recognize we're almost there. We're so close to encountering God's presence in this way. We're so close to being near him.

And Jesus in that same area where the 75 foot light towers are says, I am the light of the world. I'm the light of the world. Not just of Jerusalem, not just of the Jews, although that's for them too, but I'm the light of the world.

I'm not a light that's visible for a few miles. I'm the light of the world. He says, this is who I am.

So as the pages turn, as we move to the next act, we come to Act 3, which is the early church, or the early believers. And what we discover is that the disciples who followed Jesus around, they were anticipating a restored earthly kingdom to Israel. And they you can tell that by the questions that they ask Jesus all the time. They're anticipating a restored earthly kingdom to Israel, to get rid of the Roman oppression, so that there's some sort of military aspect in their minds to what Jesus is going to do. And so they keep asking him, are you going to restore the kingdom?

And now they encounter, they realize, they recognize to a degree that there are around someone pretty unique. I mean the disciples are pretty slow to understanding. We see that over and over again. I mean they they're you know we say oh God bless them. You know it's like, oh bless their hearts. You know they're just so slow to understanding right? They miss all the cues all the time. But they understood enough to know we're with someone unique. He's the light of the world. And so if we restore this kingdom, then we'll make Jesus king, and he's the light of the world. And so that we'll be able to be seen from all the surrounding nations. And so they have an idea in their minds of what this is going to look like.

But Jesus has a different idea in his mind of what this is going to look like. Because Jesus as he is approaching the cross drops this bomb on the disciples in John 16 verse 7. Jesus said, but very truly I tell you, it's for your

good that I'm going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate that's the Holy Spirit will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

So picture the disciples for a minute. You're leaving? You just got here. We just started to get some traction. The message is just starting to get out there. We're really hopeful of what that was going to look like for the kingdom in our minds. And if it wasn't just that, but in that same conversation, Jesus had already told them in John 14 verse 12, Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and if that's not enough, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

Now, you're the disciples. You're saying, Jesus have you seen us? You're leaving. You're saying, we're going to do greater things than you. Have you seen us? Have you heard Peter opening his mouth? Do you, I mean you know, like, you see them. They get into disagreements all the time. They they get confused when Jesus tells them parables. Jesus, you're leaving this in our hands? You've told us like three times you're going to go to the cross. We're still not getting it. And you want to leave this in our hands? And you're saying that we'll be able to do even greater things than you? Have you seen us? Are you sure? You must be kidding.

But he's not kidding. Because what Jesus does is he says, I'm leaving. I'm no longer going to be visible. But everything I've been doing is now yours to complete. I've been here on this earth for 33 plus years. Really actively in ministry for less than four. And I've been just between Jerusalem and Galilee for the most part. You're going to go. You're going to be on this

earth for decades ministering and representing the Gospel in every corner of the world. You're going to be doing even greater things.

And not just that, but he says, he says this in John chapter 20 verse 21. "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." You are being commissioned in the same way that God the Father said to the Son, go. In the same way that the Father empowered the Son to go, Jesus says, I'm empowering you. You. Yes, you, to go. And he says that I'm sending you to complete this, to do what I've been doing.

And not just that but, Jesus also says in another place that the Spirit is going to remind them of everything that I've said. The Spirit is going to remind you of everything I've said. And so when I read the Bible, I'm asking questions like I wonder how long it took, I wonder how long it took for the Spirit to remind the disciples of what Jesus had said a few years prior, which is recorded for us in Matthew five. When Jesus told the disciples, "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Jesus was letting them know what their destiny was. And he told them in advance. He told them three years in advance pretty much, your destiny is that you are going to radiate with the light of the Gospel. You're going to radiate with my light. You see, I'm the light of the world. But because I'm leaving, and I'm sending you my very Spirit to dwell within you, now you

are going to be the light of the world. I'm no longer visible, but you still will be. And you will be the light of the world.

So when you understand that, it helps shed some light. Pardon the pun. It helps us understand what Jesus said and meant in Acts 1:8, when he said this. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." What was Jesus saying? You are going to carry the light of the gospel to the ends of the earth. And they did. They did it.

The word that's in Acts 1:8 for power is a Greek word *dunamis*, which is where we get our English word dynamite. And that's exactly what happened. There was an explosive eruption that that started in Jerusalem, but emanated out into Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. And as we chart the progress of the early faithful disciples, which really started with a group of about a hundred and twenty in one upper room, that they start to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth. That's exactly what Jesus said they would do. And it sounds an awful lot like Isaiah 49 verse 6. That I will make you a light to the Gentiles. That my salvation would be known on the earth.

In fact, Paul, one of the early followers of Jesus, once he was gripped by this gospel, he started preaching. And one of the first sermons that we have recorded of his is in Acts chapter 13 where Paul said this. For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth." When the Gentiles heard this, they were so glad and they honored the word of the Lord; and all who

were appointed for eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord spread through that whole region.

What was Paul saying? Look Isaiah 49:6. He quotes it. That's become and is becoming a reality in the Spirit-filled followers of Jesus. That the invisible God is being made known through visible people.

But what about the last one? Act IV. You. You see, that statement still stands. The invisible God is being made known through visible people. And if you belong to Jesus, if you are in him by faith, I need you to understand something. You don't wear the title Christian the same way you wear the title Western New Yorker. You don't wear the title Christian the same way you wear the title Democrat or Republican. Because this is about an identity, not an affiliation. This is a life change, not just an association.

And so what we have to understand is that whether you recognize what you were signing up for or not, you - you are the visible representation of the invisible God on the earth. If you belong to Jesus, his Spirit dwells within you. He lives here. Here. And you are that visible representation. How is that possible? Jonathan, have you seen us? Yes. Because I am us. How that possible?

I'll tell you. Paul tells us actually in 1st Corinthians 3. "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?" Or some translations say God's Spirit lives in you. Don't you know that you are God's temple? Like it's obvious. But it's not.

You see, Paul is writing to Corinth. And that's predominantly a non-Jewish group of people, but there's some Jewish believers there. And so for them to hear you, all of you, are God's temple. That's a hard thing to grasp. For the Jewish person, that's a hard thing to grasp because the temple is sacred in your mind, and Gentiles are not. For the Gentile, that's hard for you to grasp, because you maybe know about the sign that's on the temple in Jerusalem that says, if you're a Gentile, you can't come any closer or we're going to kill you. You can come only this close if you're not Jewish at the temple in Jerusalem.

So Jewish people would say, I can't believe you're including the Gentiles. And the Gentiles would say we would never be that. And Paul says, doesn't matter. You are the temple. Why? Because God was doing something altogether new in Jesus that changed the game forever.

Paul expands on this idea in Ephesians chapter 2. And this is a lengthy passage, so stay with me. Follow along. Don't leave me now. For he, Jesus, himself is our peace, who has made the two groups, Jew and Gentile, one and has destroyed the barrier the dividing wall of hostility by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them, Jew and Gentile, to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. So he came and preached peace to you who were far away (Gentiles) and peace to those who were near (Jewish people). For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household,

built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In Jesus the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

That's an expanded understanding of 1st Corinthians 3:16. You are the temple of God, where God's Spirit lives. You are being built together, all of you, are being built together into this temple, where God's presence resides.

Now I need you understand something. That word you in verse 22 of Ephesians 2, and in 1st Corinthians 3:16 is plural. It's all of you. We would say you know in Western New York. yous guys. All yous guys. In the south they just say y'all. Ustedes in Espanol. That's all I know okay. Four years of Spanish. Sorry. It's all of you. So is it true in the microcosm? I am the temple? Yes. But it's also true in the macrocosm. We, we, we are God's temple. Which means we have a purpose and we have a joint purpose together with the other bricks that were positioned next to in the body of Christ. That all of these bricks together, where God knows exactly where he's placed you by the way, and he's placed you closer to some bricks than others for refinement. That if you're married, he's given you a spouse who is, husband, wife, both have the responsibility to refine each other into the image of Christ, so that the evidence of God's presence is more clearly seen in those bricks. But we have a joint purpose together as God's temple. We have this purpose.

Paul explains with that purpose in the same stream of thought from Ephesians 2. I just gave you the end of the chapter. He flows that right into chapter 3, where after kind of a prayer about the gospel, he says, his (that is God's) intent was that now through the church the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now put verse 10 back up for just one moment. Listen to this. Are you paying attention? Say yes. Lockport did you say? I'm going to find out next week. His God's intent (singular) one intent, was that now at the present time until we meet Jesus face-to-face, through the church. There is one chosen instrument, and God does not have a plan B. This is his plan A. Through the church, the manifold wisdom of God. What does that mean? The multi-faceted wisdom of God. So leave that there for a second.

Colossians 2 tells us that all of wisdom has hidden in Christ. And so we who, all diverse groups of people from various backgrounds and various ethnicities and various classes, all of us, although different and diverse, are united in one Christ. So the same Christ is revealed in a diversity around this unity. That Jesus is revealed in your life and your life and your life and my life. It's diverse. So it's a multi-faceted or maybe we could say it another way. It's a multicolored tapestry of God's grace.

And so when we, the church make the manifold wisdom of God known in the world, guess what happens? It sends a message to the angelic forces in

the universe. You're saying Jonathan, this is way too heady for me on a Sunday morning. All right? The coffee hasn't kicked in yet.

Listen. It's simple. First Peter 1 says that the angels in God's presence long to look into our salvation. They don't understand grace. They're like, why God why, would you have compassion on these people? Have you seen them? We've seen them. Have you seen them? He says, no I know. They're mine. It's like they're my kids all right? I know they're corks, and everything, right? But the angels they long to look into salvation, because they can't understand grace. How all of these manifold, this multifaceted wisdom of God is made known through these broken people.

But guess what this also does? It sends a message to another group. Because the forces of the enemy are confronted, listen, by a Spirit-filled army of Jesus people, whose job is to reclaim the territory that has been dominated by the dominion of darkness, but the Jesus people, filled with the Spirit, say this kingdom belongs to our Lord and to his Christ. And we've proclaimed that message while on the earth. It sends a message! That's good news. So as we make Christ's wisdom known, it sends that message to the world.

Now, what does that mean for us? Okay. Tie this up for me, Jonathan. Help me understand where I am supposed to fit into this. Well let me give you. Let me remind you of where we came from in the old covenant. That if you wanted to encounter God, you had to come to this building. If you wanted to know God, if you wanted to encounter him, if you wanted to be near him, and receive forgiveness, you had to come to this building. But what

Ephesians 3:10 and 1st Corinthians 3:16 says is that now, the next slide, the church gathers together, but as the mobile temples of God, we scatter from our gathering to every corner of the world, so that Isaiah 49:6 is a reality. I will make you a light, so that my salvation will be known to the ends of the earth. This is God's brilliant design.

So now in Jesus, what he's done is created millions of mobile temples. That's why Jesus said, you will be my witnesses. Because what God was doing is saying, no longer are you going to come to this geographic location in Jerusalem. But I'm going to put the temple on the road. I'm going to carry this message. He multiplies and mobilizes the temple to bring a visible representation to every corner of the globe, to encounter Jesus, to encounter God's presence. And the beautiful thing is, that people can encounter his presence without having to come or go anywhere.

But that's not, that's not how we always see the church. Or I should say how we see ourselves. I'd wager that if someone asked you where is your church? You'd say, the Walden Galleria Mall. 500 Crosspoint Parkway. 25 Walnut Street. But how I wish we would say when someone asks us, where is our church, I don't know. All over Western New York probably. They're at cubicles in Ingram Micro. They're at factories in Lockport. They're working at Macy's in the Walden Galleria. They're everywhere. That's how I wish we would answer that question, because that would tell us that we understand that we are God's temple. Mobile temples to be on the road.

It's almost like.. see here's the thing. it's almost like we view the church through the old covenant. So remember the old covenant? Here it is again.

You want to encounter God, come to this building. And sadly, to our detriment, all we've done is put a cross over the top. And said, if you want to encounter God, come to the building.

Now, don't mishear me. You can encounter God here. But that's because God's people indwelt by his Spirit are here. Not because this building is the temple. We are the temple.

Why is that good news? Because when we let me tell you the bad news. When we look at the church as through the lens of the old covenant, here's what it sounds like. If you want to encounter God, let me tell you tell you the address and service times. If you want to encounter God, right over there. But let me tell you. God didn't create millions of signs, signposts. He created millions of temples.

But it sounds like this. If there's any there's any evangelizing that has to take place, I better hope that they'll come hear my pastor tell them. So we'll come into the building, and the pastor will tell about his experience with God that I could never have as an ordinary person. I don't believe these things, by the way. These are lies. But this is what it sounds like. If there's any brokenness in the body, I'll email the pastoral team, so that they can take care of it. If there's any brokenness in the world, I'm just going to hope that the institution of the church cuts a check and maybe I'll contribute to that.

Now, that misses 1st Corinthians 3:16 and Ephesians 3:10. Is God still going to do some good things through it? Of course he is. But we are going to severely debilitate the power that Jesus promised in Acts 1:8. Because

it's only going to be flowing through a few people that we deem qualified. Pastors, professionals, spiritually elite. And how is God going to reach every man, every woman, and every child? Through a few? Why not just rebuild the temple? But God in His wisdom has put the temple on the road. So that people can encounter him without having to come or go anywhere.

So that when you're in your cubicle tomorrow, you're not just an office employee. You're a temple at Geico. You're not just on an assembly line. You're a temple at the Tonawanda GM plant. You're not just clocking in at Tops or Tim Hortons or Wegmans or wherever you find yourself. You're a temple! Because God knows exactly who he has in mind. He has the world in mind, he knows exactly where he has you. And exactly where he has me.

And what we miss, listen. If we don't embrace this, what might happen? You see God wants every man, woman and child to encounter his presence incarnationally. That is to say in the flesh. The invisible God is still being made known to visible people. But what happens if you refuse this responsibility? What if you pass the responsibility down the line and say, pass it to someone else more qualified.

Well let me remind you of what we are supposed to be, and it's this. That we gather, wherever we gather as the body of believers, we gather and then we scatter, as these temples, these mobile temples who represent God all over the world. But what happens if you don't embrace that responsibility? Who's going to reach them? Who's going to reach her? Who's going to reach this family? Because God has designed for his people

to be everywhere. And he sends us, releases us, as mobile temples with his indwelling Spirit into every corner of the world.

But what happens about them? Or maybe I could ask you this sobering question. Who is waiting for you to bring them the light of the Gospel? Who is waiting for you to bring them the light of the Gospel? Oh, they might not know that they're waiting for you. But that's okay, because God knows it and you know it. But who is waiting for you to bring them the light of the Gospel. That God has strategically placed you in their lives. Whether that's a neighborhood or a workplace or a school or an extended family. Yes, even with your in-laws. And he expects, he calls you to be the visible representation of the light of the Gospel there.

And if you won't do it, what does that mean for eternity? Now God, he's not going to be handcuffed by our disobedience. He's still sovereign. He's going to save who he's going to save. And he's going to have mercy on whom he's going to have mercy. But maybe I could give you this statement. Don't miss out on God's mission. Don't miss out on God's mission.

You see, if you refuse this responsibility, if you miss out on the mission, only God in His sovereignty knows what kingdom impact that's going to have. But if you embrace this responsibility, if you embrace this mission, only God in His sovereignty knows the kingdom impact that that's going to have. Yes I know those were identical statements.

But if you say yes. I surrender. Yes, I am who Jesus says I am. I am who God has told me I am. What does that mean? I've got great news. You have been given everything you need to fulfill your part in the mission. Everything we

have been talking about in this series. Do you recognize now? Can you retrace your steps in this series and understand that everything we've been talking about is everything we need to fulfill our part in the mission.

So God has given you this Word, which is the book that reveals Jesus in your hands. He has given you access to the Father, who speaks into your life through this book, which is the language of the Spirit, so that when you open your mouths to testify to the difference that Jesus makes in your life, there's actually something in the reservoir for the Spirit to remind you of. He fills you with that. He gives you these Spirit energized abilities to put Jesus on display in your life wherever you go. He gives you the fruit of the Spirit. The evidence that you're connected to the source of life. So that not only are people hearing the gospel from you, they're seeing the gospel in you. He's giving you all of this. He's filled you with his own presence, so that none of us could stand there with excuses, or as if we're empty-handed. But we've been equipped with everything we need to fulfill our part in the mission, so that we won't miss out on what God is doing in the world.

So what do you do then? There's a few things that are really simple. They're not going to.. These are really simple, so you can do them. We can do them. Here's the first thing you do. You pray. What do you pray for, Jonathan? You pray for one person every day for the next seven days, or maybe if you're ambitious for the next 30 days. And you pray for one person by name who does not know Jesus Christ that's in your life. Not like person X out there like, some I'm going to pray for this celebrity. I don't know them I have no opportunity to talk to them, but I'm just gonna pray

for them. Okay. But also this, someone that you know. Pray for them for the next seven days that God would bring them to the point of acknowledging their need for Jesus, and that he would give you an open door through even their questioning about to give the hope, the reason for the hope that is within you. You would pray for that opportunity.

Can I just ask you this question? If every person who calls The Chapel home and claims to be a follower of Christ. Let's say that that's a big round number - 5,000 people. What would happen if every person, if all 5,000 people who call The Chapel home spent the next seven days coming before their Father, interceding with someone's name on their lips who doesn't know Jesus? Do you think that might make a difference in Western New York? And are you willing to try and find out? Okay. All right. I wanted to know if you're going to find out. Thank you. That's not for me. I want to know that you're here and you're tracking with me. You see, coming before the Father, asking him for this person to know the gospel, and maybe that he would use you to do it. If he doesn't, that's fine. But intercede for them.

The second thing you do is you immerse yourself in the Scripture. You immerse yourself in the Scripture. So what I mean is this. You cut out all the excuses that you and I give ourselves for not spending time in his Word. So if that means you don't start and end your day scrolling on a newsfeed to find out what you missed, then that's what that means. It means taking that 15 minutes (let's pretend it was only 15 minutes), and let's take that 15 minutes, and you're going to dedicate that time to be in his Word. Why? Because you're going to fill up the reservoir with the language of the Spirit, that he will activate in the moment of need, when

you're a mobile temple on the road. You put yourself into a position to be used by God. Say yes before Jesus asks the question, and say I'm willing to be what you've called me to be.

You see, listen. Don't miss out on God's mission. If you want to have an eternal purpose, if you want to find something that is fulfilling, don't miss out on God's mission. We are his temple. And just like God chose Abraham to be the visible representation on the earth of the invisible God, Galatians tells us we are sons and daughters of Abraham. We've inherited the family responsibility, to represent God in the person of Jesus Christ by the power of his Spirit on this earth. Don't miss out on the mission.

Let's bow together for a word of prayer. I'd ask if you don't have to move right now that you don't, just so that you're not a disturbance to those around you, nor are you distracted from this part of the service. But whatever God by his Spirit is speaking to you about through his Word, that's not because of this mouthpiece, me. That's because he wants to get your attention. And whatever that step of obedience is for you, I want to encourage you, document it, write it down. Tell somebody about it. Tell your spouse about it. Tell a friend about it. So that you will be able to hold each other to it, and follow through on what God's revealed to you today through his Word. Don't let this just be something that goes in one ear and out the other, and we're on to the rest of our day. Because you are God's temple. His Spirit resides in you. This whole series has been building to that understanding, that we are called to this purpose to represent him. He's given us his Spirit. He's given us everything we need. We just need to obey. So maybe in this moment you tell God in prayer, in the quietness of

your heart, Lord, I'll be your temple. I don't know why you'd choose me, but I'll be your temple.

But maybe some of you are here today and you don't know God personally through Jesus. In fact, you'd say Jonathan, I'm not a Christian. I wouldn't call myself a Christian. But for some reason today, while I was talking, you felt that you were awakened to a great need in your life. And that need is Jesus. Maybe it felt like the light bulb came on. Maybe it seemed like something clicked for the first time. Maybe it's a truth you've known for a really long time, but you've been running from it. In any case or anything that I missed, if you know that your greatest need is Jesus, if you're in the Worship Center or the East Worship Center, here's what I want you to do. I'm going to pray and dismiss us in just a second. When I say amen, and people flood out to the parking lot, I want you to do something different. I want you to come by the Fireside Room. It's labeled, so you'll know where to go. Walk in there and say this, I need Jesus. We're not going to keep you all day. We just want to give you a Bible if you don't have one. Give you something to take home to help you understand what it means to follow Jesus, and to let you know that you're not alone.

So Father, thanks for your truth. I pray that you'd write it on our hearts. That we would walk out of these doors mobile temples embracing our responsibility and privilege to represent you. God, may people see more of you, less of us. May you continue to refine us into the image of your Son, so that that reflection is all the more clear. And God, equip us with the opportunities and the abilities to represent you on this earth, for your name's sake. Not so that we get any credit, but so that you get all the glory.

Not for any of our personal empires, but for your kingdom. And we trust you to do that in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thanks everybody. We love you. You're dismissed.