



Reflecting the Son

Pastor Jonathan Drake – September 10, 2017

Good morning everyone. Good morning to you who are watching in the East Worship Center or at any of our campuses. If you're online, or perhaps you're streaming from a parking lot in Orchard Park...hypothetically. We're glad that all of you are with us.

Grab a Bible, go to 2 Corinthians 3. I really want you to see this in front of you. As you get to 2 Corinthians 3, I've got to get us there, so let me build the backdrop here before we get to our main text this morning.

On Monday, August 21st, 2017, we witnessed a solar eclipse, perhaps you heard. I don't know why the world reacted like this had never happened before, but we were inundated with information about the solar eclipse. I don't if that's just a reflection of the times we live, our social media, whatever. But on Monday August 21st we had this solar eclipse. And there were even parts of the United States that experienced totality during this eclipse, which means that for a brief moment there was daytime darkness. Now I was never a good science student, some of my science teachers preferred when I wasn't in class, and it's not important why. But here's what I do know about a solar eclipse. The moon is positioned in such a way that it is kind of between the sun and the earth. And whereas the moon's

primary function is to reflect the sun's rays, a solar eclipse is when the moon obscures, either partially or completely, when the moon obscures the sun's rays.

Now this is amazing to me because what we're really celebrating is the moon not doing it's job. Why should that be amazing to us? That happens all the time, we see that all the time in life. I mean, where else in the world are you celebrated for not doing your job, I mean other than baseball... oh, because Pastor Jerry likes baseball, you're not going to go there with me? Really? I mean, you're successful three out of ten times and that's Hall-of-Fame worthy? I don't understand. But you've heard the expression "you had one job to do". Moon? You had one job to do. Reflect the sun's light. Don't get in the way. You had one job to do. And the moon falls down on the job. Gets in the way, obscures the sun's light.

Now if you missed the path of totality, because we didn't experience that here in Western New York, I have really good news for you. On Monday, April 8, 2024 we will experience at 3:18 in the afternoon, three minutes and forty seconds of totality here in Western New York. So save the date and we'll all have a party together in the parking lot to watch the moon not do it's job. There's still time for you to reserve your space in the parking lot, alright?

Why do I share that with you? Well again, I'm no scientist, but here's what is so amazing to me. The moon has no light source of its own. It doesn't emit light. The moon only reflects light. And the sun in our solar system, which is ninety-three million miles away from earth, someone counted,

ninety-three million miles away from this earth, the sun is so powerful and so bright that it bounces off of this lunar dust and reflects the light onto our earth in the evening, for a lesser light during the evening hours. I mean it's amazing when you think about it. I was reading somewhere that the sun's rays that hit the moon, that the moon actually only reflects three to twelve percent of the sun's light, and yet we see that the sun is able to take something that is otherwise a dull orb in outer space and transform it into something meaningful and useful and even beautiful.

So, in the beginning, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. He creates the universe. And thirty-five words into our English translation of the Scripture in Genesis 1, we discover that God is a communicative God. Because it's in Genesis 1 verse 3 that we see "and God said". And what God says is "let there be light". He creates the light. And then we read on in Genesis 1 that He creates two lights, a greater light to govern the day, and in this poetic language a lesser light to govern the night. And He creates this light. And then God goes on to create everything else, land and sea and vegetation and animals. But then God creates the pinnacle of His Creation, mankind. And there's something unique about humanity, something that is distinct and unparalleled and unmatched in any other part of the created order. Mankind is created in the image of God.

We read as much in Genesis chapter 1, beginning in verse 26: "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, and over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the

ground.' So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

We read that mankind, humanity, human beings, male and female have something about them that is unlike any other part of creation. They are created in the image of God. Theologians refer to this as the *imago dei* and although many have debated for centuries over what exactly that means, we're going to find that there is at least a few things that we can take from this understanding that are helpful and relevant for our lives today. And as we've taught in the past on the image of God, we understand that this allows human beings to have the capacity to rightly relate to God, there's the vertical relationship, and rightly represent God on the earth. That we be able to rightly relate to God and rightly represent God. Or maybe I could say it this way: Human beings exist to know God and make Him known. Human beings exist to know God and to make Him known.

So the book of Genesis was written in the Hebrew language and the word for image is *tzelam*, but when it was translated into the Greek language, which was the language of the empire later on, first the Greeks and then the Romans, when the Hebrew Scripture was translated into Greek, Genesis 1 talks about the image of God as the Greek word *eikon*, the *eikon* which is a small representation of something much larger, of a prototype. I mean we may think of an icon as something that's on our computer screen. You know double-tap the Microsoft word icon and although I'm pretty sure

that wasn't what Moses had in mind, or the translators had in mind, the comparison fits. Why? Because we have a smaller representation of a much larger program. Humanity is the finite representation of the Infinite God. That in a small way this eikon, in humanity is a representation of the premier, the prototype who is God. And so we understand that this means humanity is to reflect God. Humanity was designed to reflect God. That's just another way of saying what we've already said. Or humanity was designed to rule on this world as though God were ruling on this world the way He would.

But even though that was the intention, and even though that was the design, if you've read the story in Genesis, and it doesn't take long. We get to Genesis 3, before we see that mankind rebels against God's design. Mankind rebels against what God had created for him to do. The created rebels against the Creator. And so what happens is humanity, under the delusion that there would actually be more freedom deviating from what God had planned, humanity ends up in a mess. And although they did not experience, Adam and Eve did not experience immediate physical death, what they did experience was actually far worse than that. Because what they experienced is immediate separation from God. Immediate severance of that relationship. And an introduction of the sin virus into the stream of humanity, and it's terminal. So that image of God that was on human beings, the design to represent and relate or the design to make Him known and to know Him, that image is not lost, but it is smeared. It's marred. It's distorted. The image of God still remains on human beings but it doesn't look like it should.

If I were to use this analogy, if you ever saw a mirror that someone had taken a hammer to and just smashed it in the middle, or a mirror that had broken, you'd recognize that you might be able to make out a shape or some sort of feature, but the reflection is certainly not accurate and it's certainly not complete. Even if these aren't words that you would use to describe things, I really don't have to convince you of this, you recognize that this is really the case. You see, God who made us to be spiritual beings with a capacity to relate to Him as we've said. But because of the fall, but because of sin, our reach for God comes up short. We recognize that we can't reach up to Him. We don't have that capacity any longer.

God created us to be relational beings. This is all bound up in what it means to be in the image of God. He created us to be relational beings, to rightly relate to one another. It's a good thing we get along with everyone, all the time. No, this is broken, too, that we quarrel and we fight and we disagree and we say things that we shouldn't, we do things we shouldn't. We violate trust, we speak poorly of those that are not present, our relational capacity is broken.

God created us as emotional beings, to experience fullness and completion and satisfaction and joy. Yet that too is effected. That aspect of the image has been smeared as well because I talk to people all the time who say to me "Jonathan, I just wake up feeling so empty. I have a hole in my heart and I don't know how to fill it. I've tried so many things and nothing's working". Well, no wonder. Because our emotional capacities have been stained and effected by sin.

God created us as vocational beings. Do you know that work was not a result of the fall? No matter what you think of your job, work was a part of the design, not the curse. And so God created us as vocational beings to find meaning and purpose in our work. And yet this too is something we reach for and is fleeting. Or even if we find it for a season, soon people move on and change careers and retire and then what?

I mean, I could go on and on and on about the things that we had this built-in capacity for and that we even reach for, but we somehow it slips through our fingers every time we reach for it. We might see glimpses, we might see glimpses of that image of God, but maybe I could say it this way - we all long for Eden. Eden, the garden where humanity was with God, nothing between them and Him, in a perfect relationship. You may not use those words to describe it, but I believe that in every person at the core of their being, it's what we reach for. It's what we long for.

But if I could fast-forward a bit, quite a bit, enter Jesus. Then Jesus, because Jesus is the perfect unfiltered image of God in humanity, Jesus comes to this earth to show us what God looks like. The Scripture says as much in John chapter 1 beginning in verse 18 it says: "No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son," Jesus, "who is Himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made Him known." Jesus, who knows God because He's in relationship with the Father, and He is God, He knows God and He makes Him known. Jesus demonstrates in humanity what we were supposed to do all along but never could.

And then look what the Scripture says in Hebrews chapter 1: "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful Word." Jesus is the exact representation of His being, of God. And so, what Jesus does is He comes to show us what the Father looks like. In another place, in John 14, He says "if you've seen me, you've seen the Father". But He doesn't just come to show us what the Father looks like. He comes to show us what we can look like when we're connected to Him. He shows us what we're destined to look like, but we've never been able to experience. What has been so fleeting from our very lives and existence He shows us that He's going to create a new humanity. He's going to create a new humanity with a restored image so that we will once again be able to rightly relate to God and rightly represent Him on the earth. So that we will be able to rightly know Him and rightly make Him known.

We see this in the Scripture in Colossians chapter 1. Look what this says in 1:15. "The Son is the image of the invisible God. He is the firstborn over all creation." Isn't that astounding? Have you ever seen this before? He is the image of God and He's the firstborn over all creation. This means so many things, but at least what it means is that Jesus is the new prototype. Jesus is the new prototype. And when we see and recognize that we become icons of the prototype, we discover what we were truly meant to live for. And so all of the questions of meaning and purpose and relationship and emotion and spiritual life, all of those things

are bound up and answered in the new humanity that God is creating in Jesus.

And that leads us to the text where I really want to spend our time. In 2 Corinthians 3 verse 18, says this: "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." Maybe your Bible, like mine, has a note next to the word "contemplate" which says "or reflect". And that's helpful to us because when we see contemplate, I don't want us to think that this means we contemplate the Lord's glory. Meaning, we think fondly about Jesus from time to time. That's not what this means. This doesn't mean we take a quick glance at Jesus every now and then or at least every seven days. This means that we intently look into, that we behold. Some translations say or I really like, reflect. That we reflect the Lord's glory.

Now what's amazing about this verse is that Paul says "we with unveiled faces". What does that mean, unveiled faces? Well, if you were to look at the context around it, you'd see that Paul is making a connection to the life of Moses. Now maybe you're here and you're a guest or maybe you're new to church or new to the Bible and you don't know that much about Moses aside from the movie The Ten Commandments or The Prince of Egypt and that's a good starting place, so let me bring you up to speed. So Moses is the leader of the Jewish people. He leads the nation of Israel out of their captivity in Egypt. This is several thousand years ago. He leads them out of captivity in Egypt into their Promised Land and as the leader for the nation of Israel Moses possesses a special relationship with God. He has unique

access to God because these are God's people, the people of Israel. And so God has this unique relationship with Moses.

And if we were to look at Exodus 34, we'd see that it says that whenever Moses went into God's presence, because he had that special relationship, whenever Moses would go into God's presence, his face would radiate. His face would look like it was lit up, almost like he had LED strips behind his skin. And so he'd have this like radiant face, amazing, right? His countenance would literally change because he had been in God's presence. And because of that, he put a veil over his face because it was like this blinding light.

So what Paul says here, this is so good. What Paul says here is that we all, all of us, with unveiled faces, we are not like Moses. Not only because this is an all of us thing, not just one guy who has restricted access, but in the new covenant that Jesus is creating and establishing and advancing, in this new covenant, we all are involved in this. We all are brought in to this access point. We are all given this access to God's presence because of Jesus.

And what's really astounding to me about this is who He says this to. Corinth! Now if you know anything about Corinth you know Paul had you know, he had this like spiritual father type relationships with a whole bunch of churches, in Corinth and Ephesus and Philippi and Colossae and the region of Galatia. But let's be honest. Corinth was his problem-child. Every parent has the one kid who causes more problems than the other kids. No? Are they sitting with you? You don't want to agree with me, right

now? Okay. They're right here, right? No, Corinth is the problem-child in the family of Paul, okay? They're immature, they tolerate open sin, they act like there's nothing wrong with that. I mean, they've got some maturity problems. They're the problem-child, let's be honest. And Paul says to them, to messed up people like me. We all, in Christ, have access to the Lord's glory. Like Moses was the only guy, now all of us can come in because of the one guy, Jesus the God-man who gives us this access. And he says we all, with unveiled faces, we're not like Moses. We're not going to cover up the radiant light of God's glory. You know why? Because Jesus says, I want that glory to be seen by every single person who comes into contact with you.

Jesus said this in Matthew 5 verse 14: "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 or under a veil. 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," why?, "that they may see your good deeds" and that's not an end to itself, "and glorify your Father in heaven." Let your light shine! Let it radiate! Don't put a veil over it, don't put it under a basket, let it shine, let other people see it! We with unveiled faces reflect the Lord's glory.

But what is the Lord's glory? Well, the answer comes in our text and the good thing about, as we remember to look at Paul's letters, we remember that there was no chapter breaks when he's writing a personal letter. So the last verse of our chapter 3 leads into the following discussion in chapter 4 beginning in verse 3, where Paul says this: And even if our

gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ - listen to this - who is the image of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, way back in Genesis 1, "Let light shine out of darkness," he has made his light shine in our hearts to give us - this is huge - the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. That we behold God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

Jesus is the perfect image of God. God shines most clearly in his Son. And so what we want to do as image bearers is roughly the glory of God that is on display in the face of Jesus. We want to reflect his glory. He shines. We want to receive that and reflect it. Because his light has pierced the darkness. When we had the blinders on, when we were dead in sin and trespasses, when we could not pull ourselves out of the pit, when we had no hope, no future, no life, God reached down and he turned the light on. We weren't even looking for the switch! He turned the light on, and brought the light of the gospel into our hearts. He made his light shine. And the God who created everything out of nothing has pierced the darkness into your life. Do you think that that makes a difference? The God who makes the universe has made you brand new. That excites some of us.

But let me give you this. Someone has said this and I think this is true. We become like what we behold. We become like what we behold. That can be used for good and that can also lead to some devastation. Because what is your greatest treasure? What is the thing that you behold, that you look

intently into? That you center and orbit your life around? We become like what we behold.

I'm not pulling that out of thin air. I believe that's what our text says look again at 2nd Corinthians 3:18. And we all who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory - listen - are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. Go back one, I want to see that first slide right there again. Thank you. We are - look at this - are being transformed. So we contemplate or reflect the Lord's glory. And because of that, we are being transformed.

Jesus is... what's he doing in this when we are being transformed? He is restoring the image of God in us. He is repairing the damage of the fall in us. He's re-making us, and we are being transformed into his image. When it says we contemplate, this verb is structured in such a way that it is something we choose continually ourselves. That this is our part. We reflect. We contemplate. We look intently. We behold the Lord's glory. That's our part. That's what we do.

And then here's what God's part is. We are being transformed. He does what we can. We can't make us this way. We can't transform ourselves. We can't restore the image of God. We've tried. We failed. We reach for it, and it's ever fleeting. But we are being transformed. This is God's part. And I know this because this verb right here transformed is passive, meaning it's something that's done to us, not something we do for ourselves. And we know that again because of the next slide. Go to the next page. Because

sorry, yep, thank you. Which comes from the Lord. This transformation comes from the Lord. It doesn't come from me. I can't do that.

But we know our part. We reflect. We know His part. We are transformed. And He says that this is with ever-increasing glory. This is ever-increasing glory. Could I ask you to retrace the last few days, the last few weeks, months, even years of you following Jesus? And would you be able to say as you look at your own life, as you examine your own heart, would you be able to say that there is an ever-increasing glory? Meaning that you are able to see the progressive work of God restoring his image in your life. Can you see progress in that? Can I? Could someone look at your life or could someone put my life under the microscope and say, I don't see that. Or I do. Can you retrace and see the ever-increasing glory?

Now again, this isn't about a religion thing. This isn't about us doing something. I already established that. That's what our text says. This comes from the Lord. But what I can be responsible for is how often am I finding myself reflecting God's glory in the face of Jesus. Or have I oriented myself in the opposite direction? So I'm reflecting something else completely. Can you just can you identify the ever-increasing glory that God is restoring that image in your life? Can you find it? Can you see it?

I like the way that The Message paraphrases this idea in our text. Look at what this says. I love this. Nothing between us and God, because of Jesus. Nothing between us and God, our faces shining with the brightness of his face. And so we are transfigured much like the Messiah, our lives gradually becoming brighter and more beautiful as God enters our lives and we

become like him. I love that. Our faces shining with his face. That our lives would be getting brighter and brighter.

So again, I'm no scientist. But like the moon, we don't possess a source of light on our own. We aren't a source of light. We merely reflect the light. The Son, the Son Jesus, the S-O-N Son, he is so radiant, he is so glorious, God's glory is displayed on his face, that when we reflect him, we discover what our meaning and our purpose is in life. We find that fulfillment, we find that satisfaction, we find that destiny, we find that right relationship to God and right representation on the earth to others. We we know him and we make him known. We discover what we were really made to be. We aren't a source of light ourselves, but our job is to reflect him. Our job - human beings exist to know him and make him known.

But sadly, we don't accurately reflect him. Because the mirror is broken. While we're on this earth, the mirror will never display a full picture. But right now at the point of conversion, and however long it's been since you surrendered your life to Jesus, but at the point of conversion, that mirror was busted up, was missing a few pieces, was maybe discolored, and you couldn't even tell what was standing in front of it. But as you follow Jesus, as I walk with Him, Jesus remakes the mirror. He restores the image. He puts the pieces back in place. He patches it up.

You see, this is nothing that a little spiritual windex could fix. This is a huge devastation issue. That we were beyond hope. We could never do this. But Jesus, by His grace, when we behold him, when we come face-to-face with him, and when we discover him in his Word, he does something in us that

is unparalleled. He transforms us. He's rebuilding the mirror, until people see the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in his face, Jesus' face, reflected through our lives.

You see, the world, you know this, the world needs to see more of Jesus. I don't want them to see more of me. I want them to see less of me and more of him. Yet sadly, here's where I find myself if I'm being honest. Sometimes I find myself in this place and maybe you do too. I find myself positioned in such a way with my life, with my words, with my thoughts, where I actually obscure the Son to the people in my world. I've found myself in places, maybe saying something or thinking something or doing something where I've actually stood in the way of what the Son was trying to do in the world around me, and I got in the way. Me. Broken me.

I don't want that. The stakes are too high. Eternity is too long. I don't want to get in the way of whatever God wants to do through me. I'm not talking about as a pastor. I'm talking about as a follower of Christ. I don't want to be someone who obscures the Son and his light from reaching the people in my world. Now, God's gonna do what he's gonna do. He's sovereign. He's in control. I can't thwart his purposes or his plan. And he's gonna save whom he will save, and he will show mercy on whom he will show mercy. But man, I want to have a sense of destiny and purpose when I align myself, not in his way, but in his ways, so that I can be useful to him to reflect the Son to those around me. I want to be a part of something that is bigger than me, and that means I reflect the Son in my life.

So what's the solve? We already read it in our text, combining chapter three and chapter four. We contemplate the Lord's glory displayed, in the face of Jesus. So we should start looking for Jesus where he promises he'll be found. He's already guaranteed where we would find him. Remember in John five, it's not on the screen, but remember in John five Jesus says, these are the scriptures that testify about me these are the scriptures that testify about me. You want to know about Jesus? Here's a reliable account.

Remember when we were learning about the Holy Spirit this summer? And Pastor Jerry preached a message about the Holy Spirit and said that one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is that he inspired a book that testifies about Jesus.

So can we say we have done everything within our power on our part to behold and reflect the Lord's glory if we don't ever get in front of him in his Word? When we don't discover the living Word of God Jesus in the written Word of God, the Scripture. I mean Jesus guaranteed that this would be how we would learn about him in John 14:26. Look what this says. But the Advocate, that's the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:26. And then 15:26 says this: when the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. How does the spirit teach us? How does the Spirit remind us? How does the Spirit testify about Jesus? He does it through his word.

You say, Jonathan that's too simple. There's got to be something else to this. There's got to be something else we need. If it was so simple, we've

already been doing it. If it was so simple, we wouldn't find ourselves wondering man, how long has it been since I read the Bible for myself? How long has it been since I personally reflected this into my world?

You see, we may settle, even for secondhand reflections of people who know the Bible and teach the Bible. But that's not what God designed. He didn't design you to just rely on the secondhand reflection. Here, look at me, and then I'll give you what you need. That's great. He says, come to me yourself. We all with unveiled faces reflect the Lord's glory.

See, I don't want to obscure the Son. I don't want to do anything that gets in the way of God's purposes. I don't want to say something that would unravel my testimony to someone who doesn't know Jesus. I don't want to do something that would make people think that the light really isn't all that bright, or all that transformative. I don't want to live in such a way that people think I'm only reflecting my glory, not his. That I only do this to draw attention to myself, not him. I don't want to do anything, I don't want to spend my money, I don't want to treat my human relationships, I don't want to demonstrate through my marriage, or through how I parent my child, or through how I care for my friends and my family. I don't want to do anything that would obscure the rays of the Son's light into the people around me. And I care so deeply for their eternity that God breaks my heart for the spiritual blindness that they're in, that I recognize I can't be selfish and feed the desires of my flesh. I got to get out of the way. And the only way to do that is to get in front of him. Allow your face to reflect his. Allow people to see.

Let me ask this question in closing. What would happen if... What would happen if every single person under the sound of my voice who's a follower of Jesus, what would happen if every single person under the sound of my voice spent the next seven days beholding the Lord's glory in the face of Jesus through his Word? Would that make a difference in Western New York? Would that make a difference in the surrounding area? Would that make a difference in our friends and our family? Would that make a difference in our testimonies? Would that make a difference in the kinds of decisions we make? Would that make a difference in the kinds of words that we use? What would happen if?

You see, we can't possibly reflect what we don't know. We can't reflect what we don't know. We exist to know him and make him known. That's what we were made for. That's what we're called to be. Let's bow together for a word of prayer.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed. If you're here and you're a follower of Jesus today, I pray that God has awakened within you a passion that may have grown cold. Ignited a fire that may have been flickering. That you would want so desperately to be in a position where you are transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory. And you will do anything. You'd be so desperate for that you would do anything to accomplish it, see it happen.

You know, not only does this restoration of the image of God enrich our relationship with him. It does. But it also enlarges our capacity to represent him. It allows us to be useful hands, useful tools in the hands of

our master. That's what we want. And that's the only way to find fulfillment, completion, fullness, life to the full. So I pray that you would dig deep and dive in. And that your aim this week would be I just want to reflect his light.

Maybe you're here today and you don't know God personally through Jesus. You may know about God. You may even know some Scripture verses. You may get kind of the main idea of the Bible. But if we were just talking you'd be honest enough to say yeah, I don't know God. You may even consider yourself a spiritual person. But you don't know God. But for some reason you recognize today, and maybe it's like the light bulb went on. Maybe something clicked. Or maybe it's truth that you've known for a while, but you've been running from it. Today's the day to stop running and embrace Jesus. Because the same God who said let light shine out of darkness has made his light shine into your heart today. Don't ignore it. Don't walk out the same way you walked in.

If you've been struggling for meaning, for purpose, for why do I have this empty feeling, and you can't really explain why you've been unable to fulfill your own longings, may I suggest to you but those longings are there to suggest that you can't fulfill them, but that you need God. You need his son Jesus. You can't reflect what you don't know, and today's a great day to begin that introduction, to know him. So when I dismiss us, I'm gonna pray to conclude our service and dismiss us, and when I do that, I want to invite you if that's you, if you're sitting in this Worship Center in our atrium or in the East Worship Center, I want you to come to the Fireside Room across our atrium. It's labeled, so you'll know where to go. Just walk in there and

say this - I want to know more about Jesus. Just say that I want to know more about Jesus. We'd love to pray with you, give you a Bible if you don't have one. Give you something to take home so you can understand a little more about what it means to follow Jesus. Someone loved us enough to explain that to us. We'd consider it a great privilege to explain that to you. So we'd love it if you come by the Fireside Room when we dismiss.

God, thanks for taking us, this collection of dust, and making us something beautiful and radiant because of your son. We repent at the times that we've even obscured your your light from reaching the people in our world. That we've gotten in the way. We don't want that to be the case, but with a healthy sober mindedness, we recognize just what limitations we have. That we aren't the source of light. But you have strategically placed us so that we can reflect that light into the lives of others. So God, remake us, transform us, bring about that metamorphosis that you that you speak about in your Word through Jesus, as you transform us into the image of your son. Not so that people will get a better glimpse of us, but so that they will see a more clearer picture of Jesus. So that we will get out of the way, so that he can step forward and take his rightful place as Lord in our lives and in the world. And that we would clear away all of the debris that we can. That we would throw off everything that entangles and fix our eyes on Jesus. That's what we want, Lord. We thank you for demonstrating your grace to us, for turning the light on in our lives. May we be that light as we go from this place today. We love you. But we thank you for loving us first. It's in Christ's name that we pray. Amen.

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