

# Four Miracles

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[ 0 : 00 ] So, this is the heart of the moving crew from yesterday. Actually, this is only the tip of the iceberg.

! I am so grateful for all the effort that people put in to help us get this done fast. I mean, it was a whirlwind. But it was very cool. There's a video. I wanted to put a snippet up here, but I couldn't figure out how to do it. That shows an Amish, not a barn raising, a barn moving. And it shows, you see this barn, and all of a sudden you realize there's about a thousand pairs of legs inside the barn. They lifted it up, and they're all walking like this. And there's a couple guys outside directing traffic. That's what it felt like yesterday. It's very cool. It's amazing what we can do when we're together as a body of Christ. So, this morning we're talking about four miracles and what they have to do with our lives.

[ 1 : 16 ] But before we get there, let's take a stroll down memory lane. So, we talked about the transformation of the heart. If you remember in Mark chapter 7, the Pharisees tracked down Jesus and were all bent out of shape because the disciples had the nerve to eat without washing their hands.

And Jesus pointed out first to the crowd and then in more detail to the disciples that what goes on outside and comes in really doesn't make a difference. It's what's in the heart that goes out that's the problem.

And Jesus stopped there in the conversation with the disciples. He just said, the heart of man is wicked. It's got all these horrible things. And that is what defiles a man is what comes out. And of course, in that message a couple weeks ago, we talked about the fact that we have a new heart. That was talked about in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, that we would receive the heart of stone that was inside of us would be removed and we would receive a heart of flesh.

I want to talk a little bit more about that today as we go. And part of that was the idea of sanctification, being made like Christ. That past tense, we were sanctified in Christ.

[ 2 : 29 ] We were justified by faith. So it's an established fact. It's a future reality that we get to look forward to, that we will be made complete in Christ. And then it's a present reality, which we're going to talk a lot about today.

That it's the hard work of the Holy Spirit working with all different tools to chip away at everything in our lives that doesn't look like Jesus. Then last week, we talked about the 15 elements of discipleship.

That's right. We set a record. I had a 14-point sermon. But I added an element that I caught as I was preaching, which was the idea that we were supposed to go look.

Like, Pastor Tim talked about that several weeks ago. God takes the meager resources that we have and multiplies them to change lives. And so I missed that completely.

So many of you caught that I missed it. And can I say again, having spent most of my career as a youth pastor, that having a group of people who actually listen is so refreshing.

[ 3 : 35 ] But it does keep me on my toes. So thank you for pointing that out. But I added a bonus to make up for it. And that was that the Holy Spirit will have to repeat himself. That's just part of the drill.

As we're growing, we find that we loop through life as we mature. A lesson that we thought we had learned, God says no, has to come up again, or we just miss it altogether. At the top, the first two elements of discipleship we talked about last week are two that the Lord works on all the time. And I want you to remember these. The first is that he's establishing the relationship with us. If you recall, Jesus figured out a way to get away from the crowds and get away from the Pharisees.

He took a long, out-of-the-way route from the coast of the Mediterranean, up north of the Sea of Galilee, and down to the east side of the Sea of Galilee, in a sparsely populated area. And it gave him about two to three weeks of concentrated time with his disciples. Jesus was doing a lot of things there, but the two main ones were he was establishing the relationship with his disciples so they could get to know him better.

[ 4 : 45 ] Because remember, who is Jesus? Hebrews 1. He is the exact, exact representation of God. Remember, he said to the disciples, Philip says to him, you say we can see the Father when we look at you, but we need you to show us the Father.

And Jesus said, oh my goodness, have I been with you so long? When you look at me, you see the Father. That's what Jesus was establishing with his discipleship on that long backpack trip.

And then the other thing he was doing was teaching them core principles. Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself.

Make disciples. He was teaching them those things to set the stage for more hands-on ministry that was to come. So that kind of gets us caught up to where we are now.

So let's pray together, and we're going to turn to Mark chapter 8. God, I'm so grateful that you gave us your Holy Spirit and that he is at work in our lives.

[ 5 : 51 ] That you are training us in really the same way that you trained your disciples. You even said, although it's hard for us to fathom, that it was better for you to leave.

Because with the coming of the Holy Spirit and dwelling in our hearts as believers, we have an even more intimate relationship with you. And you use that as a means to reveal yourself, to teach us how we should live, and to do that hard work of making us like Christ for the purpose of reaching the world, to extend your kingdom.

So Lord, as we spend some time this morning looking at the next step in the story, looking at Jesus' frustration with the Pharisees and with the disciples, Lord, I pray that we would take these words to heart, that we would apply them, that our lives would be changed.

Their lives would be changed. And the world around us would be changed as well. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Turn in your Bibles to Mark chapter 8. We're going to start at verse 11, actually. Oh, there it is. My fault.

[ 7 : 00 ] Sorry, guys. In the back. Thank you for doing as I asked, even though I messed it up. The Pharisees came out and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him.

Sighing deeply in his spirit, he said, Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation. Leaving them, he again embarked and went away to the other side.

And they, the disciples, had forgotten to take bread and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them. And he was giving orders to them, saying, Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.

They began to discuss with one another the fact that they had no bread. And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread?

Do you not see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?

[ 8 : 02 ] And do you not remember when I broke the five loaves for the 5,000, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up? They said to him, Twelve. When I broke the seven for the 4,000, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?

And they said to him, Seven. And he was saying to them, Do you not yet understand? And so before we get to the four miracles, by way of introduction, we're going to talk a little bit about some history.

Because I like to talk about history. First, I'm going to have a drink of water. So, how many of you saw the movie, I think it's called The Jesus Revolution, about Calvary Chapel and their growth and the revival that swept across the United States and really the world through the 70s.

I came to Christ at the very tail end of that revival. A group of guys who were hardcore evangelists harassed my dad at work until he gave in and started reading the Bible.

And long story short, he came to Christ. About a month later, I came to the Lord and then my brothers followed suit in the weeks that followed. My life, however, as a growing disciple of Christ has been characterized primarily by frustration.

[ 9 : 28 ] And that frustration is this. I heard stories of God saving people by the dozen or more. The church that I spent most of my formative years that you've heard me talk about, Littleton Bible Chapel, out in the south side of Denver, they had meetings in the park across the street from the church.

And one of the stories, 25 people came to Christ one afternoon. One afternoon, they saw people saved. I heard stories talking with Pastor Jack and Pastor John and Tim and Pete a few weeks ago about this bus trip that started in southern Arizona or somewhere in Arizona and went across the country on this tour of sharing the gospel that was not just reviving church but planning churches. Tri-State grew out of that movement. The Great Commission churches that we were a part of became part of that movement. God was doing this work all the way across the country. But what I've seen, having come to Christ in 1980, in the last 45 years, is decline.

The Great Commission church organization is a loose affiliation now, but the coordinated effort to spread the gospel doesn't happen anymore.

The Plymouth Brethren churches that I was a part of that were exploding in the 70s are in decline except in a few pockets. What happened?

[ 11 : 08 ] And I've asked the Lord over the years, why was I not born in 56 instead of 66? Because I want that.

I can remember sitting in an elders meeting in my 20s at Littleton Bible Chapel hearing the elders say, we have not seen someone saved in two years.

What's happening? Three or four weeks ago, a group of us had breakfast with one of the men who was in that elders meeting. And I asked him, what happened?

He said, John, there was a revival. I wasn't satisfied with that answer because that didn't tell me, that told me what happened in the 70s. It didn't tell me what happened in the 80s, 90s, and beyond. I'll tell you what happened. The philosophy of ministry for the church changed. And driven largely by very successful youth ministries in the late 70s, the consumer church was born.

[ 12 : 14 ] We decided to figure out ways that we could market, because it's more efficient, that we could market to the community and bring people into the church in mass and create a church culture that was attractive to people outside of the faith and then introduce them to Jesus here.

We shifted the responsibility from evangelism from us as individuals to us collectively. And it failed. It failed, brothers and sisters, completely.

But something else happened, and this is where it ties into our sermon this morning. We went from being a people who called people to discipleship, who said to them, if you walk with Jesus, the hope of the gospel is you conform yourself to the image of Christ, is you allow him to work in you, is the problems of life find their answer in Jesus.

But you have a role to play. And sometimes those words were pretty stern that we shared, even with people who didn't know Jesus yet. But instead, we decided that we needed to be nice.

We need to soften the gospel. We needed to be more attractional. And for a time, churches grew in number, but they declined in people who actually followed Jesus.

[ 13 : 31 ] And eventually, the changes in the culture at large infiltrated the church. And where we are now is we're seeing the greatest flight away from the evangelical church in the history of the United States.

More people have left the church in the last 25 years than came into the church in both Great Awakenings combined. Scary thought. But it's rooted, I think.

And we decided to be nice. We decided to soften emotion. So, we're going to look at Jesus this morning. Because Jesus, in this passage, is not happy.

He's frustrated, he's angry, and he reacts out of those emotions with both the Pharisees and the disciples. And I suspect that as I talk about Jesus in the next couple of minutes, you might think, John, Jesus wouldn't behave that way.

don't argue with me. I just read it. And I'm just going to unpack a little bit to help you see that there is a place for emotion.

[ 14 : 44 ] And we need to start expressing that emotion. So, let's look at it. So, here's the story. Let me catch my place here real quick.

Helps if you look in the right chapter. Little tip. we saw the feeding of the 4,000 on the east coast of the Sea of Galilee. They get in a boat. They go across. And as soon as they get across, they get out of the boat at Delmanutha.

And Jesus is attacked. Literally attacked by, not physically, but attacked by a group of Pharisees who are shaking their fingers. Now they want a sign. And what does it say? Sign deeply in his spirit. Sign deeply in his spirit. Many of us are parents. Have you ever made that expression? Moms, dads, grandparents?

If you haven't, I don't believe you. Or if you claim that you haven't. I did some research this week about sighing. Contemporary research is finding that sighs like that that are intentional serve two purposes.

[ 15 : 52 ] One, is it's an expression of frustration. And I think that fits the tone of Jesus' words that come next. Jesus is frustrated and he's expressing it.

Can I give you permission to express frustration with each other? That's part of speaking the truth in love. The other part, it's very interesting, the other part is when we sigh, the extra flow of oxygen, this is, sometimes I talk theology.

Today I'm going to get way out of my area of expertise and talk about physiology. When we take a deep sigh, it takes in more oxygen. It counteracts the instinct to fight or flight when we feel threatened.

What happens when we feel threatened is blood rushes to our extremities so we can run or fight.

Did you know that studies show that you get 30% dumber when the fight or flight kicks in?

I've read the research. You're 30% dumber. So you're probably not going to give the right response.

Jesus takes a deep sigh. He forces oxygen back to his brain so he can react properly.

[ 17 : 06 ] And you might think, Jesus wouldn't need to do that. Sorry, that's a little bit of a sarcastic tone. But sometimes, sarcasm is a good tool. Jim said it right.

He is human. Listen to Hebrews chapter 4. You should get hope from these two verses.

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things. But one who has been tempted in all things, just as we are, yet without sin.

Do you think Jesus was tempted when he got ambushed by a bunch of holy, you know, dressed up Pharisees? Yeah. I think he was tempted, yet without sin.

Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

[ 18 : 13 ] It's actually another part of sighing. It's a way of expressing. The same word that's used in Jesus' deep sigh is also used in Romans 8 of the groaning that the Holy Spirit does with us when we don't know what to pray.

So it's an expression of frustration. It's an expression of forcing oxygen to the brain. Jesus is modeling for us a way to deal with temptation without falling into sin. When you want to fight or run, take a deep breath.

pause for a second and allow your brain to retake control so you do the right thing so you respond properly. And it's an expression of prayer. Jesus felt strong emotions.

This is so important for us to understand because we honestly need to stop being so nice and instead speak the truth.

Not being jerks. Not being having license to just be rude. But when the need is there we need to speak the truth in love. So like I said a few minutes ago we have chosen to suppress that.

[ 19 : 27 ] This is a church-wide decision. This is American church culture. We're just nice people. I went through a season in the 90s when I was working with a group of Mormons. They were at a bigger company that I worked for and the whole nice approach to sharing the gospel didn't work because you know what?

You just can't be nicer than a group of Mormons. That's their whole thing. You just can't out-nice them. So that didn't work. But there's some problems if we're only nice.

First of all there's an internal thing. What if Jesus had not said something to the Pharisees? We internalize that stuff and we tend to resort to passive-aggressive behavior.

You know what I mean by that? Where we instead of directly addressing a problem we go around it. We try to find other ways of solving the problem without confronting the actual problem.

We take the long way around. Unlike Jesus' long way around that I described a few minutes ago where he had a purpose our long way around is actually avoiding something that we should do. So we go passive-aggressive.

[ 20 : 35 ] The anger gets misdirected so we yell at our spouse and our kids or we kick the dog. Because we're mad but it's misdirected. We gossip.

We don't talk about the person who we should be talking to. We talk to everybody around them. Inappropriate. Or we just avoid the whole thing altogether and the problem isn't solved. Externally we don't work through things to a better solution.

I'm reading a book on effective team what effective teams look like. One of the things is conflict. I'm going to give you an example without naming names.

But we had so Caitlin mentioned we've got a children's ministries team that started meeting. And Wednesday night we were working through some stuff and a couple of members of the team thought that they were coming from different perspectives and had a disagreement.

And there was some tension in the room. But they worked it out. They talked it through. Wait. What do you mean by that? Well what do you mean? Well what do you mean? And it went back and forth kind of like a kind of fierce volley for a minute.

[ 21 : 41 ] And then it was oh wait a minute. We agree. We're on the same page. We're coming at the same problem from different angles. That's where the perceived disagreement was but we're actually in alignment and we were able to move forward.

That's what health looks like folks. That's why being nice doesn't solve problems. We need to be able to talk freely with each other to go through conflict to the other side which is unity.

Do you know unity by the way is the number one trait of people who walk with God as a group? Number one. It's in Philippians Ephesians 4. God expects us to be united.

That's at the center of Jesus' high priestly prayer in John chapter 17. The other thing about speaking directly with each other is we help each other grow.

If you don't tell me where my warts are if I don't tell you how do we grow? If you need to blow your nose you know you got one of those things there and nobody tells you?

[ 22 : 46 ] Or you get up on stage and you're leading worship and your fly is down? I actually saw one poor guy in the front row going don't be here just so you guys don't need to worry this is years ago.

But you can't grow. You also leave people in their sin. Have you thought about that? One of the ways that Jesus deals with sin the Holy Spirit deals with sin in our lives is other people saying you know something?

That thing you need to work on that. I'm here I love you I continue to love you but you need to work on that thing. But if we don't share with each other we don't make progress. The Pharisees and the disciples were on Jesus' last nerve.

Why? Because the Pharisees were the spiritual leaders of Israel. They were Old Testament scholars.

They should have known better. But they didn't. They got stuck in a path that they decided and they wouldn't flex. And Jesus was frustrated with their entrenched refusal to flex.

[ 23 : 54 ] And the disciples he was frustrated with because he had just walked with them for two and a half weeks. He had done ministry with them. He talked with them. He probably pointed out the misbehavior of the disciples and they still didn't get it.

So he's frustrated. And he expresses that frustration. So he talked about the Pharisees. Now tell me you haven't done this moms and dads. You get in your car.

In Jesus' case you get in the boat. You go to Delmanutha. You're ambushed by the Pharisees.

That's it. Kids get in the car. Get in the boat. We're going back where we came. So they go back across the Sea of Galilee.

And Jesus says to them beware the leaven or Matthew it clarifies the teaching of the Pharisees the Sadducees and of Herod. I'm combining the two accounts in Matthew and in Mark.

And the disciples immediately go did you bring bread? I forgot bread. Did you bring bread? Oh Judas has bread. Of course he's got bread. And Jesus says oh my word are you kidding me?

[ 25 : 01 ] And I think this is the emotion. It's not guys don't you understand? Excuse me. No, no. I think Jesus stood up in the boat and said you've got to be kidding me.

Really? Have I been with you this long? And then he asked some four questions and this is going to form the rest of our message because the four questions tie to four miracles that he actually is in the middle of in this passage and in next week's passage.

I never saw this before but it's really cool how Jesus ties his lessons with his disciples to things he's actually physically doing. So he asks a question do you have a hardened heart?

What did he just talk to the disciples about? In Mark 7 the hard heart. He just talked to them about it. Do you have a hardened heart?

And of course we talked about the miracle that is promised in Ezekiel and Jeremiah we're going to read the passage in Jeremiah here in a minute about the new heart. The first miracle that Jesus is going to use as he's asking the disciples is your heart still hard?

[ 26 : 17 ] Have you received the heart transplant? Behold days are coming declares the Lord when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

My covenant which they broke although I was a husband to them declares the Lord. This by the way is why Jesus was frustrated with the Pharisees. This is in Jeremiah.

They should have known this passage. They should have known that the rules were not adequate. This is not new news. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days declares the Lord.

I will put my law within them and on their heart I will write it and I will be their God and they shall be my people. This is the day in which we live.

We have new hearts. They will not teach again each man his neighbor and each man his brother saying know the Lord for they will all know me. From the least of them to the greatest of them declares the Lord for I will forgive their iniquity and their sin.

[ 27 : 37 ] I will remember no more. Jesus is asking do you have the new heart? You want to talk about a harsh question?

sometimes brothers and sisters usually in extreme cases or repetitive behavior a good smack upside the head of somebody is to ask them do you know the Lord?

Are you walking with Jesus? Then why is this behavior continuing? That needs to stop. That's a hard question. Stop being nice.

If you're motivated by love that's speaking the truth in love. But look at it's a miracle. The new heart that comes with salvation and Jesus question is your heart still hard?

Sometimes we need to ask that of each other. The next question is having eyes do you not see?

We have new eyes to see and to prove the point Pastor Tim is going to deal with this next week.

[ 28 : 44 ] The next passage is Jesus heals a blind man. Jesus ties spiritual realities to stuff, to the things of earth. And in that miracle he's saying look I can do this I'm going to do it to you but we have new eyes.

If you are in Christ if you have put your trust in him you have new eyes to see through an entirely different perspective.

So the book of Habakkuk Habakkuk I love Habakkuk he's sarcastic he's blunt with the Lord I just I love the tone of the book and I love God's patience in the way he responds to Habakkuk it's just it's refreshing because it's very blunt which if you haven't figured this out yet I prefer direct conversation and Habakkuk is complaining God where are you why are you not working these days and this is what the Lord says this is Habakkuk chapter one look among the nations again I don't think this is a soft tone look at all these exclamation points look among the nations observe be astonished wonder God is at work these days we have to have the eyes to see to be aware first of all we need to be able to interpret the signs of the times in Matthew's account Matthew gives a lot more of the dialogue Jesus says to the Pharisees I'm not going to give you a sign pay attention to the signs of the times God is moving but the signs of the time are grim we're in the fourth quarter of human history and the urgency for us as believers is to step it up to be a part of what God is doing so we have new eyes to understand what's happening around us not to lose hope our hope is sure but we need to be aware of what's going on we have new eyes to see people in their brokenness we have to be aware of where people are hurting quick story when

I was in Seattle I worked for a mattress firm this was back in 2015 I had a month long training 16 people were in this training class one of the people in my class was a gentleman who was flamboyantly gay and if you were to step back and look at a class that's in Seattle Washington who would you think would be friendly to this gentleman and who do you think would be hostile the 14 people who were politically aligned and morally aligned with this man or the evangelical youth pastor who wanted to do nothing but teach the Bible where would you think the lines would be

drawn well you probably think that the 15 would be in favor and I would be the odd man out you would be wrong behind his back this poor man was mocked every!

[ 33 : 23 ] day people would not listen to him they condemned him not to his face but the one friend he found was a man who knew Jesus who could see beyond that sin to see a man who was so deeply broken by a terrible childhood and the mockery and the disdain of people around him and to just love him you have to have eyes to see that you are surrounded by people like that every day now this man telegraphed his hurts but as you walk through Walmart or Hy-Vee or go to Target if you are crossing paths with somebody I guarantee you you are crossing paths with somebody who is in pain who is facing a tragedy who has got some hurt in their life if you're in a crowd somebody is wounded wake up wake up open your eyes

Jesus is calling the disciples to that open your eyes gentlemen that's what God is calling us to so we need to be aware of the signs of the times we need to be aware of the people around us and we need to look at each other through an entirely different lens it says in 2nd Corinthians 5 that we are new creatures in Christ C.S.

Lewis wrote a sermon called The Weight of Glory and in it he talks about the fact that if we could see each other as we are before God as immortal beings every child that's conceived is conceived as an immortal being that will outlast the kingdoms of earth that will outlast the earth itself and if we were to see them as they really are we would be filled with loathing and fear or move to worship have you thought about that that we are new creatures in Christ as you look at each other as you serve one another you bear the image of Jesus do you treat each other that way do you love each other that way think about that we have to have eyes to see Jesus said to the disciples if you do it unto the least of these you've done it unto me that's in the latter half of

Matthew what's interesting is somewhere else I don't remember where the script is flipped and we are the hands of Jesus into other people's lives so as we serve the person receiving our service is Jesus it's like we're doing it to him and as we're serving we are Jesus we have to have the eyes to see so it's a new heart is your heart hardened do you not see having ears do you not hear having ears do you not hear redeemed people have new ears listen to this from from Isaiah chapter 30 verses 20 and 21 by the way Isaiah 30 is a very important chapter you should read it and read it and read it and think about it think about it because it is such a picture of what it means to not follow the

Lord and the grace that he's offering and the alternative he's offering Isaiah 30 verses 20 and 21 although the Lord has given you bread of privation and water of oppression the Israelites actually just Judah had gone to Egypt and it was a disaster an unmitigated disaster and God through Isaiah was calling!

[ 37 : 39 ] them to still in the midst of that disaster to turn around although the Lord has given you bread of privation and water of oppression he your teacher will no longer hide himself but your eyes will behold your teacher the new eyes and your ears will hear a word behind you this is the way walk in it whenever you turn to the right or to the left remember the story of Elijah he went to the cave and there was a great fire and God wasn't in the fire there was a mighty wind and God wasn't in the wind and then there was a still small voice he said Elijah why are you here what are you hiding from we need to tune our ears to that still small voice to listen it's certainly expressed in the pages of scripture it's spoken as we walk past somebody we feel that nudge of the

Lord saying you need to talk to him you need to talk to her we need to obey that voice we need to listen to the people around us nothing nothing says I love you more than listening to somebody just take it a minute to listen take the time to listen and hear people's stories tell you a secret tell you because some of you think that's just so far outside my comfort zone let me tell you a trick because believe it or not I'm an introvert I do not it's so hard for me to engage with people I've gotten better at it over the years but I went through years of feeling guilty for not engaging with people here's a trick tell somebody something about your day you know what I'm having a great day here's the magic how about you you better have some time because they will that little exchange opens them up and then all you have to do is go wow really tell me more really tell me more wow tell me more no joke tell me more you could do that all day long because we live in a culture that we don't listen to each other exercise those new ears listen to what people are saying and then as you listen as you hear their pain as you hear their story you can tell them appropriately about where what element of the gospel fits with what they're telling you might be part of your story or somebody you know where Jesus touched them which gives confidence to approach

God does that make sense so we need a transformed heart we need new eyes we need new ears and by the way I forgot to mention it didn't Jesus just heal a deaf guy spiritual truth is rooted in reality God shows us that he can do it's kind of the principle that you see at the beginning of Mark remember Jesus said the guy is lowered down to the roof by his friends Jesus turns to the guy and says your sins are forgiven the Pharisees say oh who does this guy think he is and Jesus says stop a minute just to prove that I have power to forgive sins stand up so spiritual realities the power of God is manifest so we can see it and touch it and feel it new ears Jesus heals the deaf man so he can hear and then the last miracle do you not remember how many baskets

I filled up do you remember how little you started with I intervened I intervened I was there we need to remember what God has done in our past to give us confidence today and hope for our future now the ultimate place that we do that is the Lord's Supper the reason we celebrate the Lord's Supper is because Jesus knows that we are forgetful and so we do the Lord's Supper do this as often as you are together until I return we remember tell you something else you all probably noticed we've been very strict about staying in the book of Mark whether I'm speaking or Pastor Tim or Pastor John we've been in Mark you're going to see an exception in a couple weeks the pastors decided several weeks ago that when

Pastor Jack speaks he has license to speak on anything he wants I'll tell you why our future depends upon our past and the anchor to our past and the bridge to our future is Pastor Jack it was his obedience to the Lord returning from Vietnam that allowed him to lead his wife to Christ she wasn't his wife yet and I heard that story on a sermon when I was applying for the job and then Jack as the Lord leads him has license to share what God is laying on his heart because his obedience to God established Tri-State Community Church and he allows us as a body to remember who we are and to follow his example

[ 43 : 31 ] Jack and I had lunch on Wednesday we get together every couple weeks and we were talking about finishing the race to finish strong to finish well that is what drives that man that drove him when he began and what was driving him to the end but we need to remember who we are who we were and how God worked it's the same God we need to remember and follow and step into that Romans 8 31 and 32 what then shall we say to these things if God is for us who is against us he who did not spare his own son but delivered him over for us all how will he not also freely give us all things it's important that we remember so we know what those things are does that make sense we need to know our past we need to remember so we can have confidence for the future we can step forward knowing that it's

God who is at work in us both to will and to work according to his good pleasure as we remember so it's our application we're going to bring it home don't frustrate!

your Lord my kids I have a face that my kids call the angry eyebrows if remember Veggie Tales Larry boy had an episode where he fought the angry eyebrows that look would silence my children it was so powerful the first church where I served the youth we were more in a U shape I was sitting on this side and a group of my high school students was goofing around during the sermon on that side and I watched six 15 and 16 year old boys doing this for 30 minutes because they didn't want to you that way but you have the choice don't frustrate the Lord we don't want him to say to us he will it's okay but we don't want him to say do you not yet understand remember you are a new person in Christ you have a new heart look around you see the world see the needs that surround you see where

God is working and step into act I'm cutting out a little bit listen to the voice of God revealed in scripture as you listen as you hear him speak to you in directing your path obey you may think it's weird it's okay God knows God works remember what he has already done for you count the blessings that you have go forth and obey look in your hands God calls you to do something you think God this is all I've got there's 5,000 people and all I have is a few fish God says I don't care I'm God just obey me and watch watch watch the thing I want you to remember that this is all of us when

I was in youth ministry my passion was to make the church see that children who know Christ have the same gifts that we do as adults and to let them let them do what they were called to do now as an adult pastor John pastor Tim and Pete and I got together on Sunday we all agreed that I'm in the end of the third quarter of my life they're in the fourth quarter but as we're in that those seasons of life we still have the spirit of God in us you may think I don't have the energy that I used to I don't have the strengths I don't have the wherewithal whatever your limitations are but God says just give

me what you got i'm god and watch let's close with this verse second corinthians nine eight listen to the absolutes in this sentence and

[ 48 : 13 ] God is able it's not up to us God is able to make all grace abound to you so that always having all sufficiency in everything you may have an abundance for every good deed what's our excuse and God is able to make all grace abound to you so that always having all sufficiency in everything you may have an abundance for every good deed my challenge to us this morning I'm sorry I went a little bit long this morning my challenge to us is to stop being nice stop restraining our emotion it's not just the negative stuff the frustration the anger as I transition from youth ministry to high school ministry or to adult ministry the message it was given to me is you need to tone it down you need to tone it down your passion is too much and I listened and I softened and I withdrew

I don't think that was God's voice we have a great God who died for us who has given us the greatest task that human beings have ever been entrusted with that's to share the good news of the gospel with the people around us we have the privilege of sharing in God's work of changing people's lives every day do it live out of your new heart open your eyes hear with your ears remember that whatever you offer to God he multiplies and he will do a work in these days he is just like he said to Habakkuk let's pray Lord we're so grateful that you are doing a work in our days that you are doing a work in us you're doing work for us you're doing work through us God you want to change people's lives you want to reach our neighbors with the gospel but you have chosen to limit yourself by us God we confess to you our fears we confess to you our reluctance to be made fun of or to be thought less of Lord we repent we want to turn from that to obedience to speak the truth to our neighbors to tell them that God loves them and he knows how to clean up their mess and we'll help them we'll walk along with them give us the courage to do that Lord let us be a people who are light in Dubuque who are salt in Dubuque God we pray! this in Jesus name Amen