

# The Apprenticeship to Jesus - Mark 6:7-13

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[ 0 : 00 ] So this is an example of how I've grown in ministry and working with preaching. The first time I ever preached, I was telling Brian this earlier, Brian and Jim, the first! time I ever preached, I was referred to a church just to do pulpit supplies. We were in Denver, Colorado, and we were invited to speak at this church in Craig, which is hours and hours away.

These people didn't know me at all. I didn't know them. Get to the church, and nobody would tell me what time the service ended. And I'm 21 years old. Don't do that. And so they wouldn't tell me. And so, okay, they said, however the Lord leads. Well, I had a full hour of notes. I didn't know how to limit my time back then. Several months later, I ran into one of the elders who hadn't made it that Sunday at a camp event. And I introduced myself. He goes, oh, I know who you are. You're that long-winded guy that Alex Strauch recommended. And I said, no, no, no, no, that's on you guys. So I think they learned as well that you need to give a guy a limit. So I know what time, and I'm setting a timer so that I am on my best behavior. I was a youth pastor for many years, and one thing you'll learn in youth ministry that the attention lasts only so long as the blood, you know, as it collects in your rear end. So it's great to be here. Thank you so much for the hospitality, for the, I mean, lots of conversations. I laid in bed last night with Kara and said, you're not going to believe this, but I think I'm out of words. If you know me, that's quite an accomplishment. So you guys have done good. It's been a great time. You know, I was thinking, I was listening to Brian and Hannah and Wednesday sing this morning. That hymn, Blessed Redeemer, Precious Redeemer. I love that title for Jesus, the Redeemer, because it's not just that He redeems us from our sins, which is what that hymn was talking about, but He also, the redemption process is an ongoing process through the course of our lives. He is working with us. That was the message of the last song, Rich Mullen's song,

All my days I will follow you. That is God working in us to build us, to work through us, to advance His kingdom. As we go into the passage this morning in Mark chapter 6, we're going to see a, excuse me, a snapshot of how God was doing that work in the disciples' lives. So what I want to do to open us in prayer this morning, I'm going to pray for you. And then this is a pretty momentous occasion for all of us, for you folks with a pastor search for Kara and I as we're seeking God's will for us to potentially to move here to Dubuque. So what I would ask is I'm going to pause after I'm done. I'm going to ask you to pray for me.

That I would be clear, that I would be looking at delivering God's Word as He intended it to be brought to you, that the idea of an audition for a job would be completely out of my mind.

[ 2 : 57 ] And that together we would be seeking God and drawing closer to Him. So let's pray together. Father, it's truly mind-blowing to me that we are called the children of God.

God, that because of Jesus' work on the cross, as we've accepted you, as we've been brought into your family, we are fellow heirs with Christ. We are sons and daughters. God, we don't deserve that, and yet you've brought us into that. And then it doesn't even stop there. But you continue to work in our lives. You cultivate a Christ-like character in us. You use us to advance your kingdom. You must love a challenge. And yet we get to be part of that work. Lord, this morning as we look at what you did with the disciples, and you sent them out and entrusted them with that job of sharing the gospel with people around the region of Galilee, Lord, I pray that we would see that echoing even into our own lives. We recognize what grace it is that we get to continue that work.

So Lord, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. If you folks would just take a minute to pray for me, I'd appreciate it. Amen. So turning your Bibles to Mark chapter 6, and as you're going there, I'm going to tell you a couple stories. I like stories. So when I was a young man, Kara and I went to a church in Colorado, Littleton Bible Chapel, one of our missionaries was a gentleman named Tim Butler. Tim worked for Youth Guidance, which is a ministry of Youth for Christ. He worked with at-risk

youth in the criminal justice system for the city of Denver. And if you met Tim, he was very forgettable. He was a very quiet guy, very reserved. If there's a crowd of people, Tim was off in the corner. He was an observer, very introverted man. I talked to him a few times. His kids were in our youth group. His daughter went through a program that Kara and I led when she was in high school. Had a number of conversations with

Tim's wife, but Tim just never made an impression on me. He wasn't usually at church on Sundays because he was doing services at one of the detention facilities around the city. And so Tim just didn't make an impression. So fast forward a number of years. I was a youth pastor in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and I went to a roundtable meeting for youth pastors that was being hosted by Youth for Christ Kalamazoo. So, you know, you're trying to build rapport. You're looking for commonalities. So I talked to this guy, to these gentlemen that were working with Youth for Christ. I said, hey, this is probably a long shot since we're in Michigan and I'm from Denver, but you go and not know a guy named Tim Butler. And the room got quiet and all of the guys with Youth for Christ turned and focused on me.

[ 6 : 13 ] What did I say? I said, you know Tim Butler? I said, well, yeah. So? He goes, Tim Butler changed my ministry. Tim Butler wrote the book on working with disabled youth for Youth for Christ. He has developed developed this ministry nationwide. He's the godfather. And I thought, Tim Butler? See, the problem was I was familiar with Tim. I thought I knew him. I never took time to find out who this man was.

And to my great loss, I always wanted to be a youth pastor when I was young. And here I've got it at my fingertips one of the best resources in the country and I completely missed him because I was familiar.

Let me tell you another story about familiarity. A story about a small town boy who decides to leave his home, heads out into the countryside. He's a religious teacher, becomes a rabbi, starts to bring together followers. And he's teaching more and more. He's becoming a little bit controversial. He pops up on the Pharisees' radar. You might know who I'm talking about. You may have heard this last week. He starts to do miracles. People are healed. Even raises somebody from the dead, a little girl.

And then he goes back home. Now, you know, when I go home, I get a pretty warm welcome. We went back to the church, this is 20 years ago now, but we went back to the church where Kara and I both, where we met and where I got saved. And it was like I'd never left. These people were just, oh, John's back.

[ 7 : 57 ] We thought you died. But there was this warm welcome and enthusiastic embrace. Well, what Jesus got was, who does this guy think he is? Where did he get this stuff? We know the rabbi that taught in our village and he didn't teach Jesus this. And what is this stuff anyway? And healing, did you see him heal? I didn't heal. All I remember about Jesus is that, you know, he worked for his dad and he was such a perfectionist. That table I bought from him took forever to finish because he wanted to get it just right. Remember that time he got lost at the temple? And then he goes and reads Isaiah 61 and says, this messianic prophecy, today it's fulfilled in me. Inadvertently, they fulfilled another prophecy from Isaiah. He was despised and rejected of men. They were familiar. They were too familiar. We live in an epidemic of familiarity in our country, in our world. We think we know stuff.

And we take as much as we know and we stop learning. And we miss out like I did. The people of Nazareth certainly missed out. They missed an opportunity for healing. They missed an opportunity for miracles.

They missed an opportunity to get to know the Son of God and to hear that there is life, that the Messiah actually is in your midst. And they were offended by his audacity with the claims he was making.

We need to be wary of familiarity. So there's some dangers with familiarity. Easy for me to say. We think we know all that matters. And so we dismiss. We go on what we know rather than what's actually true about somebody. We only go as far as we think it's necessary, then we stop. In some arenas, that's okay. I've been driving a car for a lot of years. I don't know anything about how it works. I know where the gas goes. I know to take it over to the oil change place to get maintenance done. But beyond that, that's enough. Familiarity that I have is sufficient. But in relationship, familiarity often becomes an obstacle. Like with my relationship with Tim Butler, and certainly like with the Nazareth, the people of Nazareth, and their relationship with Jesus. Familiarity, you know

the saying, what does familiarity breed? Contempt. That's exactly what we saw. And so even though I didn't feel contempt toward Tim, in a way there was even contempt there. I was dismissive. Familiarity is very, very dangerous. But Jesus offers us an alternative to familiarity. He's got a solution for it. He calls us into relationship. Not head knowledge. It's important that we know this book, but it's far more.

We're going to see that as we get into the passage this morning. Jesus invites us into relationship, and he builds that relationship through a process of apprenticeship. We're going to see that in the disciples' lives. So we're in Mark chapter 6. We're going to start at verse 7, and read along with me. [11:04] And he summoned the 12 and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. And he instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey except a mere staff, no bread, no bag, no money in their belt, but to wear sandals. And he added, do not put on two tunics.

The youth pastor of me says, yeah, you know the kids are going to find a loophole, and you're going to close the loophole. That's what Jesus was doing. Don't even take two tunics. And he said to them, wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave town. Any place that does not receive you or listen to you as you go out from there, shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them. So they went out and preached that men should repent. And they were casting out many demons, and they were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them. And then skip down to verse 30. The apostles gathered together with Jesus, and they reported to him all that they had done and taught.

And he said to them, come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while. For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. And they went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves. So let's talk for a minute about apprenticeship. When Jesus invited the disciples to follow him, in Matthew 4:19, Mark 1:17, he says, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. It wasn't a magic trick where all of a sudden they're fishers of men. They weren't fully released to that until the Great Commission at the end of, in Mark 16 and Matthew 28. But he says, I will make you fishers of men, follow me, and I will make you go through a process that will culminate in you being fishers of men.

Of course, as you know, they dropped everything, and they followed him. What they would have understood that isn't real clear in English is that that invitation from a rabbi to follow me was an invitation into a relationship. It was an invitation into a holistic learning process, life on life, where they got a chance to watch the master, emulate the master, and then eventually be released in their own right.

The key is that apprenticeship is rooted in relationship. It's not just a classroom setting. It's actually more side-by-side, actually, than this format. Actually, studies show that this is the least efficient way to teach. But when you're side-by-side, that's where people really, that's where the magic happens, good things happen. So Jesus invited them into relationship. Now, there's a great book, if you haven't read it, I highly recommend it. It's been around for years, I think since the early 60s. It's called *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, written by Robert Coleman. There's a number of more contemporary books that are all, he gave this permission, but they're all ripoffs of his method.

[13:55] What Coleman did is he took a deep dive into the Gospels and distilled out what was Jesus' method for raising up people. And what he came out of it, in part, was five steps. And if you've done any training, if you've done training in a business setting, you've seen these. They're everywhere.

But Jesus modeled them, and he's the source. But Robert Coleman's book is a great study in Jesus' methodology. So there's five phases of apprenticeship. The master models. So he is doing the work, he's narrating his work, and the disciples are just watching. His apprentices are just watching him do the work. And they're seeing, oh, this is the right way to do it. So that's step one. Step two is the master mentors. And so now he brings the apprentice next to him, and he'll say, hold this for me. Put your finger here. Do this thing. Here, I'm going to let you make this cut. But it's still, the master is leading, and the apprentice is getting a narrated blow-by-blow that he's actually involved in, in the process of learning to take on these tasks that his master is eventually going to pass off to him. And we see those. I don't have time to go into them, but if you read through the early chapters of any of the Gospels, you see those steps being done, where Jesus is doing that with his disciples. And he's coaching them. He's telling them why he does what he does. That was a lot of his teaching individually with, or with the 12, or with slightly larger groups. Then the next step

is the master monitors. Now we're seeing a role reversal, and the apprentice is doing the work, while the master says, don't do that. Do this. We were in Mexico on a mission trip several years ago where we were building a house. And the guy that was leading the volunteers was unbelievable. This short Mexican guy, big, huge hat. And Hector would be in the middle of, we were building a house. He's in the house. He's cutting drywall. He would literally say, this goes there, this piece goes there, this piece goes above the door. Oh, you, get off the roof. You're going to fall. Don't do that. And he was, I mean, his eyes were everywhere. That's this stage where we were doing the work, but Hector was making sure that the drywall pieces were where they needed to be, that nobody hurt themselves. That's, that's the third phase. The disciples in Mark chapter 6 are coming to the end of that phase. Because the next one is the master motivates. He says, boys, I believe in you. You're ready. You can imagine what the disciples were thinking. Some were thinking, yeah, I'm ready to go.

You know, Peter, let's go. I was ready last week. And Thomas is probably saying, I don't want you to take off those training wheels. I'm not leaving. Nope. I want to cling to the master a little bit longer.

So there's this range of emotion, but it's time. They've demonstrated enough capacity that he could turn them loose, and they're going to be sent out. But like a good master, he's going to prepare them.

[17:09] Now, there's one last step that I'm just going to touch on briefly. That's where the master multiplies. That's what we see happening in the day of Pentecost. When Peter preached, thousands came to Christ. In the next chapter 3, Peter and John heal a lame man at the temple. He goes leaping into the temple praising God. Another sermon, thousands of people come to Christ. That's the birth of the church. All of a sudden, these apprentices are now masters. They've been released. That's the final step.

That's God's goal. So the disciples, like I said at this point, are making that transition. So Jesus gives them a briefing. He's going to get them ready. So first of all, he summons the 12. Now, if you picture the scene after the mess at Nazareth, where the whole crowd rejected him, Jesus went around that part of northern Galilee and was teaching in the villages. He did that a lot. He was an itinerant rabbi.

And so he's going to different synagogues, opening the word, teaching them. I think a lot of teaching was just on the fly while he was healing. So he's surrounded by crowds. By this point in his ministry, he's got a lot of people who are attracted because they want the stuff that he offers.

And so Jesus pauses and takes the 12 and says, hey guys, come over here. We need to talk. And I imagine that Jesus actually had to tell people, no, you stay over there. I'm meeting with my guys for a minute. Can you imagine what they were thinking? I know with my parents, with my bosses, actually it was my wife, hey, I need to talk to you. Uh-oh. What did I do wrong?

It's usually not the case. I used to, Karen and I ran this leadership development program that part of my philosophy of ministry is praise gets a lot more momentum than, than, uh, correction.

[19:07] If you take care of people doing the right thing, the wrong thing usually doesn't happen. So, and all these kids that had worked with me knew this. But if I said, hey, come here, I want to talk to you for a minute. Every time the kid would look like a deer in the headlights.

99% of the time I was going to compliment them. And they knew that, but they still thought, uh-oh, what's going to happen? That's probably what the disciples were thinking. So Jesus calls them aside and said, boys, we're taking the training wheels off, whatever the equivalent was of the first century. We're going to turn you loose. But he's, he gets them ready. First of all, he's going to send them in pairs. Why pairs? There's a number of reasons. And I think it's important that you notice that Jesus paired them. They didn't pair themselves. Over the years, we've done a lot of, because I want to mimic this, this methodology, we would send people out in pairs. But one of the things I did is I split up friends because they were familiar with each other.

They, they, and that would weaken actually their effectiveness because they thought they knew each other. And so I would, I would split them up. And I even have kids say, we know you're going to split us up, but we don't want to be. It's like, well, bummer, you know I'm going to do it. So I'm sure Jesus split up James and John. But then he also put, I suspect, people together that didn't get along. Could you imagine, say, Simon the Zealot and Levi the tax collector? And both of them are going, seriously? Him? Because Jesus knew that they had things together that would strengthen them. They could learn from each other. I'm sure he did that as well. I made that up, by the way.

The Bible doesn't tell who the pairs were. And so Jesus pairs them up. Get together, guys. All right, now listen. This is what, how this is going to work. I'm going to give you authority over unclean spirits. Now Jesus is delegating authority. That's part of what a master does. As he's equipping his people, he's giving them more and more authority. He didn't give them all his authority. He gave them some, and he gave them very, very prescribed limits. This is what you're going to be able to do. You've seen me do it.

Now you're going to do it. And so they had that scope of authority. And we can assume, even though Mark doesn't record it, that based on what they did, he gave them authority to heal, and he gave them authority to preach, to deliver this message of repentance for the kingdom of God is at hand, which was controversial. But he gave them that authority. He gave them instructions.

These are the things you're going to need. How many of you have ever seen any of the Mission Impossible movies? One of my favorite things with Mission Impossible movies is where they gather around, and the lead dog is telling, you're going to do this, and you need to bring these tools, and you're going to do this, and you're going to do this. That's actually not what this was.

[ 21 : 48 ] Because in that scenario, these are all experts planning some impossible mission. What this is, is a group of guys who are novice. Deep down, they're scared. And Jesus is making sure they know these are the tools that you're going to need. These are the, this is the process you're going to follow. And interestingly, he doesn't tell them what to take. He tells them what not to take.

Because he's, he's stripping them of things that would become crutches for them. Because he also goes into a strategy. And his strategy is to, I want you to go through the countryside. You're each, I'm assuming you're all going to be assigned a village. You're going to go in there, and you're not there as beggars. I don't want you with a tin cup, but you don't have any resources.

You have no money, no change of clothes. You're just, you're just the two of you. And I want you to find somebody that will welcome you into their home and extend hospitality. I'll tell you the reason for that. That I've learned over the years, when you find somebody who resonates with you like that, that's somebody who's ready for the gospel. And it opens up doors and you get access to their friend group. And that's what Jesus knew would happen with the disciples. But he set them up.

You're going to have to find this person. And I suspect what probably happened is they got to talking to somebody in the town square, and the person would say, hey, it's five o'clock. I'm hungry. Why don't you come over for dinner? That's where they go. For another village person says, it's five o'clock. I got to go. Be warm and be filled. And off they went. That's the village where they shake off the dust. But it gave them a clear framework of how they were to do the work and how they were going to connect with people. And then the last part is, actually, that's a sum total of all of the briefing that he gave them, and then he sends them out. And I'm sure that they went with fear, and I'm equally sure, having been in this role, actually been in both roles over the course of my life, the Apostle John says, nothing fills me with greater joy than to see my children walking with the Lord. I love that. And I think that was Jesus' feeling as he's walking, seeing his guys step out in obedience, doing what they were supposed to do, following in his footsteps. So I'm sure Jesus is excited, and I'm sure he conveyed to them, guys, you've seen me do this. You've done some of it. You've baptized people. You can do this.

You have my authority. Go. So they went out to the villages, and they were successful. They were casting out many demons. They preached the gospel of repentance. People were healed enough that Herod got wind of it. That's next week's sermon. But it was enough that it got Herod's attention and brought him in. So off they went. They preached the message. And then at the end, they took a break. They rested. That's important as well.

[ 24 : 54 ] How many of you have heard of the 10,000 hours thing? If you do something for 10,000 hours, you're an expert? Malcolm Gladwell's an author that popularized that. The guy who actually made that discovery can't stand Malcolm Gladwell because that's not the whole story. If you want to learn how to golf, if you whack away at a golf ball for 10,000 hours, you're not going to become Tiger Woods.

You're going to cement in bad habits. And all you're going to be good for is miniature golf. But if you practice with a master and debrief and make course correction as you go, those 10,000 hours lead to skill development and progression. And eventually, you become an expert.

That's what Jesus was doing here. He calls them together, and he says, let's talk. Tell me what went on. What went well. What didn't go so well. Do you think maybe you may have done something for this village to reject you? Now, obviously, I'm projecting. But I think that's probably

how the conversation went. And he celebrated. We see that in Luke's gospel. Jesus celebrated to see the fruit that came of their work. Jesus' ministry was extended six times because there were six pairs.

And so Jesus debriefed them and gave them a break because people were everywhere. So that's kind of a look at what Jesus was doing there. Let's bring it to us.

Because like Paul says in Timothy, the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. We want to be people who love God and love others.

[ 26 : 38 ] We want to be pure of mind so we're credible in our witness. And we want to be people who are going out in faith trusting God, just like the disciples did. They trusted. So God has called you. And you are somewhere on that five-point spectrum. There's actually a sixth one that I didn't cover. The sixth one is at the beginning. You have to answer the call. And so that's the first question. Jesus is calling. Have you answered the call? Have you turned away from what was your way of life to accepting a new way of life in obedience to Jesus as his apprentice? Because that's the invitation. Now, does that mean you're instantly, magically transformed into a superhero of Jesus?

No. Just like disciples, you've got to go through a process. But that first step is answering the call. If you have not or aren't sure, you need to speak with someone who can walk you through that process and what that looks like. But he's calling us. And I would challenge you to take time to think, where am I in that process? Am I watching the master do his work? And I'll tell you the way the Lord does that is he will pair you with somebody who's a master. I've heard stories all weekend about Jack being the master, training people, leading them to that first step, and then modeling, modeling that process, turning them loose and seeing his spiritual grandchildren, great-grandchildren.

That's what God does with us, is when he invites us into discipleship, ideally, we're paired with somebody who's older and wiser and more experienced. Maybe not by much, but they're ahead of us. And we go forward. That was certainly the story of my life. So the question for you is, where are you in that?

Now, there's one thing that I haven't talked about a lot, and I want this to be at the end so it sticks with you. The apprenticeship to Jesus, being his disciple, a follower, certainly is about becoming more skilled at extending God's kingdom, doing the job that you're called to. But what Jesus knows about you and me is that nothing, it's really interesting how God created us, there's nothing that builds intimacy in a relationship more than work. It's really interesting. When I was a youth pastor doing camp work, we used to run small teams in missions in the Dominican Republic, my best training was when I brought somebody alongside of me, and not just training, but if I wanted to get to know somebody, we'd work together. And as we worked, we would talk. It's almost like that distraction of digging a hole or building something opens the door for a relationship. And ultimately, that's what Jesus wants. He wants a relationship with you. He doesn't want you to do a job. The job is secondary. He wants you to grow in intimacy with him and friendship. What grace that we can be friends of God.

Think about that. You have been invited to follow Jesus, to enter into a relationship with him, to follow him, to reach people with the gospel, to share with them the hope that you've received. And he's going to equip you and send you with his authority and everything that you need or tell you what not to take. Where are you in that spectrum?

[ 30 : 25 ] Are you growing? There's another thing that I just want to make you aware of as we round out to the end.

I'll tell you another story. We lived in San Antonio a few years ago, and Kara met a young woman named Kaylee. Kaylee and her Ben had felt called by God to move to San Antonio with their little girl, Logan. Beautiful little baby girl. Logan was great. So were Ben and Kaylee, too. But they had moved to San Antonio. They were living with another family that, very similar to this, they had met this other couple, and the couple said, hey, you can stay with us until you get your feet on the ground. And so they met. They were staying at this couple's house, but it was time for them to move on.

So we knew that there was an apartment in the complex we lived in, so Ben and Kaylee moved in. Kaylee made extra money by doing flowers for weddings. And so she got this huge wedding one Saturday, and she started to get nervous.

It's a lot of flowers, a lot of table decorations, all the runners, all that stuff that goes in with it, and this is going to be tight. Then she got a call from the florist. Your flowers are a day late. And she said, I'm not going to make it. So she reached out, because she knew Kara had interest in floral design.

[ 31 : 51 ] Said, hey, can you help me? Sure. So Kara called me and said, hey, I'm going to be over at Ben and Kaylee's. So I got on the phone and started calling members of our small group. Said, hey, I know nothing about flowers, but I'm going over there to help.

I just know that the pretty end goes up and the stick side goes down. But if you can do that, come along and help. And so from Thursday morning until Saturday, we had a rotation of, I think, what, 15 or 20 people that did not know Ben and Kaylee.

They hadn't started coming to our church yet. These are godly people. They love the Lord, but there was no relationship there. But they came in and they helped. And we got, we're seeing all this, these flowers produced.

By the way, if you use eucalyptus as the core of your arrangements and you do it in your house, your house is going to stink like eucalyptus for days. So just a warning. So they did the, we realized Friday night, about 9 o'clock, we did it.

They're going to be able to get these things delivered. And here's the punchline. This is what I want you to think about. So the disciples, when they went out, they were doing signs and wonders, right? They were healing, they were casting out demons.

[ 33 : 08 ] In Acts 4, the young church asked God to validate their message with signs and wonders. So Kaylee went around her apartment to each of us and looked each person in the eye.

And she said, you are a sign and a wonder. And I said, and I thought, that's a little over the top. I thought, well, that's an exaggeration. I just, all I did was sweep up the eucalyptus leaves because that's all I was good for. And she said, you, John, are a sign and a wonder. Well, that really bugged me.

So I started thinking about it. And I realized I was wrong. Kaylee was right. Brothers and sisters, we are signs and wonders. I heard a story about a group of you banding together to buy an Apple watch for Becky Krause.

You're a sign and a wonder. Not only did you bless Becky, but if she's out and she tells somebody about that watch, what do they hear?

[ 34 : 18 ] People who love Jesus take care of each other. The love of God has infected their hearts and they love others. That draws people in as much as a healing. The friendliness that is here.

The way you greet each other. I've watched. You're a sign and a wonder. The way you care for each other. I watched Tim and John and Jack at different contexts over this last weekend greeting people, going out of the way to make sure that they remember people's names.

Tim stopped our conversation on Thursday night to talk to one of his former students who works at Applebee's. These men are signs and wonders. We are the vehicle of the gospel to the people that we meet every day.

And the question that I want to leave you with is, do you recognize that? You are a sign and a wonder. And as we are functioning in the way that God has called us to function, people cannot help themselves.

They will come to you and ask you, tell me about this Jesus. Tell me why you are the way they are. Tell me why you are the way you are.

[ 35 : 34 ] Time doesn't permit it this morning, but what I would challenge you to do is just kind of think this through. Think through what we've talked about today. Where am I on this apprenticeship to Jesus? Where am I in my relationship with Jesus?

Do I trust him? Am I willing to take the risk to talk to somebody I don't know? Who am I discipling and bringing along? And do I recognize that I'm a sign and a wonder and am I entering into that? Just between you and the Lord and ask him to show you, number one, where you're doing it. I think God loves affirming our good behavior. So listen to him speaking to you.

And if he says, you know, you could do more. You blew right past that person over at Culver's or at the grocery store. Maybe you should have stopped. Next time, stop. I'll tell you a challenge.

This is my last word. I heard people talking about being prompted by God to do something. I'd never had that experience. And I decided next time that happens, I'm going to do it. That's the Holy Spirit, folks.

[ 36 : 41 ] I have had conversations with people that I never would have had because I was afraid. I come across as an extrovert. I do not like approaching strangers.

And yet, I can't tell you the number of times. I've just listened to that prompting. And all of a sudden, I'm meeting another believer. And we're celebrating the Lord Jesus together. Or I've got an opportunity to share my faith or just to love on somebody.

And show the love of Christ. Listen to that prompting. So let's pray. Father, just thinking back to our worship this morning.

That worship song that Rich Mullins wrote so many years ago. That I will follow you. For all of my days, I will follow you. Lord, I pray that you would let that be our cry.

That we would follow you. That we would enter into discipleship with Jesus. And that we would see your transforming work not only in our lives, but as you are rebuilding us from the inside out.

[ 37 : 42 ] That the people around us would see that. And that they would want to know more. And Lord, I pray for each one of us here, myself included, that when someone asks us that question, that we would be bold enough to say, oh, that's Jesus.

Can I tell you about him? Give us a boldness to ask that question. And to enter into a friendship with somebody in which we can have the opportunity to share the gospel with them.

God, thank you for your work that you do in our lives. That you are continuing to work. Thank you for your patience with us. God, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.