

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

Dave Owen

SERIES

Reaching People

PART

4

TITLE

Pursuing People

SCRIPTURE

John 4:1-42



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Good morning to you, Providence. My name is Dave, one of the pastors, and it's a joy to be able to teach you today. If it's your first time with us, we say a special welcome to you, and it's great to see you. If you're online, it's great to have you. If you have a Bible, let's open them or you can turn them on to John chapter 4. If you don't have one, if you're new to maybe to Christian faith and you're exploring, we're so glad to have you. Under the chair in front of you, there's some Bibles there, and so you can grab that. And that's a gift from us to you, and I love for you to take that with you. But we've been walking through, and we're concluding the series today, four weeks of just really trying to see people the way God sees people, the way Christ sees people. And today, we'll look at an incredible encounter with Christ and as he pursued this individual.

I'm going to pray that God would just change us through that. Our mission at Providence goes like this, we say it quite a bit, but it's a mission to glorify God. We want to honor God. We want to glorify God. We want to, just in all things, bring glory to him by introducing all peoples to Jesus Christ and then helping them grow and love him all their life. And that's a desire for us, of ours as a staff, as a Church. And we believe that the way we will introduce all people to Jesus is to intentionally extend ourselves to the point of discomfort. To bless those that are far from Jesus in hopes that we would reach many. Now, it's fascinating what the Bible teaches about how he does that. His tool in a sense, of how he does that, is actually you and me, for those who are followers of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5 says it like this. It says, "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God ...". Now, think about this, "God making his appeal through us." So, think about that.

So Almighty God, Creator of heavens and Earth, he makes his appeal. I just wouldn't do it that way, right? Because I'm like, we're broken. We're all messy. Why do you want to use broken, messy people to reach broken and messy people? And he said, "That's why." Because broken and messy people can reach broken and messy people. And he says that he's going to make an appeal to humanity through those he's already reached. To be able to reach more. It's remarkable to think that that's the way he does it. Those that he saves, he sends. And those he calls to himself, he commissions. And so, today we're going to lean in and look at Jesus and learn from Jesus, how he pursued people. So let's pray together, and we'll dive in. Father, thank you for this time. I pray that you would open our eyes and hearts to see with clarity how God, to live, and to lean in, and to look to Jesus, and represent him in a broken world as broken people. So God, use your word to mold us and shape us this morning. We pray in Jesus name, amen.

So John chapter 4, the context is pretty remarkable because John 3, you have Jesus encountering a Jewish religious man. So he's engaging with him in conversations because this man's trusting in his self-righteousness to be made right with God, and that doesn't work. There's not enough righteous deeds for you and I to do to merit favor with God, so he's encountering him. And then he goes to John 3:16. So John 3, the first few verses, he engages this Jewish leader. And then he goes, John 3:16, many are familiar with that. Just says, Jesus says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his son, that whoever believes on him should not perish but have everlasting life." And so, if you're a 1st century reader of this narrative, this story, you're going to be really perplex when it says for God so loved the world. Because the Jewish culture thought that he loved them, he chose them to reveal himself to. Gave to the law. Jesus came, his ethnicity was a Jewish man. They're just

thinking, “Oh, it’s all about us.” And in John 3, you would lean into the text if you were a 1st century reader to say, “What is this God loves the world that he sent his son?”

Well, then what happens in John 4, he actually illustrates his love for world. That he goes to someone other than a Jew to share the gospel. Matter of fact, he’s going to cross some intense racial barriers to do it. And this is what we’re going to see here. So with a longer text this morning, I’m just going to work our way through three portions of the text one at a time. So let’s read first a few verses of chapter 4, and we’ll look at three truths that maybe will help us to reach people. It says, “Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John. Although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples. He left Judea and departed again for Galilee.” In verse four, “And he had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. And Jacob’s well was there. And so, Jesus reared, as he was from his journey was sitting beside the well. And it was about the six hour.”

So first thought this morning for us to just walk through is that Jesus calls us to go out of our comfort zone to reach people. He calls us to go out of our comfort zone to reach people. Notice verse 4, verse 4 is where the hammer is dropped. The mic is dropped. He just says, “He had to go through Samaria.” He’s crossing intense historically racial lines because of a love that propelled him to reach people. Think historically what’s happening. Notice this map behind me, where it shows the kingdom that was divided. Israel was divided in 922, was divided into a Northern kingdom and a Southern kingdom. And the Southern kingdom was known as Judah and the capital was Jerusalem. And the Northern kingdom was known as Israel and its capital Samaria. And what happened in 922 is this divided in 722. So about a couple 100 years later, you had the Assyrian army came in, attacked the Northern kingdom. Took over the Northern kingdom in a sense. And then you have hundreds of years of Jewish people that are living there and Assyrians that are living there.

They eventually would intermarry and intermingle. And so, you end up having a new generation that comes from them. And those Assyrians and those Jews, from that, you got the Samaritans. This is where they would come from. And the Jewish people in the Southern kingdom hated Samaritans. Matter of fact, they wouldn’t even pass through, they didn’t want to the dirt in that part of the world to get on their feet because they thought they would then all be unclean. They were so prejudice and righteous and prideful. And Jesus models what Jesus models for us, he had to go to Samaria. Because he knew there were people who needed what he offered. And there’s some in your life and some in my life that oftentimes we go out of the way to avoid. Do we not? And they need to hear. And we need to get close enough to engage with them. And we need to extend ourself to the point of discomfort to bless them. And so, the question this morning is, where does he have you going? Where does he have me going?

Some are thinking right now, I know in two weeks I got to go to a table at Thanksgiving. And some of you want to be there, and some of you don’t. It’s always a little tension sometimes. But listen, I will tell you this. If you want to stay in your comfort zone, then stay silent. And don’t say a word. If you want to stay in your

secure comfort zone, right. Listen, the early church, the early church was not persecuted because they believed the gospel. They were persecuted because they proclaimed the gospel. They spoke. And the reason we can speak is because God has spoken to us. He has spoken to us loudly through his son. The reason we can go into hard situations is because he has already gone to the hardest situation. Ultimately the cross, where he endured God's wrath and received it upon himself and died for the sin of the world. Was buried and then rose from the dead. See, gospel going and gospel sharing is rooted in gospel growing and savoring what he's done. The fuel to go reach is anchored in the fact that he came and has reached us.

And he's using ordinary people to proclaim an extraordinary God. This is what he's doing in our city. This is what he's doing in our world. This is what we're going to start a new series, let the nations be glad, over the next few weeks. Our missions festival is next week. And we're excited that we've been talking about reaching people here. But we're talking about reaching people there, all over the world. And one of those that we're going to hear, from a friend, who's coming to kind of give us some news of what God is doing is a Syrian who is moved and had to go to Northern Iraq to minister to people. God saved him and then sent him. He's legally blind. And when he oversees these churches and he teaches and he preaches, he uses an iPad really close to his face with the largest font that's available to be able to read the scriptures. And our team that we sent, when you go to Northern Iraq you send smaller teams. And so, our team went to Northern Iraq and they came back and reported just recently, the last couple of weeks.

And they said, that this individual that's helping a church planting movement in-house churches in Northern Iraq. Then in June, there were 16 house churches. And when they got there in October, there were 34 house churches. And God's moving, because they had to go there. God's called them. Dude, where is he calling you to go? Where? And listen, you can go because he has come. And not only has he come, but he says in Matthew 28, that he came and he said, "After the resurrection, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." That's saying that all authority rests the day you breathe and the day you don't breathe. All authority has been given to Jesus. He's numbered our days. He knows our days. And so, he says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." Listen, he calls us to go out of our comfort zone to reach people. Where? Where is he calling you to go? Where is he telling you to step out? Because he says, "I'm going to be with you. And I'm going to use you to make an appeal on my behalf." It's a promise that he says. But notice, secondly, Jesus, he compels us to turn everyday conversations to spiritual conversations.

He's compelling. He's the subject matter of our conversations, right? And so, notice in verse 7 how he masterfully does this walking through this text. Notice in verse 7, a woman from Samaria came to draw water. And Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink," for his disciples had gone way into the city to buy food. And the Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you a Jew ask for a drink for me, a woman of Samaria? For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans." And Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you give me a drink, you would've asked him and he would've given you living water." And the woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with and the well it's deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as

did his sons and his livestock.”

And Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. And the woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty. I have to come here to draw water.” Notice just a couple of things really fast. It’s fascinating, in verse 6 we learned that Jesus is weary. It’s a long trip. It’s a hot day and he is wearied and he is weak and he wants something to drink. He wants some water. Listen, it’s oftentimes when you and I are weak and we are weary. And probably more than not, right, that we don’t feel like sharing. Sometimes we feel like we have to be on a spiritual high, right? You go five hours without sinning, Lord’s Supper, three days in the word without missing something. And we might say something. And in our weakness, we still speak.

In our weakness, we still speak because his grace is sufficient to move through that. Notice in 1st century Judaism culture, in verse 7 she’s kind of shocked about this. The whole conversation is, because you don’t have a Jewish rabbi interacting with a woman, especially a Samaritan woman. And so, Jesus, what’s he doing? He’s shattering all by and pride and customs and racial tensions because he sees people and he kindly engages in a conversation. He knows people are made in the image of his father and he desires to interact with them. She’s a Samaritan. She’s shocked. It’s the sixth hour, we learn in verse 6. It’s probably the hottest part a day. She’s by herself. Most women in 1st century culture would travel together, and they would go when it was cooler. She’s by herself and at the hottest part of the day, she’s a social outcasts.

She doesn’t want to be seen. She’s probably easing up to the well looking over her shoulder left and right and wondering if anybody’s even going to see her. And, oh, somebody’s sees her. The very son of God sees her. And he, what is he doing? He speaks, and she’s even shocked. But he transitions the conversation from earthly water to eternal water. It’s the greatest of metaphors. She’s there looking to quench her thirst. And he’s saying, “You have a thirst in your soul that only I can quench. And you’re looking in all the wrong places to get it done.” He says, “Not just, I’ve got a system for you or another type of well, I’m actually the spring of living water.” It’s play on words. Is it not? “That’s going to well up in you, that would never ever come to an end.” Verse 13 and 14, he takes the practical immediate need and turns it to identify the great spiritual urgent need. He’s engaging her where she is.

He’s come to her. He’s meeting her where she’s at. And he’s exploring her spiritual demeanor, but he’ll move to exposing her spiritual drought. And for you and for me, Jesus, he’s the one. He’s the one that has to compel our conversations. He’s the most noteworthy subject to be talked about. He’s the son of God. He’s the very one who has lived that the life that we could not live. And so, how do we take trivial everyday conversations and turn them to eternal truth fill things about Jesus? And here’s what I would suggest to you. I would suggest to you that, what’s on your heart is probably going to come out of your mouth. Whatever you are thinking through. And listen, when you’re in love with Christ, when you have been captivated by his glory and all that he has accomplished that you could not accomplish. And you start your days in this book and in this word

and remembering all that he has done, right? It's like a song starts to well up in your heart and then it will come out of your mouth.

And when Christ is there, it comes out. It can be choppy at times, right? It's not going to flow in this great incredible gospel presentation. Sometimes it's just choppy. Sometimes you're having a bad day. You're in spiritual slings and you're fighting through things. And yet at the depth of your heart Christ is still King. And you speak, and sometimes it's just choppy when it comes out. But it comes out. I remember when I fell in love with Jules and we got engaged, I didn't have to go to a class to train people to let them know I was engaged. It just came, right. I'm at the Harris Teeter, we're checking out. She's here. They've got the name tag. So I just call them by name. I'm like, "What's up, John? How you doing?" He's like, "How you know me?" I'm like, "Well, you got a name tag, bro. Hold on." And he's like... I'm saying, "Man, you having a good day? Yeah. May ring it up." And I'm like, "Hey man, this is Jules, man. She could be my wife in six months." Boom. How you like that?

And so, he is just kind of look at me. Wait, but he can't go anywhere because you got to ring me up. Right. So I got him. So I got him. But it just came out. I said, "Bro, John. She said yes, I'm shocked. She said, yes bro. Praise God. Have a good day, John. We'll see you later." Right. Next people. Right. Bing them up. It just comes, when you're in love. 1st Peter says it like this, "In your hearts, honor Christ. The Lord is holy. In your hearts, every room..." We've got some front room. We've got some living rooms. We've got some rooms in our heart. We've got some rooms, some closets way back in the back. We want to keep the door closed sometimes. When every room he's honored as Lord, right. He's going to start coming out your mouth. But the back house of the house is dark, you don't want anybody in there. You just keep that door closed. You're not confessing and living in the light. He's probably not coming out.

But when you're clean before God, he just moves. You can't help but say what he's done. Listen, listen, when you and I contemplate Christ in his cross, the song takes shape in the heart and the subject becomes him and he comes out of your mouth. This is what happened with Peter and John. Peter and John in Acts 4. It's fascinating text, Peter and John. I mean, they've preached. They've seen incredible things happen. They get arrested. They get questioned. And the guys questions, if you read Acts 4, the tension of going back and forth is pretty amazing. Because they come to them and they're questioning them, and then they go off on their own in the corner. What should we do, man? Lives are being changed. I don't know what we could do. Then they go back and they're like, "Hey, y'all got to calm down talking so much.

And then they come back and they're like, "Well, should we let them go? Or should we," we ought to keep moving. Keep on. Man, people go crazy because lives have been changed and we can't really stop this, but we can stop them from speaking. That's what we'll do. So we come back and we have a verdict. "Hey, you got to start speaking. We'll let you go." And they respond in verse 20. They say, "Ask for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." As for us, we cannot help. Are you there in your heart, that you cannot help but speak about what you have seen and heard about the savior. And listen, your mouth will never be

compelled to share him if your heart has never been captivated by him. And so, his grace and his mercy has been fully lavished on your ears. If you're here or watching, you're at a place where you, there's 3 billion that have never heard this, but you're in a place this morning that you're able to hear what Christ has done for you. And you should rejoice in that.

And this is what he's done. He's lived the life that you and I cannot live. And he died the death that we deserve. And he was buried. And yet the third day he rose from the dead to validate he's the son of God and that he overcomes sin and death. And he brings strength for everyday living and hope for eternal life. This is what he does. And so, what do you do with that? If you've never been captivated by this. Listen, if you have been captivated, don't get over it. And if you haven't, we would encourage you today to trust Christ. To admit that you need him and to believe on him and what he's accomplished. And to confess and commit your life to him. And follow him today. Do that today if you haven't done that. He'll never come out of your mouth if he's not on your heart. He just won't. I remember, the Lord convicted me one time coming back from a mission trip. I had gone with some pastors and we had spoke at these conferences and we're speaking, we're sharing the gospel.

We're encouraging other pastors. And I'm on the plane flying back, we're flying into to London. And as we're flying in, I was sitting beside an Englishman and somehow I got the middle row. I'm not sure how that happened, but it's not a fun one, but I'm just there. And you're just there, you say, "God, you ordained this. And so, I'm sitting here." And I'm saying like, "I feel the spirit saying just to talk to him." I'm like, "God, I just talked to a bunch of people in another country. Isn't that good right now?" And he's like, "Listen, you got the public stuff down. I need you to speak for me in the private as well. And just the 101." You can do all this up here, but you need you about this right here. That's what I'm about. Making disciples that make disciples one at a time. And so, I start engaging the conversation. And as I'm engaging the conversation, found out he is a bright man from businessman and he lives in England. And he was an atheist. And so, very cordial we had a phenomenal conversation about hour so long.

We exchanged contact and went on our way. I wish to say, "Oh, it was amazing, incredible experience." It was, because I got to talk about Jesus. Didn't hear a word from him for some time. And about two years later, I get an email from this gentleman in England. And he recounts the conversation. He says, "I know you hadn't heard from me in two years." He goes, "But I just want you to know I'm still thinking about our conversation. I hope you're well," and left it. So listen, when you share... Listen, Corinthians 3 says it like this. It says, "Some plant and some water, but he who plants and he who waters is nothing. It's God who brings the increase." You just keep planting the gospel seed, and you just keep loving and blessing and encouraging. And then God does what God does. And so, what is the subject of your conversations? And how could he transition your everyday conversations to gospel conversations? He can do it last and quickly as Jesus.

He confronts the idols of all those we desire to reach. He confronts the idols of all those we desire to reach. Notice what he does in verse 16-19, Jesus said to her, "Go and call your husband and come here." And the

woman answered him, "I have no husband." And Jesus said to her, you are right in saying I have no husband for you have had five husbands. And the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." And the woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet." Was he ever a prophet? Listen, this is what he's doing in verse 16. He's not expressing judgment in the conversation. He's exposing folly in misplaced love in the conversation. It's her life, right? It's a life on a quest to be accepted, to be loved, to be cherished. And if you live that apart from Jesus, you will keep giving yourself to multiple men only to be left wanting more. You need an encounter with the living God.

John 3, the man, the self-righteous religious man. He keeps trusting in all of his accomplishments. And all of these systems are broken from sex to success, to self-righteousness. They're all broken. And Jesus, what he does in a unique conversation, he's exposing the longing of the heart. And he is the one that can meet the deepest need and also forgive the darkest sin. Psalm 115 says, "God is in the heavens, he does as he pleases. And their idols are silver and gold and work of human hands. Their mouths don't speak, their eyes don't see, their ears don't hear, their nose don't smell, their hands and feet don't move. Those who make them become like them, and so do all who trust them." This is what idols do. And idols, anything that you love more than God, and many in our city love things more than God. We have to navigate conversations with them that would help expose the lies behind idols, because they're lying all the time from popularity to position, to money, to power, to whatever it is. Relationships, whatever it is.

And the way you navigate it is you help them understand and see that idols, they'll never... If you set your goal on something to obtain and you obtain it, it becomes everything to you and you obtain it. It doesn't fully satisfy your heart. And if you set your eyes and your aspirations on something to grasp and get that you think is going to ultimately fulfill and satisfy you and you don't do it, it's not going to ever forgive you. It just haunts you and whispers lies to you. And Jesus is the only one that can fully satisfy you and forgive you, all at the same time. That's what Jesus does. And look, many won't be reached unless we help expose their unmet longings. And people, listen, people, they're made in the image of God. They're not projects. They're precious image bearers of God. All ethnicities, all colors, made in the image of God. And this is what's offensive. The gospel is offensive so you and I don't have to be. Jesus does what Jesus does by the power of his Holy Spirit.

He convicts of sin and righteousness and judgment. And we have to be a people who learn to pursue people and then out narrate their life. And what I mean by that is, to tell them a better story from this book than the story they are living in and trying to achieve themselves. And Jesus, what's he doing? He's not just making bad people good. He's making dead people alive. And those he confronts, he changes. And those he changes, he commissions. And those he saves, he sends. And those who are reached, reach. This is what she did. She goes back in the city. She just tells everybody about Jesus and what he's done. And John 4:41, the end of this story, it says, "And many more believe because of his word." And they said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe for we have heard ourselves and we know that this is indeed the savior of the world." Ordinary people talking about an extraordinary God, this is what he does. This is what he's doing even among our churches.



I'm encouraged by churches in our city and pastors who teach and do these outreach events. But I'm super encouraged when some of our people live life on mission and engage people where they are. For one, it's a retired engineer in his upper '80s. Buried his wife a few years ago. Moved into a retirement center. Not a nursing home, but a retirement center where it's functioning. He has his own kitchen. And they move, drives. He comes to church, praise for us as a church. Went to the administration of this particular retirement center and cursed them some time ago. They have, there's a theater inside of this hall where they watch movies. And probably a little earlier in the day, but that's all right. And so, they move in and then they're watching movies. And then he goes and says, "Hey, could we live stream our church service into the theater?" And God opened that door for that to happen.

And then COVID hits and they can't gather. And so, he's praying. Again, he's retired engineer living on mission, wanting to introduce as many people to Jesus in his last years of his life. And he says, "Well, is there any other options of, we could do an administration, loves the way he has loved and cared?" And they said, "Well, there is an Intercom system in our office that's hooked up to every room in the entire retirement center. Why don't you just come on Sunday and preach whatever you preach to everybody." And he's like, "I'll be glad to do that." Right. That what he did during COVID. I don't know what you did during COVID, that's what he did during COVID. Right. Looking for every opportunity to pursue. That's on that end. I think about the other end, right. There's a good friend of our family. Life was hard. Middle school, first year as a high school.

He's 17 now. He's a senior. About a ago, Jesus opened his eyes, opened his heart, radically did a 360 all the way around a couple of times and changed his life. And he says, "I got to tell people." We're having coffee and talking through this and he's talking with his family and he says, "I might just want everybody to know." And he's a senior and he's at a school here in the city. And he said, "Man, just got to tell people." And I'm like, "Man, just keep telling." He said, "Well, what should I do?" I said, "Man, you just keep telling people. You just keep telling them." And one thing led to another and he's helped lead multiple young men to Christ in a Bible study that's just blown up to 30, 40 folks. And folks who come and the principals call them in the office like, "Bro, what's up?" He's like, "My own Jesus. That's all I got." That's all I got. So that's all you need. Just Jesus sharing.

Listen, if we are going to reach people and see them and have passion on them and pursue them, then practically a few things really quick that will help, I believe in this. The first is this, is to commit. To commit to reach four. I just encourage you to identify four that are far from God. Hundreds of you did that last week. Think about that for just a moment. If hundreds of you do this, think of the thousands that will be prayed for to be blessed. Even this week, thousands are being prayed for because you've committed to reach. Maybe it's one, but maybe we're asking you to try to get to four that you know that in your sphere of life that you could bless them. We're going to put up a QR code. We put it up last week and put it again. It'll be on some of the slides throughout the building in the next few weeks. We want to encourage you to take your phones out and identify and put your phone up to that and take a picture of that. When you tap on that, when it comes up on your phone, what happens is it'll send you a text and that text says, "Reach your four."

And you just hit send, you send that back. That's coming to our office here. Nobody's going to get any of your numbers and stuff. We're not going to do blast emails. All we're going to do, look, we just want to encourage you weekly with the texts of just continual to be intentional with reaching folks. And so, if you haven't had a chance to sign up for that, we want you to sign up for that to commit. And then we want to walk with you to encourage you. Most people think of these outreach events. They're like a two-week where it's like a water hose, right, a fire hydrant. And then everybody feels guilty because they haven't shared. And you go away and you do one random act of kindness. And then you kind of move back into Bible studies with believers. You don't engage anybody. And we're saying, "No, listen, this is normal Christianity. This is the way we are supposed to live." And so, we just want to be able to drop it in the bucket so the bucket fills up over time. Not just dump the whole bucket on you at one time.

And so, we're asking that you would sign up and commit. And then we want to ask you to consider blessing. We're calling it the blessed practices to reach your four. There's some bookmarks at the back table that you can grab that has each of these identified. I'll just want to introduce them to you this morning. We feel like each of these are such a help to think through how to reach. And so, when you think about each letter, it's an acronym that we're using for the letter B that you would begin in prayer. That you would begin with prayer and just take the time to be praying. If you've identified these folks, that you would just pray for them. One of church fathers that we love studying, one identify five names to be prayed for. The last two came to faith in Christ after he died 55 years later, after he started praying for them. This is what we're asking God. Will give us a heart to pray for people in our city. That we would listen with care. That you would learn to listen.

That we would learn to be able to ask questions in such a way that would not just provide you the opportunity to speak, but that you would learn to really listen to where people are and where people find themselves in this day and this time. That you would eat a meal with them. Oftentimes Jesus spend a lot more time at a table than he did behind a stand. And he's just engaging with folks. And so, invite folks over to your home. Invite them maybe to your home before you invite them to church. And get to know them, ask them questions. Eat a good meal. I know college students order a pizza. That's good. But look, the rest of us, let's get butcher market. Let's get some meat. Let's get it right. Let's get it marinated. And let's just lavish some love on some folks through some good meat. Praise God. Listen, so let's eat together. Listen, let's serve with love. Actually, just think about how this is going to work, right? God, the spirit of God's going to work in your heart as you're praying for people. And as you've identified people and you're just praying for them and then you're listening to them.

You're learning about their life. You're eating a meal with them, then random acts of kindness. Right. You be the person in the neighborhood that puts all the other folks trash cans up each week. Just small things. We're going to be sending some texts of some ideas as well of just trying to just serve folks. And then the last is to share your story. Share your story in hopes of sharing the greatest story. So we want you to share your story. Now, listen, we're in a culture in a day that many don't believe this book. But listen, and you can argue to your boo in the face about the book, and many do. But let's start with a life changed. You can't argue with that. Hey,

it's my story. This is what's happened to me. We want to lean in and look at the word and study the word and have questions about the word. But let's know how to share our story. And so, we're going to encourage you over the weeks, how to even write that and how to navigate that and to be able to articulate that.

And then, understand this, that's not the gospel. That's your story, how the gospel impacted you. Then we want you to transition and open your mouth and share the gospel. And how we do it here at Providence, maybe you've trained, maybe you haven't. Maybe you tell people and you've got a way to do it, praise God. But we use a simple tool. It's called three circles. It's just three circles, so you can draw on a napkin. There's an app on the phone that you could use called Life on Mission. You can swipe and it just shows these three circles. So let me show it to you really quick. It starts with this God's design. And we would just encourage people as we're engaging with them, that we would start with God's design. He made us, he created us, but sin came. And sin is where we missed the mark of living up to perfection. And it's broken everything. And yet these arrows that would be drawn off of this second circle, is the ways we attempt to fix brokenness.

And then we transition to the good news of the gospel. And you have to explain what the word gospel means. It means good news. The good news of Jesus, his life, death, burial and resurrection in our place. Oh, what grace and mercy he has shown us. And if you repent, that means to turn from your sin and trust and believe on him, you're forgiven of your sins. And you're granted strength to live each day and the hope of eternal life when you die. This is the answer to all of life's problems. Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Share your story. This idea of being able to recover and pursue what he intended. And what's fascinating, really quick and were done, is Acts 2. When Peter preached and thousands came to Christ, he was using the book of Joel from the Old Testament. He was doing an exposition from Joel to explain Jesus. And all the Jews had gathered there for this celebration and many believed. But then you come to Acts 17, where Paul has traveled into Athens, into Greece.

Where they actually set up a rock that says, to the unknown God, just in case they forgot one in all of their plethora of worshipping idols. They had never heard of the man who had lived a perfect life and died and was raised from the dead. They've never heard of a book called the Bible. They've never heard... And so, Paul walks in and he begins to articulate the gospel, not the way Peter did, but as preaching from Joel. But by out narrating the culture, he found himself in by telling the true story of the Bible. He didn't drop a bunch of street addresses on him, right? Well, in the Bible, it says this, this, this and the verse. He just narrated the Bible. God made us, God created us. And sin has entered and it's been a mess. And there's a man who came and lived the life that we couldn't live. And died the death that we deserve. And he rose from the dead. And he offers forgiveness. This is what Paul... And it is amazing, the response. You didn't have thousands who believe, you had a few who believe.

And you had a few who said, he said, "Well, I want to hear you more on this." And then you had a few that mocked him. And we're in a Acts 17 culture, much more than a Acts 2 culture. This is where we are. This is where God's placed us as a people, who have been reached, who desire to reach many. And may it be done.

I want us to just take a few minutes to pray. Just ask you to bow your heads, and we'll just have a few minutes of silence. And just to think through these things, as we close up this series. And asking God to put those people on your heart, but not only that. But as we move into a time remembering through the supper, that you would ask God to help you to remember that you have been reached. If you're in this room or online and you know that he has saved you, that you would just marvel at that for a moment. And ask for him to become the subject of conversation in a humble, winsome but convicted and passionate way. So just pray for a moment.



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