

The Gospel Is For Everyone, part 2

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[0 : 00] John chapter 4 as we continue our study in the Gospel of John reading verses 1 through 15.

Would you please stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together? 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, 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. Jacob's well was there, so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well, and it was about the sixth hour. A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, give me a drink, for his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, how is it that you, a Jew, asked for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria? For Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. 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 have asked him, and he would have given you living water. The woman said to him, sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is 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. 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. The woman said to him, sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here and draw water.

[2 : 09] May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? Well, already this morning we've sung about the greatness of God's grace. We've sung about the fact that it is greater than all of our sins. We've sung about the fact that even though our sins are great in many, that his mercy is more. We've sung about the power of the cross and the greatness of Christ's sacrifice to atone for our sins, that his love is flowing to us, that we can become before his throne with boldness because we have been fully pardoned of our sins in Jesus Christ who gave his life as a sacrifice, redeeming us from our debt of sin, paying it in full, setting us free from that debt, pardoning us, covering us in the blood of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the sin of the world. This is great news. This is news that we should rejoice in.

And this is news that we must share. Our Lord lives, our Lord reigns. We've got to share this news. And so that's what we have been going over last Sunday and this Sunday and probably next Sunday and the Sunday after that is how important it is that we share this good news and how we can most effectively do that. So remember where we were in John chapter 3. John the Baptist wraps up that chapter by talking about the fact that Jesus is the perfect witness of God. And now here in John chapter 4, Jesus models perfect witness for us in his meeting with the woman at Samaria. Now, as Christians, unfortunately, not often enough do we share the good news of Jesus Christ. And even when we do, unfortunately, sometimes we don't often share it like Jesus did or as well as we could. We are more concerned about just getting it out there than actually caring about the person whom we are trying to share that good news with. When I was a youth pastor, one of the things that we would do with our youth group annually was take them to a Dare to Share youth conference. And the Dare to Share ministry led by Greg Steer, they would go around to different major cities in the U.S. And it was a conference for youth to come where they would be taught how to share the gospel and explain to them as well why it's so important. And I'll never forget at one of those conferences, he retold a story about how he was asked to be a speaker at a major Christian event for men. And there are other speakers as well. He was just one of them. And so after a day of being at this event and preaching at it, at the end of the day, he got into his van that the hotel was going to provide it to take him back to where he was staying.

And he noticed that as he hopped in the van and as they were about to take off, that over across the street was a group of people who were picketing the event, the Christian event for these men, right?

They had signs up and they were upset about the fact that they were there and upset about what was being preached and taught there. And he saw that another one of the speakers was engaged in a conversation with them, but he could tell that the conversation was not going well.

[5 : 47] Red faces, yelling and screaming. And so Greg Steer asked his driver to wait for him and he got out and he walked across the street and he went over to join into this conversation. And he asked, you know, after he kind of quieted things down enough so he could ask questions, what's going on here? And well, the people picketing say, well, you guys say this about us, you think this about us, you hate us, da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da. And so he says, now wait a second, okay? Before we start talking about those issues, because you're right, I believe what the Bible says, let's talk about an issue that we all have in common, which is the issue of sin. And so he started with that one thing that all human beings, besides Jesus Christ, have in common, which is the problem of our sin and our sin nature. And because he was able to begin the conversation there, it was actually productive.

Not to say that he won all those people, but at the end of his time with them, he had clearly communicated the gospel to them in a way that others hadn't been able to do because he genuinely cared about the people who he was speaking with. And he wanted to share the news of Jesus Christ with them more than he wanted to win an argument. And so the main idea for this morning's message is the same as last week, as this is a second part to that sermon, that in John 4, 1 through 5, Jesus reveals to us that the gospel is for everyone, and he instructs us on how to best effectively share it.

So in thinking about that, the first question that often we might think of is, well, why should we care about this? Why should we care about evangelism? Well, you remember after Jesus was crucified, after he raised from the dead on the third day, after he appeared to many of his disciples, and as he was ascending into heaven, he said this to them, and it's a command for us today who follow him. Jesus came to them and said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

So why should we care about this? Because Jesus cares about this. Well, who should we go to would be the next question, and that is answered for us in Acts chapter 1, verse 8. But you will receive, again, Jesus speaking, the Holy Spirit, you will receive power, I should say, when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. So who do we go to with this good news?

Everyone. Everybody. To all people everywhere. Right? In our context, our Jerusalem would be Bartlesville. We want to reach the community of Bartlesville with the good news of Jesus Christ.

[9 : 10] Our Judea would be like the Washington, Osage counties of which our church belongs to an association. Northeastern Oklahoma, even Oklahoma. We want to reach people here, but we also want to be going out and partnering with those who are reaching our neck of the woods, our state. Who would be our Samaria? Well, our nation, the United States of America, and to the ends of the earth means every place, every place, every where. So we go to Latvia, for example, and we have a partnership with them so that we, in some small way, can fulfill the great commission to go not just here, not just close by, not just in our country, but everywhere, that everyone would have the opportunity to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. And so I use the example of Greg Steer in that Dare to Share story because in that exchange, he modeled two of the first four principles of evangelism that our Lord demonstrated for us in chapter four, verses one through nine, that we covered last week. I want to review those pretty quickly here. So first of all, that Jesus was not too tired to minister.

So remember, Jesus had been hiking for 20 miles, a journey that took him at least 10 hours in order to get to this woman, and it was midday, and it was hot. And so when he arrives at the well, he is very weary. You take it with Greg Steer, yeah, he had preached that day, and all that precedes and all that proceeds that, it wears you out. But he wasn't too tired to go over to this group of people to share the good news of Jesus Christ. And so neither can we be. Tiredness, wariness is not an excuse to not share the good news of Jesus Christ. That's the first principle. The second principle

was this, that Jesus took initiative. Remember, it's Jesus who goes. It's Jesus who engages the Samaritan woman, even though doing so was culturally unacceptable in his time. In the midst of the Greek and Roman and Jewish cultures, they didn't view them being much higher than even their own cattle or material possessions. Yet Jesus showed this woman love, and he respected her, a woman whom very few did.

Many would have assumed that this woman was not worthy of his time for at least a few reasons. First of all, she was a woman in this culture. That would have been strike one. Second of all, she was a Samaritan, which in this culture would have been strike two, because Jesus was a Jew. And then thirdly, Jesus was a rabbi. Strike three, she was an adulterous woman who had been married five times and was living currently with a man who was not her husband. These two people were polar opposites. Jesus, a man and a Jew and a rabbi, the woman at the well, a woman, a Samaritan, and an adulteress.

Back in this time, according to the Jewish Talmud, it was better, they said, this was their saying, it is better to burn the Torah, right, the teachings of God, than to teach it to a woman.

[12:51] That was the thought. That was the attitude. So you see, Jesus is doing something radical here. Radical. Now, he's not just taking the initiative with this woman in evangelism. He's taking the initiative with a woman whom society viewed as being either beyond the ability to save because of her many sins, or who society viewed as being unworthy of being saved because of her many sins. And so here he's crossing boundaries, both physical and spiritual. In fact, he's shattering the boundaries that had been established by this society in order to reach this one woman. He's left the 99 sheep behind in order to find that one who has gone astray to bring her back home. Jesus initiates the conversation that will lead to his then identifying himself to her as the Messiah and discussing theological issues with her of great importance, issues of eternal life and of the nature of true worship. Jesus and the Sumerian woman didn't have much in common, but they did have one thing in common that they shared.

They both had come to the well for water. And Jesus used that one commonality to illustrate a much greater need that that woman had, though she didn't know it at the time. And so like Jesus, like Greg Steer modeled for us, we see that among all of us human beings, the one commonality that we all share is sin.

We all have that in common. And if nothing else, we can always go there as the best place to start as we seek to share the good news of Jesus Christ. So those were the first two. Here's the third principle that Jesus models for us in this text in verses 10 through 13.

Jesus shows unsolicited mercy. Again, Jesus answers her. He says, if you know the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water. The woman says to him, sir, you have nothing to draw water with and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water from? Are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us this well and whose sons and livestock drank from it? And Jesus said to her, everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again. So here we see Jesus has initiated the conversation and now he's steering the conversation towards spiritual matters. Matters of the soul, matters of the heart. He has used physical thirst and water as a contact point, but now he turns the conversation around. He is physically thirsty.

She has elements with which to draw that physical water out of the well with, but now he turns the tables on her and he identifies her as being the thirsty one and himself as being the one who is able to quench that thirst. The Samaritan woman at this point isn't quite sure where Jesus is headed with all of this yet, but what he is offering her is something that few, if anyone, had ever offered her in her life. What he's offering her is mercy. She hasn't asked him for it, but he's there coming to her with it. He'll soon expose the truth of her spiritual condition, pointing out that she's again been married five times, is currently living with a man who is not her husband. This woman is a serial adulteress. She is a repeat offender. She has not come to Jesus seeking mercy, but he extends it to her anyways as a gift. Her sins are many, but his mercy is more. The gift of God that Jesus refers to in the text there in the Greek is the word *doria*, and it refers to a free gift, a gift that is given with no strings attached. And it is with this offering being extended that evangelism truly begins.

[17:30] We can minister to people when we are weary. We can initiate conversations with them, but evangelism truly begins only when the gospel is shared. When we share with our mouths the good news of Jesus Christ, only then are we truly fulfilling the great commission. If we've only initiated and begun a conversation, maybe met some physical needs, all we've truly done is maybe

made an acquaintance, perhaps set a good example, but understand that Jesus commands us to go further than that.

In evangelism, not all the time, but most of the time, we are the ones who are to start the conversation. And so we, like Jesus, find a common point of interest, and then comes the reality that you are offering the unbeliever a gift. The gift is the gospel. And so you do so without regard to their current state of morality. It is a mercy with no regard for morality. It is a mercy with no regard for religion. It's a mercy that is all of grace. And this is what sets the gospel apart from all other religions. All other religions say, do this, do that, say this, say that, and God may save you in return. But the gospel says, no matter, no matter the state that you are in, regardless of where you are at religiously or morally, here is a gift. It's the gift of God. It's the gift of grace, a gift of mercy, and it's free to you. Religion says, here's a list of things to do. Here's a checklist. And if you can check every box every day for the rest of your life, then potentially you will receive God's mercy, God's forgiveness, God's forgiveness, and God's love. That's not the gospel. But unfortunately, sometimes that attitude, that system of checking boxes creeps into the heart of the church and to God's people. And then we begin to think, well, maybe it is about that. You know, my perfect attendance, my reading the Bible every day, my giving to the church, these are all good things, but it's when we start using them as a checking the box list and we think, this is how I'm going to be saved, that we are totally wrong. Totally wrong. And unfortunately, we can get to the point where we forget God's grace and mercy that's always flowing to us and we think that maybe that flow has the potential to run out. I'll never forget as a boy, I had two really good friends in my church and we were always getting in trouble, always getting in trouble, right? But we tried to be each other's accountability partners whenever we were going too far in an extreme to say, hey, that, you know, hey, we're in church and let's be good Christian boys, right? But I'll never forget one time, I can't even remember what exactly it was, but I was having an issue with something. It was probably language or something like that. And one of my friends said, you've got to stop talking like that. And I said, I'm trying to, and I'm praying and asking for God's forgiveness. And he said, well, if you were God and you kept asking to be forgiven, but then you would go and do it again, wouldn't you stop forgiving that person after a while? And I thought, yeah, I would. But the good news I later realized is that God is not like any person. God is not like any person. His mercy is greater. His forgiveness is ever flowing to his people. And the gospel is not based on our works and our merits, but only on his grace. Where have we seen this illustrated before? Many cases in the gospels. One that I thought of is Zacchaeus, remember? In Luke chapter 19, we all know Zacchaeus was a wee little man, and a wee little man was he. He crawled up in a second more tree, the Lord he wanted to see. And if you know anything about Zacchaeus, he was a tax collector. And if you know anything about this culture, people hated tax collectors. And still do today in some cultures, right? But God's grace and mercy are even able to save present-day tax collectors. But what would happen in this culture is the tax collector was employed by the government, and the government would say, hey, give us, we want this percentage of taxes. You go door to door, you collect that money, and you can charge above that whatever you want, and you take that yourself. So tax collectors were filthy, stinking rich. And so you would hate this person because he would come, knock on your door, and say, you owe such and such amount, and then, you know, charge over and above that, and you would have to pay it. And so you would grow to really hate that person. And so Zacchaeus was hated by the people who knew him. And so when Jesus came into the town, of course, none of them were going to give up their spot for Zacchaeus. I'm not going to let you come up in front of me so that you can see Jesus, so that you can have access to Jesus. I know who you are, you filthy, rotten, dirty, sinning scoundrel.

Go climb up a tree and get a better look if you want one. And Jesus comes through town, and remember, he looks up, and he sees Zacchaeus. He asks him to come down, says, today, I'm coming to your house.

[24 : 14] And then he shares the gospel with Zacchaeus. And you remember, Zacchaeus is completely transformed. He pays more than what he has taken back to those whom he has cheated. He's totally transformed his life. And here's the thing. Jesus doesn't say to Zacchaeus, hey, Zacchaeus, you know, I know that you really want to see me, but listen, I can't come to your house, and I can't share this good news to you until you start doing this thing, and this thing, and this thing, and this thing. You go back and pay everything that you've stolen, and then I'll come to your house, and then I'll share the good news with you. You show me that you can be a moral,

upright person, and then I'll love you. That doesn't happen. And we see that the case over and over again with our Lord and those who he interacted with. He didn't say, hey, go clean yourself up, and then I'll share the good news to you. No.

He went to sinners, and he shared the gospel with them because our Lord is merciful.

And because no matter how much we might try to clean ourselves up, our job of cleaning ourselves up is never sufficient. It must be God who is the one who regenerates us. It must be God who is the one who cleanses us, and only God can do that for us. We're not cleansed by religious law-keeping. It's a work of God. Remember, Jesus told Nicodemus in John chapter 3, you must be born again. And if we think about that, what he's saying is just as you didn't participate in your own physical birth, so neither can you participate in your own spiritual birth. It is something that I do for you. The Samaritan woman didn't ask for this meeting with Jesus, but now he had come to her to have this opportunity with her. And there is human responsibility in responding to the gospel. And so he tells her, I'm here. I have a gift for you. If you would ask, I will give you this living water. And with that, he's turned this whole conversation into a spiritual direction.

Jesus is no longer talking about the water contained within the well. He's now talking about the living water contained within himself, living water that he was ready to give to her. What was this living water? Well, as we've talked about, it's salvation. Everything that's in salvation, mercy, grace, forgiveness, justification, love. It flows endlessly from God to us, and it's always flowing from God to us who believe.

[27 : 06] As we've talked about this morning, we have a water leak in our building. And so this week, again, in order to conserve water for throughout the week, the water was cut off to our building. And people work here during the week, myself, Pastor Dan, Evelyn. And so let me tell you that you don't truly realize how much you need water until it's cut off. Amen? Water is nice to have. Praise God for indoor plumbing.

But sometimes there are issues, and the water supply gets cut off. But thanks be to God that in the gospel, we don't ever have to worry about that. We don't ever have to worry about the water supply being cut off. We don't ever have to worry about faulty pipes. These are promises from Him. These are truths from Him to us. This mercy is continually flowing to us who are in Christ. And then we get to be used by Him as like little fountains through which God's mercy, His water supply flows from Him to us to others as we share the gospel and the grace that we've received from Him in hopes that they'll receive it too. We must remember that no one is too far gone for God to reach. The gospel has the power to break the hardest ground, and it has the power to warm the coldest heart. In 1 Corinthians chapter 6, Paul reminds the Corinthian Christians that to reject this gift offered by Christ means being rejected by

Him ultimately, but to those who have received it, they should never forget that at one time they were just like the rest. And so, because of that, we should never judge the savability of an unbeliever, but always seek to extend to them the grace from God that we've received. Look at what He says to them in 1 Corinthians 6, verse 9.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

And don't forget, such were some of you. But you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. Don't you forget that just as the gospel had the ability to save you, so it has the ability to save others. And Paul was always reminded of this himself, of his own sinfulness. Remember, before he was saved, he was a persecutor of Christians. He sought to put an end to the church. And he says in 1 Timothy 1, verses 12-14, I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to this service. Though formerly I was a blasphemer, I was a persecutor, an insolent opponent, but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord,

[30 : 40] I love this word, overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Like the Samaritan woman then, Jesus offers you the same gift today, if you haven't already received it.

That is the gift of salvation, which he's used the metaphor of water to symbolize. Why water? Well, think about it again too. Water gives life. In John 6, 35, Jesus said, I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will not hunger. He who believes in me will never thirst.

And then later in John 7, 37, it says, on the last day, the day of the feast, Jesus stood up and cried out, I, if anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture said, and then he quotes from Isaiah in the Old Testament, he said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. And that is what Jesus is offering to the woman here, and to you who trust in him as Lord and Savior.

He's saying, look, you continue to drink from the world's well, and you've experienced that it's incapable to truly satisfy you completely and consistently. For the Samaritan woman, she kept trying to find fulfillment through a series of relationships with men, but none of them were able to satisfy her. They could not fix her brokenness. For you, maybe it's something similar, or for you, maybe it's something different. Maybe it's the love of money. Maybe it's substances. Maybe it is relationships. Maybe it's religion. But let me tell you, as I've experienced personally, and I'm sure many of the rest of you have, and if you're in that condition, I'm sure that you have to, that eventually those wells run dry. But the well of Christ of living water never runs dry.

[33 : 05] Jesus says again, if you'd ask, if you'd only ask, I will heal your brokenness. I will restore your soul. I will make you a new creation. I will give you this water, and it will never end. It will always be springing up inside of you, welling up forever into eternal life, and you'll never thirst again. And in those words, there's the perseverance of the saints. There's the eternal security of the believer that once you receive this water, it always flows forever and ever and ever and ever. This is the gospel. It's mercy without regard to morality. It's mercy without regard to religious observance. You ask, it's a gift. Initially, the woman responds to Jesus' offer with sarcasm.

Sir, she says, if you don't have anything to draw water with, well, the well is deep. What are you going to do? How are you going to get this water? Are you greater than Jacob? Yet Jesus continues to show mercy to her, even though she's sarcastic, and even though she's disbelieving. No doubt when you share the gospel at times, you will meet people who are disbelieving, and maybe they mask that disbelief and sarcasm. But again, notice how Jesus continues to extend the offer to her in mercy and with kindness. He says in verse 13, everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again. He sticks with her. And then in verse 14, Jesus gives us the fourth principle of effective evangelism, and it's this. Jesus offers unparalleled promises. Unparalleled promises.

He says in verse 14, But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

And so here again, our Lord offers an endless supply of satisfying water forever. And his point is unmistakable. This is permanent, he's saying. This is consistent. This is full. This is satisfying. This is everlasting mercy and blessing from God to the sinner who asks. He's offering his eternal life to them. He's offering to give them eternal life, but still she doesn't quite get it. But she will.

[35 : 47] My question is, how about you? Do you get it? Have you received it? As an unbeliever, are you tired yet of drinking from the world's well?

Jesus is ready to offer you this gift of mercy. Come to him. Ask. You will be saved. You will receive his mercy, his forgiveness, his love, and it will flow to you always and forever.

And let me tell you, does this mean that the Christian life is some kind of easy life? By no means. But it is the best life to live. Because it's a life of purpose. It's a life of meaning. It's a life filled with joy and hope. Now as a Christian, perhaps you hear all this and you feel like you're discontent in life.

Well, that's probably because God's word isn't abiding in you richly. It's not that the flow has stopped flowing, that maybe that you've taken it for granted. And God's promises are contained in God's word. And so if you feel dry, it's because more than likely you're not spending enough time with the source of living water. Christ and prayer and his word.

Last, this past Wednesday morning at 6 a.m., Caleb Dunn, the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Bahuska and I were in our conference room and we were Skyping with a church in Pakistan.

[37 : 45] And they were meeting on the top of their, of a roof in town. It was night and a couple times in the background you could hear the horns blast from the mosques. It was just a thing I hadn't seen before with my own eyes.

And if you know anything about Christianity in Pakistan, there are about 1.6% of the population is Christian. The rest are Muslim and Christians there are very severely persecuted. And so Aslam, a man who works with the North American Mission Board, he is Pakistani, he came and met with our association. I told you guys a little bit about this. And so he, he goes there once a year and his job is to train and to equip pastors because they don't have seminaries. They just don't have the access

to what we have access to here. They don't have access to Bibles really. And so he asked if some of us pastors would be willing to, to record sermons, to go over there, or in this case, to, to actually meet live with the church over the internet and speak with them and answer their questions. And so I preached to them from John 13 where Jesus washes his disciples' feet. And then afterwards, Caleb and I, we fielded their questions. And most of their questions were, were focused around the same topic. You know what it was? Persecution. Persecution.

And, and I remember, you know, staring in the computer screen and seeing this church spread out across this roof. Seeing their, their faces and their concerns. I, I felt like it, I was looking at the church in Smyrna. You know anything about the church in Smyrna, Smyrna and Revelation? The seven churches, the seven letters. Smyrna was the most persecuted church. And them and the church of Philadelphia were the only two who didn't receive any kind of condemnation from Christ. They were being crushed for their faith. And I thought, here, here I am looking at a modern day Smyrna.

And so they were asking us questions about persecution. And as best as we could, we were answering them from scripture. I remember looking at their faces and seeing these people who are, who are going through some very real persecution. And as I'm telling them and Caleb, we're telling them, this is what, this is what the Bible says about persecution.

And I remember thinking, who am I to tell them about persecution? But then I was reminded in that moment, you know what? These promises aren't my promises. These promises don't originate with me.

[40 : 40] These are promises from God. And it was touching that as we would answer their questions with scripture, blessed are you, blessed are you, when those persecute you. Talking about Christ and the persecution that he endured. Encouraging them to continue on. That our answers would be translated and then their faces, they would just smile and they would clap. And it was so surreal. And it was so awesome and powerful.

These aren't our promises. They're God's promises. And they're unparalleled by anything else in this world.

That same afternoon, I came home and Danny showed me a video of a woman in the Middle East, and it may have even been Pakistan. And she was surrounded by a group of men and they had dug a pit about this deep in a circle.

And put her in it. And they took huge stones. And they got as close to her as they could and they pelted her, pounded her. These stones repeated over and over again. Ten seconds was enough for me to watch.

Why was she there? Because she was a Christian. And she was being persecuted for her faith. She died. And she's now basking in the presence of the Lord forever. She's received her full reward.

[42 : 21] She's experiencing the unparalleled promises that she'd been told about in Scripture. She's experiencing them fully, even right now, as we meet. She died totally committed to Christ.

And her death will never be in vain. And so in thinking about those things, this is the question that I had for myself and the question that I present to you this morning. How committed are you?

How committed are you? Remember, this is the theme for our church this year in 2020, that we are committed to pursuing the best Highland Park this year. Building community, equipping believers, sharing Jesus, teaching the Word. So how do we take this message and how do we apply it to that goal? Well, first of all, build community. This means that we build up those who stumble. There are many Samaritan women types in our community. And this means that we go and we reach out to those. And even when our brothers and sisters in Christ are struggling, that we seek to encourage them. That this is a place where you can come and be honest with your struggles and be real and know that you will be surrounded by a community of people who will love you and encourage you through whatever that may be. We are committed to building community. We're committed to equipping believers. Well, if we are going to evangelize, then we've got to teach. We've got to give instruction. We've got to provide opportunity and create those opportunities for one another to go out and to do this very thing, to reach our Jerusalem, our Judea, our Samaria, Bartlesville, Washington County, Oklahoma, the United States, and the world. We're committed to sharing Jesus. There's no excuses for why we shouldn't do this. Weariness is not an excuse. We seek to initiate these conversations. And then when we do, we offer mercy by being merciful. We share the unparalleled promises of Jesus Christ with those who we encounter.

[44 : 40] And then we're committed to teaching the Word. We preach and we teach the gospel as it is laid out to us in God's Word. And I love this quote. What does it mean to preach? Well, it means this. James Stewart, a Scottish theologian, said, to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God. And I want to close with Romans 10, verses 14 through 15. And I will have one more thing to say. This is for us.

Aslam, who I told you about, is over in Pakistan. His goal is that each pastor there that he is ministering to would have the goal of reaching five people in the year with the hope that those five will reach more. And there's 500 pastors. His goal is that in two years, 5,000 believers will come to faith in Jesus Christ in that country. That'd be great if you and I could commit to at least sharing the gospel this year with five. But in order to get to five, we have to start at one. And so that's my closing invitation to you. One, you find that one. You may even know who that one is right now. And beginning today and moving forward, be in prayer for that one. That you would clearly communicate the gospel with them, initiating that conversation, expressing the love and the mercy of Jesus Christ and the unparalleled promises that are found in him.