

# Called to Engage

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[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you for welcoming me. Thank you for having me here.

! I've been looking forward to spending this morning with you guys down here at Highland Park! for a few weeks. I've been looking forward to seeing you guys down here at Highland Park! as a trustee for our International Mission Board. So this week I was in Richmond, Virginia hearing reports not only from our leadership state side, but we had leaders in from every different region of the world talking about the things that God is doing and the way that the people that we as Southern Baptists support have covered the globe and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ and are just seeing darkness pushed back.

So it's incredible to sing about that this morning. It's also incredible and exciting to look forward and see that's not just the stuff for the ends of the earth, that's the stuff for the neighborhoods that we live in.

And that's what I'm excited to talk to you guys about. I will say, I don't want to repeat everything that Mike said, but guys, I'm just going to tell you, you are blessed to have the pastor that you have.

[ 1 : 49 ] And I'm, yeah, you can clap for him, absolutely. My prayer is that Mike and Danny will be with you guys here for years and years to come and that God will bless this ministry.

I will admit I was a little bit hesitant when I spoke to Lee on the phone as one of his references when you guys were searching. For just a brief moment, the thought passed my mind, should I see if I can shipwreck this thing for him and keep him here in Leavenworth?

He's not just a friend, he has been a partner in the gospel. And that's one of the reasons that we've enjoyed each other's company is that God has given us similar hearts to see the gospel spread and to plant the word of God into his people.

So that's what we want to do this morning. I'm excited to spend a few minutes with you opening up God's word together. And so we're going to do that in just a minute. But before we get into that, could I ask you, would you bow your heads?

And before we open God's word, can we go to him and ask him to meet us in this time and lead us through it? Father, as we sang this morning, there is no other God like you.

[ 2 : 51 ] There is no one, there's no one who deserves the praise, no one who deserves the glory. Father, no one with wisdom that approaches yours and no one with might that matches yours.

And even more beautiful to us, God, there is no one with a grace and a love that reaches as deep as yours does. And you see us, God, you know us inside and out.

You know every nook and cranny of our hearts and what we try to hide from everybody else. And God, even as deep as our own sin reaches, you tell us that you love us.

And you proved it to us by sending your own son into our world and to a cross to do what we could never do for ourselves. To lay down his perfect life so that our sinful lives could be redeemed.

So this morning we come to you in his name. And God, we pray that you would open our eyes to see Jesus. Father, we pray that your Holy Spirit would come and be our teacher right now. Give us understanding.

[ 3 : 54 ] Give us insight. Strengthen our faith and root us in joy. And Father, as we look into your word, let it put life deep in our souls as we learn to love you. And we learn the call that you have placed on our lives.

God, we lift this time up to you and pray that in it you would glorify yourself. And we ask each of these things in the name of Jesus Christ, your son and our savior. Amen. All right.

Would you go ahead and take out your Bible right now and open it up to the book of John? Fourth gospel. We're going to be in John chapter 20. But I'm going to give you fair warning as you're finding your way to this book.

Get your fingers nimble because we're going to do some page turning this morning. When Mike and I talked about us coming down this weekend, he was excited to share with me about the vision that you guys have developed as a church.

And a key first step in that is this engaging mentality, this desire to engage the city of Bartlesville and to send the whole church outside the walls to go and meet our neighbors where they are and share the gospel with them.

[ 4 : 59 ] And that's just, it's one that resonates with me. And as we talked about that, he said, Nathan, he said, could you for the time that you're here this morning, could you just, he said, take us into the word and help us to root this.

Not in our grand visions and not in our creativity and our ability to go be clever and creative and reaching people, but let's root it in what God has revealed.

Let's understand that when we carry the gospel outside of these doors, we don't go to impress people with who we are. We go to show them Jesus and we go to live as Christ himself has lived. And so I'm excited to kind of walk through that and what we're going to do is trace that idea through the book of John. We're going to do some page turning here in a minute as we dig into this.

But as we're preparing to do that, I just kind of want to share with you, you all beginning to, even to take the name, engage, to reach your city.

[ 6 : 02 ] It excites me. It thrills me because this is something that, this is something that God has been brewing in my heart for a while. It's something that he's been working in our church family up in Lansing.

It's something that we're entering our fifth year of our engaged ministry. For five years, we've been organizing and trying to send the church out, equipping our people to share the gospel. And in five years, what we've been able to see is not just neighbors reached and not just kingdom fruit that way, but we've seen consistently going out to engage our city change the heart of our own church. We think of who we are as a church differently today than we did five years ago. And I don't take credit for that at all. I wish that I could have brought some of our folks down from Lansing with you. You'd find out very quickly that our ministry, our ability to do engage the way that we do, comes from the kind of people that God has planted in our church. I could start the idea.

I could start that going a little bit. But ultimately, it's taken root and it's grown and it's borne fruit because the church family has taken ownership of the mission, the calling that God has given us.

[ 7 : 18 ] And it's begun to change our churches, begin to change our communities' understanding of what kind of church we are, what it might look like for a church to be active in our cities.

In Lansing and Leavenworth, which by the way, if you're not familiar, they're kind of twin cities.

They're just butted up against one another. And so we've been doing this, we've been going out, and we found out even from the very beginning that when you take seriously the call that God has given you to step outside of this church, to get outside of your regular routine, to go beyond what's convenient and comfortable, to go and meet people and start talking about Jesus, you're going to find very quickly that you have a lot of neighbors who don't really know what to do with that.

They're not immediately going to know how to respond to you or how to react in that sense. I'll give you an example. Five years ago when we started this, our very first engage was during the summer of 2014.

And we had a handful of projects going on, and one of those we called our No Cost No Kidding Car Wash. And so we set up at a major intersection right between Lansing and Leavenworth at the local co-op that had a gas station and a grain store and all those things.

And the manager of the co-op had given us permission to set up a car wash in their parking lot. Now, at this point, this sounds completely normal, right? People do car washes all the time.

[ 8 : 33 ] Soccer teams, baseball teams, softball teams, youth organizations, church, people do car washes all the time. So we said, look, here's the one key difference for ours. Not only are we not asking for donations, we won't accept them.

No cost, no kidding, right? This is our church's gift to the community because we're going out not necessarily just to wash cars. We're going out to reach people.

We're going out to have conversations. We'll talk about that here in a little bit. But we got to go in and we had everybody, I call them our beautiful blue t-shirts, our engaged t-shirts. You'll see my wife might have hers on later on today.

But we had our team out there in the parking lot. It was hot. It was sunny. The water was flying. Blue t-shirts were bright and easy to pick up. And we had a stream of cars coming through. We were really pleased because there were about four other competing car washes going on that day. But as we'd been going for about two hours, I was there helping out and getting to talk. And about that time, I see two cars pull up in a row. And they stand out because one was an H2 Hummer and the other one was a Mercedes-Benz.

[ 9 : 36 ] You notice these kind of cars pulling in, right? So they pulled in and it's a husband and wife pop out. And they're friendly and they're excited to be here. And they'd seen the line and they kind of saw the sign on the side of the road as they came by and pulled up.

And like, hey, what a cool thing y'all's church is doing. Could, you know, if you've got time, we'd love to let you wash our cars. And I greeted him and was excited to talk to him. And he said, so what's it going to cost?

And I said, nothing. I said, it's no cost, no kidding. We mean this. This is our gift to you. We've got a tent set up over here. You can have a seat in the shade. We've got some coolers. We've got bottled water.

We've got some ice cream in there. You just go have a seat. Take a load off for a few minutes. We'll pull your cars right in. It'll take us about 20 minutes. We'll be all done. And he said, man, that's really generous of you. But I don't mind.

In fact, I want to help. I love seeing a church get out and do stuff like this. He said, is \$50 enough for the two cars? And I said, I really appreciate your generosity.

[ 10 : 35 ] But I need you to hear me. We don't want your money. And what happened there, I'm not going to rehash the whole thing for you. But for about three minutes, we stood in the hot parking lot and had a friendly little argument over whether he was going to pay for these car washes or not.

That finally culminated in the wife grabbing her husband's elbow and saying, honey, just put your money away and sit down. I don't know what they're doing, but let's just let them wash the cars. What was extra fun was when they sat down, one of our leaders got to go sit down next to him. And they had 20 minutes of conversation about why we're really doing what we're doing. That's just one little snippet, but that's the heart of Engage.

When you go out to serve, to seek and to serve, not asking anything back from the community, people don't know how to respond to that.

It's the same way with the gospel message. When you explain to people that our salvation depends on the free grace that we receive in Jesus Christ, not on your own religiosity and not on your own ability to perform or not on where you come from or whether you've checked enough boxes, but your salvation, your eternal standing with God depends on you responding to what God has already done for you.

[ 11 : 57 ] A lot of people don't know how to respond to that too. Because we feel like if we're receiving something, we should be playing a part in it. So in a small way, going out to Engage is us just beginning, just beginning to embody the gospel of Jesus Christ.

What I want to do for the few minutes that we have, and I'm going to warn you right now, I have nine points this morning. We're going to move quickly.

We're going to turn some pages. We're going to walk right through it. But we're going to start here in John chapter 20. We're going to start in John chapter 20.

And the question that we want to answer as we get into this is simply, where does the impulse to do an Engage type of ministry come from? Where do we as God's people find in Scripture a picture that says, this is who we should be and this is what we should be about?

It answers the question, is there a biblical precedent that drives us as a body, not just you as an individual, that drives us as a church family to engage our city with the gospel?

[ 13 : 19 ] The answer is yes, there is a precedent and it's the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus himself. So if you'll read with me, look down here at John chapter 20, starting in verse 19.

We're just going to focus in on four verses. This is where we're going to key, and I'm actually going to narrow it a little bit more beyond that. Starting in verse number 19, if you've read your gospel, you're familiar. This is after the resurrection of Jesus, and he's appearing to his disciples on the first day.

And it says, When he had said this, Our key verse this morning is verse number 21.

Let me read that for you one more time, because it's going to help us structure what we're going to look through in Scripture. Jesus said to them, Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.

As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you. Here's what I believe, and here's what I want to show you in Scripture, and here's what I want to help you to understand and to embrace as a conviction this morning.

[15:08] Is that if we are going to embrace the mission that Jesus gave us, if we're going to carry the gospel throughout our city, and even to the nations of the world, if we're going to be those kind of people, we have to first understand the mission that Jesus himself had.

Because he says here, As the Father sent me, so I am sending you. So that forces us to, it should ask you to lean into the text and ask the question, Well, how did the Father send the Son?

What did the Father send Jesus to earth to do? What was the nature of his mission? What was he accomplishing? What was he focusing on? What drove him day by day? Because if our mission is shaped by the mission of the Lord, then we need to understand his mission.

And here's what John did for us, a huge favor. As you read through John's gospel, you find time after time that throughout his ministry, Jesus kept talking about how the Father sent him. And we're going to trace that.

So I'm going to show you six reasons that the Father sent Jesus. And like I said, because I've got nine points, we're going to go through these reasons quickly. But when you put them all together, it's going to answer the question, How did the Father send the Son?

[16:21] The first one is all the way back in John chapter one. So turn there with me, or flip in your phone if that's where you are. But John chapter one, verse number 25, you get John the Baptist, you guys have heard of him, right?

Familiar with John the Baptist? All right, he's a little bit famous in the Bible. I'm in Luke chapter one. You're going to have to give me a second. You don't want me to read from Luke chapter one. That's a lot longer. John chapter one, verse 25.

When Jesus arrived, when Jesus stepped on the scene, John the Baptist saw him and called out, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

The first thing we know about the reason the Father sent the Son on his mission was that Jesus came to take away the world's sins.

I point that out because what this does for us is right from the beginning, it puts our, it puts in focus for us the primary need of our neighbors. You see, if we're not careful, it's going to be really easy for us as you begin doing Engage, as we continue doing in Lansing, it could be really easy for us to see these projects that are interesting.

[17:35] It's helping neighbors, you know, with projects around their houses. It's washing cars. It's meeting them at the grocery store to share gift cards and share the gospel. If we're not careful, it can be really easy to let this devolve down into something as simple as meeting felt needs.

Helping people with, with kind of where they feel the pressure points in their life. And hear me out, that's a good thing. It's a good thing to help people who have genuine needs. But it's not the ultimate thing.

It's not their deepest desperate need. Jesus came and healed the sick. And Jesus cast out demons. And Jesus walked on, you know, calm storms and walked on water.

Jesus did all kinds of incredible things. And they were good and right and necessary. But ultimately, John the Baptist helps us see from the beginning, the reason Jesus came was to take away the sins of the world.

Because for as much pressure, as much pain as we might feel in our temporary circumstances, the deep need of every human, as Scripture shows us, is to have our sin taken away.

[18:40] And to be reconciled to our Savior. So let me start with this question for you. When you look at your neighbors, when you look at your city, what need do you see?

You might see the physical needs. You might see neighbors who need a hand. You might see somebody who might be blessed by a car wash. But when you see your neighbors, do you see souls who need their sin forgiven?

You see people who need Jesus. That's the first reason the Father sent the Son, to take away the sin of the world. The second reason the Father sent the Son is that Jesus came for salvation, not condemnation.

Most of you, I would bet, probably the strong majority of you in this room could quote John 3.16 for me right now, right? Don't do it. But I trust that you can. The verse right after that is equally as beautiful, equally as powerful, equally as poignant and helpful for us here.

John 3.17 says, For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.

[ 20 : 07 ] Just as the Father sent me, so I've sent you into the world. And Jesus Himself said, The Father did not send me to condemn the world. He sent me to bring salvation. Guys, I bring this out.

Probably don't need to articulate this, but because you live in the same world that I do every day.

Guys, we live in a culture that majors in condemnation. We love to attack one another.

We are politically charged. We do it through our news stations. We do it through our social media.

We love to draw lines and tell everybody what makes them not only different from us, but worse than us and worthy of condemnation.

Guys, can I just tell you, we carry the banner of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. We are not in the world to condemn the world. They don't need us to do that. They don't need us to tell them they're sinful.

They need us to tell them there is a Savior. They need someone to come and meet them where they're living and point to the one who is the way and the truth and the life.

[ 21 : 19 ] Ephesians 6 makes it really clear for us. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood. We don't wrestle against liberals or conservatives, and we don't wrestle against Democrats and Republicans.

We don't wrestle against OU fans or O State fans or even KU fans, even though I would join you in that fight. We don't have enemies in this world.

We are ambassadors of the kingdom that's coming into this world. So when you go into Bartlesville, you can engage people who think different than you, who talk differently than you, who look differently than you, that carry different values, who see the world through different lenses than you see the world, and you can go to them with confidence and with grace because it's not your job to condemn them.

They don't need you to do that. They need you to point to someone who will change them. They need to hear of grace. Jesus came for salvation, not condemnation.

Number three, the reason that the Father sent Jesus. Jesus came to undo the curse of death. Turn with me over to John chapter 5, verse 24.

[ 22 : 43 ] Jesus says to them, truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

He does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life. Who but Jesus could ever make a statement like this? Who else could ever look in somebody's eyes and say, if you will believe in me, you pass from death into life?

That is an incredible statement because we know that death came clear back in Genesis 3, clear back when Adam and Eve decided to rebel against God and put away his instructions in the Garden of Eden.

Sin entered the human race, sin entered the world and with sin came death and we've been living with it ever since then and we see death and disease and brokenness and destruction in relationships and in our natural world and in everything that humans touch.

And here Jesus steps in and says, part of my message is the Father sent me so that whoever believes in me passes from death and destruction into eternal life. Whoever believes in me begins to live a life that reverses the curse of sin.

[ 23 : 58 ] That is a powerful message, guys. I know that Pastor Mike has been working with you all for several weeks that you've been going through the Three Circles Evangelism training. I'm just curious in this congregation, quick show of hands, how many of you have gone through that training?

How many of you have been getting familiar with the Three Circles? Alright, excellent. That's a great core. That's a really good beginning. One of the reasons, we've used this as a training tool at Lansing First Southern as well and one of the things I love about this is where you see the completion of the circle.

It's easy to understand that we see that the world began with God's design and we live, we experience brokenness. Everybody can relate to brokenness at some level.

When you go out and engage people, if you're not sure where to begin and you want to share this, you can simply ask instead of how are you doing, just change that question. Here's a practical tip. Change that question to how's your week been?

And you'll find some people who will be really, really ready to say, well, let me tell you what happened to me this week and they're going to tell you a story of brokenness and now you have a door open to talk about the gospel.

[ 25 : 02 ] But what I love about this model is the last little link that connects the gospel to God's design and you see that error that goes up and is marked by the words recover and pursue.

Part of our message of hope in Jesus Christ is that when we receive the gospel, when our lives are committed to Jesus as our Lord and Savior, that God begins a work in our life where he begins to recover his original design for us.

We're able to pursue God's desires for wholeness, for holiness, for purity, for harmony, that these things that match the design that God had for us originally, those are ours when we pass out of the curse of sin and death into a place of wholeness, into a place of eternal life.

Guys, our neighbors need to see that from us. Last spring, we did a project up in Lansing for the next door neighbors of our church. You guys might be shocked. I know this never happens in Oklahoma, but sometimes in Kansas it gets windy.

Do you guys know that? Weird thing. You know, it's not like the wind goes sweeping down the plains in Oklahoma or anything. But we had a windstorm and the next door neighbors of our church had their six foot wood privacy fence just blew down flat.

[ 26 : 25 ] Several sections of it. And so we were able to pull together. We got a couple groups together and found Home Depot and a couple other local hardware stores that donated some supplies and we knocked on the door and said, hey, we saw what happened back here.

We know that, you know, you guys are coming and going and are super busy. Would you mind if we rebuilt this fence for you? Simple hands-on project, right? We got some skilled men and women in the church who can clear out the old, build up the new, do it mostly in a day.

It was a really good project. But what happened is we got to do that was we got to stand in the backyard and talk with the woman who lived in that home. And so I got to stand there and have this conversation with her and just start asking her story.

And she shared with me, she said, you know, I used to, I actually grew up in church, said my dad was a Baptist deacon. I said, yeah, have you ever, have you, I said, I've only been here a few years.

Have you ever visited our church? No, no, I'm not, I don't really believe any of that stuff now. I'm pretty much agnostic. I don't think y'all want someone like me anyway. I'm pretty liberal in my politics and pretty unimpressed by Christians in general.

[ 27 : 31 ] I said, well, what do you mean by that? She said, well, I look around the world and I see, and she started listing off the things that were a concern to her. She started talking about injustice and slavery in other parts of the world and she started talking about global warming and the things that were near and dear to her heart.

But what gripped me was she said, she made the statement, she said, you know, I just don't see Christians all that interested in helping brokenness. She didn't know we had just done three circles training.

She didn't know that she said a buzzword, brokenness. That was her perception. She lived right next door to us.

My office is 20 feet away from the side of her house. But she said, you know what, in the life that I'm living, I don't see Christians caring, is what she said.

My hope and my prayer is that the engaged ministry and the conversation with our church allows her to start seeing because the reality is you and I know that Christians are doing incredible things by God's power around the world.

[ 28 : 44 ] We hear reports of that in our churches all the time. But our neighbors don't necessarily know that unless we go and meet them, unless we go and live it out in front of them. But when we bring them the gospel, they have the opportunity to pass from the curse of death and sin to eternal life.

Fourth, Jesus came to obey the Father's will and to give eternal life to all of those who believe.

A couple of verses in this one. John chapter 6. Read along with me beginning in verse number 38. Jesus said, For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

And this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father that everyone who looks on the sun and believes in him should have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.

Just one comment on that one. Jesus came to obey the Father's will. And the Father's will was eternal life for anyone who would look on him and believe.

[ 30 : 16 ] If we are sent in the same spirit that the Son was sent then it is still the Father's will that we obey him and it is still the Father's will that anyone who will believe in Jesus would be raised up on the last day.

That's a promise for you but that's also a promise for the people who live down the street from you. If you will obey the Father and show them and tell them the Lord and the Lord they won't all believe and they might not believe right away but some will.

Some will hear and believe and they will be raised up on the last day alongside of you and you will rejoice to have been a part of what God is doing in this world.

Jesus came to obey the Father's will so that we could see what obedience looks like. Following the direction of Jesus even when it leads us somewhere that we might not prefer to go.

Number five. The fifth reason that Jesus came that the fifth reason that the Father sent Jesus is that Jesus came to save people who are far from God.

[ 31 : 44 ] Let me say that another way. Jesus came to save people who are not like us who didn't grow up in church who don't speak the language of Zion the way that we do or even the language of Nashville like Southern Baptists do.

Came to save people who don't know what a gospel is let alone that they should believe it. John chapter 10 has become one of my favorite chapters over the past several years. I've spent a lot of time looking at Jesus describing himself as the good shepherd and right in the heart of that he tells them he says the good shepherd he says I have come because the Father has shown me that there are sheep who are not of this flock and I have to go and get them too.

If you're not familiar with that chapter he's talking about the flock he's talking about are the Jewish people. Jesus, his disciples, the religious leaders they all thought the kingdom of God was for the Jewish people. They're the ones that God loved.

The little holy huddle that they've got going there and as long as they're all good with God they're really not worried about the people outside of them and Jesus kind of breaks things up and like he had the tendency to do he starts breaking down their wrong preconceptions and tells them no, who I've come to find are sheep who are not only in this flock but I've got sheep who are not part of this flock and I'm going to bring them all together and you guys are going to all be one big flock.

Religious people and non-religious people, church folks and non-church folks. People who come from a background other than Christianity who come from an entirely different faith.

[ 33 : 13 ] Jesus says, I have sheep who are not of this flock I have to go get them too and then here in John chapter 20 says to us now, just the way I got sent you're being sent too so if Jesus had to go get people from a different flock, guess what you and I have to do?

We've got people from different backgrounds that Jesus wants us to reach too. We have to be willing to look for people who are far from us.

I told you this week I got to be in Richmond I got to hear reports from our different leaders around the world I've heard one that it just it's gripped me it's been with me for several days our North Africa and Middle East regional leader started talking to us about the crisis with Syrian refugees some of you guys are familiar with this if you cover news headlines there's been a civil war going on in Syria for over eight years now an unprecedented level of destruction some estimates are that are that more than 80% of every home in the nation of Syria has received some level of structural damage the entire nation 80% of the homes and people have just been flooding out of that country there are cities there are villages where you cannot find a man between the ages of 25 and 45 they're all gone they've all left they've either joined the war they've gone somewhere else to try to make money to send back home to those who weren't physically able to flee and in the midst of that what we heard is that as that stream of refugees has flowed out into Europe and some of them coming to North America what we're seeing is God doing a work as these people are being moved out of their homeland that there is an unprecedented openness to the gospel that these people who

have lost everything in the world that was ever familiar that was ever comfortable that ever felt secure or stable in their life they've lost everything and as they are moving they're meeting believers and they're hearing the gospel and they're hearing of a God who cares of them when they don't think that anybody in the world cares of them we heard of one it was a refugee church a refugee church at a camp in Europe about 24 brand new

Christian Syrian believers 24 of them meeting in a room that's about 300 square feet some of you all have bedrooms that are larger than that a couple dozen brand new believers and you know what they did when they came together because as they've been traveling they've met Christians they've heard the gospel and they've heard of a grace that they'd never imagined before they come together and they look at each other and they start talking about their experiences and they share their burdens and they share their griefs and they weep together they rejoice at God's goodness together they pray for one another and then they start talking about how they can be a part of what God's doing guys this church of 24 roughly Syrian believers who most of them don't have more than two or three shirts for their back heard of the needs of other Syrian believers and somehow wrangled up a little over \$1,300 to share with other refugees who don't know the gospel yet God is doing amazing things among people who not long ago we would have thought would have no interest in the Bible whatsoever they'd have no interest in the gospel that's probably what many of us would believe but we see evidence from around the world and more and more we hear similar stories here in the United States people that we thought wouldn't be interested hear the gospel and respond in a way that we would have never guessed Jesus came to save people who are far from God and the sixth reason that the Father sent the Son is this Jesus came to save us and to send us into the world this reason is about you and me presuming that you have committed your life to Jesus as your Lord and Savior that you have received his grace by faith and what he's done on the cross and his resurrection that Jesus came to save you but Jesus also came to send you if you flip over to John chapter 17 this incredible chapter where we get to glimpse into a conversation within the Trinity

[ 38 : 05 ] God the Father speaking to God the Son God the Son pouring his heart out right before he goes to the cross and right in the middle of that in verses 16 through 18 we get to see Jesus pray for us he's to pray about the mission that we're going to receive he says they are not of the world just as I am not of the world and he prays Father sanctify them in the truth your word is truth side note that's why we make such a big deal that's why Pastor Mike commits so much time and effort into pouring the word of God into you on a weekly basis because God uses this word in your soul to make you holy when he gets down deep inside of you it sanctifies you sanctify them in the truth your word is truth and he says as you sent me into the world so I have sent them into the world did you know that engage is part of God's plan to make you more like Jesus he changes you when you obey his command to carry the gospel to other people several months ago we were doing some review and debrief from our own engage and you know one person kind of raised his hand and asked the question said well look are we are we seeing anything come from this like is this really like what is this changing

I love the testimony one of our leaders began to just kind of spoke of and he said well let me kind of tell you my story he said I haven't been he's like I'm not against engage never have been he's like I think it's a cool idea I think it's a great thing for a church to be involved in for us to be out in the city and connecting with people and serving and sharing the gospel I think it's not been against it but he said I'm going to be honest with you he said I haven't been wholeheartedly invested in this thing at least I wasn't at the beginning he said we're four years into it and we just keep showing up and he said and I have kept showing up because I believe it's a good thing God is doing in our church and he said what I can tell you is that God has changed my heart he said I'm different I see God differently I hear the gospel differently I see this differently because I've kept showing up God has changed him because he's been obedient so can I share this quick word of encouragement to you some of you all I know are pumped about this missions banquet you are excited for Engage to come up here in a few weeks and I'm excited with you some of you all are going to sign up for two or three projects and you're going to get elbow deep and bring all of your enthusiasm all of your excitement you're going to go in this 110 miles per hour and God bless you go and do it and do it with gusto carry the gospel into the darkness some of you however are not against it you're saying I don't know how this is going to look I've never really done anything like this like what if I get in a conversation I don't know what to say what if I get assigned to a project I don't really run into

something I don't really know how to fix it for one reason or another you're a little bit hesitant can I just say this to you do it anyway do it anyway show up because God will use this experience to change your heart God will use this ministry to change your church and God will use this ministry to reach the lost in your city he'll do it that's the mission that we've been given God is faithful to his word and faithful to his mission you show up you do the work and the fruit will come now it may not come immediately we'll talk about this some when we get together this evening so I'm not going to go all the way down this trail but will you hear me from someone who's just one or two steps further down the road in this particular ministry than your churches right now you may not see the fruit immediately but God is faithful he will do it he will change you and he will change your church when you are obedient to his call so do it fair enough six reasons the father sent the son and every one of them falls back on us when

Jesus says as the father sent me so I'm sending you here's my last three points and these are just three short words of encouragement we're back in John chapter 20 Jesus said as the father has sent me so I am sending you so as you go Highland Park Baptist Church as you prepare as you sign up today and you pray every day from now until the day that your church goes out into the city to engage and gather people in for resurrection worship on Easter morning as you are getting ready as your heart is getting tender as God is preparing for you this for you here's three quick words of encouragement number one God's calling for us grows from a root of faith and joy God is issuing this call to you and it's not intended to be a burden this comes from a place of joy look when Jesus starts to speak to his disciples in verse number 20 he says peace be with you that's a strange thing to say to a bunch of people who are just seeing someone who's risen from the dead people who have spent the last few days terrified for their own lives and unsure of what tomorrow is bringing or what that looks like you remember these guys were living in a state of terror they were afraid of their own shadows for a few days and Jesus comes because of the fact of his resurrection and because of the unstoppable power of his grace and his mission he comes and looks and the first words out of his mouth are peace be with you you are called into this mission because Jesus has conquered death the resurrection can't be undone and his promise of your salvation and resurrection can't be revoked your salvation is secure your eternity is set this world cannot harm you so you can go out in joy you can go with the certainty that when you are obedient to what

God has called you to he will be faithful to what he has said God's calling for us grows from a root of faith and joy the second word of encouragement is this God's call on us leads to salvation we don't know how much we don't know how soon but this is what we talked about just a moment ago Jesus sends them out and says if you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven remember the very first point we had this morning John the Baptist declared behold the Lamb of God who comes to take away the sin of the world we said the primary need of our world the deepest soul level need of every person you need you meet is to have their sins taken away Jesus took that foundational level critical need of every human every one of us made in the image of

[ 45 : 57 ] God and said when you go to them when you share the gospel when you believe in them they find the forgiveness of their sin they're given spiritual life they're restored to their creator Jesus says when you go and do this you will witness forgiveness of sin you will see people pass from death into life that's good stuff guys that's exciting stuff that's the kind of stuff that fuels us to keep going to keep showing up God leads us to salvation he lets us see salvation he lets us see forgiveness and then the third and the final word I have for you is that God's calling to mission is a call to the whole church not just an individual let me say that in a little different slightly shorter way to you your church is being called to engage pastor Mike is calling you as an individual to participate

I'm here on Mike's behalf to call you to engage to be a part of this but you are not alone you will not go out alone you will go as a part of God's people that is the way that you're called when I was in Richmond this week on Wednesday night we had a sending celebration we saw 30 brand new IMB missionaries appointed and sent out they're going all over the world and I got to sit and listen as David Platt our international mission board president began to share a message with them and he was talking about Moses and how God called Moses to go into Egypt and to approach Pharaoh and he made a point that I wrote this one down and thought man I'm holding on to this one I actually emailed it to myself sitting in there because I thought I don't want to forget this one I want to share it with you too because it's something that we have to remember whenever we step out on faith to follow God he said when God called Moses he didn't sit Moses down he said now listen Moses

here's what

I need you to understand you grew up in the household of Pharaoh so you get what Egyptians are like you are just Egyptian enough because of that experience and you're just Hebrew enough you are the guy who has been tailor made for this position to rescue Israel from their slavery he didn't look at Moses and say Moses I need you to get in there and get it done because quite frankly sir you're the best shot we got at this no he kept it a whole lot simpler with this than that God said these words to Moses you go and I will be with you so Highland Park Baptist Church here's my closing statement to you I am thrilled that God has given you a heart to engage Bartlesville I cannot wait to hear from

Mike what he will do with you not only here in a few weekends but in the years to come as you are faithful to his calling and you reach out to his city but here is my final word of exhortation go go go in joy joy go in faith go in obedience go in hope go in expectation go and the Lord will be with you he will be with you and you will see him move to close our time I want us to have some time to pray together I always believe that any time God's word is laid in front of us we don't want to walk away without responding sometimes that means we need to come forward we need to pray we need someone to pray with us or God's called us to a major decision sometimes it means you need to sit right there and for just a few moments in your heart you need to sort things out with God you need to look at the word that you just heard and say

God what do you want to change in me so for my last slide you see some questions up there some prayer guides as we pause to pray these are suggestions things that you heard this morning and say God this this is what I want to happen in my heart God based on what you said this is what I see that you need to change make me new change who I am God you