

A New Hope in Christ

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Date: 26 March 2017

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[0 : 00] I'm here today because it's Missions Day and I will be sharing some specifics about missions!

I want to preach too, so we're going to do it in the context of my message. I'll be sharing some things with you. Let me invite you to open your Bibles to John chapter 14 beginning at verse 1. While you're finding that, I'll just tell you a story about these three guys that were out hunting. They came across this river and there had been a lot of rains and so the river was heavy and it was flowing pretty fast.

They needed to cross and get to the other side, but they didn't know how to do it. So being Christians, they decided, well, let's pray about it and see what we can do. So the first guy prayed and he said, Lord, just give me the strength that I can jump in this river and swim.

He was a man of faith and so immediately he had these muscles and he jumped in the water and started swimming across the other side. The second guy said, man, I'm going to take that chance. [1 : 31] I said, Lord, give me a rowboat. And poof, there was this rowboat. So he hopped in it and he started paddling the other side. And the current was hard.

And the boat kept going down. And it almost capsized two or three times. But finally he made it and just barely made it the other side. And so the third guy, he knew better.

So he said, Lord, whatever it takes to get the other side, that's what I want. And poof, God made him into a woman. She read the map.

Found that there was a bridge down about a half a mile down this way and got across the other side, okay. Well, let me tell you. There is a way to get across the Jordan River into heaven, okay. And we're going to read about that this morning. But there's only one way. So we're going to read the directions. If you found John chapter 14, beginning at verse 1, we find these words. Jesus is talking to his disciples.

[2 : 41] He says, Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God. Believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there, you may be also. And where I go, you know, and the way you know.

Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you're going and how can we know the way? And Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. You know, one of the greatest truths in our day is this truth right here. It says there's only one way.

Jesus says, I am the way. It's interesting here. I'm not a Greek scholar, but it's interesting here that the definite article, the, is used.

[3 : 38] He's not saying I am a way. When he says the, he means he is the way, the one and the only way. Now, you probably grew up in church and probably been a Christian all of your life.

But let me just share with you a little bit of my testimony here. And as a, I'm a second generation Christian on my father's side. My father is from the Sack and Fox tribe.

My mother is from the Choctaw tribe, but on my father's side, their family was raised in our traditional native religion, Sack and Fox religion.

And they converted to Christianity, and that's another story. But, so I was raised in church. Now, I didn't really become a Christian until I was in the 11th grade in high school.

But I was in church, and I was raised in church. And when I finally became a Christian, I was really sincere and really believed that God gave me new life that day that I invited him into my heart.

[4 : 43] But having received Christ, so, you know, it was just a few years, and then I went to college after that. And when I got to college, I met some other native people.

Now, this is back in the 70s, and some of you will recall those were kind of turbulent years. They were militant years. You know, there was black power, and for the native people, there was something called the American Indian Movement or AIM.

And people were really militant those days. And I ran across some guys that really challenged me. And they said, you know, Emerson, you know, Christianity is a white man's religion.

And the same people that taught us about Jesus are the ones that took our lands. And the one that placed us on reservations. And the ones that hold us back today.

And they gave me all these kinds of arguments. And you know what? I got to thinking about it. Well, you know, I wonder if Jesus really is the way. And so, begin what I call a crisis of faith.

[5 : 47] Because I'm proud of my native heritage. And proud to be Native American. And so, I began to examine all of this. And as I listened to guys, you know, is Christianity a white man's religion?

Or is it for everybody? Well, to make a long story short, there were two, three years that I was kind of going through this crisis. Going through this struggle. Trying to decide what my life was all about. And by the way, during that time I stopped going to church. And really wasn't living for the Lord. I need to be honest about that. Because I just wasn't sure. And wanting to find my way.

But one of the things I discovered during that time is I became very bitter. I became very bitter toward non-Indian people. And towards the way that my people were treated.

Now, here's the bottom line. You know, the thing about being bitter is this. Do you know that bitterness is self-destructive? And so, what happens all this time. I don't know that I was hurting anybody. But I was destroying myself with these attitudes of bitterness and anger.

[6 : 50] That were just driving my life during these periods of searching. Trying to find out who I was as a human being. As a Native American. And wanting to follow God.

But do I do it this way? Or do I do it this way? And after going through that. I can remember one day. And fast forward. But I was drafted into the United States Army.

And served in Vietnam. And then came back. And I was down in Killeen, Texas. In Fort Hood, Texas. And I remember one day thinking, man, my life is a mess.

I mean, there's just no meaning. There's just no purpose. And I think, I don't want to live my life this way. And I thought about it. And you know, I remember that my life was the happiest.

When I was growing up in that little Indian Baptist church back in Oklahoma. And I remember that we didn't have a lot of money. We didn't have a lot of things. But you know what? We had peace.

[7 : 50] And we had joy. And we had the things that money can't buy. And I began to realize. I didn't find that out in the world. I didn't find that in Indian religion. I didn't find that anywhere else.

I found that in the church where people gathered to worship the Lord Jesus Christ. And so I knelt on my knees that day in an army barracks. and I simply said to God, Lord, I want to come home.

And I believe with all of my heart that our God is a gracious and merciful God and if you'll turn to him, you'll find forgiveness just like I did that day. And my life began to change and suddenly my life began to turn around for the good.

And it was shortly after that, my wife and I, we'd been dating, but my wife and I decided that I was getting out of the army soon and so we decided that we would get married and start serving in church.

And I got a job in hospital administration and was making good money. But one of the things that I did is that I would travel around to different places and particularly where we had grants for these rehabilitative programs.

[9 : 05] And I began to look at some of our programs for Native Americans because we struggle with alcoholism. And I began to look at the programs that we had for alcoholism. And I realized that when an alcoholic would go there, he would get clean.

He would get sober. It's a residential program. And his life would change. But what I discovered was is that when he graduated, when he went out, he went back and he had no place to go except to his old friends and the people that he knew before.

And suddenly what would happen is six months later, he's back where he was and it becomes a cycle of alcoholism. And he would end up back in the same place or at least or maybe even in jail or even worse than that.

And you know what? God laid up in my heart that I know a better way. I know a better way. And so I resigned my secular job and felt that God was calling me into the ministry.

And I wanted to bring what I was so convinced that Jesus is the way that I wanted to preach the gospel to my Native American people. And so Shirley and I made the decision to enter into the ministry at that point.

[10:17] And we felt that God was calling us because I believe that the only hope for Native Americans is the gospel of Jesus Christ. I talked to a lot of groups about Native culture.

I talked to a lot of secular groups about Native culture and Native people today. And one day I was talking and somebody asked, we had a question and answer session.

And somebody said, well, Dr. Falls, what do you think is the greatest need among Native people today? Is it federal funding?

Is it grants? What do you think the greatest need is? And I said to them, obviously we need money for health care, education. The funding is important and I understand that.

But I said, that's not the greatest need. And the greatest need among Native people is hope. And they kind of thought, well, can you elaborate? And I said, you know, I'll put it this way.

[11:18] You know, we Americans are a little bit overweight. Now, maybe that doesn't apply to you. And maybe I'm kind of stopped preaching and going to medicine here. But, you know, we as Native Americans are a little bit, so I think my illustration to them would work that day.

And I said, you know, we go on a diet periodically. And why do we do that? Because we want to improve our health because we believe that we can have a better life in the future. And so we have hope.

We believe that we can get a better job. We believe that we can get a better house. But what if you live in a situation where every day was the same?

What if you lived in a situation where there was just no hope? I was pastoring a church in Phoenix, Arizona. And I remember one day between Sunday school and the worship hour, I was standing in the back and a little girl, I think she was seven, eight years old.

She came on our church bus, our van. And she came to church. Her parents weren't there, but they allowed her to come. And so she came to Sunday school and was coming to church.

[12:25] And so she's really one of these kids that are just really outgoing, talk to anybody. And so she came up and wasn't afraid to talk to me as the pastor. And so we were just visiting.

We were just talking. She says, Pastor, can I ask you a question? I said, sure. Now, listen, the question she, I'm getting ready to share it. This is a question of a seven, eight-year-old girl that's very innocent. She wasn't implying anything.

It wasn't meaning anything, okay? Just an innocent seven, eight-year-old. And she says, Pastor, do you get drunk? And I thought, what kind of question is that? I said, what? She said, do you get drunk? And I said, well, let's talk about this, you know.

And before I answer the question, what I discovered was that morning when she came to church, her daddy and her uncle were passed out in the living room. And she literally had to go past them to get out to the bus.

And it dawned on me at that point that every Native American male that she had ever seen probably got drunk. I mean, she'd probably never seen a Native person that wasn't like that.

[13:25] So she just assumed, me, I'm Native American. She just assumed, well, I get drunk, too. I tried to share with that little girl that all of us aren't like that. Some of us are different. Some of us, you know, our lives have been changed because of Jesus Christ.

And so I did my best to explain that to her. But it didn't have long because we had to go get ready. But I did go back to my office, and I delved out on my knees. And I prayed for that little girl.

And I prayed. I said, Lord, give that girl a new daddy. Now, I didn't mean a different daddy. Don't get me wrong. See, the Bible says if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

Old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new. And I prayed, and I prayed that day that her daddy might be made new by the power of Jesus Christ.

And I have seen over the years of my ministry people whose lives were headed in the wrong direction just like my life was headed in the wrong direction.

[14:23] But somebody, somebody took the initiative to take the gospel to them and to tell them about Jesus Christ. And I'm so grateful that many lives, many native lives have been changed and have been touched.

And now we live with hope. And I'm going to talk more about that hope in a minute. But we live with hope. We believe that ultimately we're going to see victory in our lives.

And it's because we discovered the one way. And that is the way Jesus Christ. Let me tell you something. Today's missions day.

And I want to tell you, this is so-called the Bible Belt in America. Christianity is strong in this part of the state. You know, when the tribes in the southeast, the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole people came to Oklahoma.

See, you don't read about it, but you know, a lot of them were already Christians. And on the Trail of Tears, there were Christian ministers. There were Baptist ministers that ministered to my people and encouraged them.

[15 : 33] And when they came here, they began to share the good news with other native tribes coming from the plains and coming from the west that were brought here during that time of forced relocation by the United States government.

But what they did was they were taken away by gunpoint from their homelands. But you know what? They did not despair. They did not give up. What they did was they preached the gospel because they had hope.

And they began to share that with other native people. And today, at least among our Baptist General Convention, we have over 180 churches that predominantly are filled with Native American people today.

And a lot of that was because somebody, when they could have given up, when they could have quit, they made the sacrifices. They made the sacrifices to share the gospel with other people. I want to tell you, see, the thing about it is that when you discover something good, the most natural thing in the world is to share it with somebody else.

[16 : 37] That's our human nature. When something good happens, we want to tell it to other people. I remember years ago, and, you know, I was just, we were just starting out and we were struggling financially like you do when you're a young married couple, didn't have a lot of extra funds.

And I remember I drove to church one day and my tires were kind of bald and people looked and said, Emerson, you need to get some new tires. I said, well, tell me about it. I know that, but tires are expensive, you know.

And, you know, so everybody says, well, you know, and I forget the name of the place, but Western Auto has this on sale. And they start talking and they said, you know, I think this is. And one guy came up and told me, well, you know, down here on 29th Street, you know, there's a guy selling tires out of the back of his pickup.

Now, I'm not advocating you do that, but here's my point, okay. When people knew a good deal, they were happy to share it with me, right? I mean, that's what we do. We share everything else. You know, if you go in at a good restaurant, chances are, if you really enjoy that experience, you're going to tell somebody else, hey, man, we ate over here. And it was the greatest food, man. We'd share everything else.

[17 : 45] And let me tell you, when Jesus has changed your heart, when Jesus has grabbed a hold of your life and given you hope and giving you peace, the most natural thing in the world is that we ought to tell other people about it.

And so as we read the New Testament, we see there's an outward thrust to Christianity. As we read the New Testament, we begin to see that it began in Jerusalem. But Jesus said in one act, you shall be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the uttermost parts of the earth.

And we see how it went down to Antioch. And then we see how it went to Rome. And we see how it spread around the whole world. And 2,000 years later, somebody told you about Jesus Christ because somebody told them because somebody told them because somebody.

That's what missions is, is seeing that the gospel goes forth because there are people today that need hope. There are people today that need to hear. And so whatever way that we can do it, I'm so grateful for churches like yours that realize, you know, you could use the money here.

And there are a lot of things that you could do. But you realize that you have a responsibility that others around the world can hear the gospel. And so today, many of you are going to make decisions to share part of your hard-earned money so that the gospel might go forth.

[18 : 56] I commend you and I applaud you for such a thing as that. You see, that's what it's all about. As a young Christian, I learned that I give 10% of what I make to the church.

And so I begin by taking a portion of that which I earn and giving it to the church. And I'm so grateful that the churches I've been affiliated with belong to. They, in turn, have taken a portion of their church budget and they've given it to missions so that the gospel can go forth around the world. And I want to tell you today that here in Oklahoma, 93% of my people are not in church. But I want to tell you, it's the same if not worse in other places.

In Canada, it's even worse than it is here in the United States. And people just need hope. And here's the thing about it.

Jesus said in Matthew 9, 35, 36, 37, somewhere along in there, he says, he says, the fields are white unto harvest, but the laborers are few.

[20 : 04] The problem is, is that there are places today where people would come to Jesus Christ, but there is no gospel message. There is no church.

Here in Oklahoma, my responsibility with the Baptist General Convention is several things. But one of the things that we do is that we try to plant churches in areas of lostness.

And even in Oklahoma, where we look around, we think, man, you know, there's, there's, there's, you know, this is the Bible Belt. We don't need any more churches. Let me tell you, I'm just limiting to Native Americans.

There are places where we have people, Native groups of people that have no gospel witness. We have no witness among the Apaches. We have no witness among some of the tribes.

You know, here, here, you know, around Miami and the, the, the, the Ottawa people and places like that have yet to have a gospel witness. So even in Oklahoma, there's still a need.

[21 : 04] And then we could continue to go across the United States and into Canada. And there are so many places where there are people today, but there is no church and there is no preacher and there is no one.

And, and, and, and I, I wake up every day excited to, to go to work to see where can we go next? Who can we raise up? One of the things that we're doing through the Baptist General Convention is something called the Robert Haskins School of Christian Ministry.

And in the Robert Haskins School of Christian Ministry, we realize that we need to raise up young men to, to, to become preachers, to become pastors, to become church planters.

Now, a lot of these, these are, these are, these are, these are people that, I say young men, some of them are retirees, 50 years old. But these are, these are people that probably are not going to go to college and not going to go to seminary.

Now, let me say this. I'm a seminary graduate. I'm grateful for my education. Okay. And I would encourage any person that has the opportunity to go to college, go to seminary. I think if you can do that, the resources that you would receive will be a blessing to you in your ministry.

[22 : 08] I strongly encourage that. But here's the thing. I know there are people, for whatever reason, they cannot or will not go, but they need help. And so what we do is we'll take a young man who's working. Maybe, maybe he's, he's working in a, as an auto mechanic throughout the week.

But you know what? He lives in a community of lostness. And so through the Haskins School, we'll equip him. We'll teach him Bible. We'll teach him how to pastor. We'll give him the skills that he needs so that he can become a bivocational pastor among some of our churches and begin to share the gospel in that community.

And in many places, we have communities where, not like Bartlesville, okay, there's not a lot of people in some of these communities. And they'll never be able to afford a full-time pastor, but we're raising up bivocational people through the Haskins School that can go.

And the fact that we're able to raise up leaders and to plant churches and to help existing churches is all because churches like yours that support us and what we're doing.

I am the only, as it was said, you know, years ago, the old Home Mission Board, some of you remember that, before it became the North American Mission Board, the old Home Mission Board, we've always had somebody that was responsible for Native American work nationwide.

[23 : 21] And when it became the North American Mission Board, we still had a person there. But NAM has made a strategic decision. I promise you I'm not being critical, okay.

But they've made a strategic, they recognize in many of the major cities there's lostness and we have no work there. And through the SEND program, what they're trying to do is they're trying to plant churches in Chicago and New York and Los Angeles and Seattle, many of our major cities where we have great numbers of lostness and no Baptist work and NAM is doing the best.

And I think it's a great vision. I think it's a great thing they're doing. But as a result of that, what happens is there's nobody at the national level that's strategizing and looking at Native American work.

Part of what happened was when that change took place, a lot of the state conventions, they had cooperative agreements with the old North American Mission Board.

And as a result of that, the money that the large conventions gave were able to go to support smaller conventions like Wyoming, Nevada, New Mexico, and places like that, particularly places where we have large Native populations.

[24 : 32] And so state conventions were able to have Native American strategists and specialists. And when that went away with the change of direction, many of our state conventions began to struggle and they had to lay off people.

And in many of our smaller conventions, one of the first things to go was those that work with Native Americans. And now in the Southern Baptist Convention, I am the only person, okay, paid by cooperative program funds.

I'm the only person funded by the denomination to work with Native Americans. I don't say that proud. To me, that's a shame that we can't do that. But you know what? I couldn't do this if Oklahoma Baptists weren't faithful in giving to missions that enabled me to be able to do the work and to have funds to help other churches and to do that.

Let me tell you, I made a decision one day that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. And I dedicated my life. But I realized one man can't do very much.

And one of the geniuses of Baptists is this. We're autonomous. Our churches are autonomous, okay? Nobody can tell us what to do. Nobody can tell us what to do with our money. But one of the reasons I think God has blessed us is because of this one word called cooperation.

[25 : 45] And we recognize that by working together with other churches, we can do more than we can do alone. And there's a great synergism. You know, when I was in Vietnam, I discovered what, I didn't know the word synergism, but I discovered what synergism was.

At some point, if you're in Vietnam, you can't have enough sandbags, okay? Because we had bunkers and we lived in bunkers. And so somebody was always, you know, on sandbag detail.

One day, I got on sandbag detail. And so our job was to take the sand and put them in those bags and tie them up so we'd hit right, you know. And so me and another guy, here's what I discovered, okay? I could take a, you know, shovel and fill my bag and he could take a shovel and fill his bag.

And to make the math easy, let's say, you know, we could make 20 sandbags an hour, okay? But you know what I discovered? If we'd work together, instead of him 20 and me 20, which is 40, what I discovered is that by working together, we could do 60, 70, 80 bags.

There's something about, here, we work together, I'll hold the bag, you shovel, and by partnering together, we could do more than either of us can do alone. That's what synergism is. Now, I can't explain this.

[26 : 59] I don't know why. But, you know, my church, you know, is a small church. We have about 60 people in our church. But, you know, we give our missions money.

It's not much. But you know what? God takes that little bit and God takes that little bit and God takes a little bit from here and there. And we have one of the largest missionary forces around the world because of the synergism of local Baptist churches that believe in missions and support missions.

And I'm so grateful that a portion of those mission dollars come to Native American work here in Oklahoma. So one of the things I want to say is thank you guys for having a missionary heart because there's much work to do.

And even though we have one of the largest missionaries, let me tell you something. If you're keeping up with our work, one of the things you know is that the International Mission Board has places that we could send missionaries.

We don't have the dollars to support them today like we need. And so what happens is there are places that are not hearing the gospel today. There are places that lose hope because we don't have the resources yet.

[28 : 06] We need to do the very best we can to support missions around the world to see that the gospel is being heard. I believe that with all of my heart.

I believe that. And let me continue on here. In verse 2, Jesus says something. In my Father's house are many mansions.

If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place, I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there, you may be also.

You know, Jesus made a great promise. What he made a great promise is that somewhere in God's house, there's a room for you and me.

I talked about hope, Paul, ago. That's the hope. Our hope is not in this world. You understand that. Our hope is not here. You see, what happens is if we place our hope here, then we've misplaced it.

[29 : 08] But not only that, is that when we put our hope in this world, that changes everything. If all I'm worried about is my retirement house, you know, if all I'm worried about is my ire, and nothing wrong with that, by the way, but if that's all I'm worried about, if that's where my hope is, if that's where, you know, you know, it's going to be sad because I'll only experience that for a few years and then I'm going to be gone.

You know, and if our hope, the Bible says if our hope is in this life, we're of all people to be pitied, to be most pitied.

Because a person who places his hope in this life is placing it in something that's just not going to last. The Bible tells us our hope is beyond the grave. We believe that we're just here for a little while and that one day, one day, God is going to, Jesus is going to come again.

We'll either die and go be with him or Jesus is going to come and get us. And that here is where our ultimate hope is, is that one day we're going to experience the glories of heaven. And we're going to be gathered there.

And, you know, what I like in Revelation 5 is, here's what it says, is they were gathered around the throne. Listen to this. Every nation, every tribe, every tongue, and every people.

[30 : 27] My hope and my vision is that one day when we're gathered around the throne, I'm going to look around that throne as we're worshipping and we're singing God. I mean, this was a great worship. It really was.

This was a great worship. And don't take that the wrong way. But that's nothing compared to that worship going to have up there, right? And I can't wait, man, where they're praising God and we're worshipping God.

But what, in the midst of that worship, you know what, I'm going to kind of look around. I'm going to look over here and I'm going to see a bunch of Africans over here. I'm going to look over here and I'm going to see a bunch of ex-Muslims from Iran that found Jesus Christ because of missions.

And they're going to be gathered around the throne. And I'm going to look over here and I'm going to see some Chinese people. And by the way, let me tell you something. The church in China is underground. The church in China is illegal.

But let me tell you something. It is growing faster than it's growing in here. And I believe when I look at that throng gathered, I believe I'm going to see just throngs of Chinese people gathered there. I'm going to look around and I'm going to see people in Central and South America because God is doing a great thing in Central and South America today.

[31 : 33] And I'm going to be hearing a bunch of people praising God in Spanish down here as we gather around the throne. But you know what? I'm going to look over here and gather around. You know what? I'm going to see Sack and Fox people.

I'm going to see Choctaw people. I'm going to see Navajo people. I'm going to see Hopi people. I'm going to see Likola people. And they're going to be gathered around praising God. You know why? Because people cared about missions.

Enough to send missionaries and to see that the gospel was there. And so we're going to fulfill the prophecy and revelation. And we're going to see every nation, every tribe, every tongue, and every people gathered.

Because people need the hope of the gospel. And so yes, Jesus is the way. He says in verse 6, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Now hang with me just a couple of minutes here. One of the greatest heresies that we live in today. One of the greatest heresies. And it's not a formal teaching, but it's just something that everybody believes.

[32 : 35] And everybody believes today that somehow we're all going to get to heaven. Everybody believes that God is a loving God and he wouldn't send anybody to hell. Okay? That is a false teaching, a false belief, and a heresy.

Because Jesus just says there is no other way. There is no other way. I went to a funeral one time of a non-believer. And it wasn't a Christian funeral.

And they made no bones about it that they didn't believe in God. They were non-believers. But their friend died, and so they had a funeral. And as I sat in the back and listened to what was going on, everyone who got up and gave a eulogy about their buddy and their friend who died, one of the things they all said was, well, he's in a better place today.

And I'm sitting back and thinking, oh, how sad if they could only see his real destination. He's not in a better place. And folks, we need to get that down. We need to understand that.

People who die without Jesus Christ are lost, and they're lost throughout eternity. Destined to be in a place that God prepared for Satan and his angels.

[33 : 49] Oh, what a tragedy it is. And so I don't know how many years I have left here upon this earth, but I want to use them so that my people might hear the gospel. Because our hope is not in this life.

But our hope is that ultimately we're going to go to that place where there's no more sorrow, no more suffering, no more tears, no more sorrow, no more death. I was in Canada a number of years ago preaching, and I heard about a couple there, Native American couple from Canada.

And it's a husband and wife, and they went to a bar one night. They did that typically. And while they were there, they started drinking and got drunk and got into an argument.

And the argument got physical, and the bartender or whoever was in charge kicked them out of the bar and told them not to come back again. And so they continued going down the street.

They argued. When they got home, they were still arguing. And they walked into the house, and the woman was shouting at the man. The man turned to her and said, listen, don't shout at me.

[35 : 03] He said, I ought to kill you right now. And she says, oh, you can just talk. And he went into the bedroom. He got his hunting rifle. And he took his hunting rifle, and he pointed it at his wife.

And he said, I ought to kill you right now. And what's interesting to me is what she said. She looked at him while the rifle was pulling straight at her.

And she said, go ahead. You'd just be doing me a favor. I have nothing, nothing to live for anyway. Go ahead, go ahead. I'm thinking, how can you come to the place in this life where you lose all hope and have nothing to live for?

Native American people have one of the highest suicide rates. I have a great nephew. His mother came home and found that he hanged himself recently, just 20 years old.

But I heard stories of 14-year-old Native people taking their lives because, like that little girl I told you about her daddy, no hope. You see, if you have hope, you'll change your life.

[36 : 10] But if every day is going to be the same, you have nothing to live for. And you have no hope. And my heart breaks because there's people today, they have no hope in this life, and they have no hope for the life that is to come.

And folks, they never will find that hope until they find Jesus Christ. And they never will find Jesus Christ until somebody is willing to be sent.

But you know what? In order for somebody to be sent, it takes a bunch of us to support them on the mission field. And so missions is a cooperative effort among all of us. You're missionaries here.

You might not be out on the field, but you're part of a great missionary team today when you support those that are going out there. I couldn't do what I do if people like you didn't support the work that we do.

And so I want to say two things. I want to say thank you for your support of missions, but I want to say keep it up. Do all you can because there's people today that need to hear the gospel.

[37 : 17] Let me say one thing as we close here. And I don't know who you are today, and I don't know the people here today. But if there's anyone here today and you've never received Jesus Christ and you think, well, it's going to be okay, you know.

I want you to understand Jesus just said, okay, himself, Jesus himself said, there is no other way. I am the way, the truth, and the life.

And I pray that you would think about those words and realize that this life is temporary, but eternity is forever. And let me tell you something.

You're either going to spend eternity in that place that he's prepared for us, that room that's in the Father's house, or you're going to spend it in that place of torment that God has prepared for Satan. And it all depends on this.

What will you do with Jesus Christ? Christ. And if there's anyone here today, I want to tell you, here's the good news. I don't care what you've done. I don't care how bad you've lived. Our God is a gracious God.

[38 : 17] God is a merciful God. And if you'll turn to him, he'll forgive all of your sins. He'll wash you whiter than snow. But more than that, he'll make you a new creation. Everything has passed away.

You'll have a new outlook, a new hope. Everything will be new in Jesus Christ. You'll have a new hope in Jesus Christ.

Thank you.