

A Sending God for a Sent People

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[0 : 00] I do want to say thank you for the privilege of allowing me to share this morning.

! I'm honored to be here. If you're a guest and you don't like any of this, come back next week. It'll be better. Don will be speaking. So I just kind of give you that right up front, all right?

I am your North American Mission Board missionary. I am a commissioned missionary from the North American Mission Board, and I want to say thank you for your giving to the cooperative program and the Annie Armstrong Easter offering.

Without your cooperation in the gospel, as Paul says in Philippians, we could not do what we do.

I'm so excited that you're already connected with Jeff Martin, an open Bible Baptist church, and Jeff is a good, good friend.

In fact, he was trying to figure out a way to get here with me. He was trying to figure out how to get on the plane, and, of course, he also has like four full-time jobs. As most of you know, he's a fireman, and, in fact, they just put him in charge of the citywide public health with fire department, and his wife's a pharmacist.

[1 : 18] In fact, we're planning on going to Uganda together in the spring on a medical mission trip, and so thank you for your cooperation in the gospel. Out in the foyer, I've left a couple of pieces.

One is about reaching the front range together, which is some information about the Pikes Peak Baptist Association and how we do that. The other is a prayer sheet to pray for ten of our church planters, and I'll tell a little bit more about that, but these are just ten of our guys who are planting churches in the Colorado Springs, Pikes Peak region, and I would simply invite you to pray for them and encourage them.

I do want to introduce my family to you. There they are. Of course, you see me. In front of me is my wife, Carol. We've been married 35 years, been in ministry all of those years.

She's a nurse. She actually had to work this weekend. She works, makes a great salary, so I can do what I want to do, and I'm thankful for that. Don, I don't know about you.

My wife is marketable. We're not, really. I mean, we've got a master's and a doctorate in ministry.

What do you do with that? But anyway, that's my wife, a wonderful, wonderful lady.

[2 : 33] In the middle is my son-in-law and my oldest daughter, Tricia. Luke and Tricia Barfield.

Luke is actually a graduate of the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. I was his pastor before he met my daughter, so he blames me.

I can't blame my daughter, right, because I knew him first. They've been married 10 years, and they run a – he's now out of the Air Force, and they run the Aerials Gymnastics Center.

My oldest daughter was a nationally-ranked gymnast. In fact, she actually traveled here a couple of times to compete in regional gymnastics meets here with, I think, the Phillips 66 gym with Bart Conner and all those.

And so she traveled all over the country. Of course, she went. We couldn't afford to go with her because we were paying for her to go. And so she got to go a lot of places we didn't get to go. Then on your right, my left, is my youngest daughter, Ashley.

She's 27, just graduated from nursing school and passed her boards just a couple of weeks ago. So we're excited about her making some money. But I just found out last night she may want to move back home.

[3 : 37] And we've already been through this once. She's like the boomerang child, you know. She just kind of keeps coming back, right? But she's trying to find a job now, and we're excited about that.

Then the two little squirts there. The tallest one is my oldest granddaughter, Sydney. She just started first grade this year. And she is your typical oldest child, very responsible, very, you know,

easy to discipline and that kind of thing.

And then there's the other one. And that look kind of explains it all. That's what I love about this picture. That's Alexi. She's almost 5 going on 20.

And she will tell you all about that. But they both love Papa, and Papa loves them. You know, if I had known being a grandparent was going to be so much fun, I would have passed over being a parent. Just gone, right?

Isn't that true, man? Just go to the grandparent thing, man. The heck with the kids. And so they have Papa wrapped around their little finger, and I don't even care. I'm good with that.

[4 : 38] So I always want to try to introduce my family a little bit to you so you get a little bit to know about me and what God has done. My youngest daughter, did I mention single? If anybody's interested, just let you know.

I got her email and everything. I'll give it out. So anyway, it is a pleasure to be here. If you've got your Bibles, turn to John chapter 20. John chapter 20.

I want to talk a little bit this morning about a sending God for a sent people. I have these words up here on my shirt. The reason I wore this shirt is because it's called Send North America.

One time I was wearing this shirt and preached the whole sermon, and somebody came up to me afterwards and said, I've been trying to figure out what that said, the whole sermon. So I'm going to tell you. It says Send North America.

The North American Mission Board has a push right now to send people out to be missionaries. And again, I'm a missionary. Now, let me ask you this. I know you're going to have David here tonight.

[5 : 38] And by the way, you are in for a great treat. And I've gotten to know David a little bit the last couple of days. And, man, I wish he was here this morning so I could hear him. But David's a great guy. When you think about a missionary, what do you think about?

Africa. Yeah, go to Africa. I've been there. I've been to Zimbabwe. I've been to Uganda. What else? Okay, so China. All right. What do missionaries do?

Help people like Jesus. Great start. What else do they do? What? School? They set up schools, maybe clinics, hospitals, like Open Bible Clinic, Medical Clinic.

And I understand there's actually your association has just opened a clinic that Jeff Martin and Freed to help to kind of put together. Do you know what church it's hosted at?

All of our churches are doing it. In fact, I met Robert, I think. He's kind of the director. Well, it's interesting because a lot of times we have a pretty narrow perspective of missionary.

[6 : 47] We often think of a missionary who goes and lives among the people, you know, whether it's in Africa or wherever, China, learns the language, learns the culture.

And they often are supported by us through the cooperative program, giving and through Lottie Moon, Christmas offering and so forth. We pray for them.

We pray for them. We encourage them. And then from time to time, in fact, Greg and Donna Fort are back here from Zimbabwe. And we got to partner with Greg and Donna about six, seven years ago for a number of years from churches in our association who went to Zimbabwe to serve with them.

So we let them come back every so often. And they share their stories and share what God is doing. And we, you know, pray for them and write checks for them. And every once in a while we get to go on a short-term mission trip, go visit them, go minister with them.

When I was in Zimbabwe, we spent two weeks in two-man tents. And that's the last time I went there. I'm not a camping kind of guy.

[7 : 51] But I got to tell you, God did some incredible stuff. We started 11 churches in two weeks and trained the pastors. And so anyway, so we think of missionaries as doing mission-type activities.

And we pray for them and we lift them up. And so that's a common theme throughout Scripture. Like redemption is a common theme. And irresistible grace is a common theme.

And the sovereignty of God and the fact that God pursues us. But there's another theme, and that is that we serve and we worship a sending God. Jesus is all about sending people.

In John 20, verse 21, this is Jesus has been crucified. He's risen from the dead. He's appeared to Mary Magdalene. And now he's going to appear to his key disciples.

In fact, I think I'll start reading in verse 19. On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you.

[8 : 59] After he said this, he showed them his hands in his side, and the disciples were overjoyed when they saw him. And then Jesus said, and this is key. Peace be with you.

As the Father has sent me, I am what? Sending you. God is a sending God.

Back in chapter 1 of John, the first verse says, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was made flesh, and the Word did what? Dwelt among us. And in verse 14, it says, The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

God sent Jesus, right? He sent Jesus. We didn't really ask for it. Humanity didn't. Humanity was pretty messed up.

But he sent Jesus to us. We call it the incarnation. God in the flesh. Throughout the book of John, we see this theme of being sent. John 14, verse 26.

[10 : 00] But the advocate, Jesus says, The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things. John chapter 15. We see this referenced again.

Jesus says, When the advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father. John 17. As Jesus is praying for his followers, he says in verse 18, As you sent me into the world, talking to the Father, I have sent them into the world.

In fact, over 60 times in the Gospel of John, we see the word send or sent. Our God is a sending God.

Now, Jesus was a missionary. All of you in this room are missionaries. I just get paid to do it. That's all. God has a mission field for you that your pastor cannot touch.

Jonathan cannot touch. I cannot touch. God has put you in a place of work or school or neighborhood or wherever. And he wants you to be a missionary in the midst of it. He has sent you there.

[11 : 08] What does the word Emmanuel mean? God with us. Why? Because he sent him. God embodied in Jesus. Jesus. Now, when was Jesus with the people?

On Sundays? When was he with them? Every day. He did life with folks. He engaged the rhythms of their life.

What did he do with them? Ate with them? Good Baptist. Ate with them? What else? Talked with them?

Walked with them? You know, one of the things when we read Scripture, oftentimes it tells that they went from one place to another. And what we don't often understand is oftentimes that took two or three days. Now, imagine a group of a dozen men walking two or three days between these towns. They would have to spend the night. What do you think they did at night? Hopefully. Sit around the campfire. I think they did a lot of camping.

[12 : 17] They sat around the campfire and told stories. Wow, did you remember what happened today? Man, that was so cool. Or what do you think is going to happen tomorrow? You know, they're roasting Jewish marshmallows or something.

I don't know. But they had conversation. They talked with each other. They walked with each other. They served together. They celebrated together. They grieved together, right?

Jesus was with them in the rhythms of daily life. In the same way as missionaries, you and I are called to do the same thing. As God gives us opportunity to connect with people and have conversation with people, we are to be his hands and his feet.

We are sent by him. As the Father has sent me, Jesus said, I am what? Sending you. And God gave Jesus a mission.

In the same way he gives you and I a mission. In this world, just as Jesus was sent, so too are we to be a sent people. We are sent by God.

[13 : 24] And again, we see this throughout Scripture where God continually sends people. In John 1, we see God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Messiah, right?

For Jesus. God sent him ahead of time. And so 60 times, as I mentioned, we see this word sent and send. Now, why? God chooses to use us as his vessels and his vehicles to communicate the greatest news on earth, the gospel.

We get to do that. We have the privilege of doing that. We are to be the embodiment of Jesus. Now, embodiment is not a word we use a lot in America.

Just as Jesus was the embodiment or the incarnation of the Father, so we are to be the embodiment of him to the people around us. We're the only Jesus some people see. How many of you have been on a cruise ship? How many? Okay. All right. What did you like about it? What was your favorite part? The food.

[14:38] Amen. Midnight buffet. Okay. What else? The what? The water. We got ocean cruise. Obviously, a cruise has to go on the water.

Hello. Well, I went on. I took gun on two. I did one in the Caribbean. Then we did the Alaskan cruise, which is kind of in the ocean, but it's really along the inlet passageway. What else did you like about it? Yeah.

You have to do nothing. One of our cruises, our girls went. They were probably middle school age, older elementary. And their favorite part was every day we'd come back to the cabin and the towel was shaped in a new animal, right?

Yeah. That was their favorite part. I'm like, really? Really? That's what you're getting out of this.

Okay. What else? Do you like the shows?

I mean, it's incredible, isn't it? I mean, they take care of you. Now, question. How many of you have ever been on a functioning aircraft carrier?

[15:38] Okay. What was it about? How? No. It's not made for comfort.

An aircraft carrier, most aircraft carriers, and I'm being general here, are about the same size as a cruise ship. They're about three-plus football fields long, about 77 stories high.

They both hold about 8,000 people, roughly. An aircraft carrier has one mission, and that mission is to launch the airplanes safely, loaded with what they need, to do the mission they've been called to do and retrieve them safely.

I mean, that's it. Everybody on that ship, from the captain to the cook to the medic to the pilots to the engineers to the flight deck hands, they have one purpose, and that's all.

That's what the mission is. Now, on a cruise ship, the mission of the crew is to keep you happy.

[16:55] The mission of an aircraft carrier is to go out and penetrate the areas that need to be penetrated, to equip, to prepare, to launch and retrieve aircraft back from a successful mission.

As I was thinking about that, I thought, every aircraft carrier has a chief mission.

And as a pastor, I would want my church to be like an aircraft carrier, to understand its mission. What is its mission to do?

And that mission should pervade everything we do. It's the Great Commission, the Great Commandment. I want my church, I think, to be like an aircraft carrier.

What good would an aircraft carrier be if the planes were never sent out? It'd have no reason to really exist. It'd be just like any other naval vessel.

[18:01] We, all of us in this room, are sent people of God, which means we need to go where the people are.

If I fail to go where the people are, then they must come to where I am. Now, that mindset, think about that a minute, requires that the unchurched nonbeliever do the cross-cultural work of finding Jesus and not us doing the cross-cultural.

We're actually asking the nonbeliever to be a missionary. God has called us to be a missionary, to be sent.

That means we embed our lives and the gospel in the local context in which we are. Now, in order to do that, we need to practice the ministry of presence.

We need to practice being Jesus in the presence of others. We need to practice the presence of Jesus in the presence of others.

[19:17] That's the heart of the incarnational mission. We need to practice presence and proximity. How many of you have heard about the Black Forest fires in Colorado, Colorado Springs?

I live in Black Forest. When we were evacuated for nine days, my wife and I were not even in town. We were down in Monta Vista, Colorado, which is about a four-hour drive.

We were almost to Monta Vista to help a church out and a mission team that was coming. When we got a call from our oldest daughter, Tricia. She said, Dad, there's a fire in Black Forest. What do you want us to do?

I said, well, I guess go out to the house and get the dogs. Grab a couple of file drawers out of the desk. Could have our important papers. Grab some pictures, I guess.

Carol and I were driving, both trying to talk to her on the phone at the same time. You know? And so they did. Well, when they got there, as they were leaving the house, and by the way, we were going to be gone for one night, which means we had clothes for two days.

[20 : 29] They didn't bother to grab any clothes. And that's okay, though. But so he called me later that evening and said, Dad, as we were leaving, we could see the fire.

The trees were all on fire across the meadow to the west of your house, and it's coming straight at the house. And so we thought, it's gone. So that evening, I called Jeff Martin, who's a fireman. And I knew Jeff was going to be at the incident command for the fire department. I said, Jeff, I said, if our fire burns, I want you to call me. Okay? I'd rather hear it from a friend than a stranger. You call me. Okay. He said, I'll do it. So we go ahead and do what we were supposed to do that evening and morning. Then that afternoon, that Wednesday afternoon, the fire started on Tuesday. Wednesday, we drove back home.

When we got home, obviously, we stayed with my oldest daughter and her family. And by the way, I'm really ADD, if you haven't figured that out. So I'm going to go this direction.

[21 : 35] If you ever give your children a futon, give them the nice one. We gave them the not-so-nice one and got to sleep on it for nine days.

This is just, I'm just, you know, give away your best. That's why I'm, because it will come back to get you. All right? So we get back home, and we're looking at the TV coverage, and it just looks, oh, my gosh.

Well, on the Internet, there was a list of addresses that they were posting of homes that had been burned and then homes that had not. And then a lot of them, like our address, was not listed on anything publicly.

We couldn't find it. Which out in Black Forest, we all have five-acre lots, and it's kind of rural and lots of trees. And so we couldn't find it, and that's fine.

Well, Wednesday evening, Jeff calls. And he said, Bill, he said, I hate to tell you this, but your house is on the burn list.

[22 : 39] He said, I've not seen it. I'm hesitant to even call you, because until I get eyes on it, I don't even want to tell you. But it's actually on two burn lists, so I'm pretty sure. I said, okay, Jeff, thanks. Thanks for calling.

So Carol and I, we cried a little bit together. Our kids cried with us. And so I said, well, I guess we're homeless, and we better find some place to rent. So one of our churches I know has a house that we could probably have rented from them.

And so I thought, well, I'll call them and, you know, so forth. And then I started redesigning our house, because we have good insurance, so okay. You know, we're getting a little bit older, and we have three floors in our house.

So we thought, well, maybe we'll do a rant style, you know, do a rant style, and still have the basement downstairs and all that. So about 45 minutes later, Jeff calls back, and he says it was a mistake.

Oh, thank you, Jesus. And then I kind of got ticked, because I just redesigned my house. I'm going, well, Jeff, could you kind of do like a backfire, you know, leave the trees, but kind of, you know, take care of the rest of it.

[23 : 45] See, I have weird thoughts sometimes about stuff. So anyway, so our house was fine. I actually got in. I was able to go in the next day with some other firefighters and deliver water to them and actually got to see our house.

And our house is fine. The only thing we lost was food in the refrigerator and freezers, and that's it. But the fire came within 250 yards of our house. And it literally, it was coming this way and actually went around our house and did that.

And our house is right there. Now, we had 500 people lose their homes, completely lose their homes.

That's not counting the ones that had minor damage or some outbuildings or whatever. These are people who their house, three stories of their house is now three foot of ash in the basement of the house.

Because our houses all have basements. And so Southern Baptists, our disaster relief teams, many from Oklahoma, many who, guys, I've seen since I've been here since Wednesday, came and served our folks in the Black Forest area.

[24 : 48] We became the hands and feet of Jesus. And I got to tell you something. Black Forest is one of the most difficult areas to penetrate. My good friend, Bob Bender, who I know pastored, was associate pastor at First Baptist Bartlesville, pastored in Ada.

He's the pastor of First Baptist Black Forest. And his church served as the incident command for over 1,000 people who came through that in June, July, and August to serve the people of the Black Forest area.

Thankfully, we only lost two lives. And now you know about the flooding, right, that's going on in our area, but also farther north in Fort Collins, Boulder, Loveland, Longmont.

We have an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Let me tell you about Terry Rosenthal. Terry, in the early 60s, lost her house.

The picture you saw was a little log cabin schoolhouse that's a landmark in Black Forest. Right next to that is our Black Forest Community Center. Right next to that was Terry's house.

[25 : 53] Terry's lost her house. Three weeks before the fire, her husband of 40-some years died. Jerry Mayfield from Broken Arrow brought a team of chainsaw people.

I joined his team. And we went over to Terry's house, one of the first days when we could get in, and began to work on her house. And I remember walking the property with her, tagging trees and just talking.

And she ultimately said, Would you come to my husband's memorial service this Sunday afternoon? I said, I'd be happy to. So I went. Jerry went. Dennis Bells, the director of our state disaster relief, went.

We were all there. It was a marine service. I'm not anti-marine. My dad was a fighter pilot in the Air Force. I love the military. We have five military installations in Colorado Springs. This was one of the most hopeless services I've ever been in.

A lieutenant general, the brigadier general led the service. They did the 21-gun salute, talked a little bit. Somebody read the marine prayer, and that was it.

[27 : 00] I thought, man, that's it? And that was it. So I've continued to try to minister to Terry.

We've had some teams continue to help her. Every time I drive by her property, if her car's there, I step in and pray with her. But I would ask you to pray for Terry. She doesn't know Jesus.

We've shared the gospel with her. She's getting closer. But pray for her. But you know what? Each of you in this room, you have a Terry Rosenthal in your life.

God has put somebody in your life. It may be across the street. It may be next door. It may be in that cubicle where you work. It may be in a class that you're taking at school. God has put you in the present to be the presence of Jesus with somebody.

See, mission is really not about location. Mission is about identity. It's who we are. Mission is really not even an activity. It's an attribute of God.

[28 : 05] God is a missionary God from the get-go. Throughout history, God's interaction with humanity is unique in that he doesn't just speak to people.

He sends them. What did he do with Abraham? Sent him, right? Into a land he didn't know about. Abraham went. What did he do with Moses? Sent Moses to get the people out of Egypt.

What did he do with Joseph? He sent Joseph ahead. Not in the most popular way. But you know what? This is probably from the Bill Lighty substandard perversion of the Bible.

But if you're not willing to go, did Joseph want to go when his brother sold him? I don't think so.

Now, Joseph later on was able to say, God did this. You meant it for harm. God meant it for good. And you know Jonah, right? God sent Jonah.

[29 : 08] I don't know about you, but I'd rather go willingly than go through what those guys went through. But God is sending God. I believe he sent Daniel into the exile to continue to prepare the people.

I think he had Nehemiah exactly where he wanted him. And then he sent Nehemiah and he sent Ezra back to Jerusalem to do what he had called them to do. God is a sending God. God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus.

God sent Peter. God sent Paul. God sent Barnabas. God even sent a guy named Philip. Remember Philip? In Acts. Take your Bibles and turn to Acts. Acts chapter 8.

Huge persecution of the church. The church is being persecuted. The church is being scattered. Stephen has just been killed. And Philip goes to Samaria. Now, who was Philip?

Was he an ordained minister, seminary graduate? Who was he? He was a deacon. He was a servant. He was asked to serve the widows in the church in Jerusalem.

[30 : 15] And so, God says, Philip, he sends him to Samaria. What happens in Samaria? Revival breaks out. I mean, a God movement is taking place in Samaria.

Philip was willing to go. He was sent by God. And in the midst of this revival, look at verse 26. Acts chapter 8. Now, an angel of the Lord said to Philip, Go south to the road, the desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.

If I had been Philip, I think I would have gone, come again? I mean, we're having a great ministry here, and you want me to go to a desert road.

Now, what does desert imply? Nobody there. And Philip goes. And it says, then, a chariot comes by.

There's an Ethiopian official who's reading from the book of Isaiah. The Spirit instructs Philip to join him. And, again, Philip obeys him. Each step of this process, Philip is being sent.

[31 : 20] He has an opportunity to be obedient. And the exact same time, the Holy Spirit was also at work in the life of this Ethiopian. He's a Gentile, and it says he's returning home from worshipping Jerusalem.

And he's led by the Spirit. And so Philip asks the official, Do you understand what you're reading? He says, No. Now, folks, this was very much outside the normal church growth strategy of the early church.

They didn't do church this way in the early church in Jerusalem. They didn't do it this way. But Philip was sent. And in the same way as the Father has sent me, Jesus said, I am sending you.

We are to be a sent people. We are to be obedient to what God tells us to do.

You know, Jesus teaches obedience, not just knowledge. Now, knowledge is great. And I love knowledge. I got that doctor's degree. I love all that stuff.

[32 : 23] But the Bible says that knowledge does what? Puffs up. And love does what? Builds up. Obedience is love fleshed out.

Obedience is loving enough to be sent. In fact, Jesus thought this distinction was so important.

In John 15, 15, Jesus says, I no longer call you a servant. I call you a what? A friend. Yeah.

Yeah. And our role as friends and ambassadors of Jesus are to share the truth about Christ. He has sent us. When I was pastoring, sometimes we got kind of caught up in the seating capacity, you know, and how many people were at church every Sunday.

And we made a shift. We stopped counting seating capacity, and we started counting sending capacity. How many people were being sent out from the walls of our church to penetrate the lostness that's there?

[33 : 34] Let me tell you about Colorado. Oklahoma, and these are rough figures, probably a couple years old, has about 3.1 million people in Oklahoma.

Colorado has about 5.5 million. About 4 million of those live on what's called the I-25 corridor of the Front Range, from Colorado Springs up to Fort Collins. 4 million.

About half of that live in the Denver metropolitan area. We have about 600,000 people in the Pikes Peak region. So Colorado has 5.5 million people. We have about 400 Southern Baptist churches in the whole state of Colorado.

And a lot of those are church plants. Oklahoma has 3.1 million people. How many churches do you think, Southern Baptist churches are there in Oklahoma? 1,800.

We have almost twice as many people and about a fourth as many churches. One of our goals in the Pikes Peak region is to start 50 churches in a 10-year period of time.

[34 : 41] We have 50 churches right now, churches and church plants. Most of them are less than 100. We feel like we need to start 50 new churches to penetrate the 600,000 people.

How many of you have been to Colorado Springs? Okay. What do you remember about it? The mountains. What else? The scenery is beautiful.

Mantou Springs. It's weird. And I'll talk about that. Anything else? Garden of the Gods. Air Force Academy. Okay. A lot of people say focus on the family, too.

A lot of people think Colorado Springs is a Christian Mecca. And it's not. In fact, in 1990, our Gazette-Telegraph took a survey and found 25% of the people go to church on a given Sunday.

That's just go to church. It didn't ask them if they were Christian or not. And that includes, we have a big Mormon base. Very strong Hispanic Catholic base there. So that includes everybody going to

church.

[35 : 45] 25% go to church. Didn't talk about evangelicals or anything like that. 1990. Did the same survey 10 years later after 100 parachurch organizations moved in.

2,000. Did the same survey. Discovered that 20% of people now go to church. It dropped 5%. Kind of scratch your head.

You go, wait a minute. Didn't all these Christians move here? They did the same survey or similar survey. Not the same survey. Similar survey in 2010. It's now down to 17%.

What that means is we've got to do some things differently. If we're going to penetrate the lostness there. And your partnership with us is critical to that endeavor.

But here's one of the cool things that happens. We've had mission teams come out for the last two summers because of our partnership. And every one of the mission teams that I talked with, which is not all of them because we had a bunch.

[36 : 47] Every one of them said they came back to their home church changed. And if you've been on a mission trip, you'll probably say the same thing. It's like God did more in my life than I think I gave to other people.

I know that's been true for me. Every one of those mission teams came back and began to act like a missionary in their hometown. I'll never forget the first mission team I was working with.

They said this as they were leaving. Don, you like this. Can we do this back home? Yeah. You can. I give you permission.

Go ahead. And they did. They'd come back and do it. And all of a sudden, they began to have conversations with unchurched people. They began to share Jesus with people.

And we saw churches transformed. Not just in Colorado Springs, but in Oklahoma. Why? Because we begin to be missionaries.

[37 : 51] Think about the sending capacity of this church. Not just to Colorado. Not just to China. Not just overseas. But the sending capacity to the Walgreens we had to stop at because I'm having throat issues.

What about the people that live there? One of the things that we do in Colorado Springs is we do a lot of service evangelism. Because most of the people in our city don't see any value of the church at all.

They think the church is just a leech because it doesn't pay any taxes and so it just sucks up resources. It's interesting that none of the churches in Black Forest burned. Burned all around them, but none of them burned.

But the unchurched people think the church is just a leech. So we try to serve the community. We try to bring value back to the community. Here's what one of our churches did. Steve Turntine, the pastor at Pikes Peak Park Baptist Church.

Lower income area of our city. He went next door. Right next door to his church is a Sonic. He went next door to the church and talked to the manager. He said, we want to serve you. You're neighbors.

[38 : 53] We want to be good neighbors. How can we serve you? And the guy goes, I don't know. You guys, eh, we can't do anything. And Steve said, okay, I'll come back in a couple weeks and I'll ask you again. Yeah, sure, whatever.

Right? Well, luckily, Steve in two weeks went back. Kept his word. That's important. Do what you say you're going to do. He went back and he asked him. The guy goes, well, I don't know, man. And Steve said, well, I asked you to think about it.

So is there anything? He goes, well. And finally, Steve said, what's the worst thing your employees want to do? You're working at Sonic, right? Any guesses? Close.

Cleaning the bathrooms. So Steve put a team together and once a week, his team has gone over there for the last couple of years and cleaned the bathroom. And he's had so many of the workers ask, why are you doing this?

And he says, because Jesus loves you and so do we. No, really, really. Are you like doing community service? Did you get in trouble, you know, with the law? I don't really count. Can we pay you? No, you can't pay us. Disaster relief. I can't tell you how many times people say, can we pay you for this?

[39 : 59] No. We're doing this because Jesus loves you and so do we. So here's the cool thing about that Sonic. They go over there. I don't know. I can't remember which day exactly. But they

now have a waiting list from employees to work that day because they only clean the bathroom.

Three of the college students that work there have come to church and come to know Christ because they serve. And they were sent.

And they went. God is sending you to impact some people around you. God sent Jesus.

Now, why did Jesus come to this earth? To die for our sins. To pay the penalty for our sin. As the Father has sent me to do the mission God had called him to do.

Jesus said, I've come that you might have life and you might have it more abundantly. Jesus said, I've come. I am the way, the truth, and the life. And no one comes to the Father but by me. And why did Jesus need to do that?

[41 : 07] Because in Romans 5.8 it says, or Romans 3.23 says, we've all sinned. We've all fallen short of the glory of God. Romans 5.8 says, God demonstrated his love toward us. And while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

If you're here this morning and you've never said yes to Jesus, think about this. God sent Jesus to this earth for you. If you were it, if I was it, he would send it for you and I.

And he loves you that much. He loves you so much that he died for you. We sang about the cross and the blood earlier. He sent him for you personally. And he wants a personal relationship with you.

Thank you.