

# Three Circles Evangelism - Introduction

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, well, good evening. Good to have you all here tonight. Thank you for coming out. ! Like I said this morning, cold and wet is the worst. I just don't like it at all, especially when you have dogs and you let them outside and then they come back inside. It's just miserable. So, it's again nice to be inside where it's dry and warm. I want to read a couple of scriptures and then, you know, tonight's just really, it's a sermon, it's an introduction as to why I feel like this training is important for our church right now.

And, and they give you a little overview of it. So, the first scripture I want to read is Matthew 25. If you have your Bibles and you want to follow along with me, I'm going to read verses 31 through 46. And then after that, Matthew 28 verses 18 through 20. And both of these are very well-known passages of scripture. Matthew 25 beginning in verse 31. This is the final judgment. And it says, Jesus is speaking here, when the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

[ 1 : 34 ] Before him will be gathered all the nations and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the king will say to those on his right, come, you who are blessed by my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you drink?

And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you? And the king will answer them, truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these brothers, you did it to me.

Then he will say to those on his left, depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food. I was thirsty and you gave me no drink. I was a stranger and you did not welcome me.

Naked and you did not clothe me. Sick and in prison and you did not visit me. Then they also will answer saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to you?

[ 2 : 59 ] Then he will answer them saying, truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me. And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

Then Matthew 28 and beginning in verse 18. And Jesus came to them and said to them, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Okay. Many of you, I don't know, it's been some, it's been at least four months, five months since you heard my testimony at first.

And I just kind of wanted to hit on a point that I had made maybe in a little bit further detail about the church I grew up in. I love my home church. And there was a time growing up in that church where we were the church on the block, if you know what I mean.

[ 4 : 23 ] I mean, we had the largest congregation. Seemed like we were doing the most. Seems like we were the place that was having, God was using to have the greatest impact in our community.

It was a Nazarene church. The Nazarene Seminary was there in Kansas City and the church wasn't far from it. So we had a lot of the seminary students were in our congregation and it was just the

place to be.

And there were other churches and there was a Southern Baptist church down the street. And it was a much smaller church. And I remember, you know, teasing a friend of mine for going to, you know, the smaller church and just being a dumb kid, not really knowing what I was talking about. But, you know, like, why won't you come to our church? Our church, we have all this stuff. You know, you guys don't have any of this stuff. We have all this stuff. You want to come to our church? And that was the case for a long time.

I mean, the church did really, really well. It grew and it thrived. We had, you know, you'd hear stories about the beginning when my parents began going to church there. They were very active in their community, very active in evangelism.

[ 5 : 38 ] They'd have visitors come and they would contact those visitors through the week. They would go to their houses. They would reach people, pray for people. In fact, that's how my parents ended up going there is my brother, before he passed, was in the hospital.

And somebody from their church just happened to be there visiting another church member. And I struck up a conversation with my sister and my father who were in the waiting room. And he just asked if he asked for my dad's phone number and said, you know, do you mind if I pray with you and let my church know so we'd be praying for you?

And he'd call them every week and see how he was doing. And then when my brother did pass away, eventually my parents started going to that church. And that man, you know, was instrumental in discipling my father and helping him become a stronger Christian.

And, you know, my parents still go to church there. My dad is still teaching Sunday school. He's in the class where all the previous Sunday school teachers have passed away. So he knows he's kind of in that spot until he goes to be with the Lord.

And yet it's sad because the last time I went there, and, you know, we're talking about a church sanctuary similar in size to this one.

[ 6 : 52 ] And there just was people that I had seen before, but so many just empty pews. And this was back, you know, we were at Calvary, and I had a Sunday vacation.

I was like, hey, let's go to Nall and go to church with my parents. And so we went. Just thinking, what happened? And then I told Danny, I want to drive down the street to that church I remember growing up.

And they were exploding. This little Southern Baptist church they were building, you know, and they had all these signs, all these multiple services that they're having. And I got to thinking, what's the difference?

You know, it used to be the case that that was here. But now, you know, going in there, it felt like, you know, the church was dying.

It had faded so far from what it once was. And you think, why did that happen there? And why is this church now the one that seems to be reaching the most people in the community?

[ 7 : 57 ] And so you just kind of think, well, what happened? What's the difference, you know? And so I want to start by asking a couple of questions. And the first is, what kind of an impact do you believe that we're having for the kingdom of God in our community?

Some, not much, a lot. What kind of an impact do you think that we're having? What kind of an impact do you want us to be having? And hopefully you would say a lot.

The next question is, what is, what do you think our reputation in the community is? As you talk with people, friends, your neighbors, whomever, and you let them know where you go to church, what kind of a feedback do you get from them?

What kind of a reputation do we have? And then thirdly is, how do we go about changing those things? I think we all know that something needs to change here.

I think we all would be in agreement on that. The thing that happened with my church happens to churches across denominations.

[ 9 : 26 ] It's not that, you know, and I, hey, I'm all for the SBC, right? I grew up in the Nazarene, and, you know, God led me. Thank the Lord to the SBC, but I feel like I chose the SBC.

You know what I'm saying? And so I'm glad that that church is, you know, having the impact that it is there. But the fact remains that it's, there's, this is not just a denominational thing.

This is a, this is happening in churches in the United States. It happens. Churches go through these ups and downs. And I try to think about my church growing up. You know, we had that peak, and

then it wasn't like things just plummeted all of a sudden.

It just sort of plateaued, and then it just kind of slowly, gradually eroded to the point where people were like, well, what happens here?

You know, what do we do now? So this is a common thing that is happening in churches. And I think part of the issue is it used to be, there used to be a time where all you had to do was just open the doors of the church and let people know what time you were open, and they would come.

[10:39] And that's not the case anymore. And there's multiple reasons for why that is. But we, the days where you thought that you could just open the doors and people would come in, they are gone.

That is a thing of the past. There are two ways that a church grows, I believe. And the first way is man's way.

And it's not hard to draw a crowd, as we've seen with our fall festival, which was amazing. I can't believe the crowd that we drew. That was nuts.

That was probably not safe, as we talked about. But then it's like, but I don't want to turn any of them away. And in fact, I kind of hope that it grows more, even though that would be, I don't know how we would handle it, but you know, God will provide solutions.

But you know, it's easy to draw a crowd, isn't it? And I tease a lot about this church that was across the street from Danny and I, one of the first places that we lived.

[11:41] And it seemed like they were always putting banners out, inviting people to come in through the doors. You know, next Sunday is, we're going to have a chief's tailgate in the parking lot. You know, we'll come to church and then we're going to tailgate in the parking lot, or something like that.

They even did like a dog, a pet Sunday. I can't remember what it was, but it was something about, see, and some people will really, it will draw a crowd.

Some of you are like, yeah, that's a great idea. And it will draw a crowd. But that's the thing is, it's what you win them with is what you keep them with, you know?

So, yeah, so whatever you draw them in with, you're going to have to keep doing those things to get those people to keep coming. And when I read the Bible, I don't see Jesus doing that.

In fact, I see him a lot of times turning the crowds away because he didn't water down the truth. He told it like it was. And a lot of people came because they wanted to see the awesome stuff.

[12:45] They wanted to see the miracles. They wanted to see, you know, things that would astound them. And Jesus would turn them away. He said some really, he taught some very difficult things that people couldn't grasp.

And they didn't want that. They didn't want to hear the gospel. They didn't want to be reminded of their own self-righteousness. And they turned away from him as a result. So there is a way to draw a crowd.

But if that's our evangelism tactic, then that's not God's way. So what is God's way? God's way, as we've read, is that we are reaching out to our communities.

That we are going. That we are being active. That we're not sitting back on our heels and just waiting for everybody to come to us. But that we are going to them.

Just like the Lord came to us and was always moving around. Wasn't he? Going and going and going. And even after his resurrection and ascension, we see that in the book of Acts.

[13:55] Don't we? They were going. They were going. They were going. They were going. They were sharing. They were reaching out to people. And as a result of that, the Holy Spirit was creating growth.

And it was God's growth. And the mission for us hasn't changed at all. We're not in the ministry to draw crowds, but to make disciples.

That's what we've been called to do. Make disciples. Tell people about Jesus. And then make disciples. And so the next question I want to ask you is how do you think we are doing in that area? How do you feel like we're doing as far as making disciples? The one thing that I am impressed with by this church is how much, you know, this core group is here.

And I hear the stories of how you guys have been disciplined by people in the past. And I see that you guys have disciplined one another. But what are we still doing today to try and disciple people?

[15:03] It's clear from Jesus' words that his mission was given to all believers. Okay? This is something that he has called every single follower of his to be a part of.

Every single one. There is nobody who gets some kind of a pass on this. And you wouldn't want to pass. You shouldn't want to pass. But the thing is, you know, society and culture has changed and we are being told the lie that we can't talk to people about Jesus anymore.

You know, I remember friends in college and they'd say, you know, well, don't you know, the two things you can't talk to people about are religion and politics. Who says that? You know? Well, now the politics thing, whatever, but Jesus is telling us clearly to talk to people about Jesus, about himself with them.

And so that's something that we must be doing. And he's called us to do that. It's clear that that's what the Lord desires from us.

And it's clear that each and every single one of us who is a follower of Jesus Christ has been called to this commission. It's our duty. It's our God-given responsibility.

[16:19] And it's our God-given privilege to be able to be a part of what the Holy Spirit is doing in leading people to the Lord. And look, he's given us coworkers.

He's given us neighbors. He's given us family. He has put us into contact with people whom we have that opportunity and that privilege to share Christ with.

As I mentioned a couple weeks ago, and I noticed, and I noticed it when I first came and was driven around town, is there's a lot of churches in Bartlesville. There's a lot of churches in Oklahoma. There's a lot of people that I believe go to church in this town. But the thing that we've got to understand is going to church doesn't make you any more a Christian than spending the night in a barn makes you a cow.

And so there are some people maybe who are in churches and they are far from the Lord. Or there are people I believe in this community, maybe they're, you know, Christmas and Easter types.

[17:17] And they're nominal Christians is what we would call them. Backsliding Christians, people who aren't in church, people who aren't being disciplined, people who aren't engaged, people who aren't walking with the Lord.

I'm sure that there's a large segment of this population who fits into that category. If we are going to have the kind of impact that we want to have, then it's going to take each and every single one of us working to fulfill God's purpose for Highland Park Baptist Church.

It's got to take, it's going to take every single one of us in order for us to experience the type of growth that I believe that we want to see God accomplishing here.

When I was in the interview process with the search committee, I remember stressing to them my desire to pastor a church who took this commissioning very seriously.

I was looking for a church that was willing to take the risks. If you remember that first sermon I preached in view of call here was all about taking risks with the parable of the talents.

[18:35] You know that God has entrusted us with this great truth and he doesn't expect us to go and bury it in the back and hide it. But to share it, that it will multiply, but that will take some risk on our part.

We risk our comfort. We risk primarily our comfort. And there could be other things that go along with that. But we are called to risk that.

And if we do, we will bear an amazing reward is the promise. I've only been in this community for a handful of months, but the one comment that I seem to hear a lot is when I, you know, introduce myself or when people find out I'm pastor here.

It's like, oh, Highland Park. It's a great church. I used to go there. I hear that so often. And I know that this church has experienced great days.

I know that this is a great church. I can see it in the core group. And like Luana and Barbara, that picture that you guys were back in 1960s in the choir.

[19:50] And so I know that there is, I know that this is a great church. Otherwise, you know, the Lord called me here, but I wouldn't have come because I know that this church is filled with great people who have a great desire, who love their church and who love the Lord.

But, you know, I was wanting to come to a place where the church was wanting and hoping for the same, to reach out into their community and to have an impact.

A church where if it all of a sudden ceased to exist, the neighborhood surrounding it would really miss it, really miss it. You know, man, we need those Highland Park people in our community because they do so much and they mean so much to this community.

Again, this church has experienced great days. It's had a great impact on many lives. And I can sense that even the people I don't know who have said, you know, they got in the church here over the years of being a member here for, you know, whenever it was, whomever was the pastor, whoever.

You know, it seems that they are really, they think of this church in a really great way. They love this church. They're thankful that this church is here.

[ 21 : 03 ] And I know that there's been a lot of great things that this church has accomplished for the Lord in the name of the Lord. But I say this with love.

And I've ran into it with my previous church. And I saw it with my home church. And you see it with many other churches. That they long for the past.

So much so that they lose sight of the future. And they spend so much time thinking about the good old days and longing for those past days that they're not looking forward at all, really.

They're wanting to go backwards. But it's time for us to look forward to the future that God has planned and what he has in store for Highland Park Baptist Church.

You probably, I haven't been here long, but you're probably getting tired of my sports illustrations and how much I talk about playing baseball.

[ 22 : 14 ] But it helps me to communicate better. And when I was in college, I was a pitcher. My best season was my junior year. Just everything clicked.

For some reason that junior year, I don't know what. I didn't feel like I was any different. But just things clicked. Especially down the stretch of the season. I think I won my last three games and, you know, pitched deep into each game.

And I remember, you know, the coaching staff afterwards being like, wow, you know, we're really looking forward to what you're going to do next year. And so, you know, the head got big.

And I'm like, oh, yeah, I'm looking forward to it, too. You know, the sky's the limit. I don't know what's going to happen. But what ended up happening is I just, I didn't take that offseason very seriously.

I didn't train. I didn't keep my arm in shape. I came back and I heard it. First day at practice. And lost a lot of velocity in my fastball. Had to sit out.

[ 23 : 14 ] But I was still, you know, I just had this air and this arrogance about me. Like, remember what I did last year? You know, just remember what I did last year? And I lived on last year for almost that entire season before it got to the point.

The season came. And, you know, coaches don't care what you did last year. They care about how you're going to help them this year. And I feel like God is in the same, you know, not that he doesn't care about what's accomplished. But, hey, he needs people who are looking towards the future.

Looking towards completing the commissioning that he's called us to. And that's the same thing for me. I wasted that season because I was living and caught up in my past. And, you know, it's like I wanted to stop time after that and just leave the season there.

But you can't do that. And so I say this with love that it's time for us to start focusing on the future that God has in store for us.

And in doing that, we need to make sure that we are doing our part to ensure that that future includes kingdom growth. That we are seeking to do things, continuing to seek to do things God's way.

[ 24 : 22 ] Not for our church's survival. Or that someone can put us in a book about church success stories somewhere. I mean, that's not our end goal. But it's because we've been called to do this.

It's because this is what God has called us to do. And it's what we get to do. And so I am praying that these sessions, that these training sessions, that, you know, I'm going to continue in this introduction tonight.

I'm going to preach the next couple of Sundays just to remind us again and hopefully light a fire in us again as to why this is so important for us to do. And why it's so important for the unbelieving world that they have churches who are actively seeking to reach them with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And so my hope is that this will equip you, that this will train you, that this will give you, again, we're going to give you opportunities to be doing this. But you are going to have to do your part.

And you will have to sacrifice your comfortability. And so will I. But I promise you, God's word promises you that it will be worth it.

[ 25 : 39 ] It will be worth it. Jesus said the cost of following him was costly, did he not? Let me read Matthew 9, 57 through 62 to you.

It says, as they were going along the road, someone said to him, I will follow you wherever you go. And Jesus said to him, foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head.

To another he said, follow me. But he said, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. And Jesus said to him, leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God. Yet another said to him, I will follow you, Lord. But let me first say farewell to those at my home. And Jesus said to him, no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.

God has placed us, each of us, in this place at this time for a reason.

[ 26 : 38 ] And that reason is to be one of his many kingdom outposts in this world. And we cannot afford to look back when our mission calls us to look forward.

Looking forward, thinking forward, and living forward. That's what the Lord is calling us to do because there is a great task that we've been given to be a part of.

And while there is still time, we must be busy about the work that he has called us to do. So we have to see ourselves as a outpost for God's kingdom here in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

And so when we see ourselves in that way, we'll start thinking differently. Our homes will become gospel outposts in our neighborhoods. And our, your desk at your workplace, you'll see it as a gospel outpost for God's kingdom in enemy territory.

Now, nobody go to work tomorrow and say, hey, my pastor told me to your boss or supervisor that you're the enemy. You know what I mean? That we have, it's everywhere we go.

[ 27 : 56 ] Every place that God has given us to be in is an outpost for us to be able to share the gospel with people. Whether it's our church, our homes, or our places of work and beyond.

So where do we start? Well, the best place to start in everything is with prayer. That's the best place to start with everything is to pray.

Take it to God in prayer. And here's the other thing. Evangelism is scary. I know that. It's scary. For some people, it comes naturally. And thank God for those people. But for others, it's just something that they just don't even know where to start. Or if I start, what do I say?

And what do I do? There's so much fear of people slamming the door in your face. And, you know, hating you. And here's the thing about that is what did Jesus say about that, right?

[ 29 : 00 ] Blessed are you when people persecute you. And there's truth to that. I will tell you this, that I have found in my experiences that the instances where somebody slams the door in your face are far, far fewer than the ones where you actually get to have a conversation with people.

That usually at least ends with you being able to pray for them. It just doesn't happen as much. This is a lie that Satan wants us to buy. And here's the other thing that's weird.

I've only had it happen a couple times. But when it's happened, you feel good afterwards in a really weird way. I'm like, that person was really rude and mean to me. And all I want to do is share with them this amazing hope that we have in Christ.

They didn't want to have anything to do with it. And your heart breaks for them. But you also feel good. Because you're like, at least that person got to hear. You know, at least that person had an opportunity.

And, you know, maybe a seed was planted. But it's scary. But my hope, again, and my prayer is that these lessons, these sermons, these teachings will help you feel more comfortable.

[ 30 : 12 ] That you'll have a better tool. This is really just a tool. And there are other tools. But they're all just tools. You know, I don't. We'll go through the three circles.

And if you don't use it, I don't care. As long as you're talking to people about Jesus. If you're talking about people with Jesus, I don't care if you use four circles or no circles.

You know what I'm saying? This is just a tool that I feel like is going to better equip us. It's a starting place for each of us to become more comfortable and confident as we seek to share the gospel.

And here's the other thing. Not going to just equip you. Not going to just train you. But give you the opportunity to put this to work. One thing we did in Leavenworth that was becoming really successful and is continuing to be a success is we would do something called engage.

And I think I shared that with you when I came in view of call. I know I shared it with the elders. But what we would do is we would be we're up to three times a year.

[ 31 : 19 ] And it takes a lot of work. And we'll have to build towards that. But it's in the in the spring, in the summer and in the fall. And so what we would do is and what we're going to do here is the two days leading up to Easter, we're going to be out and actively in our community.

If you have ideas of things that we could do, I would love to hear your ideas. But basically, we are wanting to engage our neighbors, our community. Things that we did, we'd go to nursing homes. We would do projects. We would paint, not me, because they wouldn't want me to, but we'd paint some of the ladies' nails in the nursing home. We would just interact with people. We would share the gospel with people. We would show the gospel with people. We would go to where the kids were having soccer games. And we would grill hot dogs in Bratwurst. And we would just hand them out for free to people just to let them know that, hey, you know, there's a church here who does care about you.

And we care about you because we love Jesus Christ and because Jesus has called us to do this. Now, all of these are to give us opportunities to share the gospel. And if you, you know, you come to me like, hey, Mike, I only got to the second circle.

[ 32 : 32 ] I didn't get to the third. You know, we are being successful when we are reaching out. We are seeking to engage our neighbors, our community with the truth of Jesus Christ.

God will bless that. God will work through that. We were seeing that at the end. And we had at the last event, people coming just out of the woodwork.

We were giving away free shoes. And while we were giving away free shoes, people there were an hour early. This line was packed. And we were able to go through the line and talk to people and, you know, ask them, you know, where do you go to church?

And just share the gospel. It was just, it's a thing that works. But you've got to do the work. And so you will not only be equipped and trained, but you'll be given that opportunity.

And it doesn't matter who you are. It doesn't matter how young you are, how old you are.

Everybody can do this. And there's something for everybody to do.

[ 33 : 28 ] And it takes a church to be able to do it. And my hope would be that it's not just our church, but that we would be able to partner with other churches, like-minded, in our community to be able to have a greater impact for God's kingdom.

So pray for our church. Pray for yourself. Pray for yourself that you will not allow yourself to accept any of the excuses for why you shouldn't do this or why you can't do this.

It's the two, it's the Friday and the Saturday leading into Easter. And Easter is on April Fool's this year. So now you know the dates, so write them on your calendar and don't schedule anything in conflict.

Pray for yourself. And here's what else I want you to do. I want you to start thinking of three people who you know. And they actually, you don't even have to know them.

But it would be good if you at least knew their name. Like, you may not know them really well, but at least you know who they are. Three people who you know who are not believers, who you are going to pray that God would use you to share the gospel with them.

[ 34 : 45 ] And the next step then would be also to invite them to come to Easter that Sunday morning where, you know, that entire service, every sermon and every service is gospel-centered, right?

We are sharing that truth. But especially on Easter, they're going to hear it very clearly, the message of the gospel. So start thinking. Start praying about the three people that you're going to pray for.

And then once, you know, and ask, you know, Lord, who are those people? I already have one in my mind. And I'm going to tell you so that you can hold me accountable. It's my neighbor. And my neighbor is a really nice guy.

But he is, I think he's a little rough around the edges would be a good way to describe him. He's just, he's like a bulldog personality type of guy.

You know, those little guys and they're just, they got that Hercules kind of mentality. Hopefully he's not going to listen to this sermon. He's like, ah, he's coming for me.

[ 35 : 51 ] But I want to, I want to ask that guy, I want to find out, especially because he knows I'm a pastor here, what is his situation?

Because I don't see, I come home from church sometimes and I see him working on his boat or whatever in his driveway. I want to find out what that guy's situation is with the Lord and then invite

him to come to church after sharing the gospel with him.

So that's one person. And his name is RJ. Isn't that right? JR. I had it almost. A little bit of dyslexia there.

I can't even say it. So if you know him, you know, I don't care. Let him know. I'm coming to talk to him. But anyhow, that's one person.

So just start praying upon. Who are those people that God is putting on your heart? And he maybe already has. There may be some people that he is already putting on your heart. It may be somebody that you totally don't expect at all.

[ 36 : 56 ] And you think, and this is the way God works sometimes too. Is this somebody like, I can't, I don't, why that person? You know? But anyhow, just be praying about who your three people are.

And again, the three circles, it's simply a tool. It's something to aid you in sharing the gospel with people. It's something to help you to take normal conversations, regular conversations, and turn them into gospel conversations.

And so, Lita, you have those PowerPoints. We'll just kind of walk through it first. So we got God's design. And that's the place to begin. Where, again, kind of like we're talking about this morning, people know that there is something wrong with the world.

And we start with God's design. And we share with them, you know, look, in Genesis 1 and 2, it tells us that God made everything. That he made it all to be good.

That there is purpose and meaning in life. And that God offers us the type of life that we long for.

[ 38 : 05 ] We want to have right relationships with people, I believe. And God has a design for our lives. He has a design for every life that he ever created.

And what we see here in God's design is that he created us and he loves us. That God designed the world and he designed everything in it.

He created everything as it was meant to be and declared that it was good. I think we all have this built-in sense. Whether you are a believer or an unbeliever, but things are not the way they're supposed to be.

And a longing for things to be good. Right. And so this is the starting point. Hey, it was meant to be this way.

In fact, it was this way. God designed everything to be good. God had a design and has a design for every aspect of our lives. Our gender identities.

[ 39 : 01 ] In Genesis 1.27, God created us to be male and female. That was his design. That's the good design that God created. Made for us.

There's a design for our families. In Genesis 1.28, where he tells Adam and Eve to be fruitful and to multiply. God has a design for our families.

God has a design for our work life, even. Again, going to Genesis 1.28-30, in chapter 2, verses 15-17. That Adam and Eve were given, Adam was given dominion over the earth.

And he was to work the garden. So it wasn't like in paradise that, you know, it was just like Adam was just hanging out and all was good. You know, work is good. And God called us in that design to have a good work life.

And then for the rest of our life. Or for rest, excuse me. For rest. Genesis chapter 2. The Lord rested on the seventh day. There's a design for our marriages.

[ 40 : 04 ] In Genesis 2.24, where it's declared that man shall leave his mother and father, and he shall leave and cleave to his wife. There is a design.

And we can see that as the family has broken down, as gender identities have been confused in our world, It's no wonder that our society is falling apart.

There is nobody who could tell me that things are better now than they've ever been. I would never believe that. And I didn't have to live through the 19, you know, 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, whatever, to know that.

You know, yeah. Leaving out some decades. But you know what I'm saying? Like we know that things are not the way that they should be. And I think that we all have an understanding that it doesn't look like things are going to get any better.

And now the problem is, like I talked about this morning, we're putting our hope into mankind, some of us. Well, we're just not, you know, we just need to move forward with these other things. But as we've seen, as mankind is not a trustworthy person to place hope in.

[ 41 : 23 ] We need to place our hope in God. And so I think everybody has this understanding that things aren't the way that they should be. And they have a longing for things to be made right.

God designed us for a relationship with him. He created us to have unbroken communion with him. And this unbroken communion can be restored only through the gospel and believing and receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

So it begins with God's design and then the next circle. What's the problem? Why are things not the way they're supposed to be? Or why aren't things good anymore? Well, very clearly sin.

And sin leads to all different kinds of brokenness. And we'll spend more time talking about this next Sunday. About brokenness.

And again, this is an undeniable thing. That I think when we talk to unbelievers that things are broken. Not only are things broken, but you're broken. And then we move on to, well, what's the solution?

[ 42 : 29 ] It's the gospel. Repent and believe. Receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Receive the gospel. And then recover and pursue God's design.

And so this is something that you can write out on a napkin. And we'll get, we'll go through this again in the weeks to come. And give you an opportunity to be trained and better equipped so that you're ready to do this.

And you don't, you could start right now if you want to. There's nothing holding you back. But here's the thing. God chooses us as agents in his redemptive plan for mankind.

This is the thing we've got to understand. Is that this is something that we get to do. We get to do this. We get to be involved with what God is doing.

We cannot see this as a chore. We are still, you and I, in the getting to know you stage of things.

[ 43 : 36 ] You know, I know that whenever you have a new pastor come in, there's always a little bit of uncertainty. Especially if maybe he's a little bit younger.

Like I am, you know, what's this guy going to do next? You know, he's going to start preaching in holy genes. And, you know, not like holy, H-O-L-Y, but like holy, you know, just what's he going to do?

Or, you know, he's going to put a coffee shop in here. And next thing you know, Dan's going to, you know, be rocking out on electric guitar with the praise team or something.

I mean, it's just what's going to happen here. We don't know. I want to assure you that that's not going to happen. That that's not the case.

In fact, there was, we were out with Jack. I'll wrap up here in a second. We were at Hibbett Sports, and for some reason they sell these like real fancy jeans, trendy jeans, and they were red.

[ 44 : 40 ] And I was joking with him. I was like, Jack, I was like, what if I wore those to church? And he said, ew, those are disgusting. So not even my own kid thinks it would be cool if I did something like that. So what I'm trying to say to you is I understand.

When a new guy comes in, you're still trying to get to know that guy, and there's a little bit of hesitation and uncertainty as far as like what's he going to do? How far is he going to push us?

You know, I like things the way that they were. And I want you to know that I understand all of that, and I appreciate all of that. And I will not suggest or try to make any changes that I don't feel like are changes that God is putting it on my heart and the heart of the people here to go forward with.

Because there are some things that we need to do so that we'll be forward thinking. But I want you to know that, you know, I am thankful that God has entrusted you with me and to be able to be your shepherd, to be able to be your pastor.

And so if you have questions, if you have things that you're not comfortable with or you need further explanation, I encourage you to talk to me about those things. My office is all the way down the hallway, so it's not a real convenient thing to just stop by.

[ 46 : 02 ] But if you want to come by my office and talk to me, that's not an off-limits place. The door is open. And, you know, you don't even have to, well, I'm just going to go ahead and say it.

You don't even have to make an appointment. Just, you know, know that there's other things going on. But if there's something that important to you, just come by. I would love to hear what you have to say or whatever ideas that you have.

Because I know, again, this is just the starting point. But I anticipate God's going to do great things here. And I'm very thankful to have been led here.

And I'm very thankful for you all. And I'm very thankful for what I feel like the Lord is going to accomplish here. And so this is going to be a good training. This is going to equip us. And I feel like much fruit will be born as a result of us being this forward thinking. Looking and seeing our community maybe a little bit differently and the people around us. [ 47 : 07 ] Praying for those three people. Inviting those three people to come to church. And be a church that's about reaching people and making disciples for Jesus Christ.

Thank you.