

Mark Week 10

Spend Time with Jesus

May 17, 2026



If you could go back with me to April of 1986, that evening. I don't know what the date was exactly, but I was in Lakeland at the Lakeland Civic Center. Back when I was growing up, and many of you all may have grown up around here, the real big concerts would usually happen at the Lakeland Civic Center. Some of them happened at the Sun Dome in Tampa, and a couple used to happen at the Old Bayfront Center, but usually the concerts that I went to were at the Lakeland Civic Center. And for this particular concert, I had been given some backstage passes.

Now, I had never gone backstage anywhere, never knew anything about it. I showed up, had no idea what to do. I looked at it, it said backstage pass, so that meant I probably should go somewhere where the back was. I'm from Kentucky, that's how I read it. So me and my buddy went back there and stood where like the tour buses were, and all the stuff that was going on—had no idea what we were doing. There's people walking around doing stuff. Most of them were like roadies, big sort of guys, and you know, beards and all this stuff. And I thought, 'Hey, maybe what we ought to do is maybe we ought to show our passes, and then they'll tell us what to do.'

Well, I remember vividly we pulled out our passes, and it wasn't very long, and all of a sudden this guy, sort of an imposing guy, walked up to us, grabbed my pass and my buddy's pass, yanked it off of our person, and walked away. And I was like, 'Whoa.' Well, it dawned on me at that point that maybe the backstage passes that we thought we had weren't actually the ones that you needed to actually get backstage. And so I thought I was going to be in, but I wasn't in. I don't know what happened. Maybe it was the night before, maybe they were just fake. I don't know. I'll never know. Went to the show, but I didn't get to go backstage.

You say, "Chip, why would you say that story? What does that have anything to do with anything?" Well, we're in the Gospel of Mark, and Mark tells us over and over again that most people don't get Jesus right. They're missing out on who He is. And he's saying that not to scare us or to lead us into fear or make us question our salvation, but he's doing that to make sure that we know exactly what it looks like to be Christians. In other words, I think what Mark would say is, I don't want anybody to think that they have a backstage pass to eternity and it not work.

And so as we're going through this, he's continually showing us in all of the things that we're reading and studying that a lot of people are just missing out on who Jesus is, and we want to make sure that we hear what Mark is telling us.

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So over the last couple of weeks, as you know, we've been working through what I called a subsection. And all the gospels have this. They have a chunk of verses that go together, and then they're sort of put together like a large puzzle, and you got 16 chapters in Mark. We went through one section, which was Mark 2:1 through Mark 3:6, which was dealing with five conflict stories. And we ended last weekend on a pretty rough note in Mark 3:6, that the Pharisees wanted to destroy Jesus. I mean, they wanted to get rid of Him.

And the temptation oftentimes, when we're reading Scripture, and we come to a moment like that, and then we start into another section, sometimes the section that we start into almost feels like a little bit of an exhale, and maybe we blow through some words, and then we're down a little bit further. I want to show you that all of these words matter, that every single thing that we're reading in the gospels, that they're not throwaway words. There's no surplus words. It may feel that way at times, but they're not.

And so we're going to pick back up in verse 7, and verse 7 goes through verse 21. This is sort of a section that needs to be read together. And I hope the more we read the gospel together, the more we do this together, the more you at home will start to be able to put those things together and read this, and it will be something that's beneficial to you.

So let's pick back up. They've just decided they want to destroy Jesus, and Mark tells us that:

“Jesus withdrew His disciples to the sea...”

Jesus knows that the heat lamp's on. He knows that the Pharisees want to destroy Him, so He pulls away. He sort of gets out of harm's way for a little bit, and He goes towards the sea, which would be the Sea of Galilee.

Now, if you've been to Capernaum, where the synagogue is, it's not a very far walk from the synagogue to where the Sea of Galilee is. Maybe a walk from here, maybe to the, I don't know, middle of our parking lot here. It's not that far. He didn't go right there. He probably would have gone down to the sea and taken a right or taken a left and got away from Capernaum, but He did that to just get away, withdrew to the sea. That's not a throwaway term either, that He withdrew to the sea. So He withdrew to the sea, and we'll come back to that in a minute.

“...and a great crowd followed [Him]...”

So no matter where Jesus went, people were sort of all over Him. They sort of wanted what He had, so He goes and trying to get away from everything, this great crowd follows. And then we're told:

“...from Galilee and Judea...”

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This really should go in the next verse. The chapters and verses are not inspired in Scripture, that they were put in much, much, much later. I'm going to drop this part of 7 into verse 8, and you'll see why, because Mark's giving us a bunch of names here.

So Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples, and a great crowd followed. And then we're going to read this together here as we bring in some of verse 7.

“...from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon.”

Now, you won't bother me, don't raise your hand, but you won't bother me at all if you went: “When I read those things like that, man, I just read right through. I have no idea what that means or why—” But this is why I want you to see it's important. Everything is important.

So when you're reading something like this and you go, I have no idea about any of this stuff, what is really good to do sometimes is to just circle these places. And you circle them and you go, “Wow, hold on, that's a lot of places. What is Mark trying to tell us? Why does He use all these, why does He specifically call out these places? What is He trying to tell us?”

And He tells us that people from all of these areas, it says:

“When the great crowd had heard all that He was doing, they came to Him.”

They came to Him from all of these places. So what's really good to do at that point when you're reading scripture is to just grab a map and actually look at what's going on. I created this map because I wanted to be able to grab all of the places that are mentioned here in Mark. And what I want you to see here is I'm going to draw some arrows so that you can see where everybody's coming from to see Jesus.

Everywhere, all over the map. They're coming from Tyre and Sidon, Gentile places, like places that the Jewish people would be like, those places were cursed by Moses. Why would they show up? The Edomites, nobody wanted them around. I mean, everybody's coming from everywhere to see Jesus.

Why is that important? Why does Mark want you to see that everybody from everywhere is coming to Jesus? Because what's going on here, this is written to suggest a conquest of the whole region. Jesus is, I mean, the Pharisees are trying to kill Him, but what's really going on is He's conquering everything. Sometimes, you know, something bad goes on in our lives and we can't really see sometimes what

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God is doing. This is a great place here where they're ready to kill Him. God's not done. It ain't His time yet. God's going to work.

But this is what's so crazy about this, and lean in here and hear this, because this is important. Jesus is preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God, telling everybody that God is at work and that the long-awaited promises of Israel are happening in Him. Because of that proclamation, because of the good news, people's lives are being transformed. People's lives are being healed. All kinds of miracles are going on because of Jesus preaching and teaching the good news, and the miracles that follow the preaching of the good news.

What's happening? Well, everybody, no phones, no TVs, no anything, word of mouth is spread through the whole region that people's lives are being forever changed. And guess what? People start coming because they want to be a part. They want their own lives to change because all of us do. Everybody wants something better for their life. They're all coming.

Here's the cool part. It's the exact opposite of how you and me would go to conquest an area. We would put maybe some strong forces, maybe some military, and then we would branch out from that base to go and conquest, or we would use force, or we would do whatever. They're all coming in to see Jesus.

And here's my point. Just listen to me. Please hear me. The church in America thinks that we're supposed to be going out and conquering and doing all this stuff and telling people how to live and telling people what they need to do, and we're using it. We're going to do it. We're going to push all this stuff. Maybe, just maybe, maybe we should do it the way Jesus did it, which is that if we're really, truly preaching the gospel and people's lives are really being changed, the surrounding area will want to know what's going on, and they'll want to come for themselves to see what's going on. That's how you change an area, not by going out and trying to force everything on everybody else.

Yeah, that's a lukewarm clap, but that's okay. Good job, Chip. Anyway, hear that. Because we got it so backwards. Do you realize that if people's lives are being changed, you're walking out, people are seeing it work, that you are a totally different person? Do you realize people are going to go, what's going on? People want Jesus. They just don't know that they want Jesus. They think they want drugs or alcohol or all these other things. That's all a loneliness on the inside that only Jesus can feel, and you can't do it by forcing stuff on people. You do it by living a life that people see the difference, and when they see transformation, they're going to want it, and when they want it, they're going to be more

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receptive to hearing what it is that changed your life, and that's when you tell them about Jesus.

But not only is this a conquest of the whole region that Mark's telling us about, he's also going to tell us in this passage we're going to move from the sea, the Sea of Galilee, we're going to go to a mountain in this passage, and then we're going to go to a house. That's not throwaway terms either. That's not just talking story. No, this is pregnant with meaning. The sea has meaning to Jewish people. The mountains have significance. The houses where the people live in Israel has significance.

Mark is showing us that not only is Jesus conquering everything, but he's fulfilling everything that God has said he would do. He's fulfilling the real exodus. He's fulfilling what really should have happened at Sinai. He's fulfilling all of who and everything about Israel within himself. He's fulfilling it all. That's why Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5 that all of the promises of God find their yes in Jesus. He is the fulfillment of it all. Mark is saying he's not only conquering everything, in him is the fulfillment of everything.

And so as these great crowds come, he tells his disciples, he says, you need to have a boat ready. Remember in the movies when there's a getaway car? This is the getaway boat. They don't have cars back then. This is the getaway boat. Jesus says, "Hey, if the crowds get too crazy and start pushing on me too much, I need to have a boat to get in to get away." He says, "Get a boat ready for me because of the crowd..." He says:

"...lest they crush him..."

Now, all these people are coming because they know that Jesus is changing lives, and they want to get around that. Now, not everybody's there for all the right reasons and Mark wants us to know that. Some of these crowds are there just as a consumer to get what they can get. They're not there to really understand who Jesus is, but these crowds are coming because they know that change is happening in people's lives. They know that people are being healed.

So they come and Jesus says, hey, get a boat ready because the crowd could really fall on top of me. They could crush me and I need to be able to get out because they knew this.

"...for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him."

Everybody wanted to get a hold of Jesus and hope that he could change their lives, which he could. And then we're told that:

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“And whenever the unclean spirits saw him...”

These are people that are possessed. When the unclean spirits saw him, look at what Mark tells us:

“...they fell down before him...”

The crowd's crushing him. Pharisees want to kill him, but the demon-possessed man here actually has the right posture. He falls down. He falls down before him.

“... and cried out, ‘You are the son of God.’”

That's correct. He has the right posture and he has the right theology, but this is a man that's possessed. These are the unclean spirits that are doing this. And Jesus tells them:

“[And] He strictly ordered them not to make him known.”

Why does he do that? Why does he tell these people who are possessed, why does he say, “Zip it, don't say anything?” We're going to come back to that because this is a real central part of this text, and understanding that really helps us to understand what Mark is saying to us through these 14 verses that we're reading. Then we're told that:

“[Jesus] went up on the mountain...”

He went up and that would evoke all kinds of things to people. I mean the mountain Sinai and all the great places that God did stuff. There's like a lot of meaning here. He went up on the mountain and look here:

“... and [he] called to him those whom he desired...”

Out of all the people that were sort of misunderstanding who he was, he called some people to himself. The people that he desired. People that we probably wouldn't have chosen. We probably wouldn't have chosen the list of people that he chose. Just like you and me are people that maybe people would have thought God shouldn't have chose. Maybe because of our background.

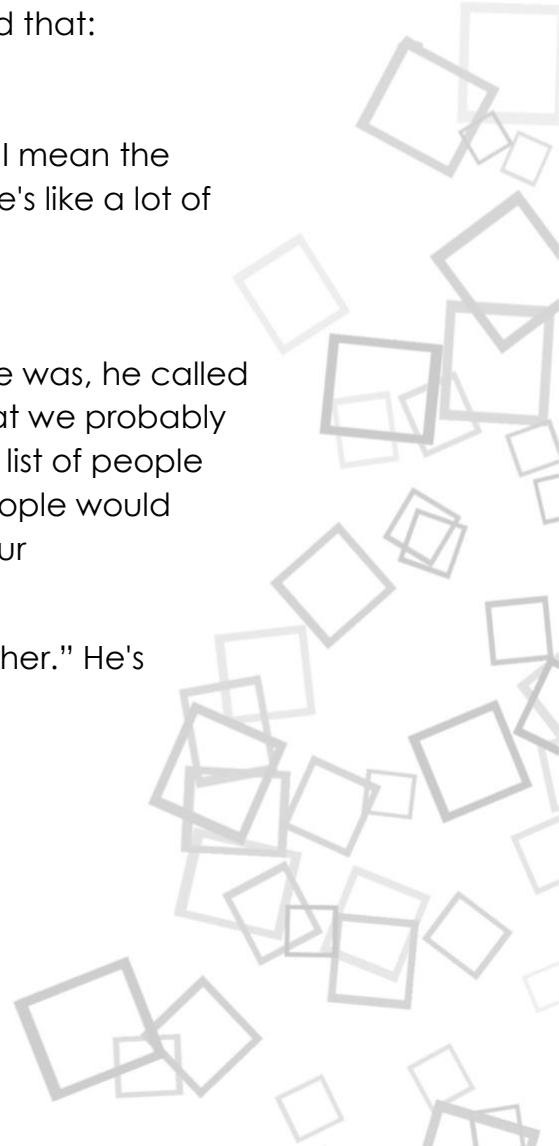
See there's a Lord calling right now, saying, “Listen to the preacher.” He's giving you an audible right now.

He calls these people to himself whom he desires...

“...and they came to him.”

They responded, and there's twelve of them. Now look at what happens here. It says:

“And he appointed twelve.”



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He's reconstituting the twelve tribes of Israel around himself because Jesus is the fulfillment of all of Israel. It's why he went to Egypt. That's why he went through the waters of baptism. It's why he went to the wilderness. He's fulfilling all of it in his person. He's fulfilling everything. So:

“...he appointed the twelve whom he also named apostles so that...”

Now I believe if I didn't have this up here on the screen. If I read to you and said he appointed these twelve so that they could go out and preach the good news, you wouldn't have thought anything about it. And honestly, that's true. He is doing that.

But what's really important is to pay attention to what the passage says and what Scripture says. It says that he appointed the twelve whom he named apostles for a reason. And there's multiple reasons here. But the first one is:

“... that they might be with him.”

See that's the difference. It's not what can we get from Jesus. It's not what can Jesus do for me. Although you can get a lot from Jesus, he can do a lot for you. The real question of, 'What does it mean to truly understand who Jesus is,' is to understand that what he wants from you and me is he wants a relationship. He wants to spend time with you and me.

It's not about getting everything right, which is nothing wrong with getting things right. But it's about a relationship. It's about understanding. It's being called and responding to that call to spend time with Jesus. Christianity is relational.

It's when Jesus says, "I never knew you," in Matthew 7. It's because he didn't know you. There was not a relationship. Those people were doing things. "We built this, and we did this, and we did all these things." He goes I mean, "That's great, but I didn't know you. I didn't know—we didn't spend time together." That there's a real sense here that the biggest thing the big thing here is that they might be with him.

And from that relationship with Jesus, it's not about just getting everything right. It's not about just saying a creed. It's not about having moral issues that we get right. It's, "Do you know who Jesus is? Does He know you? Do you have a relationship with Jesus?" Since they might know him, and from that...

“...he might send them out to preach...”

In other words, you can go preach, but if your preaching isn't coming from the fact that you've spent time with him, it's not the effective preaching that God would want from you and me. If you do whatever ministry you do, you can do all kinds of good things.

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But if it's not flowing from having spent time with Jesus, it's not as effective and as meaningful as it should be. So you see, he wants to spend time with him.

“...he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.”

That authority comes from spending time with him. And then we get a list of people. I'm not going to go through the people. You guys have tools to read up on every one of them. The list is sort of a crazy list, though. It's people that you probably wouldn't have put together, but the list is put together for a point.

First, we see Simon, who gave the name Peter. We have James, the son of Zebedee and John, the brother of James. These people are called the Sons of Thunder, Boanerges. They must have been some really interesting cats to be called the Sons of Thunder. I mean, that means that they had some real personality. Okay, not only that, but we have in this group Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew the tax collector, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon the zealot.

I mean, the zealot was on one end of the spectrum in the political world in the first century, and the tax collector was on the other—complete opposite. Jesus got them to lay down that junk to follow him. This is a group of people that, if you were doing a youth retreat, you would not want these twelve on your bus. Okay you'd be like you know I think you should take them. I mean, this is a combustible group of people that Jesus has chosen.

But the most important part of the list is the next part because it once again shows that even when you're on the mountain, and you've been called with Jesus, you can still get it wrong. Because we're told:

“...and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.”

Mark is really trying to get us to think: What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? What does that look like in our lives?

“Then he went home...”

We've moved from the sea to a mountain to a house. He goes home...

“...and the crowd gathered again...”

He can't go anywhere without the crowd. The crowd is very disruptive.

“...so that they couldn't even eat.”

He couldn't even get the sustenance that he needs. And now we meet his family. His family heard it. They heard that he was

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not eating, so they went to seize him. For what reason? Why did they go to grab him? Because they wanted him. Because they wanted to have a relationship with him. They wanted to follow? No, they wanted to seize him, because they said he's out of his mind. Even his own family did not understand who Jesus was.

Mark is really trying to get us to understand that these Pharisees who want him killed are not the only people that are misunderstanding who Jesus is. A lot of people are misunderstanding who Jesus is, and so what we want to do is we want to make sure that we know what it looks like because we're not called to doubt our salvation. We're not called to question our salvation. We're called to know about our salvation. John in fact when he writes John says that I've written these things that you may know that you have eternal life.

What Mark is doing is he's not trying to create confusion. He's trying to make sure that you know what pure genuine Christianity looks like. It's people that spend time with Jesus who follow Jesus and obey the things that Jesus has asked them to do.

So let's do some sort of application here. We've read this. We've sort of looked at the text. What can we learn? What can we sort of pull away from the text? Well, the first thing that we need to do, I think—**We need to ask ourselves the question: why does Jesus silence the demons?**

Why does he say not to make him known? Why does he say that? Scholars call it the messianic secret that Jesus is trying to hide his messiahship. I think there's some truth there, but I think it's deeper than that. I think it's more profound. Why does Jesus say to these demons, 'Don't tell anybody who I am. Don't say a word.'

Well, I think there's a reason, and I think the reason is this—is that demons can speak truth, but still have no loyalty. They said: "He's the son of God." That's correct. They fell at his feet. That's the correct posture, but they had no intention of having a relationship with Jesus and no intention of ever obeying and following Jesus. They could speak the truth, but their lives would never connect with Jesus in a relational way and would never really obey Jesus when it came down to it.

A better way to put it maybe is this is that people can speak accurate theology while still being opposed to Jesus. You can have all the right creeds. You can have all the right posture. You can come in here and worship and make it look good. You can go to work and tell all your friends that this is what the Bible says about this or whatever, but you can do all of that and not have a real relationship with Jesus and all of that and still not being really submitted and in obedience to Jesus in our own lives. And this is why he writes. It's not to make

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anybody feel bad. It's just to be honest with ourselves to say, "Wow, this is pretty interesting."

Because, see, Jesus doesn't receive testimony from those who are unwilling to truly follow him. He says, "You know? What I don't want you to say who I am. I don't want you to fall down here because what I don't want people to think is if they get the right posture and the right words that that's enough—that that's what makes them a Christian."

And here's what's sad in American Christianity and you know this you all know this there's millions of people in America that think if you just get a couple of moral issues right and you have a couple of things that you do the right way that that means you're a Christian and what makes you and me a Christian is whether or not we have a relationship with Jesus.

Have we given our lives to him in a way that what matters is that we want to spend time with him, we want to be with him, we want him to transform us, more than anything else? And so, what I would say is, here are some things—could probably say some more—but here's just some practical tips to make sure that somehow we don't end up at the Lakeland Civic Center with a backstage pass that doesn't work. Just some tips to think about.

First one: Make sure we treat truth as something we obey, not something that we master. I don't know what it is about American Christians, and it's just the truth. We think as long as we're just out there speaking on whatever it may be moral issues or whatever we got to get up there and we got to tell everybody how to live and tell everybody how they should you know do certain things and all these things and how they ought to vote and how they ought to do this stuff because that's what makes you a Christian and whatever else. It's like we want to master truth but problem is that so many people who are out there doing that if you actually look at their lives they don't look anything like what a Christian should look like.

Let me read what maybe we should be looking like. How about this:

"... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness..."

And there's a lot of Jesus bumper stickers out there on the highway that I don't know that are really kind. I don't know what the sign language is that comes out of the window but I don't know that it's the blessing of the Lord.

"...goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..."

Like this is the stuff, like when we talk about being people of the truth—which we should be—that means we should embody it. That it should reside in us. So that when we speak it people see it. Do you realize the most important thing you can do is not what you say, but it's how you live? How we treat people? How we speak about others? I mean, these are the essences of what it really means—and

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nobody's going to get this perfect. That's why there's grace. But like, truth is something that we should want to live.

There's an old statement—I don't know who said it, whether it was Saint Francis of Assisi or maybe it was Anselm, I'm not quite sure who said it—but it was a great statement said: “Wherever you go, preach Christ. And if necessary, use words.” Life matters. The way we live matters.

And so don't treat truth as something that we master, it's something that we obey. Don't ask, “What truth do I know?” Ask God, “What truth am I unwilling to practice in my life? Lord turn it towards me.” In other words, don't see truth as something that's for others. “I'm going to tell these other people the truth. I mean these other people are terrible. These other people are no good. These other people...” You can hear it. That's bitterness. That's anger. That's not self-control and patience and kindness and all of those things.

Instead of saying it that way, take truth and say, “God, turn that on me. Let me look into your Word that is true, and let me ask: what does that mean for me? What areas do I need to grow in? What areas do I need to be transformed in?”

Can you imagine if every Christian in America just decided, “God, work on me. Just do in me what you need me to do”? Rather than trying to change everybody else, we started saying, “I'm gonna look in the mirror, God said...” If you started getting the change in your life, guess what would happen? Your friends, your family, your co-workers would say, “What's happening to you?” That then is your cue to say, “What's happening to me is a person. His name is Jesus, and he's changing my life, and he can change your life too.”

Second: Just stay teachable. It's simple. Stay teachable. That's it. Like, none of us know it all. None of us have it all together. But man, you talk to Christians sometimes, and they're nasty about stuff. Like they know. It's interesting to me how much we know about people that we've never met, that we've never had dinner with, that we don't know anything about other than the news that we consume that frames it in the way that we want to hear it. It's amazing to me. It's amazing how much we know that we don't know. But man, we know.

Stay teachable. You know what? Somebody may see something different than you. And being honest and humble enough to listen to them, you might go, “Wow, you know what? No wonder they see it that way.” Maybe you don't even agree with them, but you start to understand how they see things, and you become less offensive and less other stuff. Stay teachable.

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And the last thing I would say is look for who, what, and where. Who, what, and where. Our affection, our love, our kindness, our other-focused, genuine love leads and points us towards things instead of simply looking for accuracy. In other words, "I just want to be right about everything." No, look at where your affection is leading you.

Are your affections leading you towards speaking negatively about people and taking postures towards people that don't look right? Or are your affections leading you towards people, even people who are not like you?

Because Jesus said to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and body, and to love your neighbor as yourself. Who's your neighbor? Everybody. And especially those that you don't like are your neighbors.

"Well, I'm not going to love them." Well, you're supposed to love them. If you spend time with Jesus, you're going to want to love them. Because Jesus doesn't just say, "Love your neighbors." You know what Jesus says? He says, "Love your enemies." You want to know what it looks like to be a Christian? You love your enemies.

You go, "Well, Chip, we can't love our enemies. Our enemies could kill us. We can't love them." No, you can. Because you've lost the beauty of the transformation of the gospel. Those enemies that you love might one day become your brother and sister in the Lord because they got transformed by the gospel in which you loved them. Correct doctrine without transformed affection can harden into spiritual pride.

The second thing, and this is important here, **We've [must] recognize that any ministry, maturity, real relationship**—anything that we grow, anything that we serve, anything that we do, any relationship that we have with or for Jesus—**flows from proximity near Jesus, in the presence of being with Jesus, not a platform.**

I don't know how we did this in America, but we made this right here—we made this sort of the holy place. Those that are up here, they've got to be the real heroes, the real whatever. And I'm just going to say this, and I'm being for real here. The one thing that needs to die in America, big time, is the idea that anybody who's up here on a platform is somehow a celebrity. We're not. At all. In any way, shape, or form.

I've told you for 16 years here: you look up here long enough, you're going to be disappointed. You look up here long enough, you're going to realize that there are holes in my life just like there are in yours. That's why I've told you for 16 years: don't look up here. Look to Jesus.

We don't come to church to put people on pedestals. We don't come to church to hear how good somebody sings or how

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good somebody preaches. We come to church because we are desperate people in need of a connection with a holy God that can change our lives. That's why we come.

And so it has to be that way. That's why he says:

"... that they might be with him."

This is the essence: to be with him. Being with Jesus precedes being sent out by him. For whatever reason, we think, "Well, if you've got a bigger platform or a bigger podcast or a bigger whatever, that means you've got more maturity." It could mean that. But real ministry, real stuff, happens from those who spend time with Jesus. That's the important thing.

Third: **We can't run or hide from the fact that Judas is listed last and is a betrayer.**

In the first century, when you would list something last in a list, that was the primary spot because Mark wants us to know something when he says that Judas betrayed him. He wants you to feel that this is a seismic fracture.

Because you're thinking, "He brought the twelve up to spend time with him, to go do what?" And one of them betrayed him. Yeah. Even at the formation of the new covenant community, corruption is already present. In the chosen community of Jesus, betrayal is present. It takes away this romanticized view that there will never be issues with people who follow Jesus or whatever.

But it also reminds us of something really important—pay attention here: We can sit near Jesus and still love something else more. Don't do that. Don't do that.

And the last thing is that **everybody wants something from Jesus.**

The crowds want their healing. The demons fear getting expelled to judgment. That's why they say, "Put us into the swine" rather than sending us other places. The disciples want to reign. "Jesus, when you get into your kingdom, can we be on your right hand and your left?" Judas is going to want gain.

Because here's the deal: the central question underneath the text is: who just wants Jesus? Not for what he can do. Not for what he can give you. But for who he is. For what he's done.

I think there are a couple of questions that are really good to ask: Has theology and doctrine become a substitute for surrender? Do we hide behind that? Or maybe let's put it this way: Do we hide behind truth to avoid transformation? Oh, we can tell everybody else how to live, but we're not the ones actually looking and doing the hard work to become more like Jesus. Or maybe the simplest question: If we

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never received anything else from Jesus, would we still follow him?

He's worth it. We don't want to end up—and I don't want you to end up, as your pastor—I don't want you to end up at the Lakeland Civic Center of eternity with the wrong backstage pass, thinking you were going to get in and didn't get in.

That's not to give anybody a hard time. That's just to say, “Hey, let's take this seriously. We're adults. Let's look at this seriously.”

We have an opportunity to make such a difference. The world out there is in desperate need of Jesus. The world out there is in desperate need of hearing the good news. But it needs to hear the good news from people that have spent time with Jesus and whose lives reflect transformation.

Everybody in here, we're going to sing a song at the end here. And I'm going to ask you not to leave. The love bugs have picked back up. You're going to get attacked, so just stay in here. It's safe. It's hot now. Even if you walk out and there's a breeze, it's like a hair dryer on hot. It's nice in here. You've got a moment. You don't need to rush out. You're not going to beat anybody for traffic. It's the 11:30 service. There's nobody else coming in.

We're going to sing a song that says something about everybody here. No matter where you're at, if you still have breath in your lungs, there's still more for you. You're made for more. For some of you, that may be that you take a step towards Jesus. You've never done that. That may be right now for you. But for others, it may be that you need to take seriously what it means to really have a relationship with Jesus. What does it mean to really be committed to that?

And I want us to sing that song in faith. I really want you to allow God—don't worry about the person to your left or right—just sing the song. It's beautiful, too, because it's going to be led by a father and his daughter. It's beautiful. And it speaks to everybody here: You're made for more. Let God birth that in you wherever you find yourself right now.

Father, I come to you and I thank you for the truth of your word. I thank you, Lord, that your word doesn't just cover over stuff and gloss over stuff. It's real. It cuts. It divides. It speaks. It's a mirror into our own souls. It really shows us where we are.

Lord, there may be people here right now, and those online, that genuinely need to take a step for you. Maybe they're like the crowd. Maybe they're like Jesus' family. Maybe they haven't quite figured out exactly who you are yet. But Lord, that's the step they need to make.

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But for many of us, Lord, it may be that we need to realize, “You know what? I need to spend more time with Jesus. I need to—that’s the essence of my relationship with God—that there’s time spent with him, whether in prayer or reading Scripture, to know him and to be changed by him.”

Lord, I pray that as we sing this final song, there would really be a wonderful move of your Spirit to let us know that we truly are made for more.

Father, I pray in Jesus’ name, as the worship team leads us in this final song, that it would be a real moment here at Grace Community Church. We love you, Lord. We thank you. And we praise you. In Jesus’ name. And everybody said, “Amen.”

Would you stand with us and let’s sing this final song together.

