

# How Weird Do Christians Have to Be?

by Francis Chan

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*Francis Chan emphasizes the need for Christians to actively engage in evangelism and support missions while navigating the complexities of joy and sorrow in faith.*

**Duration:** 44:26

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:14

**Topics:** "Christian Witness", "Loving Others"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life that attracts others to God through genuine love, care, and relationships with those who may not believe. It challenges the audience to be a light in the world, engaging with people in a way that reflects Christ's love and compassion, rather than isolating themselves in a Christian bubble. The speaker shares personal experiences and reflections on the need to prioritize relationships and love for others, especially those who may have had negative encounters with Christians in the past.

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## Transcript

Some of you have been concerned about whether or not my wife was going to recover from the pregnancy in time for the opening of the new mall. And she's been there three times already. So don't clap.

Don't clap for that. How many of you have seen her there? All right, OK, a few of you. All right, good, good, good.

This is going to be a great, great mall for us. Hey, I want us to take some time to pray this morning. Because do you guys realize right now is the first Sunday, right now, they're having service in Santa Monica.

Cornerstone has started a church in Santa Monica. So cool. This is so exciting.

I mean, last weekend, you guys got to hear Brian speak. A few weeks before that, you heard Scott speak. And these two young guys, I mean, Brian's 24 years old.

And you hear him speak, you go, gosh, could I have done that at 24? You know, you just think, I think about what I sounded like when I was 24. You know, I was like, God, good. You know, it just was like, man, and just to hear him speak, and I was listening to his message, going, Lord, if this guy stays humble, stays focused, if he and Scott work together as a team, we're going to make a dent in Santa Monica and

that whole area.

And so right now, they're having service, their first church service out there at the Double Tree Hotel in Santa Monica. And I just thought, you know what, we need to just stop and pray that God does something huge and begins a huge, huge work, because the people need it. Let's pray.

Oh, Father, what an exciting day, God, to think that there's another extension of what you started here, God, in Santa Monica now. And God, I just pray that you speak through Scott, speak through Brian, and that there will just be just that movement of you in that area. God, I pray that you would just do things greater than what you've done here in Simi Valley, there in Santa Monica.

God, I pray that you do greater things in these young men's lives than what I've seen in my own, God, just that they would just understand you and love you and walk just that path that you've called them to. God, that they would step out in faith, that they would just be men of God. I pray for Scott and Laura and their relationship and their marriage.

I pray for this new baby that they're going to have. And God, just as they're all starting off in life, God, and starting off in ministry, I just pray that this morning would be such an encouragement. I just pray that everyone in that congregation will sense your spirit and your moving in that church like we do here.

And God, I just pray. I just pray for your presence, that you do what only you can do for supernatural things in Shoreline community this morning. In Jesus' name, I pray.

Amen. Seems like every week, there's like something huge, huge happening, or we're sending someone else off. And you guys, this morning is no exception.

I'm going to have Jeff and Christine Atherstone are coming up. They're heading to Uganda. They're going to live in Uganda.

And so this is huge. Jeff and Christine, they've been with the church for like 3 and 1 half years. Most recently, Jeff has been our youth pastor in our Moorpark church, Cornerstone Moorpark.

He's been heading up the youth ministry there. And they've decided that they have an amazing opportunity in Uganda. And he's going to tell you about it.

It is so strategic, so huge. And God's already shown himself to be so faithful in this project. There's just little to no doubt that this is exactly what God's called them to.

And so Jeff's going to share with you what's going on. It's so good to be here at Cornerstone. You guys have heard of Uganda before.

You know that's in Africa. That's great. And it's so great to be around a congregation that encourages us to dream big dreams.

And two years ago, my wife and I were on summer vacation and got away for two weeks. And we were just really seeking God as far as, God, we know that we're here and we're ministering in Moorpark and we're doing this pastor thing. But is there something more you want of us? And we really felt that we were in a very comfortable place.

It was easy. And we just asked God, is there something else? He just continually is just putting Africa on our hearts and Uganda specifically. And so last year, I took a trip to Uganda and was part of a pastor's conference.

And I was absolutely floored. We had the one-week conference I went to. We had three pastors that I got to counsel with as they received Christ.

And that was just weird for me because these pastors were leading churches of 200 people. When we did a message on teaching God's word, they all walked forward after the message. And I didn't know if they were going to beat us up or what.

But they were coming forward to repent because every pastor there had knowledge that they'd never taught God's word in their church. And I thought, wow, and why is this? And they just said, we don't know it. And so myself and Shannon Hurley, we're going over there to start a school for the pastors in Uganda.

It's a big deal. You all right? You're OK. They've been stealing the show every service.

You can watch him and listen to me. But the archbishop of the country, who oversees 32 dioceses in Uganda, and each of these dioceses have 300 to 500 pastors in them, has invited us to come. And he said, train all of our pastors, which is.

So we'll be back in a few weeks when we're done. And it's just an amazing opportunity to go there. And we're just floored that God would allow us to be part of what he's doing over there in Uganda.

And we want to allow you guys to be a part of that. We need you guys to bathe us in prayer. We have a hard enough time getting our two-year-old son to come up on stage with us, let alone take him to Africa.

And so we just want you guys to be praying with us as a family that God would just continually provide and care for us and just show us his power daily. We were going to ask you guys to help us with our startup costs. But last night, someone wrote a check for \$40,000.

So you're out of luck. That was an interesting experience. But if you guys still want to be a part, please come by and grab our postcards.

Please pray for us. Sign up to be on our email list. If some of you guys would like to sponsor some of the pastors that are receiving their schooling over there or help build the training center or whatever, please let us know about that.

We'd love to still have you guys be a part. But please bathe us in prayer. We appreciate that.

Yeah, this is so cool. Last night, he mentions that they have their monthly support pretty much taken care of. They go, but we have this \$40,000 startup cost.

They ended up with like \$60,000 last night just from them people giving. And it's so cool. And it's just so encouraging to see the body of Christ come together and say, you know what? Let's take care of this need.

And now they can start building something else. Or you can have a really nice house. But the whole idea is just it's so cool when you step out of faith and you go, OK, God, you've got to come through for us.

And then things happen that just go over and beyond. And that's the life when you follow Christ. Because you can look at them and go, oh, man, what a sacrifice.

They're going to Africa or whatever else. But the truth is as they do that, they're going to see the hand of God and these blessings in ways that we don't even understand. But what an amazing opportunity to not just go out and start a church, but now train every pastor in Uganda and the Anglican church.

There's hundreds and hundreds of pastors to multiply the effort. This is a huge endeavor. And so again, would you join me in a word of prayer for just this huge mission? Father, thank you so much for the Atherstones.

And God, I just think of Jeff and Christine. They're two boys. And just taking them out there and this family just uprooting and going and just following your call and going on this adventure.

And God, I just pray that as you've already shown your hand on this project, God, that they would just see it more and more every day. I pray every day they just see things and they just get amazed at you, rejoice in you, worship you. God, prepare those pastors in Uganda.

Keep them hungry for your word. That as Jeff delivers it, as Shannon Hurley, who goes with him, delivers it, God, that these people would just fall in love with you even more as they know more about you. May not become an intellectual thing.

God, may their hearts be moved as they hear the word of God. And God, may revival begin in Africa, continue in Africa, I should say, as they just learn more and more about you and your wonderful words to us. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. Man, what a fun weekend. Just huge things, not to mention what happened yesterday here in Simi Valley with, yeah, just so cool.

For any of you who don't know, hundreds of people came to the church yesterday morning to get all the DVDs, you know, to distribute it to all the homes. And so, you know, we went to like 30,000 of the homes in Simi Valley and gave them a DVD presentation of the gospel, just encouraging people to just check it out, nothing pushy or whatever else. And then, the only ones that haven't gotten are the ones that have the sign that say, no solicitors, you know, because we want to respect their, you know, not their privacy or whatever.

And so, we're mailing it to them, you know. So, no, that's right. No, because that's not soliciting.

You know, it's just, you want to respect people. You don't want, you just don't want to be a jerk about things, you know. It's just like, let's just get it out and let's just share it.

And what an amazing time, you know, to see you guys walking the neighborhoods and just handing out DVDs and passing it out to the homes, leaving it at the doorstep, whatever else. And it was so exciting this week, you know, because it's not just us. You've got to understand the other churches in town, you'll see that they have banners up, you know, promoting Just Stop and Think.

You know, they're putting bumper stickers on their cars as well. You know, it's this citywide movement. You know, last night some people said, yeah, I've been seeing those bumper stickers everywhere, you know.

And, you know, she says, I saw one going 90 miles an hour on the freeway. And I was like, well, you know, someone's got to minister to the fast lane. You know, it's just got to, but it's just cool.

It's just this, you know, everyone's getting into it. It was awesome. This last, this last Wednesday, you know, the pastors in Simi Valley from the different Bible teaching churches get together and we pray, you know.

And this Wednesday, you know, at the end of it, one of the pastors, you know, just, as everyone was leaving, he goes, no, no, no, wait, you guys, get back in here. He goes, do you understand how huge this thing is on Saturday? We've been praying for years that the good news would get out to the people of Simi Valley. And this Saturday, it's going to happen.

And we all need to get serious and pray again. And can we just all join hands and just lift our hands to God? And you had all these pastors just joining hands and everyone just screaming out to God, saying, Lord, we just want people to know your good news. And, oh, what a rush, you know, that all these other pastors are on board.

They're telling their congregation members this morning to go and talk to their neighbors and just ask a simple question. What did you think? That's it. Just find out, what did you think? You know, just so that people know, you know what, I believe that.

That changed my life and not pushing it on you. Anything else, just want to know, what did you think of that? You know, any thoughts, you know, and just to love and be amidst the people. And I really wanted to, I really want to take some time and talk about this this weekend.

You know, at first I was going to start my series on intimacy with God, but I thought, you know, we can't miss out on what's happened this weekend. We can't miss out on just a monumental event, something that's never happened in this city. I don't know if it's happened in any city for the gospel to be presented in this way to this many people and for a congregation to be mobilized and move out and care for all these people.

But I bring this up because, guys, it's not like the job's done. Okay, that's a part of it. That was a part of what we wanted to do was get the message out to these people.

But the truth is, it's like we threw a bunch of seeds out. Okay, that's all we did. We tossed a bunch of seeds out and now it's our job as the body of Christ to water those seeds.

You know, then it's God's job to make it grow. You know, that's what scripture teaches. You know, that okay, now the point of it, the point of the DVD was not just to put it out there, but it was a tool for us.

You know, it's supposed to accompany our testimony. It's supposed to accompany our relationship with our neighbors. So it was an easier way for us to say, hey, you know, that's what I believe.

That's what my life is all about. And I guess my question this morning is before we talk about, hey, go out and impact your neighbors, my question is, do you even know your neighbors? Do they know you? And if they know you, is that a good thing? You know, sometimes we jump the gun and we just talk about, oh, you gotta get in their lives, you gotta get the gospel. And it's like, well, do you even know them, first of all? Do you even spend time with people? Do you love people? Because an amazing thing happens when you love people and you really know them and care for them.

You know, I was speaking at Biola University a couple weeks ago and I gave that series that I just finished here at church. I just spoke through joy. And the student comes up to me afterwards and asks a question that's probably on a lot of your minds, too, that I don't know that I really addressed real well because the student asks, he says, he goes, you know, you talk about rejoicing the Lord always and just meditating and dwelling on the things that are praiseworthy, excellent.

He goes, man, I totally agree with all of that. He goes, my question to you is this. How can I have joy when the people that I love the most don't believe in Jesus? He goes, I'm talking about my family that I'm just crazy about.

He goes, and it just kills me every day to think that they reject Jesus. And you're telling me just rejoice in the Lord always. I go, you know, that's a great point.

What do you do with that? How do you rejoice? Because it's interesting, you know, and the way I responded was, you know, the apostle Paul who wrote Philippians 4 that God used to write Philippians 4, for rejoice in the Lord always and commands us to do that. And he writes that from prison and talks about this overwhelming, amazing joy. It's the same person that wrote Romans chapter nine.

And in Romans chapter nine, verse one, Paul says something else that he feels, not just this joy, but in Romans chapter nine, verse one, he says, I speak the truth in Christ. He goes, I'm not lying. My conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit.

He says this, I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Paul says, look, I'm not exaggerating.

I'm not lying to you right now. I can stand with a clear conscience before the Holy Spirit. This is the truth.

He goes, right now, I have such great sorrow in my heart. He goes, I have this unceasing anguish in my heart. He goes, I'm dying inside.

Why? He goes, because my people, my friends, my brothers, the people of Israel, they're rejecting God, they're rejecting Jesus, and it's just eating me up. He goes, I wish, he goes, I can almost wish that I were cursed by God and they could enjoy that. That's how much I love them.

It's like, okay, God, curse me or something, but get them to know you because I have this unceasing anguish. It's like this fire in me that's burning. It's like, oh, I love these people so much and they don't love God.

It's killing me. And yet that same person says, rejoice in the Lord always. And it's this tension that we live with and some of you are living it.

I see it on your face. I see your heads nodding, go, yeah, that's what I feel. I hurt so badly.

Some of you come here this morning and you have that great sorrow in your heart, that unceasing anguish because of people that you love. And it's this tension, you know, that the Bible talks about. If you can remember way back to when we studied the book of Revelation, in Revelation chapter 10.

You see, Revelation, it's a story about the end time events and it's this drama of unrolling the scroll, breaking the seals and reading the scroll, of all the things that are gonna happen at the end time. But it's

interesting because in chapter 10, there's this scene where this angel takes a scroll, not that scroll, but a little scroll, and hands it to John and says, take this and eat it. And it's this picture of this replica of it.

And so John takes the scroll and he eats it and it says that it was sweet. It tasted great in his mouth. But then when it got to his stomach, it turned his stomach sour.

And to me, it's the perfect picture of the end time events. It's this picture that, you know, there's this side that when we think about Christ is gonna return, we go, oh, that's so wonderful. That tastes so good.

I can't wait for that moment like we read in the book of Luke where Christ returns and I just lift up my head and I see my Savior and go, oh, I'm united with Jesus. I get to see him, what a glorious moment. He says, but at the same time, there's that sick feeling you get, realizing, okay, he's returning to pour out his wrath also on those who deserve the punishment.

And we all deserve it. But Christ took it for those of us who believe in him. You know, and you just get this sick feeling going, okay, Christ, I want you to return, but I kind of don't.

I love the end times and the thought of being united with you, but it also makes me sick to my stomach as I think about the people I love that don't know you. I guess a lot of this has come to my mind because last weekend, last weekend I wasn't here. I was at my 20-year high school reunion.

And I don't know about you guys. I don't know if you liked high school, but I loved high school. High school was so fun to me.

I didn't want it to end. It drove me crazy thinking this is over because it was just one big party. It was just one big social event.

No responsibility, you know, study, just cheat, you know, just laugh and play and talk and hang out. And to me, that was high school. It was just, I loved going to school because, you know, I think about my senior year, you know, because I took all the courses I need to by my junior year.

So my senior year, I just set it up to where I took all dumb classes, you know, just nothing. I just knew I wouldn't learn a thing. And I could just socialize my whole senior year, you know, I had yearbook, newspaper, photography, you know, just on and on and on.

And it was just like, oh, this is so cool. That was high school to me. Just so fun.

And so, and I went to a big high school. It was like 2,000 people. And so 500 people in my senior class.

And I'm looking through the yearbook before I went just thinking, oh, I can't wait to see this guy. I can't wait to see all of these people. It's just going to be so much fun.

I get there and absolutely, it was just a blast. Now, I don't know if you went to your 20 year, those of you who are old enough, but the 20 year, you know, you don't recognize a lot of you. You got to look at the little name tag.

I go, no way, that's you, you know, and you hug and you laugh. And, you know, everyone's just laughing, looking at each other, catching up. Absolute blast.

You know, and yet, as I talk and hang out, then the moment I bring anything up about God, it's just like, okay, you know, let me move on. Let me go to someone else. And such a, just a blatant, clear rejection.

I don't want to hear anything about God. Let me just move on to someone else. And I remember just driving home and just being so sad.

So sad. Seriously, for like two or three days, literally just on the verge of tears all the time. Like, this is killing me.

It just killed me. The whole way, that whole drive home from Stockton, just going, this is awful. I am so sad.

I'm just so sad. And I thought, you know, I was talking to my wife, and I'm like, I don't understand why I care so much. I don't understand why I feel so much for them.

Like, I haven't seen them in 20 years. Why do I care like this? Why am I hurting like this? And I realized, because, you know what, those are the people that I loved. Those are the people that I spent time with, that we just hung out with, and we just laughed with.

And I realized, you know, as life goes on, after high school, after college, you spend less and less time knowing people, hanging out with people. You get busy. Then you move to a place like Simi Valley with outrageous mortgages, you know.

And you get the dual income thing going, and you're just both working yourself to the bone. And then you have kids, and then you feel like, I don't even spend enough time with my kids. You want me to go out and have friends? You know, what is that all about? And you start going on and on.

It's like this busyness, and I'm going, you know why I still love these people? You know why I'm on the verge of tears? It's because those are the people I still love more than anyone. I've said things like, hey, you know what, my heart breaks for Simi Valley. You know what, I take that back.

I do, because now I know what it feels like to have your heart break. Your heart is broken when you love, and you really took the time to know people, and you befriend them. You know what I'm talking about.

It's one thing to say, absolutely, yeah, I hurt for anyone who doesn't know Jesus, but man, when you love them, and when you know them, and there's time invested in relationship, that's when this unceasing anguish takes place. This is when that godly, that sorrow, that great sorrow takes place. It's, oh, I love these people.

Man, I love these people. And your heart just breaks, and you live with that tension. You know, someone had asked me about my reunion this week, and I was telling her about it, and I go, oh, man, you gotta understand, like out of the 500 people in my senior class, I was probably friends with 400 of them.

I mean, that's just my life. I just love hanging out with people, love laughing with people. And her comment to me, she goes, that's weird to me.

That surprises me that you were social. And, no, no, no, this is a good thing. And she goes, because I see you at social events, and it doesn't seem like you really enjoy them now.

And I thought about that, and I go, you know what, you're absolutely right. It's changed for me. And as I thought about it, I could say, you know why, you know why I don't just like going out and hanging out? Because I feel like 90% of the people who talk to me want something from me.

You just get tired. And it's just not that fun. It wasn't like in high school.

It wasn't like in college when people just wanted to hang out with you because of you, and they want to hang out with you because you're fun to hang out with. They just want something. And so you start getting that attitude.

And you want to give, and I want to be a giver. Don't take me wrong. But it's just not as fun when the expectations are there, and you feel like half people are looking at you to judge you, and catch you doing something wrong, or whatever.

It's just a different world that I live in now. And then not only that, but then I have this guilt of, man, my four kids at home. I don't even spend enough time with them.

And you start thinking, well, I probably should be there. I should be here. I should be doing this.

And you're getting pulled around all these different places. And you go, that's just where life is now. And probably a lot of you feel that same thing.

You just go, yeah, it's just different. And the time, and the love, and you know, it just caused me to think the question, how do you reach people in a culture where everyone's too busy for you, and you're too busy for them? Right? How do we get to them? They're too busy for us, and we're too busy for them. And so, how are we going to build relationships? How are we going to have an impact? Move.

Move someplace. Hey, this is an option. Move somewhere where things are slower, and they have time for us, we have time for them, and we won't have this crazy payment.

And that's why we're planting churches everywhere. It's like, you know what, go here, go there. If that's really your motive, but there's got to be something we can do for people here.

I'm just convinced of it. You know, I've got to somehow change my life, because that's the way Christ lived. Christ was amongst the people.

He was. He hung out with people. He was at some of the craziest parties with prostitutes, thieves.

You know, or they're laughing, and drinking, and Jesus was with them. And the church people, or the religious people, would accuse him. Hey, why are you hanging out with him? Why are you hanging out with him? And Jesus is like, man, these are the people that need me.

And are we doing that? Are we getting out there? That's why I said, do your neighbors even know you? Do you take the time to love people, know people? You see, because the world looks at Christians as just a bunch of people that are trying to get them somehow, or take something from them, proselytize them. And that's why we bring up Jesus, like, just get away from me. My wife, a few weeks ago, was at the T.O. mall.

She likes to be fair to all the malls. And she was in the elevator. And she was in the elevator, and she goes, it was so cool.

She goes, someone came up to me, and just said hi, and spoke to me. They didn't know me. They didn't know who I was.

Just to be friendly. And it was the weirdest thing. She's looking at the baby.

Oh, what a cute baby. Nice outfit, whatever else. And she was just in this little elevator ride.

You get to the top, and you're like, wow, that was just really energizing. Like, someone would talk to me. Like, a stranger would just be nice to me, and hang out.

And just for that one minute, it just felt good to be spoken to. And she goes, and then when I said goodbye, she gives me her business card and says, I want to tell you about a business that I started. I was just like, exactly.

It's that same feeling. Like, okay, you don't care. You care less.

You probably think I look like trash. You just wanted me to join your business. Tell me about this.

Tell me about that. And you guys, that's exactly the way people look at Christians. It's the culture we live in.

You know, it's like, oh, hey, you know, your lawn's beautiful. Hey, let me give you this DVD. And it's like, alright, what are you throwing at me? Because we don't take the time to know them.

We don't care about them. We don't spend the time with them. You see, Jesus, that's not the way Jesus lived.

Jesus created a following. Jesus, by his lifestyle, attracted a ton of followers. He lived a life amidst the culture to where everyone wanted to hang out with Jesus.

Now, once he started giving his message, then that was a turnoff to most of them. But, I gotta look at the scriptures. Jesus created a following by his lifestyle.

He loved people, and so people liked hanging out with him. He gave to people, and so people liked hanging out with him. He met their needs.

He healed them. He helped the sick. He did so many things to where he had thousands of people following him around.

When he wanted to get alone, he had to get in a boat, you know, cruise out in the jungle. Get somewhere. Get on a mountaintop.

Because everyone wanted some of his time, he created this following. And yet, when he spoke and he told the truth, you know what? Then his followers disappeared. He attracted people by his lifestyle, but he turned them off by his message.

Now, as Christians today, we're real good at the second part. My question this morning is, are you attracting people by your lifestyle? Because Jesus says, that's what we're here on the earth to do. He says, you are the light of the world.

In Matthew chapter 5, he says, you're the light of the world, verse 14. He goes, a city on a hill can't be hidden. And he says, in the same way, no one would light a lamp and then put it under a bowl.

He goes, instead, no, you put it up on a stand so it gives light to everyone in the house. He goes, in the same way, let your light shine before men so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who's in heaven. He says, you're supposed to be a light in the world, not under the shell of a church building.

He goes, but out in the world, you're supposed to be out there showing your good deeds, living the way that God wants you, having this joy in this relationship with God and this intimacy and knowledge of him to where people who don't believe in God go, wow, you know what? There's something different about him. There's something different about him. We're supposed to be amidst them.

I love the way Peter says it in 1 Peter 2. 1 Peter 2, verse 12, he says, live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. Where are we supposed to be living our lives? He says amongst, in the center of those who don't believe in God. So even though they're gonna accuse you of believing the wrong thing, doing the wrong thing, they'll see your actions and go, huh, I can't deny that, the lifestyle.

Why was the testimony of Jesus Christ so powerful? It's because of his life. They couldn't find anything on him. He lived it out.

And yeah, they didn't agree with the message and the things that he said, but I can't argue his life. See, are you living that type of life amongst the unbelievers? Do your neighbors know you? Have you taken the time for them? Do you hang out with them? Or have you isolated yourself from all the believers? It's so easy to get in this little Christian bubble, or this covering or this bowl, really, where it's like, okay, I go to my church, and I hang out with the Christians, and I'll get in my car, drive home, close the garage door, not let any unbelievers in. And every once in a while, I'll have Bible study where other Christians can come in.

And then I'll get in my car and drive back to the church every night so that I can be around the Christians. You guys, that's not where we're supposed to live our lives. He says, you live amongst the pagans.

Let them see your life. Let them see who you are. Let them see the difference that Jesus has made in your life.

And as Christians, we isolate ourselves. Man, I've been doing it, and I'm noticing it. I go, gosh, you know what? What happened to those days where I just hung out with everyone, just had friends all over the place, and people believed totally different things, but they knew what I stood for.

They knew how I lived. You know, it wasn't just Jesus' example. It was the example of the Apostle Paul.

The Apostle Paul, remember in 1 Corinthians 9? He says in 1 Corinthians 9, verse 19, he goes, I make myself a slave to everyone to win as many as possible. He goes, to the Jews, I became like a Jew to win the Jews. To the Gentiles, I became like a Gentile to win the Gentiles.

He goes, those under the law, I became like those under the law. Those without law, I acted like those without the law. He goes, to the weak, I became weak.

To the strong, I became strong. He goes, I became all things to all men so that by all possible means, I might save some. That's a very important passage.

See what Paul's saying. He goes, man, all I care about is people. You know, all the other stuff, it doesn't matter.

He goes, so if these people have dietary regulations, you know, hey, no pork. I go, hey, no pork. Big deal.

And when I'm hanging out with the people who are Gentiles, no one cares. Like, oh, I love bacon. You know, it's just, who cares? Who cares? You know, I'll be a vegan.

I'll work out at the gym. I'll go to the ballet. I'll do whatever.

I'll hang out. I'll get into their world so that I'm not so offensive to them. I'm not going to stand out and be this weird person.

You know, doesn't understand, you know, what they enjoy. I'm going to get into their world. As long as it's not sin, no big deal.

I have freedom in Christ. He goes, the important thing is that I love people and I get into their worlds. He goes, I say this because I feel like I hear things like, you know what, I get rejected.

People reject me because I'm a Christian. And I'm going, you know, I'm not so sure that's true. And I think a lot of you get rejected because you're just weird.

Seriously. Seriously. Do you understand how it's weird? You know, how Christians, you can't watch football anymore.

You can't just, you know, have a barbecue with me. You can't, you know, go, your kids can't play sports with mine because they're not Christians. It's just like, that's weird to them.

You know, that we wouldn't even try to engage in their culture and know them and just enjoy the things, you know, that other people enjoy. I'm not talking about the sin. I'm not talking about getting wasted or anything like that and following them into something the Bible clearly says is sin.

But Paul says in everything else, there's freedom. Just go and do what's most loving. Get into their world.

To the people of Simi Valley, become like the people of Simi Valley. You know, get in there and get amidst them and know them and love them. You guys, are we in the world? Do we know the people in the world? Do we care about the people in the world? You guys probably noticed when I first walked on stage, you go, oh, that's a different outfit for him.

His shirt's tucked in. He looks halfway put together, you know. And, you know, why am I wearing this? Yesterday, I did a funeral.

I did a memorial service. And 26-year-old, you know, this is what I wear, you know. And so, you know, what I'll look like when I do your funeral, you know.

You won't even see me then. This is what I look like. And here's the deal.

I mean, it was such a, it was a great time. It was a sad, sad, sad time. This place was packed, you know.

A 26-year-old, you know, had a killer band, you know. A bunch of groupies and his family and just a bunch of people that loved him. And it, oh, it was so meaningful and so good.

A lot of tears, a lot of sadness. He had come here a few times. And, you know, he sat next to some of you and you had no clue.

But I go to those things and I get so sad. And I think about life and I go, gosh, 26. And just, boom, it's over.

And it just hits your heart and you go, oh, Lord, I can't take another day for granted. What matters? Who should I be spending time with? You know, all these tasks and things I do and this busyness. Am I going to care about it? What will I really care about? But I'll feel those feelings during the services.

I perform these services and I'll think about them for a couple hours later. But I'll go home. I'll change out of my clothes and move on to the next activity because I got stuff to do when life goes on.

And I just thought, you know what? Life's not going to go on this time. Let me just wear this outfit tonight. Let me wear it tomorrow and just remind myself, you know what? Life is short.

And life is about relationships. Relationship with God. Relationship with people.

And I got to make time for that. I'm still not even sure how. But I don't want to leave this weekend and just go, oh, I know I should spend more time with people.

I'm going to say, no, what am I going to do today? Why don't I just hang out? I'm not that important to where I got to do all these things and be all these things to all these people. Why don't I just go hang out? Just make friends again. Be with people again.

Just laugh again. And then hurt again. And I actually love people so much that I have an unceasing anguish because I love them so much and they don't know Jesus.

Listen, I'm not saying don't just present the gospel when you get an opportunity to tell people the good news of what God's done for them. Because there's power in that. I'm just saying there's so much power when you actually live a life like God calls us to amidst the people, in front of the people, with the people, just like scripture commands us to.

And I just want us to look at ourselves today and say, what are we doing? Are we missing out? Are we just missing the boat on this one? By just hanging out with each other and not really living our lives amongst the people who need it the most. Not really being like Jesus and being at the parties, laughing at the parties, hanging out. But there's a line for us, you know, where we go, no, I can't do that.

That's fine. But there's a lot of things you can do. And a lot of things that are okay and even good.

And are you doing those things? Let me just close with this. When I was at the reunion, there was this girl, Shannon, and we were, you know, just like a lot of my friends, I just hadn't seen in so long. It's funny because, you know, I see her and we used to ride bikes together like in seventh grade.

We'd ride to the movies. I just remember like little things and it was like, oh man, it's crazy, you know, and just laughing. And I'm like, hey, what are you doing now? And she goes, oh, I live down in Southern California.

I'm like, oh, me too. Where at? She goes, down in Ventura County. No way, me too.

Where at? She goes, it's a little town called Simi Valley. You know, what, are you kidding me? You know, and just going, no way, you know, where do you live? And she goes, oh, just right off of, you know, Sterns and Cochran. I'm like, man, that's right by, you know, where I work.

And I go, have you heard of Cornerstone Church? And she's like, yeah, I've heard of it. And I just thought, oh. Well, I haven't.

No. No, it's, but you know, and you know, we get distracted or whatever else, but I just thought, you know, I don't know. I don't know what it was, you know, and your mind just starts wondering and you go, gosh, I wonder if she's had a bad experience.

with someone who would say that they're a member of Cornerstone. You know, maybe she lives next to someone here who's just, hasn't been that light, hasn't been that testimony. You know, maybe something else, but who knows? But I just thought, okay, that's pretty much how all my friends feel.

It's just like, well, I don't want anything to do with the God thing or the Christian thing. Don't push that thing on me. And I thought, so what's the hope? What do I hope for for all my friends that are like that? You know what I hope for? I thought about, what would be the greatest thing? The greatest thing would be is, if maybe she lived next to one of you that actually took the time to love her.

You know, what's my prayer for all my friends from high school? Man, I hope that they're just next to someone who's really living the life and actually takes the time to love them and know them, hang out with them. I really thought that. I just thought, gosh, I hope she's not next to someone who's weird that's from our church.

You know? I hope she's with someone that, you know what, just actually cares and loves and hangs out and laughs and is a normal person but really lives out the Christian life and really enjoys God. So it'd be something that's attractive, that's contagious. See, I know even this morning, some of you guys are here.

I hear it all the time. People say, I don't go to church because I had a bad experience with someone who called himself a Christian. And maybe you're here today and you've had a bad experience and I'm sorry for that.

And you know what? Your bad experience may have even been with me. Man, I look at some of the things I've done in the past and go, man, what a terrible example I've been so many times and I may have turned you off by something I said or did that had no love in it at all. And I'm sorry about that.

And at the same time, I go, you know, this room isn't filled with a bunch of perfect people that feel like, oh, we're so good and that's why we're going to heaven. This room is filled with a bunch of screwed up people and some weird people. but the thing we have in common, the thing we have in common is that we all recognize how we've messed up in life.

We all recognize how we've offended a holy God and we've done things that we're ashamed of in our past. We've sinned against this God and we've hurt God, we've hurt people. And yet, that's the whole reason why we need the cross.

That's the whole reason of God saying, you know what? Even though you've offended me and punishment needs to be had, I'm going to punish my son on the cross. He'll take it for you because I love you that much. And if you believe that, then at the end of your life you're not going to be punished.

And we live with this joy and this peace going, wow, God loves me that much. We live with a relationship with that God and we're trying to pursue Him and become like Him. That's what this whole message is about.

I want to be more like Jesus. He was out there. He was just loving on people and, you know, and He just enjoyed people and loved them and hung out with them and got into the world and they didn't believe what He taught.

A lot of them didn't. But, but, you know what? We can't just jump to the second part and say, oh, they don't believe what we believe. It's like, no, my duty is to be down here and to love and to care and build relationships with people.

And, and we're going to have a worship time right now. You know, Jim Sheridan will come back up. But, but, but during this time, for those of you who say, you know what? I have had bad experiences and I need some prayer.

I need to get over some of my baggage or, or maybe this has been a tough week and I don't want anything from you. But if we can pray for you and answer any questions or maybe some of you go, you know what? I do want to follow Jesus. You know, I've always wanted this.

I never understood what He did on the cross. He didn't come up and get baptized today. But during the worship time, I'll be over there by the prayer room with some of the other pastors and some of the other counselors and just to pray with you.

If you just need someone to talk to, someone to cry with, someone just to give you some answers to what this book's all about and what Christianity is supposed to look like. But for the rest of us, it's a time where we're just going to sing to God and tell Him, you know what? As much as I hurt for all these other people, I'm so excited to know you, God. And I'm so glad to have a relationship with you.

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