



HOW JESUS TAUGHT THE BIBLE

Part 99 of Luke's Gospel: Investigating the Man Who Is God

Pastor Mark Driscoll | Luke 24:13–35 | November 20, 2011

Luke 24:13–35

¹³ That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” ¹⁹ And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. ²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.” ²⁵ And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸ So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, ²⁹ but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” ³³ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

JESUS' FIRST PRIORITY

Start with a weird question. Let's say you got your life back. Let's say you were, for example, in a coma for an extended period of time, and you got your life back. You woke up. What would be the first thing you would do, first thing you would do? Whatever that is, that reveals to us your passions, your pleasures, your priorities, right?

If you pick up the phone, call a pizza company, that tells us something about you. If you run and hug your mom, that tells us something about you. If you go back to work, that tells us something tragic about you, right? You, in that moment, reveal what your highest priority is. When you get your life back, what you give your life to first indicates, really, the priority of your heart, and that question for Jesus is answered today.

We're in Luke part 99. Next week, we finish the Gospel of Luke. More than two years we've been in it. We're this close. We have seen Jesus live without sin. We've seen him die. We've seen him buried. We've seen him rise. And today in Luke part 99, chapter 24, verses 13–35, we're going to look at how Jesus taught the Bible. We're going to see the first thing he did after he rose from death. What did he do? What did he not do?

SPIRITUALLY BLIND

We pick it up, Luke 24:13. “That very day,” we are told. This is the day that Jesus rose from death. So, he'd been dead for three days. He comes back to life. His life is returned. What's the first thing he's going to do? “. . . two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.”

So, there are two people going for a walk. We're going to learn the name of one of them in just a moment. They were potentially even relatives of Jesus, based upon related Scriptures. And as they're journeying, these people are having a conversation. “Boy, Jesus seemed like a great guy. It's too bad that he died.” “Yeah, don't you wish that he was alive?” “Yeah, that would be awesome. I wish there was something like a resurrection.”

There's a lot of humor in here, at least I think, because Jesus is going to show up and have a conversation with them, sort of incognito, ninja-esque.

They're not going to know that it's him. He's just going to come into the conversation. And so we get to eavesdrop.

"While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him." And this is that you can be physically alive and yet spiritually blind. And here they don't see Jesus for who he is, even though he's right there.

The sad truth is that that is the state of all people who are apart from Christ and those of us who are in Christ that choose to close our eyes to the truth of Christ. God has to open our hearts. He has to open our minds. He has to open our eyes. He has to open our understanding.

This was my experience before I was a Christian. I'd heard some things about Jesus. I'd been to church, but I didn't see Jesus as God, and Savior, and King, and Lord. And then one day, God opened my eyes. And that's the truth. And so for those of you who have non-Christian family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, they're not stupid. They're blind. It's not necessarily that they're opposing what they see; they don't see Jesus clearly.

That's this great illustration here. Jesus is right there, and they don't see him. They don't see him for who he truly is. And so he has a conversation with them. Verse 17, "And he said to them, 'What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?'" "What are you guys talking about?" "You see the funny comedy here? I mean, two people are having a conversation about Jesus, who's asking them what they're talking about, and they don't see that it's him.

"And they stood still, looking sad," very sad. They're talking about the funeral of Jesus just a few days prior. "Then one of them, named Cleopas," potentially a relative, "answered him, 'Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?'" "What are you, stupid? Do you not know what's happened? There was this guy named Jesus. Everybody knows he was here. He was a great guy. They killed him. We went to the funeral. He's dead. He's totally dead! We wish he was alive! He's not alive!"

How hard do you think it was in that moment for Jesus not to at least smirk? I'd, like, "Actually, this may shock you." Now, I think this is funny. It's a little moment. He goes on. "And he said to them, 'What things?'" I love Jesus. "Oh, really? There was a guy named Jesus? Tell me more. I would love to learn." Jesus is playing along, which is awesome.

"And they said to him, 'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth . . .'" At this point, he's probably got his hand over his nametag that says "Jesus of Nazareth." *[Congregation laughing]* ". . . a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers," the political and religious leaders, "delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him." "Really, he was crucified? That must have been terrible. Oop, don't show my hand."

"DON'T YOU BELIEVE THE BIBLE?"

"But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel." "We were hoping for more." "Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive." "Yeah, the women said he rose from death, and they saw an angel. Charismatic women, you can't trust their testimony. They're all emotional. *[Congregation laughing]* So obviously, this didn't happen."

"Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." "Us men folk investigated it. We didn't see the body." "And he said to them," Jesus does, "'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!'" "Don't you believe the Bible?" "Was it not necessary that the Christ [the Anointed One of God] should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets . . ." That's another way of saying the Old Testament Scriptures. At this point in history the New Testament had not yet been written. ". . . he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

Coollest Bible study ever. Jesus is like, "Let's start in Genesis. Here I am. Exodus, more me. Leviticus, ha, me, too." He just kept going. He just kept going through the Old Testament, taking all of the Scriptures and connecting them to himself. "This is about me, this is about me, this is about me, this is about me."

IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS

Here's what's really important. This is how Jesus taught the Bible. There's morality in there, but it's not primarily about morality. There's religion and tradition and history, and miracles and the supernatural in there, but it's not primarily about all of that. All of that is secondary. It's primarily about Jesus.

This is a driving, deep conviction of Mars Hill Church. By God's grace, it has been since the beginning; and by God's grace, it will be 'til Jesus returns. This is a book that God wrote, and it's all about Jesus, and you can't make any sense of this book unless you connect it all to Jesus. Any time this book is taught, and it's not primarily, firstly about Jesus, this book has not been well taught.

It's about Jesus, and that's been the heart cry of Mars Hill Church since the beginning. God wrote a book, and it's all about Jesus. What that means is this book is not primarily about you. It's not primarily about me. It's not primarily about us. It's about him, and it's for us, but it's primarily, firstly, chiefly about Jesus, and that includes not just the New Testament, but the Old Testament, as well.

So Jesus goes to the Old Testament, and he opens it up, and he methodically teaches through it, connecting it all to him. "So they drew near to the village to which they were going. And he acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them . . ." Starting a Community Group. Going to have dinner together, build their friendship, discuss the Scriptures. We call this Community Groups.

What's the first thing Jesus does when he rises from death? He teaches the Bible and starts a Community Group. These are our first priorities at Mars Hill. The Bible is open. We learn about Jesus. We get together, break bread, have a meal, and build a friendship. We call it a Community Group. There are five hundred. Get in one. Jesus did. Yay, Jesus. Be like Jesus. Read your Bible, love Jesus, get in a Community Group. I was expecting more enthusiasm, but we will— *[Congregation laughing]* I'll sell it again at the end. I'm going to sell it again at the end.

Jesus loved his mom, but the first thing he did was not hug his mom. Jesus had brothers, but the first thing he did was not go to his brothers and say, "Ha ha, told you so!" That would all be later. Jesus had disciples. He's going to show up to them and do the whole "Where's Waldo?" next week, but the first thing he did, he taught the Bible and joined a Community Group. So that's first priority.

Where was I before I had such a good time? *[Congregation laughing]* Ah! Oh, verse 31, "And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him." So, this is what God needs to do. All right?

Okay, here's how it works. God opens our eyes so that we see Jesus as God, Lord, Savior, King, and Christ. So if you have family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, enemies, they don't see Jesus for who he is, don't get mad at them. Pray for them, keep teaching, keep answering the questions, keep bringing the Scripture, and wait for the Holy Spirit to open their understanding. They're not stupid; they're blind. Okay? You don't yell at blind people, saying, "Don't you see it?!" That's mean. *[Congregation laughing]* It's really mean. God's got to open their eyes, like God's opened your eyes and my eyes, if we are Christians.

"And then he vanished from their sight." I don't know how that happened. "We got it! There he went. What?" "It was awesome for a second." "They said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?'" It's all about opening the Scriptures and meeting Jesus. "And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven," those are the other disciples, "and those who were with them gathered together, saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed.'" "The charismatic ladies are right! He's alive! There was an angel. He conquered death. Good news! Jesus is alive."

This is amazing. This is resurrection, not just revivification. Revivification is when someone is pronounced dead, or we perform CPR, they come back to life, and eventually they're going to die. Jesus died and he rose to never die again. That's resurrection. No one, no one is like Jesus. He alone conquers death.

"The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Also known as Peter. "Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was made known to them, in the breaking of the bread."

Three things we see here. Number one, Jesus rose from death bodily, physically, literally. Some say, "He rose from death spiritually in my heart." No, he didn't. He's really alive. Like the Jehovah's Witnesses, "He rose spiritually." No, he didn't. He's walking, talking, eating. Do you know what that is? A resurrected guy walking, talking, teaching, eating—dead and alive. That's exactly who Jesus is.

Number two, we are spiritually blind until God opens our eyes, and, number three, it is through the teaching of the Word of God that blind eyes are opened. The first priority of Jesus is get people together and teach them the Scriptures, teach them the Word of God, teach them about the fact that God wrote a book, and it's all about Jesus.

HOW JESUS TAUGHT THE BIBLE

So, what I'm going to do now is I'm going to teach you how Jesus taught the Bible. I want you to see the Bible like Jesus did. That's what I want for you, and I want you to be able to, as you read and study the Bible, connect it all to the person and work of Jesus. And so I'm going to teach you some things that perhaps you've heard before.

And if you've been at Mars Hill, these are the kind of things that I tend to weave into the sermons often because they're important and they're significant. Paul in the New Testament does the same thing. He oftentimes tells various churches, "Let me remind you." So, for some of you, the rest of the sermon is going to be a reminder.

For many of you, it'll be new. We have grown in the last few weeks by a few thousand people. So, praise God. Welcome. Jesus loves you. We're glad to have you. God wrote a book; it's all about Jesus.

And it's my great pleasure to teach you. We're going to do a whole year of Bible college in one hour—or more—and we're going to look at six different ways to take the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus taught were about him and connect them all to him. Are you ready?!

1. EVENTS

All right, number one. Sometimes the Old Testament teaches about Jesus through events. I'll give you two major events. The first is called Passover. Passover was an occasion where, at the end of the book of Genesis, a family, a small family, sixty-some people, was suffering from a massive famine, so they sought refuge in a country called Egypt. They relocated there.

Over the course of more than four hundred years—this is Genesis and Exodus—what happened was this little family grew to be a nation, called Israel, of a few million people. And there was a new king. He was called a pharaoh, and he was worshiped like a god. He was worshiped as a god. And he was enslaving, mistreating, abusing, and harming God's people. And so what God said was that he wanted to deliver them. He wanted to redeem them so that they would be free to worship him.

So God, the real God, showed up to the false god named Pharaoh, and he basically said, “These are my people. You’re hurting and enslaving them. You need to let them go, otherwise I’m going to punish you.” Pharaoh hardened his heart, resisted the grace of God, kept fighting against God, and wanted to be god. So God sent an escalating succession of plagues, and he sent a messenger named Moses. “A plague is coming. Please repent. Obey God. Let the people go. He loves them. They’re his people, not yours. If not, this horrible thing will happen.”

And it happened over and over and over. The plagues came just as God promised. What happened then was it escalated in the final plague, the killing of the firstborn. And God, through Moses, essentially said to the false god, Pharaoh, “This is it. We’re done. I’ve been really patient, loving, gracious, merciful, and kind. The nicer I am to you, the harder your heart becomes. You let my people go, or I will kill the firstborn son in every household in your nation, including your own household and your own son.”

Pharaoh did not repent and, as a result, death came to every household and the firstborn son in every home, with one exception: those homes who, in faith, as an act of worship to the God of the Bible in acknowledgement of their own sin, took an animal, sacrificed it—because the wage for sin is death—and that animal was a substitute, showing, “We’re sinners. We should have death come to our home, but because of our faith in the God of the Bible, his love for us, we’ll sacrifice this animal. We’ll take the blood, we’ll paint it over the doorpost of our home, and then literally death will pass over our home, and we’ll be spared from the wrath of God.” So death came to every home, with the exception of those who, in faith, were covered by the blood, so that the wrath of God would pass over them. That’s all about Jesus.

Later—many years later—when Jesus comes, his cousin, John the Baptizer, looks at him and declares, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!” Paul tells the Corinthians that Jesus Christ is “our Passover Lamb, who has been slain.” You know why we don’t celebrate Passover? You know why we don’t slaughter animals? We don’t need to. Jesus fulfilled Passover. Jesus is our Passover sacrifice. He shed his blood for our sin, so that the wrath of God and the death from sin might pass over us. So we don’t just have celebrations and annual feasts and meals. We have Jesus, and we love him every day.

The second event that I want to connect to the person and work of Jesus is called Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. And it was the big day in the Jewish calendar year. They actually called it The Day, and it was the big day, and it was the day when the holy God and the sinful people would deal with the sin problem that separated them.

The people would come, usually to Jerusalem. The priest, the high priest, as the intercessor, mediator, advocate between God and the people, would take two goats. One was the sacrificial goat, and the other was the scapegoat. This was an annual tradition, and it was their big, high, holy holiday. And over the sacrificial goat, the sins of the people would be confessed, and then that priest would take and slaughter the animal as a substitute sacrifice, and the blood would be shed, and the wrath of God would be poured out on that animal, in their place, as a substitute.

Then the second goat was not the sacrificial goat. It was the scapegoat. If you’ve heard that nomenclature, it comes from the Bible. And, again, the sins of the people would be confessed over the animal, and rather than being slaughtered, it would be sent away, showing Jesus is coming.

He is our Yom Kippur. He is our Day of Atonement. His cross will ultimately achieve this. He is our high priest who mediates. He is our sacrifice who forgives our sin, and he is our scapegoat who takes it away and makes us clean. And we don’t celebrate Yom Kippur. We celebrate Jesus because the whole point of Yom Kippur was preparation, anticipation, and expectation for the crucifixion of Jesus.

2. TITLES

Number two, we learn about Jesus in the Old Testament through titles. There are a variety of titles in the Old Testament that were ultimately attributed to Jesus by Jesus. So if you read, for example, Isaiah—written seven hundred years before Jesus was born—beginning in roughly chapter 40 all the way through to chapter 66, the dominating theme is about someone called the suffering servant, that God would send a Savior, a Son, who would be a suffering servant. Jesus comes and says, “I have not come to be served but to serve by giving my life as a ransom for many.” Jesus comes as the suffering servant.

Furthermore, in the Old Testament, God is referred to as the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. This is in reference to the eternity of God. God is without beginning. God is without end. God is the uncaused cause. God is eternal. All that has been made has been made by God. And the New Testament takes that eternal Alpha and Omega nomenclature for God and attributes it to Jesus, who is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.

We’ve seen it in Luke, as we’ve been in Luke now for more than two years. Jesus’ favorite title for himself is from the Old Testament: the Son of Man. He uses that language roughly eighty times in your Bible, and it comes from Daniel 7:13–14, where the vision is of Jesus in eternal glory in heaven, ruling and reigning, coming into human history humbly as a man to set up a kingdom that’ll never end. And Jesus says, “Though it was written hundreds of years before I was born of the Virgin Mary, I am the Son of Man.” And people heard that, and they said, “He is claiming to be God.” Exactly, because he is God. And he was crucified, put to death under the charge of blasphemy for declaring himself to be God! And he rose from death three days later to, in essence, say, “I told you so!” And Jesus is alive, and he is the Son of Man.

Furthermore, there is another title in the Old Testament used for God. It’s around the burning bush with a guy named Moses. So Moses is walking along in the wilderness. There’s a bush that’s on fire that does not get consumed. Again, I think God has a good sense of humor. God talks to Moses through the bush.

Now, we tend to read this in a religious way. If you read this, you’re like, “Yes, yes. Moses had a conversation with the burning bush.” Just think about

it. If you saw a guy talking to a plant, you would call 9-1-1, right? You would not say, "It's a moment with the Lord. Leave him alone." Right?

So Moses is having a conversation with a bush; not just a bush, but a bush that's on fire in Exodus 3. And the bush tells Moses, "Go to the Pharaoh. Liberate my people. Lead a mass emancipation for millions!" Moses has a good question. "Who should I tell them is making this declaration? Because I don't feel altogether confident saying, 'Thus saith the bush.'" [*Congregation laughing*] It's a reasonable request. So through the bush—I think it's Exodus 3:14—God says, "Tell them 'I AM has sent you.'" "Okay, that's a lot better than the bush. 'I AM says . . .'" Jesus comes along, I think it's John 8:58, and he says this: "Before Abraham was—" Abraham was thousands of years prior. "Before Abraham was, I am." "I'm eternal God, older than Abraham, and I was the one who met with Moses in the burning bush and told him to go liberate my people."

3. PROPHECIES

The titles of the Old Testament point to Jesus, the events of the Old Testament point to Jesus, and the prophecies of the Old Testament point to Jesus—category three. Now, prophecy shows us that God is omniscient; he knows all things. He's sovereign; he rules all things. Twenty-five percent of the Bible, roughly, at the time of its writing, was prophetic in nature, meaning it was God through human authors, by the power of the Holy Spirit, revealing future events in meticulous detail because God knows the future and he rules over the future, bringing it to pass, just as he promised.

This makes Christianity different than other religions, and it makes the Bible altogether unique. People today would love to know the future. From investments, to sports competitions, to who am I going to marry and how long am I going to live, so much of our life is dedicated to trying to discern and determine what the future might hold. And the truth is we don't know because we're not God. But God does know. And as he writes the Scriptures, he also reveals the future, and he, through prophecy, tells us exactly how Jesus will come.

I can't give you all of the prophecies, there are hundreds, but I want to visit some of what I find to be the most compelling, and I do so for two reasons. Number one, for those of you who are not Christians, I want you to consider Jesus. I want you to read the book that God wrote and I want you to see that it's all about Jesus and I want you to wrestle with the fact that if God did not write this book, how can you potentially account for the magnificent detail around prophecy that I will share with you in a moment?

Number two, for those of you who are Christians, I want you to trust that this is the book that God wrote, and I want you to see that it is superior to and unlike anything else that has ever been written or taught in the history of the world. And because it is the book that God wrote, it has authority over everyone and everything else.

We'll start in Genesis 3:15. After our first parents' sin—this is some four thousand years before Jesus is even born of the Virgin Mary—God comes and gives the first prophecy. He speaks to our enemy, his adversary Satan, the serpent, in the Garden. Genesis 3:15, prophecy begins with God who says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

God comes and says, "Sin has now come into human history. I will send a Savior for sinners." He—so, we're looking for a male child—will be born of a woman. This is the first intimation at a virgin birth. As you read the rest of Genesis, there are, on a few occasions, family histories and chronologies. All of those are patriarchal, meaning it tells us who the father, the grandfather, the great-grandfather, was. They are not matriarchal. They do not list the mothers. They list the fathers.

Here, there is no mention of an earthly father, only the mention of an earthly mother. That is because Jesus would come, number one, born of a woman, that he would not have a biological earthly father, that he would be conceived by a miracle of the Holy Spirit, that he's not a mere man. He's God become a man. And it was said that he would come and battle Satan and that Satan would harm and wound him, but he ultimately would defeat and crush Satan. And from that moment forward, there was an expectation that a woman would give birth to a son, who would be the Savior of the world.

Continuing the storyline of the Bible, Genesis 17, penned some two thousand years before Jesus was born, God shows up to an obscure man, at that time—a famous man in our time—named Abraham. And this is one of the many things that God said to him in Genesis 17:19. "God said, 'No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you [Abraham] a son. You shall call his name Isaac,'" which means laughter. They're a barren elderly couple. They've been laughing at God. God always gets the last laugh. He's going to impregnate Sarah at the retirement home. It's going to be hilarious. [*Congregation laughing*]

"I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him." He says, "Jesus is coming and, Abraham, he's coming through your line. He's going to be your descendant. And he's not coming from your girlfriend. He's coming from your wife."

They had waited for God to provide a son. They had not become pregnant. Sarah cooked up this horrible idea for Abraham to, in essence, commit adultery, to sleep with another woman. Gave birth to a son. The Muslims now look back and say, "Our son was born first. That is the seed and line of the promise." And the whole conflict between Islam, Christianity, and Judaism comes out of adultery. It's amazing what one illicit sexual act, given enough generations, can result in. The fight between the religions is, to some degree, an ancient family feud.

God came. He loved the other woman and her son, but he said, "It will be through Sarah, not the other woman, your son Isaac, not the other boy, that Jesus ultimately will come." So we're looking for one born of a woman without an earthly father from the line of Abraham, through Sarah, descendant of Isaac.

God is telling us how Jesus is going to come, and then he narrows it even further, roughly seven hundred years before Jesus is born on the earth, Isaiah 7:14, we read this: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

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Number one, a virgin is going to have a baby. That really narrows it down, right? There are not a lot of pregnant virgins walking around the Middle East a few thousand years ago. This really narrows it down to one person, and she's going to give birth not just to a child, but a son, and we're going to give him a name, a title, which is Immanuel, which means what? "God is with us." God is coming to be with us. You'll know it's him when the virgin gets pregnant. Her name is Mary; his name is Jesus. It's a miracle of God. It's once in all of human history.

Where would he be born? God's going to narrow it down even further. So we read, roughly seven hundred years before Jesus is born, in Micah 5:2: "But you, O Bethlehem—" that's a city—"Ephrathah—" that's a region—"who are too little to be among the clans of Judah—" little town, dumpy town, rural town, hick town, small town, not the kind of place you'd think God would come from, rural area—nothing big ever happened there—that's where God's going to show up—"from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel—" a king is coming—"whose origin is from old, from ancient days [from eternity]."

He'll be born where? Bethlehem. Question: Was Jesus from Bethlehem? No, he was from Nazareth. He grew up in Nazareth. I've traveled, and ventured, and journeyed in this region. It's a ways from Bethlehem to Nazareth. And what happened was Mary was the virgin. She conceived by a miracle of the Holy Spirit. She was probably a teenage girl. Joseph decides he's going to go ahead and marry her, and he's going to adopt Jesus. Yes, our God is adopted. It's a magnificent story.

But before Jesus is born, a godless political leader who's in it for the money and the power, says, "I want a census taken. I want to know who all my people are so I can get all my tax revenue. So everybody needs to go to their hometown of origin, where their family is from." And in the providence of God, even though Jesus is in the womb of Mary, Joseph, Jesus' adoptive father, is a long descendant of King David, who came from the town of Bethlehem. So they have to go to the city of Bethlehem to register for the census.

And Mary is very pregnant, and once they get to Bethlehem Jesus is born. Where? Bethlehem. They didn't live there. They were visiting there. Why? Because this is the book that God wrote, and it's all about Jesus, all the way down to where he would be born.

Furthermore, it tells us when he would be born. Four hundred years before Jesus was born, Malachi 3:1, we read, "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord," God's coming, "whom you seek," the one you've been waiting for, "will come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts." That's the God who rules over the angelic creatures.

Number one, a messenger is coming! You'll know it's him! He's going to prepare the way! Who was the messenger that prepared the way? John the Baptizer, Jesus' homeschooled cousin. He lived in the woods. He was a strange kid. Bugs, honey, strange diet; interesting kid. He prepares the way for the coming of Jesus, and then the Lord comes.

And where did it say he would come to? Where? The temple. Now, if you've been to Jerusalem, you walk up, and you say, "Show me the temple," and they're like, "We'd love to, but there is a slight problem. It was destroyed in AD 70. All we have now is a flat piece of ground where the temple used to be. For almost two thousand years," they will tell you, "there's been no temple."

So, here's a clue. Whoever this person is, this Savior, he had to come by when? AD 70. If he's going to come to the temple, and the temple is destroyed in AD 70—we've now had almost two thousand years without a temple. He had to come before AD 70.

So for those of you who are my Jewish friends—and I won't call you my brothers unless you're in Christ—but for those of you who are my Jewish friends, we love you. We believe the same Old Testament Scriptures that you do. Our disagreement is we believe they're all about Jesus, and we believe you missed the most important Jewish person who's ever lived: Jesus Christ. We believe he was Messiah, God among us, the fulfillment of prophecy, the Savior of the world, and we believe that God had the temple destroyed in AD 70 so that you could not have a priest because Jesus is your priest; so that you could not have a sacrifice because Jesus is your sacrifice; that you would not go to the temple because you need to come to Jesus.

We love you. We read the Scriptures that your people wrote, and we want you to worship the God they reveal. His name is Jesus and he came to the temple. And after that the temple was destroyed because we don't need the temple. We've got Jesus. We don't need the priest. We've got Jesus! We don't need the sacrifices. We've got Jesus! And this is the book that God wrote, and it's all about Jesus.

Furthermore, prophecy goes on to reveal what Jesus would do on the earth, a little bit of his resume and job description. How will we know it's the one? Isaiah 35:5-6, seven hundred years before Jesus was born, we read, "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy." How will you know it's him? Mute people are singing. Deaf people are hearing. Blind people are seeing and handicapped people are running. When you see that happening, note to self: This is the one we've been waiting for. Jesus did all of that.

Additionally, we are told that Jesus would be betrayed, and that the bounty on his head would be no less than thirty pieces of silver, not twenty-nine, not thirty-one. We read this five hundred years before Jesus was born on the earth in Zechariah 11:12-13. "And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver. Then the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter,"" that's a portion of the temple that no longer exists, but did up until AD 70, "the lordly price at which I was priced by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver," a few hundred bucks, "and threw them into the house of the LORD, to the potter."

It is promised that the bounty on Jesus' head would be thirty pieces of silver. Judas Iscariot betrayed him for how much? Thirty pieces of silver, and

then in disgust, threw it into that portion of the temple that no longer exists today.

Some of you would say, "I don't think this is the book that God wrote." My question to you is this: Then who wrote it? Who wrote this? Who knew the future? Multiple authors spanning hundreds and thousands of years in painstaking detail telling us how Jesus would come, and what would happen to him, and what would be accomplished through him. See, the burden of proof is on you. It was on me, as a non-Christian. As I started to read the book that God wrote, it was prophecy that helped to open my blind eyes. This is the book that God wrote, and it's all about Jesus.

Additionally, we read how Jesus would die. One thousand years before Jesus was even born, it was prophesied in Psalm 22:16 how he would be crucified. We read, "For dogs—" this is a slang term for horrible men. It's like today calling someone a wolf in our culture. It's just a horrible denigrating term. Do you still use that term in the Middle East? Let me just submit to you, don't. Don't walk up in, say, a Muslim country and call somebody a dog. It's a highly negative term. It's loaded.

"For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my—" What? "hands and feet," the most sensitive nerve centers on the human body. Jesus was crucified through what? The hands and the feet. Here it is prophesying, predicting, promising the crucifixion of Jesus one thousand years before he was even born and, get this, hundreds of years before crucifixion even existed! God is not only promising, prophesying, predicting the crucifixion of Jesus; he's promising, prophesying, predicting crucifixion.

Lastly, it is prophesied in the Old Testament that Jesus would rise from death, that he would rise from death. So again, back to the story of Luke. He's walking along the road. "Oh, Jesus died. We were hoping he'd rise." "Don't you believe the Bible? Don't you know what the Scriptures say? Have you not read Moses and the prophets?"

And that's what I'm sharing with you. This is how Jesus taught the Bible. And I could unpack it. There are hundreds—I wish we had days to do this. But it all sort of culminates, and I think the most packed prophetic section of Scripture is the second half of Isaiah 52 through Isaiah 53. And I'll share with you Isaiah 53:8–11, seven hundred years before Jesus was even born on the earth. "By oppression and judgment he was taken away . . ." He'd be arrested, tried— ". . . cut off from the land of the living." What is that? Dead, killed, murdered. "And they made his grave with the wicked—" Jesus was crucified between two guilty sinners—"and with a rich man in his death—"

Jesus was not a rich man. He was rich in heaven. He was poor on earth. So, the Bible says, "For our sake, though rich, he became poor." While on the earth, he was homeless. He was broke. He was destitute, poor. He could not have afforded a rich man's tomb; in fulfillment to prophecy—but after he died—there was one of his more quiet followers, a man named Joseph of Arimathea, who was an affluent rich man, and he gifted to the Lord Jesus, postmortem, his personal tomb, so that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, and Jesus was buried with the rich in his death—

". . . although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth." What that is saying is Jesus had no sin in word or deed. Unlike you and I, he was flawless, perfect, and sinless. "Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him." He's not just a victim. This is a salvation plan that the Father and Son in eternity past had agreed to.

"He has put him to grief," and Jesus wept, and Jesus grieved. "When his soul makes an offering for guilt—" he suffered and died in our place for our sins. The cross is something that was done by us. We killed God. But it was something that was done for us. God used it to atone for our sin and guilt—"he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; and the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand."

What he's saying is after he dies for your sin, he's going to come back and the sun is going to shine on his face and he's going to have an eternal forward progress of days and he's going to delight in the salvation that he accomplishes and achieves. He's not going to stay dead because sin and death reign where there is sin, but death could not reign over Jesus because he was without sin, and so he rose in victory over sin and death.

"Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied." Once Jesus sees all the sinners and sins that he has saved, he'll be satisfied with his suffering. "By his knowledge shall the righteous one—" Jesus is the only righteous one. There's one who is righteous, and all the rest are unrighteous. That's where the Bible says that we're all unrighteous. Here it says that there is one who is righteous. His name is Jesus Christ—"my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities."

The question is: We who are unrighteous, how can we be declared righteous, justified in the sight of a holy and righteous God? Answer: We cannot. We cannot stand before God with our religion, our morality, our tradition, our efforts, our pride, our success, our achievement, our accomplishment and say, "God, I feel that I have performed adequately well. God, I believe that I am essentially a good person. God, in comparison to others, I do believe that I have outperformed them."

God has two categories: righteous, unrighteous. Jesus is in the category of righteous; everyone else is in the category of unrighteous. And Jesus comes and trades places. He takes upon himself our sin, guilt, condemnation, shame, filth, and unrighteousness, and he gives to us, if we have faith in him, his righteousness, his perfection, his salvation, his forgiveness, his reconciliation with the Father. And that's exactly what he says. "My servant will make many to be accounted righteous."

If you want to be righteous, the answer is not do better, try harder! The answer is: God wrote a book. It's all about Jesus. Trust him! Trust him for your righteousness. Trust him for your salvation. Trust him for your eternal destination. How come I'm the only one who's excited? This is fantastic!
[Congregation applauding]

4. CHRISTOPHANIES

We learn about Jesus through events, titles, prophecies; number four, Christophanies. This is where Jesus is eternally existing as the Son of God, the second member of the Trinity, and sometimes before he's born of Mary, he makes a little cameo appearance, shows up, plays a little "Where's Waldo?" in the Old Testament. I'll give you a few examples.

In Genesis 18, Abraham is having a conversation with somebody who is God. That's Jesus. Jesus shows up and hangs out with Abraham. Furthermore, there's a guy named Jacob in Exodus 32:30, and he's got an all-night UFC cage-fight wrestling match with somebody, and it's Jesus who came down to wrestle with him all night. At the end of the fight, I think Jacob was thinking, "I held in there all night. That was a long fight. I'm pretty tough." And Jesus says, "I could've taken you at any point." Reaches out his finger, touches his hip, and cripples him. "Oh, wow. I'm wrestling with God."

Additionally, I told you that Jesus showed up to talk to Moses through the burning bush. He also shows up in a fiery furnace with a guy named Daniel. Right, if you're a *Veggie Tales* fan, it's Rack, Shack, and Benny, right? [*Congregation laughing*] If you're just old school Bible, it's Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And they take these three worshipers of God, these young men, they throw them in a fiery furnace. And then there's a fourth guy. Like, who's the fourth guy? Who is it? It's Jesus, and he gets them out of that furnace.

One of my favorites is in Isaiah 6, and I've shared it many times in the history of Mars Hill. A guy named Isaiah goes on to write, over the course of more than forty years, the rule of many kings, the whole book of Isaiah. They call it the fifth Gospel, because it's got so much Jesus in it. And his public ministry really commissions in Isaiah 6. And he sees heaven open. It's this majestic, glorious revelation.

And he says, "I saw the Lord high and exalted and seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. And the angels surrounded him. And day and night they worship him, crying out: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD God Almighty; heaven and earth are full of his glory!'"

And Isaiah says, "And I'm a man of unclean lips. I've said some things I shouldn't have said. And I come from a people of unclean lips. I'm a dead man. I've seen the LORD." Then an angel takes a hot coal and presses it to his lips. "Your sin is atoned for; you're a new man now. Your mouth now belongs to me. You're going to be a prophet and say what I tell you to say." So Isaiah says, "All right, Lord. Tell me where you want me to go. Tell me what you want me to say. I'm your man."

Who did he see? John 12:41 says, quote, "Isaiah saw Jesus and spoke of his glory." It's the same picture that John has of Jesus in the book of Revelation. It's the same picture of Jesus that you and I will have when we see him face to face. No longer humble, marginalized, beaten, poor Galilean peasant, but risen, ruling, reigning, resurrected, glorious King of kings, Lord of lords, high and exalted, worshiped by angels, adored by nations: the Lord Jesus Christ. [*Congregation applauding*]

5. TYPES

Number five—I have the best job in the world. I really love my job! Thank you for letting me teach the Bible. Number five, we see Jesus in the Old Testament through types, where somebody does something that's a little bit like Jesus, but he comes along and does it bigger and better.

So history starts with the first Adam, and Jesus is called the last Adam in places like 1 Corinthians 15:45 and Romans 5:12–21. The first Adam sinned and this last Adam atoned for sin. Through the first Adam, the human race fell; through the last Adam, members of that race can be saved. Through the first Adam, there was condemnation; through the last Adam, there can salvation. Through the first Adam, we inherit a sin nature; through the last Adam, we receive a new nature. Through the first Adam, we're born sinners; through the last Adam, we're born again, saints. The first Adam turned from God in a garden; and the last Adam turned to God in a garden, the Garden of Gethsemane. The first Adam was a sinner; and the last Adam is a Savior of sinners. The first Adam yielded to Satan; and the last Adam defeated Satan. The first Adam sinned at a tree; and the last Adam atoned for sin on a tree. The first Adam brought thorns; the last Adam wore a crown of thorns. The first Adam was naked and unashamed; the last Adam was stripped naked and bore our shame. Everybody is born in Adam. My hope is that you would be born again in the last Adam, Jesus Christ. See, Jesus is the better, greater Adam.

As well, we read the Old Testament, and there are priests, and they mediate between people and God. Jesus is our great High Priest. God became a man to mediate between men and women and God. That's why Paul tells Timothy, "There's only one mediator between us and God." It's not religion. It's not the church. It's not morality. It's the man Christ Jesus, and he is our priest who brings us to God and brings God to us.

In the Old Testament, as well, there are prophets who speak for God, and Jesus is the Word of God, and he is a preacher and teacher of the Word of God. Furthermore, we see kings who rule and reign, and it reminds us that Jesus is a greater King. He's the King of kings! He has a kingdom that will never end, that has perfect justice and provision for all.

In the Old Testament, as well, we read about shepherds who care for wayward sheep. We're the sheep; he's the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep. We read of judges who bring justice; and Jesus tells us in John 5 that the Father judges no one, but he's entrusted all judgment to the Son, that Jesus is our Judge.

We see in the Old Testament sacrifices, revealing to us that Jesus would come as our sacrifice to give himself for our sins. We see the temple, which is the meeting place between men and God. It's that connection point, that holy place, and Jesus is the greater temple, and Jesus is God among us, and now we don't go to a place to worship. We go to a person to worship. His name is Jesus Christ, and he comes to be with us and to make our bodies a temple in which God is glorified, and the presence of God dwells, so that we live a new life, not just a better life, but a new life, not a life so that God would be pleased with us, but because in Christ, he already is; and through Christ in us, we can, by the power of the Holy Spirit, be new people, living new lives

by the presence of God, as the temple of God, to the glory of God, because we're the people of God. And all of it is about Jesus.

So again, Jesus is walking along the road, and he asks them, "Don't you know the Bible? It's all about me." And he starts unpacking in succession various ways. I wish I could've been there; best Bible study ever.

6. LIKE SERVICE

Lastly, number six, there is like service, where someone does something that Jesus does greater and better. So early in the Bible, the first two brothers are Cain and Abel. Like many brothers, they're competitive and they fight. And they come to worship God, and Abel is a righteous man, and Cain is a jealous man. He's jealous of his brother. And what Cain does is he kills the innocent Abel. Jesus is a better Abel; we're a worse Cain. God comes to earth, and we kill him, though he's the righteous one. And Jesus is a better Abel, in that he did not remain dead like Abel did. He rose from death. That makes him a better Abel.

As well, when Abraham was living in the land of his father, and God came to him and said, "I'm sending you on a mission to a new place to start a new people, a new humanity," Jesus is the greater Abraham. He left his Father's house. He came to this forsaken earth. He came to set up a new humanity through faith in him. Abraham's descendants are many, physically speaking; Jesus' descendants are more, spiritually speaking. A few billion of us on the earth today are descendants of his mission to leave his Father's house and to come here and to seek us to be his people.

Furthermore, we meet then a guy named Isaac. He was a promised son. He was a beloved son. He was a firstborn son. He was an anticipated son. He was a miraculous son. He was born to Abraham and Sarah, though they were elderly and barren. And once they got that boy, they loved that boy, and God came to Abraham and asked him to do something to his son that was unthinkable: to offer him as a sacrifice, to murder his own boy, the boy he had waited his whole lifetime for. That's the kind of thing that the false gods of Chemosh and Molech and even abortion and murder in our own day worship. "Murder your child," the God of the Bible never says that.

Abraham, by faith, though confused I'm sure, sought to obey God. Hebrews 11 says, "He believed that even if Isaac died, God could bring him back from death." So even Abraham believed in the hope of resurrection. And what happens then is Isaac is an adult boy, son. He carries his own wood on his back to the place that God had designated for his death. He, though a younger, stronger man, willingly lays himself down to die at the hand of his own father. And as Abraham takes the knife and is about to plunge it into his firstborn, beloved, promised covenantal son, a messenger of the Lord, perhaps Jesus, cries out, "Abraham, there's no need to murder Isaac. There'll be another day when a greater Father offers a greater Son."

Jesus comes as the greater Isaac. He, too, carries his own wood on his back to his place where he would willingly lay down his life and that the Father would agree to the death of the Son. And all of this happened in roughly the same region and area very close by where Jesus was crucified, because there's a greater Father than Abraham, God the Father; there's a greater Son than Isaac, Jesus. And all of that was to show us how God would save us.

Additionally, there then comes along a man named Joseph. He is betrayed by his brothers. He is reckoned for dead, put in a hole, and he comes forth to ultimately rise up to be a leader who saves many lives! Jesus comes along as the greater Joseph; disowned, abandoned, betrayed by his own brothers, put in a hole and left for dead, but came forth to save a multitude that is even greater than the multitude that Joseph saved physically, Jesus saves spiritually. He's the greater Joseph.

Along comes a man named Moses. He was an unexpected man to be a prophet and leader of God's people, but God raised him up to proclaim deliverance for the people of God and to mightily proclaim the Word of God. He prophesied about the coming of Jesus in places like Deuteronomy 13 and 18, the great prophet Jesus who would come. Jesus comes as the greatest prophet ever. He comes in the lineage, ministry speaking, of Moses. He proclaims the Word of God. He calls people to repent of sin. He comes to also deliver us from slavery.

And when we tend to think of slavery, we tend to think of American slavery where someone or something you hate enslaves you. When the Bible speaks of slavery, it also includes self-selected pharaohs and rulers. We choose food, alcohol, people, sex, fear of man, pleasure, comfort, religion. We choose our own gods. We put our hands through the shackles. We accept our own fate, and we destroy our own lives, and Jesus comes as the greater Moses. He comes to defeat bigger pharaohs. He comes to liberate more slaves so that they might become free worshipers. Jesus is the greater Moses.

Job comes along as an innocent man. Satan opposes him and harms him. His friends are of no help, but God ultimately vindicates him. Jesus comes along as the greater Job. He, too, is opposed by Satan. He does suffer. His friends are of no help, but God ultimately vindicates him and blesses him, as he did Job, because Jesus is the greater Job.

There's a king named David who comes along. He's an unexpected king. He's a little boy from a poor family in a rural area, and he rises up to be the greatest king in the history of the nation. And Jesus comes from the lineage of David, and he's a greater David, and he is an unexpected leader. He comes from a teenage girl in a small town, from a rural family. And he is the King of kings. He is the greatest King. He is God among us! He's the greater David.

Furthermore, there's a guy named Jonah— Make sure when you read the Bible stories to your kids: It's not about Jonah. It's not about David. It's not about Moses. It's not about Abraham. It's always about Jesus.

Jonah comes along, and he rebels against God's call to communicate the truth of God to a pagan, lost nation that he doesn't like. He's got racism, classism, all kinds of -ism issues; so ultimately, he gets thrown overboard off a boat. A fish swallows him. The fish then gives him a last-class ticket to Nineveh, pukes him up on the beach. Stinking, frustrated—weird three days. Jonah, the reluctant prophet, walks into Nineveh, says a few words, basically, "God hates you, it's gonna go bad, goodbye," walks away, and like half a million people get saved because the power is in the Word of God,

not necessarily the messenger.

And some of you say, "I don't think that happened." Jesus did. Jesus comes along and says, "As Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, I'm going to go into the earth three days and three nights. As he came out alive, I'm coming out alive. As he was used to save a multitude, I'm going to save even more people." Jesus is the greater Jonah.

There's also a guy in the Bible named Boaz—greatest love story, after Jesus and the church, in the whole Bible. Boaz is a good guy, godly man. The Bible calls him a worthy man. He's holy, righteous, older, single, got a job. Total Mars Hill guy. He's what we're looking for. He's not a boy who could shave. He's a guy with a job and a Bible and a clue. He's a good guy and he's looking for a girl, wants to get married. He's got his own business. He ends up picking as his wife, the most unexpected woman. There's not a guy here that your here's-what-I'm-seeking- in-a-wife list looks anything like Ruth.

Let's just go through her resume. Okay, Moabite race, cursed of God, product of incest. Here we go. All right, not a virgin. She'd been previously married to an idiot who died, and it kind of looks like God whacked him, if you read the story. *[Congregation laughing]* She's from a foreign country, so she's not one of your kind. You're supposed to marry with your kind. There were some racial issues in that day. Furthermore, she may not be a believer. She says she is, but she's brand new to her faith. Oh, and she's broke and homeless. She's gleaned in the fields, which is basically dumpster diving. And if you choose her, it's like a Groupon. Buy one, get one free. She also comes with a mother-in-law. *[Congregation laughing]*

Now, it's not even her mother. It's her dead loser husband's mother, whose name was Naomi, which means "sweetheart." She was so frustrated, she legally changed her name to Bitter. "Hi, my name is Bitter." "Wow, is that what it says on your driver's license?" "Yes, I'm with Ruth." "Oh, what a deal." *[Congregation laughing]* This is who Boaz picks. "I'll take Ruth and Bitter. That's who I'll take."

They ultimately are used by God to give birth to a guy named Jesus. Jesus is from that crazy family line, and Jesus is the greater Boaz. And he takes us, people who are worse than Ruth and Naomi, and he marries us, and he loves us, and he calls us his bride, the church. And Jesus is a greater Boaz.

This guy named Nehemiah, he rebuilds a city called Jerusalem so that God's people could have a home. Jesus is a greater Nehemiah. He's creating a New Jerusalem, Revelation says, for an eternal home for God's people.

GOD WROTE A BOOK, AND IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS

We could go on and on and on, and I'd love to. But God wrote a book, and it's all about Jesus. And as he's walking along the road, his first priority after rising from death, "We need to get a Community Group together, sit down and have dinner. We need to talk about the Scriptures so that people know the Bible." That's Jesus' first priority.

At Mars Hill Church, these are our first priorities. The Bible is open, talking about Jesus, get you to have meals together, build friendships. We call them Community Groups. Yes, I'm selling it again. There are about five hundred of them. Please get in one. You say, "I got in one, and I didn't like it." Well, it's God's way of sanctifying you. You're welcome. Go back. Go back or find another one, but please be in community with God's people.

Be in God's Word and look for Jesus. If you don't have a Bible, we give them away. Take one with you. If you want to buy a good study Bible, the ESV Study Bible, in my opinion, the best that's ever been written; it's fantastic. Read the book that God wrote. See Jesus in every page. Get in a Community Group. Talk with people. Do life. Have Jesus' priorities be your priorities.

Additionally, if you're a person who's been taught, do me a favor this week. Say thanks. Maybe this was your parents, your grandparents, your Community Group leader, your Redemption Group leader, an old pastor, a Young Life leader, a Campus Crusade for Christ leader, whomever. And I'm not talking send me a "Thank you, Mark." I'm the most encouraged guy. I'm fine. I'm talking, who has really done for you what this experience was for these people, how Jesus taught them. Who's kind of done that for you? Tell them thanks. Say, "You know what? This week we were in Luke and I'm so thankful because what Jesus did for them, you did for me. You opened the book that God wrote and you told me about Jesus, and I'm so thankful for that."

Then be that person to someone else in the grace of God. Answer their questions. Lead a Community Group. Lead a Redemption Group. Teach your kids. And some of you say, "I've talked to them and their eyes are closed and they're blind and they don't see it." That's how it started for these people, and Jesus kept talking to them until their eyes opened. So don't stop talking to people. Don't stop praying for people. Don't stop pursuing people.

I'll tell you what, Mars Hill. This to me, is humbling. It's overwhelming, it's amazing, it's encouraging, because I get to do what Jesus did. I get to teach the Bible. So I want to publicly say thanks. Thanks for letting me teach the Bible. I rant and rave. I go way too long. I mean, what we call a sermon, most people call a service, right? But it's amazing because the power is in the Word of God, and God has blessed his Word.

GOD'S WORK, OUR WITNESS

I just want to explain this to you. We started as a little Bible study like Jesus started with. Fifteen years later, do you know where we're at recently? Recently, in the last few weeks, we got over twelve thousand people at Mars Hill Church, over twelve people. That's thousands more than last year. That's thousands more than last month. Don't get excited, whatever you do. *[Congregation applauding]* Many of these people are becoming Christians. Do you know how many people have made a profession of faith in Jesus and gotten baptized so far this year? Over twelve hundred people, over twelve hundred people. *[Congregation applauding]*

And here's what's really crazy. We give it away, on this thing called the Internet, like we've been doing since the '90s, and we're on pace for ten million sermon downloads this year. That means above and beyond Mars Hill, there are about ten million people who are listening to the teaching of God's Word. This week, again, we hit number one on iTunes with an hour-long sermon on "You Killed God." *[Congregation laughing]* We're just like, that's amazing. *[Congregation applauding]*

And so let me tell you where we're at. I mean, all this has happened while we're going through Luke. Now we're on Luke part 99. You know. I mean, it's kind of comical, right? It's like, "What's the trick?" "God wrote a book. Jesus is alive. Yay." I mean, that's kind of our thing, right? That's all we've got. We're a band with one song. We play it loud. That's it. That's all we've got. "Play it again." "All right, we're glad to do it."

So let me tell you, as we're going to wrap up Luke next week, let me tell you what's coming next, okay? We're going to do, then, a five-week series called God's Work, Our Witness. And here's what happens. There's so much going on at Mars Hill. I mean, you see your Community Group or you see your church, you see your service. I want you to see everything that I can show you that God is doing.

So over the course of five weeks, I'm going to take you around and show you all fourteen Mars Hill churches, including the four that haven't even been planted yet. They're in core-group phase. So we're doing something crazy. January 15, it's all sort of culminating. Grace and I have got a book coming out called *Real Marriage*. We're going to do a Real Marriage sermon series. Two thousand churches have signed up to go through that series with us.

In addition to that, we're going to open on January 15 four churches in three states, for two reasons—we love God and people—on one day, January 15. So we'll do Mars Hill Sammamish. Great church, great people. They've got twenty acres. They just decided to become Mars Hill. They built brand-new buildings. The place is already going to two services, and we're still in core-group phase, and we've only been there a couple of weeks.

In addition, we're launching Mars Hill Rainier Valley, most diverse zip code in America, which is great. In addition, we're launching Mars Hill Portland, Oregon. We're launching Mars Hill Orange County, and they're all blowing up. I was just in Orange County a few weeks ago. We had a Sunday morning core gathering for the church that's going to start in January: five hundred seats, one thousand people. It was like ants on an anthill. That thing is going to go crazy.

So everything is growing at the same time. We praise God. We rejoice. We're riding a wave of God's grace that I think is sort of once-in-a-lifetime, the kind of thing you tell your grandkids about. Really encouraged, really excited. So we're going to show you that over the course of five weeks.

GIVE GENEROUSLY

And here's the big ask. We want you to pray, serve, give. And I'm just going to boldly ask for more money. I know the last thing to get saved is your wallet. I know that. Sanctification concludes in your wallet. And we want to open up room for nine thousand more people in 2012. That's what we're going for, the biggest year we've ever had. We figure if this book is true, if this guy is alive, if people don't know it and they're going to hell, and we know it, we want to help them. We want to tell them about Jesus. We want to plant churches. We want to make disciples. We want to open opportunities.

So in the next few weeks I'm going to ask you to give big, give generously. Let's beat budget. Let's open the new churches. What else are you going to do? This is a wonderful opportunity. God's in it. Things are going great. Let's keep it going.

And in conclusion—you know what a preacher means when he says that? Nothing, I just want you to keep paying attention. *[Congregation laughing]* Two final things when it comes to giving. Okay, number one, I want to introduce you to one of our most faithful, generous, consistent givers at Mars Hill. His name is Gideon Joseph. He is my five-year-old son. That is us at Disneyland last week and he put on the Mickey Mouse hands.

Let me tell you a story about Gideon. Gideon is a generous giver. We had the coolest thing. We recently launched Mars Hill Bellevue into their new location. It was nuts. Thousands showed up. It was crazy. And after the service I was trying to leave with my family, and Gideon, who's five and usually really happy and compliant, he was fighting me. He was like, "No, I don't want to go. I want to go in the foyer." "I don't want to go in the foyer. People are going to want to argue about theology with me. I want to go eat something. We need to go." "No, I want to go back to the—" I finally said, "Okay, Gideon. I don't know what you want. I'll take you in the foyer."

So I take his hand, we go into the foyer. My five-year-old son walked up to the offering box and pulled out of his pocket five bucks, and he said, "Dad, we've gotta pay for this building." *[Congregation laughing]* And he put his offering in. Because Gideon, amazingly, he realizes we're opening a new church, we've gotta pay for this! So, he, at five, came ready to give. He's on pace to give about fifty bucks this year.

And I know some of you will say, "Well, you know, my income stream is minimal." His is not great. *[Congregation laughing]* He usually gets paid in suckers. I mean, he does not have a huge income stream. So let me compare Gideon's generous giving to yours. Okay? Here's a chart. All right, you know it's going bad when I pull out a chart! You just know that. "Oh, Mark's got a chart. It must be bad." It is, it's bad.

Here's the chart. Okay, so 24 percent of people at Mars Hill this year, this year, a whole year—a year is a long time. If you just make it through one, we give you a cake. It's that big of a deal, right? So this year, 24 percent of people gave nothing, and 41 percent of people gave between \$1 and \$500 (Gideon); 14% of people gave \$500 to \$1,500; 11% gave \$1,500 to \$4,000; only 10% gave \$4,000.

I know some of you immediately will be like, "Um, I'm a single mom. I don't have money." Great, okay, cool. We understand. "I'm at Bellevue, and we just paid off a huge building, and, man, we're all tapped out." Okay, I get it. I understand. "I'm unemployed. I've got nothing coming in." I get it, I get it, I get it.

But what I don't get is 65 percent of people doing nothing or close to it? That can't be 65 percent unemployment. It can't be 65 percent poverty. Here's what I'm asking you to do. Care. Care. You are part of something that God is doing. We are part of something that God is doing. We get to tell people about Jesus, and people are getting saved and churches are getting planted and the upgrade from hell to heaven is pretty fantastic, and we want to have that for as many people as possible.

So we want to end the year strong, we want to end it generously, we want to end it really big, so we're going to ask you to give generously, okay? So I'm going to have folks take the offering right now. If you didn't come prepared to give, we love you. I'm not guilting you. We don't teach 10%. We percent say generous, regular, cheerful, and sacrificial. That's what the Bible says. We want you to give whatever God has told you to give.

And here's my question. Which category are you in? Which category, at the end of the year, will you be in? And we want to see more people meet Jesus. Amen? If we believe this is the book that God wrote, if we believe it's about Jesus, if we believe that people need to know him, we should be enthusiastic to do all we can, pray, give, serve, make that happen.

THE LAUNCH OF MARS HILL

So as they're taking the offering, we're going to show you a little preview video for God's Work, Our Witness, the five-week series that'll start after we finish Luke next week. Amen? Yay! All right, let's show it to you. *[Congregation applauding]*

So when we went to launch Mars Hill, we started a Bible study in the house. It outgrew the house. And since we had a little bit of a relationship here, and the pastor at the time was a good guy, he allowed us to use the building and so we started using the youth room upstairs, mainly because it was free. We're going up to what is a third-floor, basically, attic. It was used, I think, at the time, as kind of a youth room.

So we started meeting, actually, in this room. I think it was January 1996. We'd outgrown our home. Had, I don't know, maybe fifteen or twenty people in our house, and it got too big for our small rental home. And so we launched the evening service here, five or six o'clock.

And it was really simple. So I would get up in the morning, put my sermon together, and then I would write out the sermon notes, type them out. I would take them to Kinko's and photocopy all the sermon notes, and then I would get the Bibles and the books we were going to give out, load them into my Toyota pickup truck. We had two speakers that were actually home speakers that some rocker brought, and jerry-rigged them. We had a soundboard that we stole from Antioch Bible Church, and I want to publicly apologize to them for stealing their soundboard. Our first technology—

What does that mean?—

Well, they—I was a college pastor at Antioch, and they had some extra gear in a closet, and so I took it because we needed a soundboard, and I put it in my truck and drove it over.

As well, we had a little pulpit that somebody built for me. We've actually still got that. I saw it at the downtown Mars Hill location. And we had an overhead projector because we had to do song slides. So it was literally just a light bulb, and then teardown was me.

So then I'd put the cords away, put the overhead away, and put the chairs away, and put the tables away, and so we got home really, really late, and we were still working jobs at the time. And we actually met in this room from January until probably about September. We officially went public with the church in October. So it actually took us that long to fill this room up, January to September.

And once we got to thirty to forty people, then it started feeling like a really big deal. And so then we had to move into their main sanctuary, and that was \$1,000 a month. There were some times that were really brutal, where we didn't even have the rent money.

So Grace had an old Subaru that she drove, and I had a Toyota pickup truck. Between the two vehicles, we literally had almost half a million miles on the two vehicles. And Grace's Subaru, she'd leave it parked out on the street in Wallingford in front of our rental home. And on multiple occasions, because the streets are narrow, people would hit and sideswipe that Subaru. And I think it was at least three times. People came and knocked on the door and told her, "I'm sorry, I just hit your car. Let me give you a couple of hundred bucks to cover it." And so there were multiple months that we actually paid our rent and kept the church afloat because people kept hitting the Subaru. By the end, it was pretty battered, but it paid the bills.

Note: This sermon transcript has been edited for readability.