

Hey, how are we? I don't know how much you've traveled, but the rest of the world gets four distinct seasons. We don't get that. So this time of the year is really a gift. We get about a month that is a transition from about 40-50°F outside to 140-150°F outside that we call Spring. And I love Spring. It smells good, we get decent rain, it's cool but it's warm, flowers are budding, white people are changing color. It's just magical. And then if you've got small children, you get the outside back. Because you can't just send your kids outside if it's hailing. So we at least want there to be decent weather before we go outside. So we in the Chandler family get after it in the Spring. We ride bikes, and we take walks quite a bit. About two weeks ago, we were riding our bikes through Highland Shores. We were all on bikes except for Reid who was on his Big Wheel. So Mama and Audrey were way ahead of us and I walking next to Reid on his Big Wheel. The girls were just dots way up there, we just stopped for a second and said, "Hey daddy, Jesus died on the cross." I was like, "Yeah." I mean, that's not surprising. We talk a lot about Jesus. We talked about Him this time until Mama and Audrey came back. And I was like, "Yeah buddy, He did. And then what happened?" We talk a lot about it, so I'm just expecting him to bust into, "Well father, after the atonement, the implications of the resurrection are endless." But he just gets quiet and starts thinking, and I'm going, "Oh, he's thinking in the Greek." And all of a sudden you could see him get really excited about what he's going to answer. So I repeat the question and go, "So what happens after the cross?" And just unashamed he goes, "And then a bunny brings me candy!!!" Lauren just looked at me like I have failed our family. I was like, "Baby, God has hardened his heart. That is not on me. That is just sovereign. We've just got to pray and hope." So we've been talking a lot about the resurrection lately at the Chandler house.

But here's the thing. My boy is 3 and doesn't quite get the implications of the resurrection, but if we were honest, big church doesn't really talk about it much. We talk about the cross. You've got to talk about the cross. We talk a lot about the atoning work of Christ on the cross. You've got to do that. If a place doesn't do that, it's not a church. If you don't talk about the cross, it's not a church, it's a gathering of good people. If there is no cross, there's no blood and agony and screaming and the absorbing or wrath, you don't have a church. You've got something else there. You've got self-help, you've got good people, you've got the Rotary Club, you've got Kiwanis. You've got all these different things, but you don't have the church. You've got to have the cross to have the church. So we spend a lot of time talking about the cross, but we rarely talk about the resurrection. And then even when we do talk about the resurrection, we do it a certain way. Let me show you what I mean. Turn to Luke 24. "But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." And they remembered his words..." I love that verse. They got in the tomb and were like, "What is going on here? Where is He? Where is His body?" And the angel's like, "Remember when He told you He was going to be crucified and raised again on the third day?" And they were like, "I do remember! How did I forget that?" Now this gives me hope, and I'll tell you why. Because that happens to me all the time. Some event happens, and I'm wondering where God is on that one. And then I'll go back to the text and He'll be like, "Remember when I said stuff like that could happen?" And I'm like, "I remember." It gives me hope. "...and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these

things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.”

“That very day 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. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.” Jesus kept up with them for seven miles. Let me tell you why this is important. The resurrection of Christ historically causes a lot of trouble for the secular mind. So there’s all these theories about how do deal with it. One of the theories is that when they arrested Him, beat Him a dozen times, yanked the beard out of His face, drove nails through His hands and feet, after they yanked the skin off His back and left Him hanging there for six hours and then took a spear and drove it under His ribcage through His lungs and back out, spilling and water all over the cross, maybe they didn’t kill Him. The theory is that they put Him into the ground, and two days later He’s jogging to Emmaus with two guys seven miles after being crucified and beaten for close to 20 hours. That’s ridiculous. You’d have to be an idiot to believe that theory. I’m not trying to offend you. Have you ever broken a toe and tried to walk without looking like your hips have exploded inside of your pelvis? And the historical Discovery Channel theory is that, two days after this unbelievable beating, Jesus is walking to Emmaus for seven miles. That’s just silly. So for all the goofiness that is Christianity, that’s right up there with the dumbest things you could say we believe. It’s silly to believe that, two days after having your full body weight bear down on a nail driven through the center of both of your feet, you’re jogging a seven mile jaunt to Emmaus.

Let’s keep going. “While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 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. 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?” 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, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 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. 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 that he was alive. 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.” And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” So Jesus, wanting to prove that He is God and that God’s plan for the crucifixion and resurrection of the Son of Man needed to take place for God to fulfill all that He wanted to do, took them not to the New Testament but to the Old Testament, the Law, the prophets and the Psalms to show them that this was not Plan B, but that this was God’s plan all along.

Verse 28, “So they drew near to the village to which they were going. 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, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. 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?” And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them,

and said to them, "Peace to you!" Literally they're in a circle going, "Simon said he saw Him. We were on the road to Emmaus and He appeared to us too. I just don't believe it. I mean, I just can't believe He's risen." And then Jesus sneaks up from behind going, "What are y'all doing?" And boom, He's right there in the middle of all of them. "But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." So there was this idea going around that maybe the disciples just saw a ghost. And so Jesus is like, "Hey, touch Me. I'm not a ghost. I have flesh and bone." He's going to go even farther. "And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them." Why? Because ghosts don't eat. Let's keep going, "Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

So here's what we like to do with the resurrection. We want to take it and simply deal with it apologetically. And I don't mean this, "I'm sorry Jesus rose from the dead." But rather we want to intellectually prove that He rose from the dead. So we want to do things like say, "Well, you know Isaiah 53 said that the servant would suffer and then he would rise again on the third day. So hundreds of years before Jesus came, there was a prophecy that He would come, die and rise from the dead." Or we like to go, "Actually, Jesus Himself said on four different occasions in the gospel that He was going to be crucified, that He was going to be in the ground for three days and He would rise on the third day." Or here's one of my favorite ones I like to point out. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul said there were 500 people still alive as he was writing that letter who could testify that they saw Him post-crucifixion. He says, "Go ask them. There are 500 people who I know of who are still alive who interacted with Him. Go and ask. I'm not making this up." Or I love to get into historical circumstantial evidence. I'll get away from the Bible and ask this question. What do people do with the fact that the disciples historically were absolute cowards and then all of a sudden were fearless over a weekend? What do you do with the fact that they were so terrified that one of them is trying to run away as Jesus is arrested and they grab him by the cloak, he takes off all his clothes and runs away naked?" Like when it's less embarrassing for you to be naked than beat up you're afraid, a coward. How about this one? What do you do with the fact that Jesus' family worshiped Him as God? In fact, just a few decades after Jesus is raised from the dead, they take His brother James to the top of the temple and say, "Recant!" And he says, "I cannot." And they threw him off the top of the temple, he landed on the ground and fractured both of his legs. He's laying in a pool of blood, both legs broken screaming as they pelt him with rocks, and he'll never recant. In fact, he starts to pray to his half-brother Jesus, "Forgive them. Heal them." And on man got so angry at this that he picked up a club and crushed James' head. What do you do with the fact that His family worshiped Him as God? Because listen, if my dad came to me and said, "Good news. I'm here to take away your sins, son. I'm God," I'm having him institutionalized and I'm taking his stuff. I'm just talking straight with you. He's going into a home and I have a motorcycle. So what do you do with that?

What do you do with the Biblical and historical account that it was women that found Him alive? Do you know why the disciples didn't believe women, even the ones that were in their own circle? In the 1st century, a woman's testimony was worthless. A woman couldn't even use what she saw in a court of law. They wouldn't even listen to her. So in the biblical story, women are the ones who discover Jesus. This would be insane in the 1st century unless it happened. What do we do with the unbelievable fast growth of Christianity in the urban context among all socioeconomic, social, racial and every line that divides humanity? And it was all taking place in the urban context. Like if you see Christianity on TV these

days, it's like they searched the backwoods of some place to find the guy who will say, "If you say something about Jesus, I'll stab you." There's a guy behind him in a "I ♥ Jesus Shirt" going, "We will. We've done it before. This is a man's finger here who said something about Jesus." It's always backwoods. It always feels a little uneducated. "We be worshipin' Jesus." It's just like they're all rednecks. But early Christianity is not taking place in the sticks; it's taking place in Rome, it's taking place in Thyatira, it's taking place in Philippi. It's happening in the seven great cities of the ancient world. It's happening in London, it's happening in Paris, it's happening in Hong Kong, it's happening in L.A. and New York. The gospel is saturating the urban context so that even the elite of society are becoming believers. Even the Emperor of Rome becomes a believer. What do you do with that? We've never even seen anything like that in the history of the world. How did it spread so fast? Because they had seen them. Why were so many so willing to give their lives in such brutal fashion? What do we do with it? There's plenty here.

One of the things I saw on *The Discovery Channel* in addition to the idea that Jesus may have gotten up from that historic beat down and jogged a seven miler is that there was no real evidence or no real historic writings that would say Jesus had risen from the dead until 100-200 years later. Despite the fact that I am not a PhD and not a scholar, I have three books in my office that are from the 1st century who beg to differ, including Josephus and Pliny the Younger. There were plenty of secular, non-Christian writings talking about Christians at the time talking about how they believed that their Messiah had raised from the dead. Anyway, there's more. Like 2000 years of celebrating church on Saturday, and then all of a sudden you shift it to Sunday out of nowhere. Why would they shift it to Sunday? Has your experience of humanity been that after 2000 years of doing something, anyone would go, "You know what? I don't know why, but let's just not do it like that anymore. Let's just move it to tomorrow." Is there anything about church people at all that has proven they're capable of that? No. What about the sacraments that came out of nowhere? They don't just celebrate the cross. Baptism is the death and resurrection.

So anyway, when people preach sermons on the resurrection, it's like this. It's apologetic. But that's not what I want to do today. I want us to do something else. Instead, I want us to look at the implications of the resurrection. Here's what I want to ask: What does it mean, and does it even matter? Does it effect Christianity if all we get is the cross? If there is no resurrection, does it change anything? That's what I want to try to get to the bottom of. Now to do that, I've got to put you into the story. So regardless of whether or not you're a strong believer who has given your whole life under the lordship of Jesus Christ or you're a nominal believer or if you're just an outright pagan, you're a part of this story. And what I mean by nominal believer is you come to church and you're a good person but really nothing in regards to your money, your life, your house, the way you do anything has anything to do with the Lord. Which means you don't seek the Scriptures for where you should go, or you don't pray and ask the Lord for direction. You go to church and you're a good person, but at the end of the day you don't have much of a relationship with the Lord or have any intention of really submitting to that Lordship. That's nominal Christianity. Religiously lost maybe. And by "pagan" I don't mean that you do bad things. Pagan means outsider or just like, "No thank you." Regardless of where you land in there, you're a part of this story. So let me set the story, and then we'll talk about what resurrection is.

I think I was about 11 when I figured out something was wrong in the world. It wasn't when I figured out there was something wrong with me. That was much earlier. There was a girl in my school, Judy Haskell, who was a year older than me. She was as healthy as we were, she bounded, played, had a great time. She started feeling sick, went to the doctor, had leukemia, put up a pretty good fight for a while and then died. Now although I to this day understand the biology involved in disease, something in me screams, "It shouldn't be happening." Like this week I'm in the ICU in Children's Hospital with a three year little boy, we're asking God for a miracle and I understand the biology in the disease, but it doesn't stop something in me that says it shouldn't be happening. And I'd just like to point out the silly and the secular because *South Park* does such a good job of pointing out the silly in Christianity. If natural evolution is

really what's going on here and that's the real story, why are we trying to cure anyone of anything? Because wouldn't it be that nature has decided that it's your turn to die so we can evolve? So why are we spending trillions and trillions of dollars on trying to heal diseases when nature, for some reason, is trying to off some of us? I mean we're going, "We've got to cure cancer. We've got to cure AIDS." Well how do you reconcile that if there is no God, if there is no Imago Dei, if there something hasn't gone wrong, why are you trying to fix it? Why are we in Darfur? Why are we digging water wells? Why are we taking food over there? "Well, because there's oppression." Well wait a minute. If it's just natural selection then that belief system says in order for us to be all that God would have us be, the weak have to die, they have to be oppressed and killed by the strong. So you know it, and I'm not just talking about Christians. Everybody knows something's wrong here. Every time a kid gets sick, something's wrong. Every time we get something that should really make us happy and it runs out of steam very, very quickly, something's wrong. The fact that we can never seem to get there, something's wrong. Like we've got our hope in this thing and it brings us joy for a while but then it's like we hit this ceiling. It's like we can't get past it. Something is wrong. Well there's lots of philosophies about what that is. Some people will even say religion does that to people. Sure. That's why I love being a Christian; it's not a religion.

Anyway, the Bible would say that when you feel like something has gone wrong, what's happening in that moment is you're becoming aware of the fracture in the universe, the fall of man, sin entering into the world. And so injustice, pain, sorrow, death, disease, violence, these things are a part of the world we live in and a part of us. So God invades once again, finds a man named Abram and says, "This is what I'm going to do. I'm shutting that down. I'm restoring what I made the world to be. I'm going to do it through your line. I'm going to do it through a people. I'm going to start a people." So we go from Abram to Moses, Moses leads Israel out of slavery and gives them the Law. The Law is not a bad thing. The Law is the holiness of God. He gives them the Law that's built around justice, around mercy, around forgiveness, around a love for one another, where they will be a community of men and women who serve one another, love one another, walk with one another, show mercy to one another, walk in justice. Where they got off of that path, God gave them the sacrificial system. There is an atonement system for their failures in the Law. And then even when they got outside of that, God sends them prophets to say, "He's going to kill all of us if you keep this up." They don't listen, Israel goes into captivity and there's 400 years of nothing, silence. Then all of a sudden, out of the quiet, the crazy loony voice of a homeless man wearing fur says, "Prepare the way of the Lord. The kingdom of God is at hand." Rewind to Abraham. "The kingdom of God is coming." Israel. "The kingdom of God." Prophets. "The kingdom of God." Right up to John the Baptist saying, "It's here!" And then Jesus shows up preaching and proclaiming the kingdom of God and Christ Himself as the King. Did you know that in Matthew 2, when the wise men got there and say, "Where is the King of the Jews?" In His healings, He's called the King. In His teaching, He's called the King. In His arrest, He's called the King. In His beatings, He's called the King. On the cross, they nailed above Him "The King of the Jews." Jesus establishes, rolls out the kingdom of God, the pushing back and destruction of all that went wrong in the fall, the restoration and reconciliation of of the *shalom* that God created the universe to operate in.

Alright, so here's what happens in Easter weekend. The cross saves us from something, and the resurrection saves us to something. Have you ever heard this? This is kind of staple Christianity. Jesus died for your sins. If you haven't heard that before, I've got to rewind even more, and that was in Genesis 12. Jesus died for your sins. That's Christianity, isn't it? "Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven." Jesus died for our sins. Here's what that means. When they grabbed Jesus and beat Him and spat on Him and yanked the beard out of His face and open-hand slapped Him and blindfolded Him and mocked Him, and then peeled the skin off His back, drove nails into His hands and feet and hung Him on the cross while the most backwoods scum of the earth came out to watch Him bleed out and spit on Him and mock Him while He's drowning in His own blood, what's happening in that moment according to the New Testament, according to the rest of Scripture is that God is making Christ who knew no sin to be my sin on my behalf that I might become the righteousness of God. Let's say it this way. That day, 2000 years ago, Matt Chandler died. Every act of rebellion in my heart, every

wicked fantasy in my mind, every bit of selfishness, every bit of laziness, every piece of the sinful man, Matt Chandler, was nailed to that cross with Jesus Christ. So now when I'm seen by God, I'm perfect and spotless before Him by no act of my own but because I have been crucified with Him. So here's what He saves me from. He saves us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:10 says, "...wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come." There is wrath. The idea that God is loving comes from the Bible. You will not find any other sacred literature that teaches that the essence of God is love. You cannot say "God is a God of love" and then take from that loving God His wrath. They are inseparable. I wish I had more time to unpack that. He saves me from slavery to sin according to Romans 7. He saves me from the devil (John 8). He saves me from the power of darkness (Colossians 1). He saves me from the Law (Romans 7). He saves me from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2). Those are what He saves me from. On the cross, He saves me from these things. I am no longer under wrath but under mercy. "Well Chandler, are you trying to say you're perfect?" No. When people come up to me and go, "Christians are hypocrites," I'm like, "I know, they are. They're a horrible group of people. How unreal is it that their God so ferociously loves them in their failures?" Man, I am a mess still. And if you check in with me ten years from now, I'll still have some issues. So I celebrate. Why? Because all my sins were future sins when He went to the cross. And the Scriptures say that because I believe and repent, all of my wrongs against the Creator God were atoned for on that cross. So I am no longer under wrath but under mercy. That's the gospel. That's such good news.

But it doesn't just end there. It's not just, "Okay, I believe and repent, so I'm waiting around for heaven." The cross of Christ saves me from; the resurrection of Christ saves me to. Galatians 2:20, which we've already started quoting, says this, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." The resurrection of Christ screams to the universe that this world matters, that God is doing something in it. The story of the Scriptures is the story of God's activity from Eden into the eternal kingdom of God. It's an ushering in of a new humanity. He saves me from sin and death, and He saves me to union with Christ (Romans 6:5), eternal life (John 3:16), participation in the life of the Triune God. I wish I had time to unpack this. The Trinity, the Triune God doesn't work like this. It's not God the Father in the middle and then there's little bitty Jesus and little bitty Holy Spirit running around Him going, "We love You...We love You...We love You..." If you read the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit glorifies the Son, the Son glorifies the Father, the Father, the Father glorifies the Spirit and the Son while the Spirit glorifies the Father. There's this selfless, giving, sacrificing joy that sits at the center of all reality. It's what C.S. Lewis called "the dance." Now, we've been invited into that. Which is why Jesus says, "Hey, unless you die, you'll never live." Why? Because that's the essence of the Trinity. It's why Paul would say, "Outdo one another in showing honor." Why? Because that's the essence of God. The resurrection saves us to participation in the life of the Triune God. I've been saved to know God (John 17), I've been saved to freedom (Galatians 5:1), I've been saved to community (1 Corinthians 12). Why community? Why is it so important that we know one another, serve one another and love one another? It's the essence of God. Community is the essence of God. God didn't start with power. "Boom...I made the earth." No, He overflows out of community. You have been saved to the great commission and the mission. You've been saved ultimately to the kingdom of God.

If Easter is simply about individual conversion, then all you get is this self-seeking, self-centered faith that says, "Fix me...make much of me...heal me...make me right." But the good news of the resurrection is that we've been called to greater purposes, greater glories. We've been called to the mission? Of what? Well He already said. Remember? He takes them up to the hill, He's about to ascend and He goes, "You go and tell everyone that injustice, sorrow and death are over. And you tell them everywhere that I have saved them from, and now I save them to." And so our lives and our wallets and our houses and our cars and our jobs, it all flows through that lens. And I think this is why Christianity gets a little goofy, because I think it becomes self-help to most of us. "Oh, my marriage is in trouble. Jesus, help me....Oh, my kid is just a moron. Jesus, help me...Oh, I lost my job. Jesus, help me..." Okay, yes and amen and hallelujah. But

that takes place on mission. You see, mission exposes who you really are. Like if you're ashamed of Him, then mission exposes that. If you love this world more than you love the idea of the wedding supper of the Lamb, mission exposes this. How do you grow into the fullness of Christ? In submission to Him in the mission. Because it reveals who you really are. Isn't that horrible? I mean, it reveals it. It reveals that you go, "Okay God, here's the plan. I've got a lust issue. I want You to fix my lust issue while I continue to be uppermost in my own affections, loving my own life and my own comfort more than I care for Your name at all. But this lust thing is getting in the way of my happiness. So if You'll fix that, we'll be good." Or you can fill in the blank. Maybe it's not lust, maybe you want more money. I don't know what you're asking for. You see, the mission exposes more than anything else where our affections really are. And I get it. Oh, how I get it. This world's nice. There's great stuff here. I mean, it's not worthy to be compared, but it will woo you in. And then I don't want anybody looking at me like I'm an idiot.

You see, the resurrection sets us free. It puts us on mission, it sends us out. Here's what I put. "If Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, Christianity becomes good news for the whole world, news which warms our hearts precisely because because it isn't about warming our hearts." This is what you find your life caught up in – the great story of God's grace and mercy restoring what's gone wrong in the world, that you have been saved from, but you have also been saved to. It's why the apostle Paul says, "I pray now as always that I would not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ." Could it be that you live in your neighborhood, work where you work, play who you play, know who you know, walk with whom you walk with because God, in His predetermined plan, put you there to a herald of the good news? Maybe it's not an accident that you have the job you have or you don't have the job. Maybe where you live isn't some random circumstance but a preordained move by the God of the Bible. And listen, I get hard neighborhoods. We moved out of a neighborhood that was really friendly to the gospel and we got to share the gospel all the time and even had some people get saved and baptized. But my new neighborhood, they're just not having it. I can feel it. They know who I am. I moved in and they're like, "Oh, the pastor of the red brick church. The one with the traffic problems." I've had the neighbor across the street mowing his lawn and just won't look up. And then there's Rich. We've talked, and I don't think he wants to talk again. I get hard neighborhoods. I get them. But it doesn't change the fact that we're on mission.

And can I rant for a minute? Not like you can stop me. Ladies, how many Beth Moore Bible studies are we going to do? I'm just saying. Can we maybe run some of the plays instead of just studying them? Men, how many men's Bible studies are we going to do? You have Tuesday mornings with Tommy, Wednesday with your group of guys, Thursday with us. How much are you going to study before you start to play? I mean, that's what makes this thing so stupid down here. Everybody can talk it, nobody wants to engage anybody with it. Or at least very few of us do. Why? "Well because I have a lust issue." Okay, submit to Christ, get into Recovery and live on mission. It will reveal all that stuff. It will be horrible. God will just rip it out and replace it with His grace and mercy. It will be awesome in the end. If you're waiting until you're perfect to live life on mission, you're going to die without much mission. It's coming. Do you get this? Do you get that 6000 years ago He told Abram, "This is how it's going down," and it has stayed true to the line right up until now where a massive portion of Africa has become believers, a massive portion of China has become believers, South America is blowing up with the gospel? Do you get that the gospel is penetrating the world? Do you know how this ends? With you and me in front of Him, with the kingdom of God, new heaven, new earth coming down, no more injustice, no more pain, no more sorrow, God's redeemed, God's elect, the kingdom of God established. Now do you think anyone is going to give a trash how much money you have right now, how much comfort you have right now, who's cool and who's not, who drove what and who didn't, who was well liked in the neighborhood and who wasn't? Do you think any of that's going to matter? No one will care, but a lot of people will be embarrassed.

Let's pray, "God, we love this world too much. We love toys and trinkets, and we love our lives. We love our lives too much. This temporary misting vapor, we love it too much. And the bulk of the time, we're embarrassed of You. Well, we're not embarrassed of You when we're with our Christian friends because we're cool to talk about You in that

moment. But on that airplane, at the office, in our neighborhood, we're embarrassed then. Holy Spirit of God, help us. Far too many of us are good church people with no relationship with You. Far too many of us know a couple of Bible verses, have some Christian books at the house but don't submit to Your lordship any way whatsoever, and we're definitely not a people on mission. So give us eyes to see. I just confess my own cowardice at times. I confess my own cowardice in my neighborhood, I confess my own cowardice on airplanes, I confess my own cowardice in restaurants. Please help us. I just pray for this church, and I pray that we wouldn't be self-absorbed but that we would worship You and serve You and love You. Help us. It's for Your beautiful name. Amen."

© **2009 The Village Church**