

Hey, my name is Adam Griffin. I'm one of your pastors here on this campus, and it's my honor and delight to be with you guys tonight to bring some of this Word. I really hope and pray this is as good for your heart to hear it as it is for my heart to think through these things tonight. I'm really glad you guys are here. This is the holiday season. I hope it was a great week for you with Christmas, and then New Year's coming up. Great stuff. Some of you are fresh back from your honeymoons. I see you out there. Don't be embarrassed. That's a great thing.

It was a really special weekend for me. My son Oscar, my one and only, turned 1 yesterday, so he's no longer 0. That's great news. I love that. It's such a weird thing to have a baby, a 1-year-old baby. One, that anybody would trust you. They send you home from the hospital with a human, and they're just like, "Here," and you go and you take him places, like a pet. He's kind of in a little cage and you feed him a little food. It's just a weird thing.

It's a weird season where he's almost walking and almost talking, and he's diving off of things head first, and you're always on the lookout because you might have to catch him at any second. It's a weird season of life. He's kind of a weird kid. He's already kind of weird. He is insatiable when it comes to eating. Today for lunch (I'm not even making this up) he drank a bottle. That's like eight ounces of milk. That's a lot of milk for a baby. Then he had a whole thing of green beans, pears and apples, cheerios, guacamole, refried beans. I mean, he ate more than I did at lunch, and I eat a lot. He's this big.

I'm not kidding. When he was done, he was crying going, "Give me more." I had to take him away from the table. He's insatiable. I know for a fact he gets that from me not from his mom. I will eat until the cows come home. I love to eat. It's my favorite hobby. I do it like three or four times a day. It's great. There's nothing else I do three or four times a day, but I will eat. Every couple of hours I'm going, "Man, is it time to eat yet? That'd be awesome." I love eating.

When you love eating as much as I do, you really have two choices if you want to be healthy. You have to either watch what you eat carefully...mind your portions, eat your vegetables...or you have to work out. Some people do both. That's fine. Some people do one or the other. That's great. Me? I struggle with both. That's what I do. I've tried. I've tried to watch what I eat. I've tried to watch my portions, to decide, "This is enough," or "This is good for me," or whatever. I've struggled with that.

I've tried different diets and things, and a lot of them haven't worked for me. I tried to think this through and go, "What is a diet that would work well for me in my circumstances?" A couple of months ago I came to this brilliant conclusion I'm willing to share with you tonight. Yeah, it's patent pending, but it's called the "really diet," and I think it's really good. It works like this. Basically, you have to have a partner in it. For me, my partner is my wife.

I asked my wife, "Wife, whenever you hear me order food or say what I want to eat for dinner, could you just respond by saying, 'Really?' That would really help me out a lot. Like if you hear me go to a restaurant and say, 'I'll have a number three with a milkshake,' your job is to say, 'Really?' And I go, 'No, I want a salad.'" That's her job. We went to Bread Winners on Friday. It's 2:00 in the afternoon. I've already eaten lunch. We ended up there because the museum was sold out and the aquarium was full. So it was like, "Let's go to Bread Winners. Great. It has been two hours since we ate." So I go, "Man, I'll have the large plate of pancakes."

"Really?"

"Okay, small plate of pancakes?"

"Really?" Like a double "really." Then, "No, just eggs. That sounds great." That's the way it *should* have gone, but it didn't. I had the large plate of pancakes. It was awesome. Yeah, it was really good. It was excellent, in fact. The problem with the "really diet" is that first you have to give permission. You can't do it to a stranger. That's really tough on me. You can't just walk up to a stranger, look at them, look at their food, and go, "Really? Really, bro?" You can't do that. So I have to give my wife permission to ask those questions.

The other problem is I need everybody to participate. Really, it runs through my mind when I pull up to the Chick-fil-A drive-through and I'm like, "I'll have two chicken biscuits." I'm hoping the guy will go, "Really?" but he doesn't. He just gives them to me. I want to be like, "Really? No, just one." They're Chick-n-Minis. "Just one Chick-n-Mini." Just help me rethink my decisions a little bit.

Or ideally, I should never make it more than five feet into a Baskin Robbins. I should walk in, I should make eye contact with the scooper, and he should go, "Really?" and I'll go, "Nope, thanks. Have a great day!" and I will turn around and walk back out. That would be ideal, but it hasn't worked. I've struggled with diet. So if it's not going to be diets, then it's going to have to be working out.

Here's the thing with working out. You may already know this. If not, I'll let the cat out of the bag. Working out is miserable. I mean, terrible. I don't know if any of you guys have tried exercise, but that is hard. It is

not easy, and it hurts, sometimes for days. I am against exercise. I've tried to convince my wife of this, but my wife is a PE teacher and a coach, so it's a really hard sell to be like, "Exercise is bad," because that's her career, but whatever.

My wife loves exercise. She's always telling me things like, "Adam, you just..." Literally, she said this to me one day. She said, "There's this point in a workout where your body just goes, 'I can do no more,' and you push past that threshold, and it is so worth it. It just feels so good." I see so many head nods out there. That's great.

Man, I know exactly what that feels like. I really do. Because that's exactly how I eat. I will hit a point where my body goes, "That is enough! No more!" and I go, "No! Push past that threshold," and I stuff more in. I'm like, "Baby, I'm with you." My wife and I are on the same page. Completely different books, but it is like page 56, or whatever. We are on the same page. I know how that feels.

Now, I know if you have a healthy view of food, that basically you can't look at it healthily unless you see that what you eat, or what you consume, and what you do are intricately connected. Those have to be connected for you to be healthy. You have to think, "What am I doing with my life?" and that will tell you what you need to consume. Or you think, "I've consumed this; now this is what I need to do with my life." Those two things are connected.

Michael Phelps is famous because he has like a 5,000-calorie-a-day diet, and then he swims like 30 miles in the pool. I have a 5,000-calorie-a-day diet, and then I *sit* by a pool. We just have different ideas about what... I burn like a hundred calories a day, but I'll eat a thousand. It's just different, but those have to be connected if you're going to do it in a healthy manner.

I really feel like what the Lord has put on my heart is that for us as a church, and particularly the Dallas Campus, we have struggled with our consumption here. Not of food, but as a church. We come together once a week as a church, we come together in our home groups maybe once a week, or maybe you're doing your individual time, and you're being fed spiritually. We're consuming and consuming and consuming, and what God has put on my heart is really this big question: What are we doing with all of these things we've consumed? I'll give you an example.

Last week Matt preached a great sermon on participating in the gospel mission wherever you're at. It might look totally different than what you expected, but knowing what you're gifted at and knowing where you are, what does it look like to push forward the kingdom where you are? I would guarantee, almost, that most of us haven't thought about that sermon since we left church last week. We walked out, we consumed the good Word, the truth, and it had nothing to do with what we actually did.

We, in a sense, are just becoming more and more spiritually obese, where we will say, "This is a church where I get fed, and I just want to keep getting fed. I go to Bible study to get fed. I read the Bible to get fed." I would go, "Man, what are you *doing* with that?" and we would struggle to come up with a good answer. If we walk out of a sermon and I say, "How was the sermon?" your answer would be, "It was good." I would say, "What did you like about it?" and you would say, "I liked this and this."

Maybe you could come up with something you liked, but how many times is somebody asking, "So what are you going to do about it?" How many times are you asking yourself, "Now I've consumed all this, what am I going to do with the knowledge I have now? Where are we going to go with it?" I want you to understand there's a purpose we gather, and the purpose we gather is not exclusively to consume. We are here to consume and then go out and do and, in some ways, do in here in this room. The truth preached here is not just to be consumed. I'll show you what I mean.

If you have your Bible with you, or if you want to grab one that's near you, and turn to Hebrews, chapter 5, I think these Scriptures really speak right into this topic. I really hope what we walk out of here with tonight is not... Maybe not profound new knowledge, but just an understanding that, as a church, our hope for us is that we aren't just a gathering place for people but a place where we are gathering together people who are on the same mission; that we're here to consume, but with what we've consumed here, which is the truth of the gospel, we're pushing forward the kingdom of God.

In Hebrews, chapter 5, verse 11, it says, "**About this we have much to say...**" When the writer says, "About this," what he's referring to is he has just finished this beautiful speech about Jesus Christ as a priest in the order of Melchizedek. He's talking about Jesus as High Priest, that he's a King and a great High Priest because he knows what it's like to suffer. It's a beautiful picture of Christ. It's very deep. It's very profound.

He says, "About this I have even more to say, but it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing." In other words, "There's deeper stuff we could go to, there's harder stuff we could talk about, there's more to this picture of Christ, but I can't go there right now because of the way you're responding, the way you're hearing this." This doesn't mean literally, "You're hard of hearing," or "You haven't heard this." The word *dull* there means literally, "You're a lazy listener," like you're dragging your feet on things you know to do.

Every one of us in this room could testify, "I know better." There are things in my life I know better that I still do. There are ways I'm walking where I go, "I don't need somebody to tell me that's wrong or this is right. I know it's wrong, and I'm still walking that way." When we're saying you're dull of hearing, what we're saying is there is a truth... There's deeper truth we want to get to (which is true and great; it's

profound to go after the deeper things of God), but there's also a truth you've already been told, already been taught, and we're wondering why we're not walking in it.

Why aren't we doing it? Because we've become dull of hearing. Is there any more accurate accusation of our generation than to say we might be lazy, we might not be the hardest-working generation in history, that we find more ways to waste time than are good for us? Is there any more profound, obvious sin in this generation than the ability to waste time, to do things that won't matter in eternity for a long period of time?

How many hours do we waste playing video games or surfing the net or watching reality TV (other than *Duck Dynasty*, which is obviously not a waste of time)? We find all sorts of ways to waste our time. We are a lazy generation. We are lazy listeners. I hope you don't hear that as an insult. "Because you're a lazy listener." It *is* an insult. That should hit home. "Man, I'm wasting time."

Let's look at the next verse. I think this is the centerpiece for this whole idea. This is just a profound verse for us. It says in verse 12, **"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God."** *By this time*. Some of us have been Christians for years. Some of us have been at this church for years. Some of us have been walking with God for a long time, and this verse would say, "Hey, by this time you should be able to teach this, and instead you're stumbling over the smallest bits of this."

If I were to ask some of you, "What is the gospel?" which is a foundational piece of our faith, many of us in this room would struggle to answer. "What is the gospel?" If I said, "How has God transformed your heart as an individual?" some of us would go, "Well, it's kind of like... I haven't really thought through that." That's the foundation. That's the most basic part. That's the basic principle. We'd say, "By this time you ought to be teaching this."

You come in here every week for a sermon, or listen on the podcast, or maybe you've come to your home group regularly for years, or you've been in personal Bible study, or accountability, or discipleship, and we would say, "By this time you should be able to teach this stuff. Why are we still struggling with the most elementary principles?" This is a verse that calls us out, saying for some of us we've been Christians long enough that we shouldn't have to keep going over the ABCs of Christianity, the basic principles.

So tonight, one of the things I want to go over is... *What are those basic principles of Christianity? Can we all get on the same page?* Before I do that, I want to call out some of the rest of us who sit in here every week and think we get the basic principles but need to second guess that notion. Maybe we arrogantly sit

in here when Matt says the words *the gospel*. We assume we know what he's talking about. We arrogantly think, "Yeah, okay. I know what the gospel is. I get it." But do we?

Have you ever had something you feel like you've known for a long time and then something clicks where you realize a new facet of it, or a new understanding of it? It realigns your whole thinking. In my former career I was an English teacher. I taught high school English, and I had to do these things as a teacher they call "in-service," which were just like exercising. They were kind of miserable but probably good for me.

I had to do a training once on ESL, where I had to learn how to teach English to someone who doesn't know how to speak English, doesn't know English. English as a second language. I was taking this class, and I was very upset about going. I had to miss the classes I was teaching in order to be there, so I had to miss a day of my classes and sit in a room with like 10 other people, and literally, we were going to hear a lecture on the alphabet. I was like, "Man, this is ridiculous. Maybe for elementary teachers this is great, but for me?"

I literally sat there arrogantly thinking, "Does she know who I am? Does she know what I do for a living? I'm Adam Griffin. I teach literature. I teach Shakespeare and poetry. I have a Master's-level education in teaching the Holy Scriptures to teenagers, and she's going to teach me the alphabet?" I thought, "Man, this is a waste of my time." So I sat in that room. She walks up to the board, the little, sweet teacher lady, and she writes "mom" on the board and she writes "dad" on the board. I was like, "This is ridiculous."

I think she could sense that arrogance in me. Thank God she did, because it helped me recognize something in my own soul. She called on me and said, "Adam, what two words have I written on the board?" I gave it my best shot. "I believe that's 'mom' and 'dad.'" "Correct." *Boom!* Got it. She said, "Adam, what's the first letter of the word *dad*?" I said, "D."

"That's correct. What's the first letter of the word *mom*?"

"M." I'm nailing it. Everybody in the class is so impressed. I'm just killing it. She says, "Adam, what sound does a 'D' make?" I said, "Duh." She said, "Adam, what sound does an 'M' make?" I said, "Muh." She said, "Those are both incorrect." I was like, "What? Are you messing with me? I teach English. What do you mean that's incorrect?" She said, "Adam, if you teach a non-English-speaker that 'D' makes the 'duh' sound, what's that word going to become?" I said, "Duh-a-duh." "Uh-huh. And if you teach them that 'M' makes the 'muh' sound, what are they going to say?" "Muh-o-muh." *I want my muh-o-muh right now.*

She went on to teach me the entire alphabet, that "D" makes the "d" sound and "M" makes the "mm" sound. I had to relearn the simplest, most basic part of the language I speak every day and taught for a

living from this lady, but first she had to humble me and show me, "If you start teaching this the way you think it's supposed to go, you're leading people in the wrong direction, people who don't know any better."

We need to get back to the most basic spot and say, "Can we all get on the same page and agree this is the way it should go so that when we teach it we teach it rightly, that we're talking about the same thing?" Do you understand what I'm saying here? She took me down to the most base level of the alphabet, and I walked out of there humbled, going, "Who did I think I was, thinking I knew the alphabet?"

I know I'm an idiot. A couple months ago... This is the best example of mind-blowing I can think of. I had never realized (maybe you have) "The Alphabet Song" and "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" go to the same tune. I had no clue. Some of you guys are figuring it out right now. This is crazy! It's the same song with different words.

It was mind-blowing to me, and I need that. I think we need that as a church sometimes, to go, "You know this thing we call the gospel? Do you know this is a facet of it?" and us go, "Man, I had never really considered that," or "I hadn't really thought about that," or "That personal connection with it hasn't happened to me before." We need that.

So before we move on, let me call out you who think, "I know the gospel," and have you take a second and think, "Man, I need to revisit the gospel. I need to not come into church every week and assume, 'Yeah, that part of the sermon I have nailed down, so I'll just listen for new stuff.'" No, that's a good word...the *gospel*. Spend time there.

The beautiful thing about this chapter is it's going to go on to explain, "Here are those foundational truths." He's going to say them in the sense of, "Let's not waste our time by covering these again," but tonight, since we're talking about wasting time, we're going to cover those again, the basic truths of the gospel. First, let's finish out chapter 5.

In verse 13 it says, "**...for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child.**" That means a non-speaking child. In other words, some of you guys are dealing only with the simplest pieces of theology so you never communicate anything, like a child does with milk. You get fed, and you do nothing with it but just consume and digest.

Verse 14: "**But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.**" It's such a beautiful verse. We don't have time to go through it all there, but the idea there of comparing what we see as milk or meat and saying those who are

being trained by constant use to discern good from evil, that is meat. That is theological meat, but we can't get there unless we are all on the same page with the basic foundational issues of the gospel.

In Hebrews 6, verse 1, he says, **"Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God..."** I love that, the two most basic principles of the gospel. If we're going to visit the foundational issues of the gospel, he says they are *repentance from dead works* and *faith*. That's the place where I want to sit for just a minute.

Repentance means you've been walking in one direction in your life and you should have been going in a different direction and you realize it. That's repentance. "I need to change the direction of my life."

Repentance means I've realized I have problems I can't solve and I'm going to need to look elsewhere for the solution. "I can't handle this." That's repentance. *Repentance* means I recognize, "I am messed up. I'm flawed." I maybe even acknowledge specific ways and places where I have messed up, and I say, "That is no longer a part of my life." That's repentance.

If you miss repentance, you miss the gospel. Let me explain. If I have a bottle of water up here and I offer it to you as a church, that's not great news to anybody in here. Maybe some of you are thirsty; maybe you aren't. Now, if we are in this room and we are dying of thirst and I have a bottle of water, that's great news. Am I right? Repentance is recognizing your thirst, your absolute "I will die if I don't get that" need for the gospel.

If you don't understand repentance, then the gospel becomes almost worthless to you. If you don't understand you need a Savior, then Jesus Christ becomes a nice add-on to your already American lifestyle. "Oh, that's nice. I'll have Jesus." But if you don't understand, "No, I *need* Jesus, because what am I without Jesus? I'm hopeless. I can't have anything without Christ." If we don't understand repentance, the idea that I'm broken in a way I can't fix...

If you're in here and you're thinking, "I'm self-sufficient; I've got this; I was born a pretty decent person; people are basically good," then you miss the gospel, because the gospel has nothing to do with your self-sufficiency. It has everything to do with God's sufficiency and your insufficiency. We have to start with repentance, the idea that, "I can't do this. I've tried. I've failed. I'm messed up. I'm flawed. I'm broken, and I need somebody else."

It's the thirst for the mercy of God. I don't want us to walk past the gospel without understanding it's only good news in the context of the thirst for the need for God. That's reality. That's truth. That's not just a different way of thinking about things. That's reality. "I'm broken beyond my own repair."

The second foundational truth of Christianity he'll say is *faith*. If repentance is the realization of that need for the gospel, then faith is the revelation from God that he is the water that quenches our thirst, the solution to our problems, the healing of my brokenness, the gift of God to trust in him, in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. If repentance is saying, "I have this problem," then faith is saying, "I know the solution." It's the two sides of the coin you have to understand in the gospel. "I can't; God did. I didn't; God is."

It's all about understanding that relationship, and if we miss that when we talk about the gospel, we think it's just "okay" news instead of *the* good news you need to hear, we'll miss it. We'll end up consuming and consuming and doing nothing with it. If you understand the gospel like this, you understand how important this news is to the people who don't know it. This news is crucially important to a world that doesn't know it.

Your heart doesn't break for a world if you go, "Man, I wish they had Jesus, but I guess they don't," but your heart might break for a world if you go, "Man, if people only knew how desperately they need Christ." That's heartbreaking. If we could only get to the point of repentance, understanding, "Isn't there something else that can relieve this suffering, or take this, or change this?"

I'll get to the point... I know Jesus Christ is not this cure-all, your life is happy. We'll get to that, but understand that in the ultimate picture, in eternity he is, that he *will* make all things new. That's a beautiful picture of the gospel. Let's go to verse 11 in chapter 6 and spend a minute there. In verse 11 of chapter 6 it says, **"And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end..."**

That word *earnestness*...I want to spend a minute there. *Earnestness* means to be sincere and to be diligent, to work hard at something and to mean it. That's to be earnest. What the writer of Hebrews here is saying is that he hopes for each one of us to work hard and be sincere in our pursuit of Christ and our understanding of the gospel, to take the truth we've been given and do something with it, to work hard at it.

There are many of you in this room, including me, who need somebody else we've given permission to to speak into our lives and look at the way we're spending our time and go, "Really? Really? You spent how long doing *what?* Really? You're going to do *what* with your summer? You're going to do *what* with your weekend? Really? You had a conversation with your neighbor and your church came up, and what did you do with that opportunity? You had a conversation with somebody at work who's having an issue or a sickness, and what did you do with that opportunity? Really?" And have them walk you through that.

Maybe as a next step you just need to give somebody permission to ask you, "Are you wasting your time on things that are temporal when you have the opportunity to invest in things that are eternal?" That's what comes from a church that doesn't just consume, or a group of people who don't just consume, but people who understand the healthy intricate connection between what we take in and what we do with it, what we do with it in community.

Then this next verse, verse 12... I love this word. This is the other side of the coin. He says, "**...so that you may not be sluggish...**" That word *sluggish* is the exact same word used that they translated *dull*, that you were dull of hearing. "That you would not be sluggish." It means you're lazy; literally, that you're dragging your feet, that you know what to do, you know where to go, and you're slow to get there. You've been told, "Here's a truth Matt laid out for us last week; here's a mission to get on board with where you're at," and you're going, "I get it, I know it, and I'm dragging my feet. I'll get there when I get there."

How many times have I talked to a college kid who has said, "Yeah, I will clean my life up, but first [fill in the blank]"? Or a high school kid whom I've shared the gospel with and they said, "Yeah, I get that, and I believe that might even be true, but I have plenty of time to get to that. For now [fill in the blank]." They would put that off, and they would drag their feet to get there.

One of the great things about reading the book of Acts and the Gospels is you see these men and women going forth with the truth of the Gospels and there is a real urgency with the truth they have, where they say, "We need to get this news out, and we need to get it out now." There is a diligence. They work hard. And an urgency. "We need to do it now."

It's not to be different for us today. Most of us operate under this assumption, "Well, since Jesus didn't come back yesterday and he hasn't come back yet today, he probably won't tomorrow, so I can just take it easy and be sluggish with that which I have consumed." Two weeks ago, or maybe not even that long ago, people were predicting the end of the world because the calendar ran out. Of course it's going to be the end of the world.

We saw these tweets back and forth. Some people said, "I hope Jesus does come back. *Maranatha*. Yes, that would be great." Other people said, "Man, if the world ends, I'm going to do this," or "What are we going to do tonight?" or "What kind of partying are we going to do before the world ends?" To some people it was just a joke. "Oh man, it's not going to end. I'll see everybody tomorrow." And we did, right? We all woke up the next morning like, "Man, the world didn't end."

The only thing is not everybody woke up the next morning. For some people, December 21 *was* the end of their days on this earth. For some people, that *was* the end of this world. People died that day. My friend Thomas is a youth worker. He has been at a church for about a decade right around the corner from the Flower Mound Campus. He's a great man, a godly man. He had a 17-year-old son Max who got sick earlier this week and then yesterday passed away. Seventeen years old.

A month ago you wouldn't have predicted that. You wouldn't have guessed that was going to happen. You wouldn't have looked into his heart and said, "Man, your time is short," but it would have been reality. Seventeen years old. No one is expecting that. Every day you have here has not been promised to you. You are not promised another day. There's nothing in the Scripture that says, "And you will live this long," or "Because you're in the middle of this aspect of life, or in this mission of life, then God will keep you there longer." No, there's no day promised to you.

So isn't there an intrinsic urgency in the gospel for us, knowing that not a single day is promised to us? There are people who don't know the Lord, and I would wait why? For a selfish reason. I would be sluggish and drag my feet about the truth I've heard because I'm afraid of being uncomfortable, or I'm afraid of whatever it is for you.

We would hesitate to live out the truth we've already been told. We would come forward and consume and in here feel real safe and then out there feel fear. So what *do* we do with this? What *do* we do with the basics of the gospel? What *do* we move forward with? I believe there are two really obvious lenses we see this through. In Jesus Christ's day, as well as today, there are two really obvious movements.

One, Jesus Christ came to seek and save the lost, and that's the same mission we're on. One of the lenses we need to see all of Scripture through, every sermon we hear, every home group Bible study we do together, every intimate time with the Lord, we see through the lens of, "How is this equipping me to be on mission to seek and save the lost?" That is a huge part of what we are about, to rouse souls to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The other one is the way he disciplined people, trained up people who were already pursuing Christ in earnestness. That's the same mission for us, that we would look to, "Who are wise men and women in my life who are training me up, and who are men and women in my life whom I'm training up?" and see every Scripture we read through those lenses.

Yes, reading Scripture and being fed here is something that is also good for our own souls and leading out in our own souls, but part of the mission is doing something for others. It's not being only selfish. It's not hogging Christ and holding on to him tightly and not opening up our hands to what it looks like for him to

revolutionize our neighborhoods, restore marriages, see our pagan neighbors come to know Christ for the first time, or our brothers and sisters understand that lightning-bolt moment of knowing what the gospel is and applying it and understanding, "It is the truth of Jesus Christ for my situation and my life."

There's this beautiful chapter in the Bible. In Matthew, chapter 10, Jesus spends the entire chapter preparing his 12 disciples to go on an evangelistic experiment journey. He takes a whole paragraph to explain persecution, to basically say, "When you share with people the gospel, people won't like it. There will be some people who will not like you because of it. There will be some people who will be against you. They will overtly work against the gospel."

He spends a paragraph explaining that. Then the next paragraph he spends talking about how you need to be brave because you have the Holy Spirit, because God is with you. He says you have to be brave because we struggle there. We would be fearful in that situation. He says, "No, don't be fearful; be brave, because you have the Holy Spirit." He spends a paragraph on that.

Then he spends a whole 'nother paragraph on the fact that if people do believe in this gospel, it will break up families. It will ruin friendships. It won't make everything happy and shiny and new. There will be suffering. Even within relationship it will break. He spends those three paragraphs: persecution, bravery in light of fear, and the breaking up of families.

Do you know how much time he spends in that chapter explaining the knowledge they need to give to people? In one sentence he says, "Tell them the kingdom of God is at hand." That's it. He doesn't give a dissertation. He doesn't give a deep, theological outline they need to explain to people. He says, "Tell them the kingdom of God is at hand," and then persecution, be brave, it'll ruin families.

How many of us have sat back and went, "I would talk, but I just don't know enough," or "I don't know how to answer that question, so I can't really address that issue"? When Jesus Christ sends out his Twelve, he doesn't go, "There are going to be questions you can't answer, so hold back." No, he goes, "Yeah, there are going to be questions... You're the disciples. Everyone knows there are questions you can't answer, so here's a simple message. Do you know how close God is? How close do you think God is?"

Yeah, having that conversation, some people won't want to have it. Some people will come up to know the gospel and it'll wreck their lives. Yeah, you're going to be afraid, but it's not God waiting for you to know enough to be on his mission. It's not God going, "Man, if you could just learn a little bit more, if you get more meat, then you'd be on mission."

I think we have enough to go, "We're not doing enough with the milk we've been given to beg God for the

meat." I feel like every week we come in here going, "Give me something new. Give me new meat. Give me something deep and theological." Then we go out and we do nothing with it. Some of us don't even understand the most basic principles of that gospel, and that's all we'd have to know to share.

There is something beautiful about knowing deep theology. I think that's great to keep pursuing that, but to use not knowing it yet as an excuse why not to be on mission for Christ is ridiculous. It's absolutely ridiculous. There's a beautiful speech Paul gives to some Greeks in Acts, chapter 17. He's speaking to these guys who are learned men. They are studied. They are knowledgeable. They are smart, the smartest people. They don't know Christ. For those of you who don't know Christ, maybe this'll be great for you.

He says basically the reason you've been put here (I'm talking to everybody, whether you're a Christian or not), the reason you've been put where you are right now, and for the time you've been put here is so you would seek God and maybe find him and when you find him realize he was closer than you knew. Isn't that good? For each one of us, the reason you've been put here *when* you've been put here, *where* you've been put here, is that you might seek God, find him, and find out he was closer than you knew.

That's not a hard conversation to start with someone. "How close do you think God is? In suffering, do you think God is close?" My friend Tom, right now in his suffering of losing his 17-year-old son, how comforting is it to know God is close, closer than he even knows, that God is at hand, that God is living and active? I don't need to give a theological treatise on where God is in suffering. I'm just saying, "Man, God is close in this." It's simple. God is close.

Sometimes this will go really well. Sharing the gospel, discipling men and women, can go really well. In fact, Mark would tell us that when the disciples came back from an evangelistic journey, they were so thrilled and pumped, they were overwhelmed telling Jesus stories of, "You won't believe the transformation we saw in people. You won't believe the demons obeyed us in your name, diseases obeyed us in your name."

They're celebrating this, and they're saying (similar to what we might in our church), "Man, you wouldn't believe the stories we hear out of the baptismal waters, the conversions we hear. It is awesome." Do you know what Jesus Christ says to them to temper their enthusiasm? He says, "We do not celebrate that demons listen to you in my name," although secretly I'm going, "Man, that would be awesome. I would celebrate that moment."

He goes, "What we celebrate is this," and this is so sweet to all of you who are believers in Christ. He says, "Celebrate the fact that your name is written in the Book of Life." That's what we celebrate. Isn't that

awesome? That you in here who are believers in Jesus Christ, what we celebrate in worship, what we celebrate in gathering, the reason we're on mission, is not because, "How awesome is it that God..."

That's all awesome. Like Matt said, there's no reason for us to be bored. But we celebrate that Jesus Christ, through his death and resurrection, has written my name in the Book of Life, that I will spend eternity with him. I've always wondered, when Jesus told his disciples, if it was a real awkward moment for Judas. They're like, "Man, your name is written in the Book of Life," and everybody is like, "Sorry, Judas." He can't celebrate because his name is not in there.

What a beautiful thing for us. It's a beautiful confirmation to us of the faith we can have in Jesus Christ, that he...not because of me but because of him...would save me. I know there's a lot I don't know. I know I'm a flawed, messed-up guy. I know I constantly fall short of who I'd like to be and what I'd like to be. I know I don't have all of the answers or all of the solutions to all of the problems. I know I'm broken. I know for a very long time I was completely consumed with my own self-interest and that, at some point, out of God's own sovereignty, he reached into my life and changed my heart and transformed my mind and made me more like him.

In that I would say I am saved by grace through faith, not because I came to this knowledge on my own, not because he saw me fit, but because Jesus Christ was merciful to have mercy on me, Adam Griffin. I pray that same thing for you, that God would give you grace to believe, to have faith. I pray we would gather and keep gathering and keep consuming, but not just consume, that we would do something with that which we've taken in. Will you pray with me? Then I'll lead us in Communion.

God, I thank you that you are good. Thank you that you know these things better than we do. God, I thank you that you've been closer to us than we've realized, that you've been more to us than we could acknowledge or even understand. God, I pray for us tonight, that for those in this room who don't know you, that you would reveal more of yourself to us.

And for those of us in this room who *do* know you, that you would reveal more of yourself to us, that, God, we'd just get more and more of you. God, I thank you that your gospel is true and real and profound. I pray you give us the courage to be on mission with you. We pray these things in your son Jesus Christ's name, for his sake and his glory, amen.