



Exodus (Part 30) – Understanding Glory – Part 2

Matt Chandler – May 14, 2017

[Video]

From darkness to light, this is the story we all share as the people of God. The story of Israel is the story of us today. We are God's people. He draws us out to draw us in. Like the Israelites, we still await the Promised Land in the midst of our sin and suffering, yet God is with us.

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Good morning. If you have your Bibles, go ahead and grab those Bibles. We're going to start out in Exodus 38. If you're a guest with us, we've spent close to eight months just kind of walking through the book of Exodus, so you've joined us near the very end of that. I want to remind you just briefly as we dive back into Exodus of something that we said last weekend.

What we said last weekend is when you look at the book of Exodus and start to outline how you want to teach it, whether you're teaching or preaching or even studying it, you have to figure out what you're going to do with chapters 37, 38, and 39. The reason you have to figure out what to do with those is they are verbatim chapters 25, 26, 27, and some of 28.

There is this reality where if you talk through chapter 25 and then come and try to teach through chapter 37, you have already preached those exact words. The way that is usually handled is someone will preach 25, and then they'll make you flip toward 37, and then they'll show you in 37 that the same thing they just preached in 25 has now been done.

You can approach it that way, but what I wanted to do in our time together, because I knew that new the end of Exodus, we would be talking about what makes us distinct as the people of God, is I wanted to read these passages or at least sections of these passages. Instead of diving into these

passages and staying in Exodus, I wanted to show you that this is kind of how Christians have thought of themselves and considered themselves throughout our history.

Last week, what we did is we read chapter 37, and then we went back and looked at 25 where they heard the Word, and then in verse 32 where they wrestled to believe the Word, and then finally in 37 where they did the Word. What we did is we took that and re-embedded ourselves back into the story and said that one of the things that makes Christians distinct is we hear the Word of God, we believe the Word of God, and we do the Word of God.

That's what we did last week. We'll do something very similar this week. We've been talking about what it means to be distinct among the other peoples on earth. Here is what Exodus has been teaching us, that Christians are the people who operate in and by the presence and power of God. That's what makes us distinct. We're living our lives in the presence and by the power of God.

That means an embrace of the ordinary. We understand that God is going to do the most significant things in our lives over a long period of time, born out of everyday faithfulness. In a culture that loves fireworks and instantaneous things and silver bullets and magic pills, we've just kind of given ourselves over to this reality. We're going to get up on Monday, and we're going to do the best we can to serve the Lord, to be obedient to his Word, and to walk in faithfulness.

We just believe that after a couple of decades of that, things more beautiful than we could imagine will be born. There is no silver magic bullet or magic pill, but there is everyday faithfulness, submitting to the Word of God, and living out our faith in the day in and day out of Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

We believe that over time, God does really beautiful things. Nobody becomes a patriarch or a matriarch who doesn't do it that way. You can't die with a legacy of faithfulness without spending a lot of time just being faithful in the ordinary things. Yet, while we embrace the ordinary, we believe in the supernatural. We believe in demons and angels and miracles and supernatural activity.

We are living in the ordinary and praying and asking God to do the extraordinary in a way that is expectant. What I want to constantly teach you in this season of the life of our church is to not let anyone force you to pick one of those two. Ordinary, everyday faithfulness to the Word of God, yes and amen, but that Word of God points to a supernatural reality that we'd better understand, cling

to, pray for, and expect. We're a people of God embracing the ordinary, expecting the extraordinary, and serving over the long haul as we wait and see all of that play out.

Then we talked about how we're a generous people. Having been recipients of the generosity of God, the kindness of God, we now extend that generosity. We used our imagination (and we'll do it again this week) to just kind of get our minds around what would happen if The Village Church, five locations across the Metroplex, 10,000-plus people, were just unleashed on the Metroplex to be supernaturally generous and to meet every need they could possibly see and step in and fill.

Can you imagine the spiritual impact and power that would be on display in our city if the people of just The Village said, "We're going to meet every need we see. We're going to step into that. We're going to encourage. Where we have money, we're going to spend on that. We're going to help this. We're going to fix this. We're going to step into this space"? Can you imagine what would happen?

We said last week that we are a people of the Word, that we hear the Bible, that we believe the Bible, and that we do the Word of God. We just believe the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, given to us by God so that the power of the Holy Spirit might work in and through us as we submit to it and lay our lives down, saying yes to the God of the Bible. We just believe that.

Maybe you're here, and you think that's so antiquated, and you can't believe we would actually land there. I would just say, "Welcome to the antiques show." We do believe that. We're going to submit to that. I'll explain more in a little bit. What I want to do is I want to read yet another thing that makes us distinct as the people of God. Like last week, it will be a text where you can't... It's just a lot of, "What is that?" and, "What's going on in that space?" If you re-embed it in a story, it becomes a little bit more clear. Let's look at this, Exodus 38. We're going to start in verse 21.

"These are the records of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, as they were recorded at the commandment of Moses, the responsibility of the Levites under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the Lord commanded Moses..." By the way, we've already read all of this. This is just it in action.

"...and with him was Oholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver and designer and embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. All the

gold that was used for the work, in all the construction of the sanctuary, the gold from the offering, was twenty-nine talents and 730 shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary.

The silver from those of the congregation who were recorded was a hundred talents and 1,775 shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary: a beka a head (that is, half a shekel, by the shekel of the sanctuary), for everyone who was listed in the records, from twenty years old and upward, for 603,550 men. The hundred talents of silver were for casting the bases of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil; a hundred bases for the hundred talents, a talent a base.

And of the 1,775 shekels he made hooks for the pillars and overlaid their capitals and made fillets for them. The bronze that was offered was seventy talents and 2,400 shekels; with it he made the bases for the entrance of the tent of meeting, the bronze altar and the bronze grating for it and all the utensils of the altar, the bases around the court, and the bases of the gate of the court, all the pegs of the tabernacle, and all the pegs around the court."

Then from there, in chapter 39, we get into the making of the priestly garments. Now, confession time. Did any of you partially glaze over in the middle of that at some point? You can fess up. I love you. We're in a safe place. In the middle, you're like, "Shekel what?" There is no way right now, I don't think, that I could just pray and dismiss you, and you would go, "I'm going to apply that today. I need a shekel of silver and a talent to build some bases." No.

What is happening here is we need to re-embed this back into the story. As we said, what we're seeing, in a very real way, is them being obedient to the Word of God. Everything they're doing here, God has commanded them to do earlier in the book of Exodus. Where I want to talk today, what I want to embed us into today, is the purpose of the church.

I'll let the cat out of the bag. I think I already did in the announcements. The church is a community on a mission. That's what we are. We're a community of faith on a mission. Where we forget that, really bad things happen. Where we forget that, really bad things happen. From the beginning, the people of God have understood themselves as a community that has been given a mission. You're seeing this in the narrative in a real surreal way.

Where did they get all of these talents and shekels and tools and linen? What happened? The people provided it. Why did the people provide it? Out of an overflow of generosity, because they had

received generosity that led them to give toward and now execute upon all God had commanded them to do in line with the mission of God.

This will be how the people of God understand themselves moving forward. In fact, a long time later, the apostle Peter would pen these words. I'm going to be in 1 Peter 2. In fact, the bulk of our time together will be spent there, so if you want to turn over to that verse, you can. I'm going to put it on the screen if you don't, but it would be probably helpful for you to see it. In 1 Peter 2, starting in verse 9, it says,

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation."

This right here is a passage that is nearly pulled from the pages of Exodus as an example of what the Christian community should see and understand themselves to be. Let me kind of draw parallels. In Exodus 19, here's what God says about his people. He says they will be his prized possession. Now, think about this. What God has said is, "You want to see my prized possession? It's my people. This people I have formed, this people I have put together, they are my prized possession."

If you don't know what a prized possession is, that's what you show people when they come to dinner at your house. Somebody shows up to your house for dinner, and you're like, "Do you want to see something really cool? All right. Let me show it to you. Let me go get it." You bring it out, and you're like, "How about that, huh? There are only seven of these on earth." It's a prized possession.

If you start to think about it, you want to get your mind around God's delight and love over his people. Think about the expanse of the universe, the beauty that exists in the universe, and of all that God created, he said, "This is my prized possession." One of the things I can geek out about is images from the Hubble Telescope. Maybe that's not you, but that stuff wigs me out. It's amazing.

I don't know if you've had the opportunity in your life, by the grace of God, to maybe be at the Grand Canyon or at the base of a large mountain or be in front of an ocean. The Gulf of Mexico doesn't count. It's a large body of water. It's not scary. If you've been in those places where you feel small... Then, if you just stop for a second and remember the fact that the earth is a tiny planet...

It's not one of the largest planets even in our solar system, much less the galaxy. Then if you extrapolate out the size and scope of the universe that is continuing to this day to expand in every direction. What is God's prized possession in the midst of that, infinite, beautiful, marvelous things? His people. "These are my prized possessions."

We will be a kingdom of priests. That's also in Exodus 19. What you hear in Peter, that you're a royal priesthood, that we will be a holy people, what we read in 1 Peter, that we would be a holy nation. In Exodus 2, we begin to see in the Ten Commandments and the laws that God is going to help us with a vertical relationship with him that leads to a horizontal community of faith where there are deep, loving relationships that both hold accountable and encourage.

All that we just read in 1 Peter 2 finds its roots in how God's people understand themselves in the laws, rules, and grace of God in Exodus. Let me give you my outline for what it means to be a community on mission. Are you ready? There is *relationship*, there are *roles*, and there is *reputation*. There are three R's for you type A people. You can rest now. We'll dive in.

1. *Relationships*. Let's talk about relationships. The first relationship we see in regard to how we're to think about ourselves as a community on mission is the vertical relationship with God. In fact, that vertical relationship informs and empowers all of our horizontal relationships. How does Peter write to us to think about ourselves? According to the text, we are a people of his own possession.

How am I to think about myself? I belong to God. My life is his. My money is his. My family is his. My stuff is his. All that I have has an owner, and that owner is not me. Now, think about what changes in your life if you understand that you are not God and that you don't own you. Think about this. It flies in the face of the air we breathe in 2017. I am not my own. I have been bought with a price.

The message of Christianity is not, "I used to party, used to get high, used to sleep around, but now I don't." The message of Christianity is, "God and God alone saved me. He rescued me, transferred me out of darkness and into light. He extended mercy when I did not deserve it. I did not save me. He saved me. I did not make myself better. He took me and made me new." Are you tracking with me?

This is not pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps nonsense. This is made alive, made new, reborn, completely different.

"I am not my own. I have been bought with a price." We are a people of his own possession. We belong to him. He purchased us with his blood. We didn't come together of our own accord. He made us. He put us together for his purposes. Then from there, he gets into these kind of vertical relationships. I love what he does here because he goes straight at the ways we like to identify ourselves. He goes straight at race, socioeconomic status, and nationality.

That's what he does in the first sentence of 1 Peter 2:9. **"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation..."** Let's chat about this because I think this is a complex yet beautiful text in the Bible. Let's have a quick talk about race. I'm white. The white is strong with me. Here's what I mean by that. This is the time of year where white people are changing color. I don't know if you noticed that, but this is that time of year.

All of a sudden, we're just not as pasty as we used to be. We're adding layers. Did you notice your pastor never really does that? He might appear red one week, and then he peels, and the pastiness remains? It's just like this force that can't be denied. I think I'm like 90 percent English with a little sprinkling of Cherokee. There you go. That's me. I will always be white.

Listen. I'm not less than that, but I am more than that. Are you tracking with me? I am not less than that, but I am more than that. My primary identity marker is not my race. I'm not less than that, but I'm much more than that. I'm a son of God, a child of the King, and he has built a race of people that transcends ethnic lines and creates a new one. That's awesome.

Then he goes after socioeconomics. "You will be a royal priesthood." The Levites were a group of priests who had some advantages and some things they were going to have given to them and a type of wealth that was going to be unattainable for many. Yet God goes, "No, no, no. My people are going to be a chosen race, and they're going to be a royal priesthood. They're going to be, in a very real way, my people, called from every type of socioeconomic climate and made one in my name."

Then he goes after... I'll be careful here to not get myself in trouble. He then goes after nationality. One of the things I didn't have time to do as we were preaching through Exodus that now, in retrospect, for where we are as a country, I wish I would have spent some time on, is how many

Egyptians and men and women from other nations fled with Israel out of bondage and slavery and went with the people of God into the wilderness and then went with them into the Promised Land.

All of these laws about sojourners and aliens and strangers that you find in the Old Testament... Do you know why those are there? Because there are a lot of people who aren't Jews who are with Israel. That's why. I want to say this, but I want to say it in a way that doesn't create a lot of work for me. I am a navy brat. I grew up my entire life on military bases. I have seen *Rocky IV* 32 times, every time with a small tear going down my left cheek when Rocky knocks out the Russian.

I can quote to you the movie *Red Dawn*, and in certain moments of my life to this day, I will scream out, "Wolverine!" for no other reason except as a type of barbaric yelp. I love the United States of America. I have travelled the world, and God has surely shed his grace on thee, but I am not now, nor will I ever be, American first, because I belong to the kingdom of God first.

We have to filter. Praise God for our Constitution, for our Declaration of Independence, for our laws. We should be good citizens. We should be involved in those things that make us good citizens, but our kingdom is not this kingdom. It's an eternal kingdom. My allegiance is to Christ and his kingdom and not this country that will pass away.

Here is insight into American pride. Did you know that Rome existed for 1,500 years, from India to England, for 1,500 years? How old are we as a country? Not yet 300? We're in diapers. If you would have come to Rome at 300 going, "There's going to be a day where they're just going to study you in history books and look at your ruins," they might kill you honestly. They're Romans. They would crucify you or cut off your head or do something like that.

Yet here we are thinking we're going to always be here. We're not always going to be here. The kingdom of God is always going to be here. There is one kingdom that is forever. It's not our country. Be good citizens. Be good Americans, but this is not your kingdom. Here's what's great. Here's what God does. Vertical relationship with him that begins to transform our horizontal relationships, right? God says, "I'm making a people." The response is, "What race are they?"

"Yep."

"No, like what race?"

"I answered you. Uh-huh."

"Wait. Are you saying...?"

"Yeah. White, black, brown, yellow, red... Those are my people, and I'm making them a people."

"What is their class? What class are they going to be?"

"It's funny that you should ask that because they are going to be billionaires, and they are going to be broke. They're going to drink expensive bottles of wine and have filet for dinner, and they're going to eat some Ramen noodles with some Dr. Thunder and sometimes not even be able to eat. I'm going to make them my people, and I'm going to make them my family. I'm going to put them in a room together, and I'm going to make them my people."

"What country are they going to be from."

"I'm glad you brought that up. Every tribe, tongue, and nation on earth. That's what I'm up to. Every tribe, tongue, and nation on earth, and I'm going to make them my people."

God does what man cannot do. He transcends these identity markers and says, "You're more than these things. You're more than these things. You're more than your race. You're more than your socioeconomic status. You're more than your nationality. You are my people. I'm making you a people, something that has never been here before. I am speaking and empowering into existence the church, the people of God."

That's where you start with the community of faith. That's how they understood themselves. In Exodus, that's how they're still understanding themselves. In 1 Peter, it's still how we understand ourselves. To this day, we are the people of God, bought with a price, of his own possession, belonging to him and, therefore, belonging to one another in a significant and serious way.

What has this community been put together to do? What are our roles? If these are our relationships, what are the roles? Well, again, I love it when you ask questions that are next in my notes. Let's dive in.

2. *Roles.* There are two primary roles of the Christian community. We proclaim, and we abstain. That's not cute. I didn't mean that to rhyme. It's in the text. I wasn't like, "What could really rhyme here with *proclaim*? Oh, I know. *Abstain*." No, it's in the text. I just let the text determine the outline.

A. *We proclaim.* Let's look at this again. **"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."** One of the reasons that God has put us together as his people with this shared experience of his grace and mercy being dragged out of darkness and into life is now to become proclaimers of his excellencies to the rest of the world.

What does that look like? I think in a very real way, it looks like how you live your life. In 2017, kindness goes farther than most people can fathom. Again, if I could just unleash you on our area with just the idea, "I'm going to be kind to people." You get that your barista and your waiter and your lawn guy and your coworkers are souls, right? They're human beings made in the image of God who are carrying with them their own hurts, their own fears, their own failures, their own difficulties.

They're not just empty shells put here to serve you and make your life easy. They're human beings made in the image of God, and kindness goes farther than most people can fathom. I'm going to just plead with you to not buy into the propaganda just yet that everybody hates us and that everyone is going to be super offended by everything.

I've lived in this area for 15 years now. It will be 15 years this fall. No one has ever freaked out and gotten angry at me for asking how I can pray for them. No one, not the most gruff-looking, monstrous, too much creatine monohydrate in his system, bodybuilder. Not kind of the mopey, "I don't want to have this conversation with anybody. Leave me alone." I've never gone, "How can I pray for you?" and had anyone go, "You make me sick. Get out of my face. I can't believe you just asked that." Ever.

Here's what will happen. I'll ask that question, and here's what's crazy. I'll actually pray for them. What happens is God begins to birth in my heart a genuine affection and concern and care for them, so then I get to loop back around and ask how they're doing and what's going on and how I can serve them and if I can be generous in this situation. "Can I help? Can I walk alongside?" That has then led to all sorts of really beautiful, spiritual conversations that have led not a ton but quite a few to faith in Christ.

They're not projects. I actually begin to love them deeply out of a question. "How can I pray for you?" To just extend kindness, to proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light. Why has God put together this community? So that we might proclaim his excellencies. That's not the only purpose we have. That's the purpose that goes outside these walls, but there's a purpose that exists inside these walls, and that is to abstain from the flesh that pulls us toward things that are going to destroy our souls.

B. *We abstain.* To read it again, look there in verse 10. **"Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul."** This is scary text, and it's why we need to be ferociously committed to one another.

What the Bible just said is you have some base-level urges and instincts that, if you give in to those urges, you will give in to what wages war against your soul. It's not for the good of your soul. It's to destroy your soul. Now, think about how precarious that situation is. You have an urge inside of you to step into something that you think is going to satisfy some longing in your heart. Instead, you're giving yourself over to a spiritual power that seeks to ravage and destroy your soul.

We proclaim the excellencies of Christ outside these walls, and inside these walls, we encourage, support, and rebuke the giving of ourselves over to those urges. How do we do this? How do we fight this impulse inside of us? I think God has given us three tools. If you don't use all three, you jam yourself up.

The first one is confession. We confess our sins. One of the things that makes us distinct as the people of God is we have a Savior who outed us as being imperfect on the cross of Christ. We're just not going to give in to that impulse to try to be pretty and put together and, "We don't have any struggles, and everything is great. How are you?" "I'm fine, brother."

We're just not going to do that. We're going to be honest about where we struggle. We're going to be honest that there is a reality that we do struggle. We're going to confess that, and we're going to actively repent of it. If you're fighting, that is your left and right hand. God is also giving you another tool, and it's one that I eventually want to preach a full sermon on, but let me just give you...

There is an idea of renunciation here. I'm growing in my conviction that some of the things we think are concepts are actually spiritual realities. What happens when you try to fight spiritual realities with intellectual concepts is you lose. Remember when I said we embrace the ordinary, but we also embrace the supernatural? Well, the Bible is going to list out a series of strongholds that are more spiritual realities than they are intellectual concepts.

I'll give you a real quick, easy one. Fear. The Bible says, "I did not give you a spirit of fear, but rather..." There is this idea that there are these spiritual realities at play in us. If you've ever been in a Home Group or been a part of a group of people where people continue to confess the same sin over and over and over again and never seem to gain any victory, I think part of what is happening there is there is no renunciation taking place.

If you're like, "Where are you getting this from the Bible?" I'll tell you exactly where. It's 2 Corinthians 4, where the apostle Paul says, "We have renounced the former things." Renunciation means there is something, some kind of authority. We have given sin spiritual power in our lives. We have given ourselves over to lust, given ourselves over to fear, given ourselves over to anger.

The act of renunciation is in confession and repentance. We're saying, "You don't own me anymore. You have no rights." When temptation comes, we're able to remind spiritual realities, "You are not my God. You are not my master. I have renounced that in the name of Jesus. I belong to Christ." We can walk in victory.

This is how we fight these things, not with, "Oh, man, I just need to memorize more verses on fear." I think that's part of it, but we give those verses to the Spirit's power to trump strongholds. We renounce, confess, and repent. We do this as a community. Do you see how all of this is sabotaged if you think you have to act like you're awesome?

Do you see how all of this breaks down if you're unwilling to kind of come out from behind that façade that you've built in front of you? Do you see how none of this works if you're not willing to kind of be honest and go, "No, this is a real issue, and I can't seem to get ahold of it. I need to confess this, but I also need to walk in repentance, which means I'm going to need to renounce some things, because I've given myself over to them for a long time, and I feel like they own me right now." That's spiritual reality, guys.

It's strange to me that Christians tend to think more and more and more intellectually rather than spiritually. I don't think those two things are at odds. I just think intellectual realities don't tend to solve spiritual ones.

3. *Reputation.* I love the way Peter ends this. He ends it with this. I'll just read it out loud and quickly talk about it because I want to give you a good illustration. Verse 12. **"Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation."**

Being put together by God, formed as a people into a community of faith that is given the mission of proclaiming his excellencies and abstaining from fleshly desires, we begin to live in the ordinary, embracing the supernatural, and living lives in such a way that those who hate us would see our morality and find something beautiful about it. I'll give you a couple of examples on this.

Husbands, if you would obey the Word of God and love your wife like Jesus Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, if the basis of your marriage was not, "You exist to serve me," but, "We exist to partner together for the glory of God, and I'm going to do everything I can to see you flourish as a woman." You call out her giftedness. You create space for her to operate in that giftedness. You cheer her along.

You're doing this not because she's weak but because God has called you to. What happens when those outside the church go, "That church just wants to subjugate and crush women's souls. This patriarchy is just destroying women right and left"? They throw that, and it hits the side of your life and just slides right off. It's not going to stick because your wife is a well-watered vine, flourishing and bearing fruit in season. Right?

If you're loving and kind and gracious and show hospitality and are generous, what accusation thrown against us sticks? The reputation of the Christian should be honorable, not dishonorable. That means you should not be lazy at work. You should love well your family, not perfectly, just as best you can with where you are.

Now, I said earlier (and I want to press in on this) that where we forget these things, bad things happen. I'll give you I think probably one of the better business examples of what happens if you forget who you are and why you exist. In the year 2000, Reed Hastings... Does anyone know who Reed Hastings is? If you don't, I'll let you know here in a second.

He approached Blockbuster's CEO John Antioco and asked if he was interested in buying a little upstart company he had. Here was his idea. He said, "Listen. I don't think people want to go to the store. I know you have a bunch of Milk Duds, and you have all sorts of stuff that drives parents crazy when they're just trying to rent a movie, and they have to walk through a wonderland of candy and toys to check out.

They can get online, and they can click their movie, and we'll mail it to their house with a return envelope. When they're done watching that movie, they can just put it back and send it. They create their own playlist. Then we'll just send a new movie every time they send one in, and they can work their way through their list." Here's what's great about John Antioco and what he said about this offer. This offer was made. "Would you like to buy our little company?" Here's what the Blockbuster CEO said. "I think that Netflix is a very small, niche business," and he declined. Here's what's crazy.

Hastings came back and said, "That's so antiquated, the whole mailing back and forth thing. Here is what we can do with broadband and Fios. We can literally together destroy reading comprehension for a generation or two together. We could literally make everyone on earth stupider together. Would you like to join with me? Instead of actually having conversations and going to bed at night and flourishing as human beings, we can have them binge-watching 15-year-old shows forever. It's just never going to end." Blockbuster yet again said, "No, thank you."

When was the last time you went to a Blockbuster store? Has anybody gone in this past six months? No one. Has anybody even...? It's okay. I know what I said. Does anybody like to Netflix out a little bit? Is anybody doing it right now? Let me tell you what happened. Blockbuster got confused. Blockbuster thought that they were in the movie rental business. They weren't. They were in the home entertainment business.

When you forget who you are and what you're supposed to be doing, really bad things happen. When the church forgets who she is, a community of faith... Let's just start there. If the church is this loose band of people who attend one location every week to hear an hour's worth of preaching, teaching, and singing, we're outside the balance of how Christianity has functioned and flourished for two millennia.

The call to the church is not a call to come but to belong. Here's what happens in suburban life. I'm just going to be so bold to say it. You have your work friends and your college friends and your

friends whose kids play sports with your kids. Then you have your church friends. You have these five or six subgroups of friendships.

Because that's reality, you don't have any deep relationships with anybody, and nobody fully knows who you are, and nobody can encourage you or confront you or help you be a proclaimer or an abstainer because nobody actually knows who you are. You know everyone and no one. Your heart longs to be known, and you've created no environments in which to be known.

Part of what it looks like to belong to a community of faith is that we say no to several other things so we can be serious about being in a deep community of faith with those who can encourage, support, and build up our abilities, desires, and need to proclaim and abstain. I think one of the things we have to do is get a good sense of where we're spending all of our energy and time relationally.

What group do you belong to that, when you walk out of that group, you feel encouraged and equipped and built up to proclaim and abstain? You have to find that group. You have to invest. You have to work. It's not always easy. It does take some steadfastness, but you have to fight for it, and you have to be serious about it. It's just not going to work for an hour and 20 minutes on the weekend and going to a Home Group twice a month, maybe. If you miss one, then it's once a month.

We've been there in these environments that we're hoping are going to bring this thing about. Really, all that has happened is some talk about sports and some good guacamole, maybe. We need to be more serious about that. What happens is maybe you want to be vulnerable, but it looks like nobody else wants to be vulnerable. You want to be honest, but it doesn't look like anybody else wants to be honest. You want to step into these spaces, and you find it difficult to even find these spaces.

Specifically, if you're a Home Group of The Village, this is a great opportunity to talk about the seriousness of belonging to a community. This is what God has called us to, together, on mission. If you forget about that togetherness, you don't have community. You have what you have all over the evangelical landscape: very little discipleship, a lot of attendance, and *evangelical* becoming a junk word that means nothing.

I would just encourage you for the rest of your life probably, unless revival breaks out, that if you read, "Evangelicals believe..." you can just strike out *evangelicals* and write in *conservatives*. It

doesn't mean they're Christians. Maybe I say that and you don't agree. There must be a commitment to a place where I'm going to be serious about pursuing God with people who are serious about pursuing God.

Then, if we lose track of that aspect, then most times, we also lose track of the mission of the church. It's a funny thing, being a pastor. I find that everybody comes in with a bit different expectation. In a very real sense, I think there are two kind of Achilles' heels, two fatal faults of how people currently view church. One is this kind of social club thing. People just kind of come together, and it's a good place to meet other people, like-minded people. It just creates an environment for us to hang out with one another.

"Do you know what would be great? A series of Super Bowl parties would be awesome. Why don't we show it on the big screen, Pastor? You have that big old screen. What we should do is just host a big Super Bowl party in here. I'll bring the chips, and we'll just show the Super Bowl." It's this social club thing. We're not serious about the things of God. We're just kind of getting together.

If that's not the prevailing view, then God help us. The one now is like, "Entertain me, and entertain my children." The church isn't here for entertainment; it's here to train you. We're thinking like we're on a cruise ship. In reality, we're in a battleship. We're thinking, "Hey, when is the limbo contest? Do you know what my kid loves? My kid loves rock walls. When are we going to get one of those? I could really convince my kids to come here if you had like a virtual reality game. They could shoot up..." Right? That's not what we do.

We are to train you for the work of ministry. I am a minister. The calling on my life is to equip you to do the work of ministry. I do not have a special dispensation of the Holy Spirit's power in me that is not available to you. It is not me who is meant to herald the gospel to your neighbors, your friends, your family members.

It's not up to me to, in your domain of influence, praise the excellency, proclaim the excellency of his grace. It's yours to do, and you know how. I don't know how you do. You have a story. God met you somewhere. He saved you somewhere. He has done things in your life. That's how you do it. Again, I just keep letting my mind drift to what would happen...look right at me...if we actually believed this.

This thing we do in here every week... What would happen if we actually believed it, if we actually believed that God was seeking and saving the lost, that no one was so lost as to not be saved, that

God would use us in profound and powerful and miraculous and supernatural ways in our neighborhoods, in our homes, at our workplaces?

What if we actually believed this was true? Some guys have these ongoing fantasies about being professional athletes or being billionaires. This is my fantasy. What if we actually believed this? What would happen in Flower Mound, Lewisville, Highland Village, Plano, Fort Worth, Dallas, South Lake?

What would happen if the people of God said, "We believe this is true. We're going to give our lives fully over to it," and began to understand the church as a community on mission and left this building and these buildings every week to head out and proclaim the excellencies of God's grace and work together to abstain from the impulses of the flesh with confession, repentance, and renunciation, walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, submitting to the Word of God, pushing back what's dark, and enjoying the fruit of full submission to the King of Glory?

I want to end today by just showing you a picture of what this can look like. David and Keri Campbell sit third row left right here for, gosh, four or five years. They're in North Fort Worth. They started a bunch of Home Groups. They're just a businessman and a stay-at-home mom who are serious about the things of God.

A lot of you might even be in this room because of the Campbells, just a ferocious evangelist and disciple-maker who just believed that what we said as Christians is true. Then the Lord moved them to Berlin. They were praying about it. I was praying against them, and we see who won. They're now in Berlin doing the same thing they were doing here.