



## Let's Talk (Part 3) – Evangelism

Matt Chandler – July 9, 2017

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**Matt Chandler:** Would you have a seat? If you have a Bible, let's go ahead and grab that. Revelation, chapter 2, is where we're going to be. If you don't have a Bible, there should be a hardback black one somewhere around you. Let me just kind of let you know where we're going. I plan on spending about 20 minutes (maybe 25) on answering the question, "What kind of church will we be?"

Then from there, I'm going to have David and Keri Campbell, who are back from Berlin with us for the month of July, come up. We're just going to have a little bit of a conversation, because I think they so well embody what I want to talk about. Now what I'm saying today is not new. We've said this for years. This is just kind of a reminder of the kind of church we want to be.

What's happening in Revelation, chapter 2, is Jesus, through the pen of John, is writing a series of letters to seven churches in the ancient world. These seven churches were kind of missionary hubs that served as kind of bases where the gospel was kind of pushing back darkness all over the Roman Empire.

We're going to see in Revelation, chapter 2, verses 1 through 7, that Jesus is looking at the church of Ephesus, and he likes some of the things he sees. Right out of the gate, if it pleases Jesus, we kind of want to be about it. Right? If Jesus looks at it and goes, "I like that; that makes my heart happy," then we want to go, "Okay, then we're going to do that." We want to be a church that makes the heart of Christ happy, not that his heart could ever be lacking but that just he would see it and be pleased.

Let's dive in, because he sees some really good things. Then he sees some things we need to be concerned with. Again, this isn't new. This is just reminding, refreshing, the kind of church we want to be. Revelation, chapter 2, starting in verse 1. **"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.'"**

This is apocalyptic language. It's Jesus. Red letter. It's Jesus. That's who is holding these stars and walking among these lampstands. It's not a secret. It's Jesus. Here's what he says:

**"I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.**

**Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."**

We're seeing three things in this text that we as The Village Church want to emulate those things. I want to kind of list out those things. The first thing we see starting right at the beginning of verse 2 is this is a church that has patient endurance. It's not only in verse 2, but it's also in verse 3. He says in verse 2, **"I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance..."** Then he repeats in verse 3, except he flips the words. **"I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake..."**

Now when we're talking about patient endurance, here is all we're saying. We are sure of ultimate victory. You and I are living in this space between the *already* and *not yet*, and ultimate victory has been secured in Christ. We wait patiently enduring in the age we're in until final victory has been established. There's a deep-rooted confidence in the church at Ephesus. Jesus is looking at it and going, "I like that."

What they're enduring in and through is not being marginalized by the media. I mean, that's not what they're patiently enduring through. They're being arrested. They're being killed. Their stuff is being confiscated, and they are patiently enduring. We want to be a church that patiently endures, but that's not the only thing we see happening here. We see they can spot false teaching.

Look at the second half of verse 2. We read the first half. **"I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance..."** Look at this. **"...and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but**

**have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false."** The picture is one where false apostles show up, and they begin to preach a gospel that's different than the gospel of Jesus Christ.

They know the Word. They're theologically rooted enough to spot that it's not true. They're able to hear this teaching and go, "This teaching is inconsistent with the Word of God. So we reject that teaching." This is a place that has good doctrine. Right now I want my daughter to join this church. I mean, they patiently endure. They have a great training program. I'm in! This church is legit!

I love this line. They don't acquiesce to culture. Look at what he says in verse 6. **"Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."** Let's talk about this group for a second, because I think it has some weight on 2017. This was a group of men and women. In Ephesus, you had the Temple of Artemis. It was one of the great wonders of the ancient world. It was literally a stunning, beautiful temple.

The way you worshiped the goddess Artemis was via sexual rituals and temple prostitutes. If you brought your kid in here, sorry. You'll have a conversation on the way home. I apologize for that. Yet this is how they worshiped. This group, this sect of people in this culture, was saying, "The only prohibitions on sexual rituals using temple prostitutes found in the Old Testament are not in the New Testament. In fact, we have been freed in the coming of Christ to worship him however we know to worship him. This is one of those ways we want to worship Jesus."

This church is like, "That's ridiculous! God hates that, and we hate that." Jesus goes, "I like that. I like your gall. I like that you're enduring under cultural pressure to conform to sexual perversion, and you've rejected it. I like that about you, Ephesus. I love First Baptist at Ephesus. You're knocking it out of the park."

Then they say there's a third thing here. Well, let me finish this. They can spot false teaching. We want to be this kind of church. We are going to be a church that loves the Word of God, preaches the Word of God, sings the Word of God, and rejoices in the Word of God. I don't know if you picked up on that, but every song we sang had what accompanying it? A text to show you where we got it. We're not just making stuff up off the top of our head here. We want to sing it.

Our theological Training Program has trained over 400 men and women the last two years. Over 9,500 men and women have gone through forums and classes, women's Bible studies, men's Bible

studies. We are serious about the Word of God. We preach long series on big books of the Bible. We just finished close to 40 weeks on the book of Exodus. We love the Word of God. We want to be formed by it, shaped by it, driven by it, and submitted to it. We want to be this kind of church.

But they also have zeal in all of that. They're not a crusty church. They're zealous. They're specifically zealous for this doctrinal depth, and they're specifically zealous for this endurance. We see that just in that simple line, "**...and you have not grown weary.**" "You have not gotten exhausted in this kind of pursuit of doctrinal purity and orthodoxy. You have not grown weary in patiently enduring wave after wave both of culture in the church, out of church, kind of trying to pull you away from the gospel. You have done well."

In the middle of all of this encouraging, beautiful stuff that we want to emulate and pursue, you get this word of warning and a threat. Let's look at that. Look at verse 4. "**But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.**"

Now let me kind of unpack the threat here, because it's a terrifying idea. Jesus just said, "I love that you're pursuing doctrinal purity. I love that you're well-taught. I love that you're patiently enduring. Yet you don't love me, and you're not really about me. You're really about *yourself*. If that doesn't change, I'm removing my presence from you." So you can have (according to the Bible) a church that pursues doctrinal purity, that patiently endures, and even kind of bucks up against the wind of culture and yet is devoid of the presence and power of Jesus.

Now that's a terrifying idea for a church like us who is serious about orthodoxy and Christian historic orthodoxy and serious about the Word of God and serious about being strong in the face of the winds of culture to be powerful in endurance in this day and age. This word of warning kind of echoes to us it needs to be considered.

Now God never threatens us without showing us the way to life. That hasn't happened in this text. He said, "I'm going to unless you repent." Then he lays this before us. "Do the things you did at first." Now my first sermon series at The Village Church was out of the book of Ephesians. The reason I wanted to preach Ephesians first is we know more about the church at Ephesus than we know of any other church in the Bible.

We see it born in Acts 18 and 19. We see the letters to Timothy, who is one of the elders at the church of Ephesus. First and 2 Timothy are written to Timothy while he is pastoring Ephesus. Then I don't know if you knew this, but 1, 2, and 3 John are also written to the church at Ephesus because John was an elder at Ephesus. I mean, you want to talk about a church staff that's ridiculous... I mean, when like guys on your staff are actually writing the Bible, it just feels a bit unfair.

Yet this is the church at Ephesus. It has this long history. You can track their trajectory, and here in Revelation, chapter 2, they're about 60 years old. Somewhere along the way, they'd gotten really good at being clean, tidy, and well put together and have lost love for Jesus. That's a terrifying idea to me. Jesus says, "I'm going to remove my presence unless..." Then he points them back to when they were born. We're going to look at that together.

I love the birth of the church at Ephesus. It's supernatural, wild, insane, and everything that would make us uncomfortable. The Bible says Paul shows up, and he starts preaching the gospel. Then there's some disagreement about that. So instead of arguing with those who want to argue, he instead finds those who are hungry to know the Lord and begins to pour into them every day in the Hall of Tyrannus. They're driving out demons, and they're healing sicknesses.

What happens is, when the gospel lands, it explodes. The whole socioeconomic climate in Ephesus is flipped on its head, and you could not make money off of sinful gain. Those who built shrines to Artemis started a riot in the city because they couldn't make money selling idols anymore. I mean, can you imagine a movement of the gospel in Dallas/Fort Worth where all of a sudden there were no strip clubs because no one was going to go to them? There was a full-scale shutdown on anything that was of sinful gain. The gospel just flipped the socioeconomic climate on its head.

That's what happens in Ephesus, and really the spark that made Ephesus explode involved... Paul had been casting out demons and healing the sick. I'm not making any of this up. You can go when I'm done and read Acts 18 and 19. The seven sons of Sceva watch Paul cast out a demon, and the Bible says they are the sons of a Jewish itinerant exorcist. That was a job back then.

They go find a demon-possessed man. They find a guy who is demon possessed, and here's what they say according to the text. "In the name of Paul's God, Jesus Christ, we command you to come out." The Bible says the demon speaks to them and says, "**Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize...**" I don't want to move past that. I love that! The demons are like, "Paul? Oh gosh! Yeah, we know who he is. Is he around? Is he around right now? We've heard of that guy."

He is so wrecking shop in spiritual realities that the demons are like, "Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. No, we got an update about that dude. Yeah, he ain't here, is he?" Then I love the last line. "**...but who are you?**" "**Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?**" "I don't know your name." Then the Bible says the man overpowered the seven sons of Sceva and beat them (this is in the Bible) bloody and naked so that they fled the house without clothes.

Now if you've ever watched a fight and then talked about the fight afterward, there is always debate about who won the fight. General rule: if when the fight started you were wearing pants and when the fight ended, you no longer had pants, you lost. Right? Nobody is going to be like, "Well, he got that one hook in." No, no, no. You came in with drawers, and when it was over, you weren't wearing drawers. You lost the fight.

That was like a spark in a powder keg, and Ephesus exploded with the wildness of the gospel. It was stunning. Here's what we read in Acts 19:17 through 20. "**And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks.**" What did? That the seven sons of Sceva got the pants beat off of them. That's what became known in all of Ephesus. That's what made it explode.

**"And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily."**

I think we see three things here that they did at first that, on top of the things Jesus is looking at in Revelation 2 and saying, "I love that," he would call us to make sure we always got kind of our eyes on the prize. Here are the three things I think you see. One you see is...

1. *The name of Jesus being extolled.* To *extol* (I don't think we use that word a lot) just means to praise enthusiastically. To just kind of be captivated and consumed by Jesus. Don't churchify this text. It doesn't mean when we're singing in church we should extol the name of Jesus enthusiastically because that's not how it's being used. It's certainly not how it's playing out in Ephesus.

It's just a group of men and women captivated by Jesus Christ who can't help but extol his name, to praise his name, to rejoice in the goodness of Christ in their hearts and in their lives. There are people who wherever they are they're extolling the name of Jesus Christ. We want to be a church that is captivated by Jesus. Jesus is front and center. Jesus is celebrated. Jesus is rejoiced in. Jesus is given credit. Jesus is exalted. We want to be enthusiastic in our praise of Jesus Christ, not just in here but especially out there.

When we sit down and have lunch wherever we're going to do that, we want to be just enthusiastic about our salvation, enthusiastic about the goodness of our God and the fact that he is pushing back darkness as he is establishing his kingdom. We want to be a Jesus people. Well, isn't that going to make us weird? Yes! It's going to make us weird even around other Christians. What we're talking about here isn't some kind of cold, weird religion that's overly programmatic. No, it's wild! It's just, "Man! Jesus has just got a hold of them. I'm wiggling out here!"

Then that's not the only thing we see, and I want to spend some time here for my own heart. The second thing you see here is they were...

*2. Divulging and confessing their practices.* If I could just make that a little bit clearer, here's what I would say. The church at Ephesus was grimy. It was grimy, man! I mean, you have these men and women. If you were paying attention to what we read earlier, they were being saved out of witchcraft. They were being saved out of temple prostitution. They were men and women who had been visiting temple prostitutes. I mean, there is a griminess to Ephesus. I mean, it's wheels off. They're burning witchcraft books. I mean, it's wild.

Now in the future what we see is they don't tolerate evil and they have good doctrine, but there's not a hint in Revelation 2 that confession and the divulging of practices is a part of their lives. Now maybe it is, but there's nothing in the text. I need The Village Church to always be a bit grimy.

In the early days when... Really kind of one of our first purges at The Village Church when we were Highland Village First Baptist Church was I would get these crazy emails about how disappointed people were that when they pulled up in the parking lot, there were some men and women smoking in the parking lot.

I'm going, "Look. I don't want secondhand smoke in my face, right? Yet what happened after? Did they come in and hear the gospel? Did they walk into the room, and did they hear the good news of

Jesus Christ proclaimed? Then if you're a mature believer, you should just celebrate that the grimy are among us and rejoice. Man, maybe you need to have a conversation with your kid, or maybe you need to kind of absorb, but you deal with it because you're mature. This is God's mission."

I think the one that probably left a mark on me (made me angry for a while) was we had this beautiful woman who came to know Christ. She just worked in the strip clubs. Then she just started bringing strippers to our church. I don't know what you know about strippers, but no little girl dreams of being one. Really terrible things happen that lead to that. They don't just arrive there because when they were 11-year-old girls, they were like, "Do you know what I would love to do when I grow up?" No, it's awful. It's a world of brokenness and despair.

Do you know who dresses like strippers? Strippers. Then I started getting these emails like, "Hey, man. You need to say something about how women are dressing around here. You need to!" I'm just like, "Or you could deal with the lust of your heart and own your own sin and see women as sisters instead of something to be consumed. We should just rejoice that the grimy are among us."

I am unable to pastor a super clean, smiley, perfect church. I can't do it. God has not wired me like that. The more it looks like that, the more I feel like we're failing and off mission. I just can't. I am! I just can't. I mean, I can't do it. Now remember what we say because I'm not going, "So just give yourself over to griminess," because I don't believe that either. Here's what we've said for 15 years. It's okay to not be okay, but...what? It's not okay to stay there. God is going to move. God is going to save. God is going to work in us, which leads me to the third thing we see here.

3. *Forgiveness of sin and victory over Satan.* **"So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily."** The men and women in Ephesus have forgiveness of sin, and then we're seeing victory over Satan. I know this is going to wig some of you out, but I'm just going to embrace it. If you're worshipping demons (which is what's happening at the temple of Artemis), if you have books of witchcraft in your house and you're casting spells, you have given permission to a very real Satan and demonic realities to have claim on your heart and to disrupt and to break and to bend.

I don't know that a believer can be possessed, but they can certainly be oppressed like a tick on a dog sapping the strength, stealing from it vitality. Yet when the gospel lands, we're seeing even the power of Satan broken and men and women beginning to grow in holiness, be transformed by the gospel.

Hear me. Here's the way I would explain it to you. At the very center of The Village Church, I think there are probably 1,000 to 1,200 people who their *yes* is down. "Whatever Jesus wants, I'm saying yes. I'm all in. I'm walking in victory. I'm going to just embrace the awkwardness of what it means to be a son or daughter of God, and I'm going to go with the gospel wherever I go." That's what stands. That's the gravitational pull of The Village Church.

Then attached to that group is about 2,000 or 3,000 people who are good people. They want to grow. They want to be in that group. They're just not. They have some hurdles to overcome. They have some sin they're dealing with. They're not quite full. They don't know how to say *yes* all the way yet. They're not bad people. They're really good people who are hungry to know Jesus.

Then attached to that, there is another couple of thousand who just think I'm funny and like music. Right? "No, no. This is my kind of church. I have no intention of ever surrendering to Jesus. I'm not really serious about it, but I feel better about myself when I go."

Then attached to them is just a few hundred people who just are begrudgingly being drug to church by a neighbor, coworker, friend, or spouse, which means if you're ever looking at us, we're going to look a bit grimy from the outside. But the further in you get, the holier it gets. The more serious about Jesus it gets. What's happening is mature believers at the center are pulling in from the outside those who are in those outer circles. That bigger circle grows, but there's always new life being had. This is happening right now.

We nearly can't hold recovery anymore in that room on Wednesday nights. I mean, we're just seeing hundreds and hundreds of people who have never even come to our service come on Wednesday nights because they've heard freedom is being found. Marriages are being put back together. Addictions are being broken. They're coming out of the woodwork not to our services but to a Wednesday night gathering of broken people who are serious about wanting Jesus to free, heal, restore, and establish.

I just want to just really lovingly say this. If that's going to be too difficult for where you are, then, man, I love you. I don't want you to feel any shame, but I would just invite you to find another place that isn't as zealous as I am personally for these things. If you're going to be like, "Man, if I'm constantly having to navigate a smoking section in the parking lot before I get to there..." or, "Man, if I'm always going to have to be averting my son's eyes because of the... If I'm going to have to muff my kid's ears every time we do baptism testimonies..."

If that's just where you are, listen. God bless you. I'm not angry. I'm not upset with you. I just think this will never be home for you. I just want to free you up to go to a place that is going to be a little bit different in their approach than we are. You can plant there, grow there, and feel safe there. I'm just laying before you that me as one of the elders... I have one life. I'm not spending it that way. I just have one. I don't know how many days I have, but I want to be wrung out watching those very, very far from Jesus come to know him, love him, and be transformed by him.

I have boundless energy to that end, but it's exhausting to me to manage the moralistic deism stuff. I'm for you. There are hundreds and hundreds of churches in Dallas. I would just encourage you, before you get too deep in to just go and find that place where you feel like you can belong wholeheartedly and enjoy Christian fellowship without always being irked by what you see around you.

I love you. I don't want you to go, but I just always want to be really honest. This is who we are. This is what we're going to be. Man, if that's not you, I love you, but you should go. You should go, because it's not going to change. Now the people you see right now who are immature, by the grace of God, they're going to mature. But by the grace of God, new people are going to get saved, and then they're going to come in. Then there we are again, right?

It's like, "Great! Finally she is dressing right. Now look at this one!" It's just never going to stop. "Finally this smoking group seems to be changing." It's like, "Come on, man! Yes, it is! Praise his name! Yes, it is!" It should be wild, man. It's establishing order, right? It's not wild for wild sake. It's wildness that brings about order. It's chaos that leads to order. This is what I'm in for, and this is what, brothers and sisters, I'm inviting you into.

Again, I don't know of anyone who has embodied this as well as David and Keri Campbell. David and Keri Campbell were here for years. I mean, they're just faithful. In fact, they're sitting where they used to sit for years. You actually are! I mean, how ironic is that? I'm going to pray, and they're going to come up and join me for about 20 minutes. We're going to talk about what Jesus is doing in Berlin and then have them encourage us as we consider how to live this thing out here in our area. Will you pray with me as they come up and join me?

Father, I thank you for today, and I thank you for how, in a very real way, you have blessed this church with kind of a grimy reality of you saving and drawing near to yourself and opening the

hearts of those who are far from you. I think of the stories we could just tell all day long about those who have come to know you out of lifestyles of swinging and those who have come to know you out of prostitution, and those who have come out of serious and brutal addiction to drugs and alcohol.

Man, I see faces in here that were far from you who now worship you with an open heart. I just pray you would protect us. We don't want to be Ephesus in Revelation 2. We want to be Ephesus in Acts 17, 18, and 19. Hold us there. Help us. It's through your beautiful name I pray, amen.

Would you guys welcome the Campbells? Now how many of you knew David and Keri before they left? Okay. See? In every service. How many of you are duplicates (you've already been in a service)? See? They weren't that time. Just to encourage you, I mean, look at the reach you two have had, and you haven't been here in three years. It's pretty significant.

**David Campbell:** We haven't been dealing with smokers.

**Matt:** That's true. That's true! You've been dealing with other things. David and Keri are in Berlin. They work primarily among Muslim refugees from the Middle East in Berlin. So scary images you're seeing on your television that are meant to make us really be terrified of Muslims, this is a man and woman and a family who have kind of gone right into the belly of the beast to share the gospel. Did I exaggerate or something? I want to be...

**Keri Campbell:** You're good.

**Matt:** Okay, thank you. Will you kind of chat with us a little bit about life in Berlin and what it looks like for you guys to kind of be light in darkness there?

**David:** Yeah, so when God called us to Berlin, we knew we had a hunger to see the kingdom of God come. We knew the light shines in the darkness, so we really understood when the kingdom of God comes... We look at it in Luke 11 that deliverance and demons are cast out. We see in Luke 10 that people are healed. We knew that was going to happen, and we just kind of picked a really dark place initially, a place where all the refugees would come in. They would register with the government, get their money, find vouchers for housing and stuff.

It was just a place where riots would break out. There were police vans everywhere. There were news crews just waiting for something significant to happen so they could put it on the air. We

would go in. We just started praying for people. We would see really God begin to move. Then we just really started taking teams in and just began to worship in the middle of just an area that felt like there was a riot just about to break out.

We'd start worshipping, and you would see everything change. It would just change immediately. What happened was shortly thereafter, we got frustrated because we thought, "Man, our place of ministry has kind of dried up." If you look at it now, if they put sod down and put some playground equipment, it would be a park. But at the time, it was pretty bad. Then we just started taking that and going to different dark areas of the city and kind of just looking and seeking the kingdom of God to come. That's really just kind of how we got started and what we started doing.

**Matt:** I want to provide color commentary, because I think it will blow your mind. When he says they went to that place where all the Muslims from all the Middle East were coming to register and worshiped, they literally brought a guitar and a little drum. I don't know how to...

**Keri:** It's a cajón. Do you know a cajón?

**Matt:** Does anybody know what a cajón is? All right. Well, I'm ignorant here. They sang "O Happy Day." They went into this place where there are riot police and news cameras and all of this tension and everything is really explosive and just started singing "O Happy Day."

It's a great picture of how light penetrates darkness because that's how things began. All of a sudden, man, things started to break open, and people began to be open. Will you talk a little bit more about what happened as you were singing "O Happy Day" in what we have been told is the most dangerous, deadly place on earth?

**David:** Yeah, really quickly what would happen was you just started seeing... People would start singing along with us. You know, you have Muslims singing "O happy day when you took my sins away." They're singing along with us, and then they're clapping. Then all of a sudden, they're whistling. Then they're dancing. Everything changed. Everything completely changed. We began to see people saved. Like not just us arguing them into the kingdom, but them begging us, "How can we just start following Jesus? Can you show us what this looks like?"

**Matt:** Did anybody else have that happen this week where just your neighbor was like, "Please let me accept Jesus"?

**Keri:** We started keeping waders in our vehicle because people wanted to be baptized. So we keep waders in our vehicle to find water and baptize people.

**Matt:** "Get the waders, honey. You never know."

**David:** We would instruct our teams, "Okay, you can go out, and you can be the savior, or you can let Jesus be the Savior." We would say, "Even if you *can* provide the need, is there a way you can pray for someone in that moment?" We saw this guy. It was super cold one day, and he was walking by wearing shower shoes and no socks.

This young lady, **Rebecca (33:04)**, walked over and said, "Why don't you have shoes on?" He said, "I don't have any." She just prayed for Jesus to provide him shoes and socks. She walked *this* way. He walked *this* way. A man walked out of nowhere with a bag of shoes his size and handed it to him and walked away. He chased us down the street to give his life to Jesus. He was kissing me on the cheek, which...

**Matt:** You are not a physical touch guy. If you run into David afterward, he does not want you to hug him.

**Keri:** So do it! Do it!

**Matt:** Yes, please do! Please do! You've been gone for three years, and in three years, a lot has changed. There are new roads. There are new shops. Old shops are gone. There are new subdivisions. A lot has changed, and I'm wondering, coming back in after three years being gone... Not so much what you're picking up on in regard to, "Oh, this road is a lot bigger than it once was," or, "What is that over there?" but as you kind of get a sense of the spiritual climate of the area, what are you sensing coming back from Berlin, and how would you kind of encourage and edify us?

A lot of what you're describing that's happening in Berlin, some of that started while you were here. How could you encourage us, first, the temperature of kind of what you're seeing and sensing here and in this area, and then how you might encourage us to step out in the fullness of doing the Word and not just hearing it?

**David:** Yeah, one of the things we have noticed... We began noticing it before we came back just with our connections to people here. Then coming back here really cemented it that there's an unusual spiritual hunger, especially among this body that is growing. I think a lot of you feel isolated from one another.

You have this hunger that you want to see the presence and the power of God in daily life, but you are afraid of maybe being a little strange or a little weird or something of this nature. We get a lot of people who contact us and say, "This is happening in my life." Really we feel the spiritual hunger that's beginning to rise.

Also in that, we see there's a lot of anxiety about the future. I believe really you are sensing something from God that you are sensing everything is about to change. Life as you know it is about to change, and you know that. But the Enemy comes along, and he distorts that message.

You feel like, "Man, I think I have to worry about my job or my family or my friendships or all of these things" when really what it is is the Lord just giving you this confirmation, "Things are about to change, and it's going to be okay. You don't have to be afraid of it because it will look different, but it's okay."

**Matt:** I love that. At lunch on Thursday, you brought up John 4:34. That's where the disciples are trying to get Jesus to eat. Jesus says to the disciples that his food is to do the will of the Father and to accomplish his purposes. You talked about *doing as feasting*. Will you talk a little bit about that for us? Because I think it's pertinent to where we are as a congregation.

**David:** Yeah, because I think as a congregation, as being a part of that, you know, we live through that. We know we're one of you. I had this insatiable hunger for a long time. I wanted to know Jesus more and more and more and more, but I had been taught growing up that the only way that can happen is just to read more of your Bible. I went through a period of about seven years just reading about 10 chapters a day, buying tons of books, reading and reading and reading, podcasts. I mean, it was just over and over and over and over.

The thing is, I was still hungry. I felt like I was starving to death, and I felt like I wasn't growing. No matter how much I dove in, I just felt like I wasn't growing. You know, I was just really being struck by the fact that Jesus said, "**My food is to do the will of him who sent me...**"

I had always thought that pulling away, having my quiet time, that's where I'm *feeding*. Then what I'm doing is me *exercising*. I think it's the other way around. I think our *doing* is actually us beginning to really feast on the Lord. What I found was all of the study I had done up to that point really began to make sense to me once I started engaging.

**Matt:** I love that! I think everybody kind of gets amped up about these things, but then what does that mean? What are practical steps when we're not far from shutting this down and celebrating the Lord's Table and being dismissed? What does that look like practically walking out of this room today?

**David:** What I would encourage is just take Luke 10:1 through 12 and try to be as literal to it as possible. Just follow it. You know, Jesus said, "**...I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves...**" If you take a lamb and shove it out to a forest filled with wolves, the wolves will find the lamb. The lamb doesn't have to go looking for the wolves. Just know the people God wants you to minister for, they're looking for you. You don't have to go looking for them. They'll come find you.

How do you find them? You look at it, and anybody who is extending just a little bit unusual hospitality. Maybe it's a little bit different than what you're used to. Maybe they strike you as something a little bit... You know, your heart is just kind of pulled toward them. Then just ask if you can pray for them. You know, just see. Pray for them. Pray for healing. Pray for deliverance. Pray for blessing.

Whatever it looks like, just engage, and pray for them. See what happens. The Lord says if your peace rests on that person... Okay, don't run from all these places. Stick there. Start working there. I think all of you guys can do that today and really begin to... You'll start developing relationships built on Jesus. It's not relationships built on something else but built on Jesus. Just run with it.

**Matt:** Keri, will you tell the story Thursday with the waitress at La Hacienda Ranch. I think this is a good picture of what David is talking about. We had lunch at La Hacienda Ranch on Thursday (the best beef fajitas in Dallas, I would say). Then from there, it was evident our waitress was *not* having a good day. I'm like a little human Golden Retriever. I'm like, "How are you? Tell me your name. Oh, great. Yeah, the queso with the jalapenos in it. Yeah!"

None of that worked. I mean, she just kind of was... I mean, I don't know what was going on in her life, but it was a tough day. Then we took the kids out, and Keri went back in. Will you chat a little bit about that? Because I think that's what we're talking about.

**Keri:** Right. So it's super practical. You can all do this. Constantly be aware of where the Spirit is moving. Okay? I saw her face, and it didn't look happy. I went back, and I asked for her name. I asked if I could pray for her. When I do that kind of a thing, I want to call forth heaven in this moment. Right? Jesus gives us permission when he teaches us how to pray. If something is not of heaven here, we can call it down.

I told her she is a woman of peace. She is a woman of joy. I just prayed a little bit more with her. Her face literally changed. It changed from what we saw as kind of angry into a peaceful, joyful face. She was very thankful. She wasn't resistant. She was super thankful that I took the time to do that. I think practically speaking, it's opening your mouth. When you are captivated with Jesus, you open your mouth, and that comes out.

There's a couple right here who I met at the pool the other day. We can't talk without talking about Jesus. Do you know what I mean? Every time you have a conversation, when you're captivated with him, when you're captivated with your Savior, you speak of him, and things happen. Big things happen.

**Matt:** No doubt! I think one of the things that happens is we start to immediately think of why that's not us. We're introverted, or, "Man, if I ever said this, I would lose my job." I have yet to find the person who you would be unable to say, "Hey, I know we probably don't believe the same things, but man, I've noticed you're in a tough season. I would love to just pray for you right now. Are you all right with that?"

I haven't met a Muslim or a witch that would be like, "I can't. I'm turning you in to my..." Right? They're just like, "Oh my gosh! That would be amazing." Like they said, you're starting this relationship on Jesus. It's like you're talking with them like you would talk with your Christian friends from the first conversation. You *can* do this. This isn't difficult. It's just going to require three seconds of awkwardness, which is a tiny price to pay for the power of the Holy Spirit moving in, through, and with your life.

I've said this in all the services. If you're bored with your faith, chances are God is bored with your faith. I'm just being straight with you. If you're like, "I don't get it..." So many of us, we're like people who are studying a sport without ever playing it. You know it's like you know all the plays to run, but you just won't get out there and play. The invitation is to come and play. It is not your ability. It is God who works in and through you.

We are committed to training you. If you wait for us to train you, you are being disobedient to the call God has on your life. We've grown too fast, over a thousand a year for 12 years. We're trying to catch up on training, but you should not be waiting to be trained to fulfill the commands of God that are clear in Scripture. You don't need to wait until you have all the answers because you will never have all the answers. That's why it's the power of God unto salvation and not the power of your argumentation and intellect that is the power of salvation. Right?

You *can* do this. It's just a willingness to step out in faith. We should not be bored, crusty people. We just shouldn't. I don't know. I don't know what you're believing in and following if that's where you are. The Word of God is living and active. It's sharper than any double-edged sword. It separates out bone and marrow, flesh and spirit. Now I'm going to pray, but before I do, will you thank the Campbells for being with us today? We love you guys. Let me pray for us.

Father, we thank you for your mercy and grace. I pray where there is fear in this place, Spirit of God, you would drive out fear as love casts out fear. I pray in a very real way that you would encourage the hearts and minds of my brothers and sisters in this place to boldly live out their faith with confidence.

I pray for supernatural power to not just abide in them because it already does as the Spirit dwells in them, but that they would walk it out in the places in which you've placed them. I pray you would surprise them this week as they have these kind of conversations. Even as they leave this room, Spirit of God, you would kind of spark their spiritual imagination of what might be and what could be and what you're up to.

I thank you that you will save. You will redeem. You will break the back of the Enemy. Thank you for your invitation to play. I just pray for the courage to step on the field. You are gracious, kind, and good. We love you, and we want to love you more than we do. Help us. It's through your beautiful name I pray, amen.

