

**Rightly Delivering the Gospel**  
**Pastor Ty Blackburn**  
**John 12:44-50**  
**June 1, 2014**

Dr. Mack is not preaching this morning. It says in your bulletin that he is. He was actually scheduled to preach next week, but he is going to be preaching a little bit later in the month of June, not next Sunday as well. He came into my office after Sunday morning Bible study and said, "I'm going to check and see about the bulletin. I'm going to need to borrow your tie if I'm preaching." So, anyway. We look forward to hearing him in a few weeks. Praise God that he and Carol are both doing so well, and so grateful for the Lord's kindness to them, and kindness to us in continuing to bless and strengthen them so they can continue to shine the light of Jesus Christ.

We're returning to John 12, and actually going to finish up this section, Lord-willing, this morning, Verses 44-50, which is really the last public discourse that John records in his Gospel. This is the last, kind of Jesus' last words to the crowd, because from Chapter 13 on, Jesus is talking to His disciples in the upper room. So this is His last message to the public. It is quite instructive as we look at that, at how He delivered this message. I mentioned earlier that we're talking about delivering the Gospel, and the title of the message is really 'Rightly Delivering the Gospel'. The focus is, in this passage I think what we're going to see, as we look at this, is we can glean some principles that help us have the right manner of delivery. I mean, it is so important that you have the right content. That is the first foundational thing, that you understand that the Good News is that God has sent His Son into the world to save sinners, that we are all hopeless apart from Him, but He sent His Son into the world to save sinners. Jesus is fully God, fully man, lived a perfect life, and offered Himself as an atoning sacrifice, bearing the wrath of God for the sins, for every sin of everyone who would ever believe. He rose again on the third day and sits enthroned at the right hand of God. That is the Gospel, that is the content of the Gospel, and there is so much there, and so often people get it wrong there, but it is also important, not just that we have the right content, but that we have the right manner, that we deliver the message rightly.

You might have seen, it was a month or two ago, maybe it was several months ago, on the news broadcast I believe that I was watching, they showed a video. Now that people have these cameras around their homes, and businesses, from time to time you'll see some odd things that they captured on their camera. One lady had complained to the post office when she looked back over, she received a package

in the mail, the box was marked 'Fragile—Handle with Care', and it was delivered to her outside of her garage. Everything looked good to start with. There is the box right outside the garage, she goes and opens it up, and this priceless item that said 'Fragile—Handle with Care', 'Caution', you know, all over the box, was broken. So she's distressed, "How'd this happen?" Well, she goes back and looks at her video, and she sees that the mail carrier didn't bother getting out of his car, but threw the box from about 40 feet away. The box that says 'Handle with Care', onto the concrete driveway. He got it there, but how he got it there wasn't appropriate. In reality, when you don't get it there appropriately, sometimes you mess up the contents of the message by the way you deliver it.

So there is an analogy with also how we deliver the most priceless treasure that we have. To the unbeliever we need to think, not necessarily about the content of that message, we certainly need to get that right, but this passage is going to challenge us to also deliver it with the right manner, in the right way. It answers the question *how* we go about it. Not so much what we say, but how we say it. In a very timely, I think, message for us, I mentioned earlier that in 21st Century evangelical Christianity, that all of the momentum and inertia, there is a lot of talk about how we deliver the message, but all the momentum and inertia is away from Biblical methodologies, the Biblical manner. Because the Bible says a lot about, it doesn't just tell us what to say, it tells us how to say it. Some people say that the message never changes, but the methods do. Well there is a grain of truth in that, but there is really a bigger principle that they often miss. Though the methods may change slightly, the methods are controlled by the Scripture. The Scripture doesn't just tell us what to say, it tells us how to say it. So we need to derive our methodology from the Bible. If we're not, we're in danger of then corrupting the glorious Gospel which we present.

We see this in a number of ways. I mean, I'm going to talk about kind of the general culture of preaching. For example, you know when people go to hear sermons at many churches, they go to services, the tone, and the manner in which the church service is conducted is not without some need of examination. I mean, like for instance, does it seem that we're hearing a sermon, or are we just like having a dialogue? Just sharing some things? "I'm just rapping with you." Not rapping, that doesn't work so well anymore, does it? You don't want to hear me rap. "But yeah, I'm just sharing some thoughts, throwing it out there for your consideration. Here are just some ideas." Now do you see what that does to the content of what I'm about to say then? If that is my tone? You know, it goes beyond that. So often the way that we're taught to evangelize today, or the way it has kind of become inculcated into the Christian church is that when you try to

share with someone, you first of all try to show that they are really not that much different than you. “I’m not that much different than you.” “Hey, I’m really cool, and I’m hip, and I know what is going on. So you don’t have to be scared of me because I’m not different from you.”

Well now there is a place where you try to meet someone where they are. Paul said, “We become all things to all men,” and you saw that in Acts 17 where he started off by saying, “Hey, I see you guys are very religious people. I even saw an altar to the unknown god.” After he connected, he was pretty direct and authoritative. “What you worship in ignorance, I’m going to proclaim to you.” That is not soft-pedaling. “For the God who made Heaven and earth does not live in temples made with hands, not served by human hands. I’m not interested in talking about all the different gods, I’m telling you about the one true God. This God has appointed a day in which He will judge the living and the dead. He has overlooked times of ignorance, and now He has appointed a day, and it is time for you to repent.” That is the message Paul gave in Acts 17. If you read it carefully, it is full of Gospel authority. So people that say, “You know, well, in this day and age, people, it is a pluralistic society, and you need to sort of acknowledge that where people are, ‘Hey, that’s truth for you. That’s okay.’ This is truth for me, and I’d like to share it with you.” No, it’s not truth for me, or truth for you, there is truth and there is error. In reality, we can acknowledge, “Hey, yeah, we’re on the same plane. I was just as blind as you are. I’m blind like you are apart from God’s grace.” You’re no better than the unbeliever you are witnessing to, possibly worse. “I know myself a lot better than I know you, so obviously in my eyes I’m worse than you are, but what I’m giving to you is not my own ideas, this is the word of the living God. It is not one idea among many, it is *the* authoritative declaration from God Himself, as how man can know Him.”

Not that we, you don’t just meet somebody and start preaching in the tone that I’m using right now, but the attitudes that we have come across even as we winsomely, and kindly engage in conversation. We start off talking to somebody, “Hey, how are you doing? Tell me about, what do you do? Hey, tell me about that. Do you find that fulfilling? How long have you been doing that?” I mean, you start with that of course, but when it comes to talking about eternal life, and the matters about which their soul hangs in the balance, there is earnestness about that. There is certainty, and anything less than that is to dishonor God. People who act like we have to act like we don’t know anything with certainty. “Well, if it’s up to me,” no, but it’s not up to me. God has spoken, and He’s spoken clearly in His word, and He’s given us this Spirit so that what I know, I know with certainty. It’s not because I’m smart, it’s because God is gracious, and the same God that has made it

known to me can make it known to you. So this sense of Christianity, “It’s really no big deal whether you accept it or not. I’m just sharing.” If we’re thinking biblically, that is not the manner in which we deliver the message. That is like driving up to somebody’s house and throwing the box of treasure from the road. God’s word is not to be handled like that.

We see in this passage, Jesus’ last words, John 12:44-50, we see much about our manner when we look at Jesus’ manner. How did He share His last public proclamation of the Gospel to the masses, to the crowds? How did He share? Let’s look at these verses, beginning with Verse 44.

***John 12:44-50 ~ And Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. 45 He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. 46 I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. 47 If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. 49 For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. 50 I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.”***

Let’s pray together.

*Father, we come intensely aware of our need of grace, aware that even with redeemed hearts, with minds that have been enlightened by Your Spirit. We still wrestle with the old man, the old ways of thought, the world system, our flesh, the lies of the enemy, and we need the power of Your word to take hold of our minds, and our hearts, by Your Spirit, and to make us think Your thoughts after You. And to make us able to receive Your word, and to apply it to our hearts, and our lives. We pray this in Jesus’ Name, Amen.*

It is interesting, this idea of lack of authority that is so much of kind of a way that is going through the church today, that you know, are like I said, are sharing. We are just giving you one perspective. It’s so illogical, the surface of it, and I found a quote some time ago, of an outspoken atheist who, this quote really is really amazingly perceptive for an atheist to have said this about evangelism. Listen to

what he says. This is a statement by Penn Jillette, of the magic duo, Penn and Teller. He is an outspoken atheist. This is what he says:

*I've always said that I don't respect people who don't proselytize. I don't respect that at all. If you believe that there is a Heaven and a hell, and people could be going to hell, or not getting eternal life, and you think that it is not really worth telling them, because it would make it socially awkward.*

This is an atheist who thinks people shouldn't proselytize, and who say, "Just leave me alone, and keep your religion to yourself." How much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that? I mean, if I believed beyond the shadow of a doubt that a truck was coming at you, and you didn't believe that truck was bearing down on you, there is a certain point where I tackle you, and this is more important than that. Isn't that amazing? You know if somebody has a truck bearing down on them you don't say, "Hey, you know, I'd just really like to share with you something here. I don't want to catch you at a bad time. I hope this isn't offensive." No, you say, "There is a truck coming! Get out of the road!" There is some sense in which that earnestness needs to be in our evangelism. When you look at Jesus, and you look at the apostles, it is always there, and we see it in this passage.

### 1) The Urgency of the Gospel:

What I want us to look at this morning, how to deliver the Gospel rightly, there are three things I think we see in the passage that ought to be in our presentation of the Good News, ought to be in the way we reflect upon the Good News, and the way that we celebrate the Good News, so that when we are going, as Matthew 28:18-20 says, "As you go", Jesus says, "make disciples." Teaching them, as you are going you are to be making disciples. Every Christian is called to be a disciple-maker, and as we go, how do you go about it? We'll see three things, I think, in the passage. First, we see the urgency of the Gospel. The urgency of the Gospel in the way Jesus delivers His message.

### A) Time is Short:

Now it's important to remember that Jesus knows His time is short. We're going to see that John 13 begins, now before the *Feast of the Passover*, this is the Last Supper, is the next thing coming up. We are in Holy Week, and this is Jesus' last public address, and then before the Passover, this is His last moment of sharing the

Gospel. So time is short. And the urgency of the Gospel always ought to understand that. The time is short. The time that we have, and the time that this person has, we don't know how long it is, and so time is of the essence. You see His urgency in the verb '*cried out*', 12:44, ***And Jesus cried out and said,...*** This verb is only used four times in the Gospel. Jesus, this verb is used to describe what He says in John 7:28 and 7:37. Those are in the area of the temple during the feast of tabernacles He cries out the first time. They are saying to Him, "Hey, where do You come from? We don't know where You come from. You know?" No, they said, "The Messiah, we know when He comes we won't know where He came from, but we know both where You came from, and we know where You were born." Or, "We know where You came from. You came from Nazareth." And Jesus in His earnestness, "You don't have any idea where I came from." He cries out. Verse 28 says that. "You don't know where I came from or where I'm going." In His earnestness, and this word connotes a sense of earnestness, and a measure of almost grief. So when He cries out, and he says, "He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me." This is like a last appeal. You guys are rejecting me. He knows that the masses, the multitude by and large has rejected Him. A few disciples are believing, and there are some who are hanging in the balance, kind of in between, as we just talked about the last time we looked at this passage in Verses 42 and 43. There were some among the Pharisees who believed secretly, but they weren't willing to lay their cards on the table. They weren't really true followers of Christ. So as He looks out at the sea of faces, His urgency is evident. Even in that word '*cried out*', time is short, and He cries out.

## B) The Need is Great:

Not just because time is short, the urgency of the Gospel also understands that the need is great. Verse 46:

***John 12:46 ~ I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.***

He looks out at those people and he sees people who are in darkness. Their lives are lived in blindness. They don't know it. A blind person that knows it takes precautions, they have a seeing-eye dog, or they have a cane that helps them. They learn how to navigate through the world, but the reality of spiritual blindness is you don't know that you're blind. So if you don't know that you're blind, and you're going around without those necessary precautions, anything can happen to you. You can walk out in front of a truck, you can fall into a hole. The need is great. The message must be heard. They abide in darkness. And you see also that time is

short when you look back actually to Verse 35. Jesus had just said earlier, in speaking about the light, He said: ...***“For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light,...*** You only have a short span of time of opportunity.

### C) Action is Necessary:

The urgency of the Gospel sees that time is short, the need is great, and that action is necessary. When we present the Gospel, we are not presenting thoughts to be intellectually accepted. The Gospel requires action, it requires surrender, and we see this in the passage. Look what He says in Verse 44.

***John 12:44 ~ ...“He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me.***

You are to believe. But then also, in Verse 47:

***John 12:47 ~ If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world,...***

“If you hear My sayings and you don’t keep them, you are rejecting Me,” is what we go on to see. The idea is that when you hear the words of Jesus, you must keep them. You don’t just think about them, and the word ‘keep’ actually means ‘to guard, to watch over’. When the word comes to you, you treasure it, you look at it, you hold it, you give your attention to it. You don’t just take it in and say, “Yeah, I’ll think about that.” So the urgency in sharing with someone is, “Listen, you must understand time is short, your need is greater than you can imagine, and you must act on this. You must receive His words, receive Christ.” Urgency ought to be a part of everything that we do. If we were really seeing things as they are, we would be more urgent ourselves. If you knew that you were going to die tomorrow, what would be different about today? A sense of urgency needs to be in our sharing of Christ.

### 2) The Gravity of the Gospel:

But not just the urgency of the Gospel, but secondly the gravity of the Gospel. The gravity of the Gospel, the weightiness of the Gospel, the seriousness of the Gospel. I mentioned earlier that the idea comes across as it’s just really no big deal. You know, “There’s really not much difference between me and you.” Isn’t that amazing that that’s even become a part of the vernacular in Christian circles, in

churches, where the word of God is being proclaimed, that someone could act like that becoming a Christian is not that big of a deal? I mean, the Bible says that when you become a Christian you go from darkness to light. That you were delivered from the domain of darkness, you are a child of the devil, you are a slave to sin, and then suddenly you are translated by the power of God, and the power of His word, into the Kingdom of His beloved Son. You have moved an infinite distance, it's not a small step. "It's just a small thing. Hey, just become a Christian. Try Christ." When you present it that way, they follow your direction, they are not getting saved. I mean, God may save them in spite of you, that happens. Sometimes bad Gospel presentations, the Lord saves because He can do whatever He wants to do, but if they take it the way that you're presenting it, it's not salvation. "I'll just try it. I'll add Jesus to the rest of my life." No, if you want to follow Jesus, it means you deny yourself, you take up your cross, and you follow Him. You die to everything else and you seek only Him. That is true Biblical salvation. That is not a small thing.

So gravity, a sense of the weightiness of it, is evident here in Jesus' presentation. I mean, to fail to guard His words, He makes clear, you know when you hear it you can just kind of ponder it and think about it. Now, I understand that when we share Christ with somebody that they are going to go home, and they're going to have to think about it, and the Lord is going to work, and we sow seeds, and it's going to take time, but it is an underlying attitude though. If there is still a sense in our hearts that we know, "This is the most important thing in the world," that comes across, and if we don't believe it is the most important thing in the world, that also comes across. He makes clear that how you respond to His word is a lot bigger deal than we tend to think it is. There were many people, like the Pharisees, that were mentioned in Verse 42, some of the Pharisees, who believed in Him but *...they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.*, Verses 42 and 43. They were really looking at Jesus, and hearing what He had said, and thinking, "I think He really might be the Messiah. I think He is the Messiah." But I think from this passage we would say, "They're not saved." They have an intellectual understanding, but they have not responded to His word appropriately. They loved a lesser glory, the glory of men, rather than the glory of God. And Jesus is reaching out to them when He says, Verse 47:

***John 12:47 ~ If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him;...***

He says, “Look, if you hear My sayings, and you don’t guard them, I’m not judging you,” which I’m going to get to a little bit later, “but there is someone who is going to judge you,” and they are being judged. Verse 48:

***John 12:48 ~ He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.***

“If you reject My sayings, if you don’t take them and guard them, if you don’t receive them into your heart, if you don’t surrender to them, and submit to them, then you will be judged. I won’t be judging you. The word that I said will be judging you.”

The point that He’s making here is that to not heed His words is actually to reject Him. In fact, the word in Verse 48, ***He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings***,... the word *rejection* is a very strong word which means to deny, to denounce, to detest, and what He’s saying is, “When people hear My sayings and they don’t change their life accordingly, what they’re doing is not just being neutral.” They are attacking His character. To hear the word of Christ, the glory of Christ offered in the Gospel and to not repent and believe is to attack His glory. They are rejecting Him. This is serious business. And then what He goes on to say is, “If you reject Me, you’re really rejecting God the Father.” That’s really what His whole point has been in Verses 44 to 50. Look what He starts off with in Verse 44:

***John 12:44 ~ ...“He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me.***

He’s saying, “If you believe in Me, the ones who are believing in Me are not believing in Me, they’re believing in the One who sent Me. So if you don’t believe in Me, who are you not believing in? The One who sent Me.” Then He says:

***John 12:45 ~ He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me.***

He’s saying, “He who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me. Everything that you see, you’ve seen My ministry, you’ve heard My words, you’ve seen My miracles. As you’ve seen and as you’ve looked at, what you have seen and looked at is God the Father in Heaven.” Now, the Jews, they were thinking that they could be faithful Jews and reject Christ. “No, we’re just not convinced He’s really the Messiah. We think He’s a good teacher and everything, but we’re going to just keep the verdict open for a while.”

Jesus is pleading with them, “Listen, if you don’t respond correctly to what I’ve said, you are insulting and rejecting the very God you claim to worship,” because to reject Christ is to reject the Father. He basically says in Verse 44, “If you believe in Me, you believe in Him.” In Verse 45, “If you see Me, you see Him.” And then in Verses 47 to 50, what He says is, “If you’ve heard Me, you’ve heard Him.”

***John 12:47 ~ If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them,...***

Look at Verse 48:

***John 12:48 ~ He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.***

Look at Verse 49:

***John 12:49 ~ For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak.***

The grammar here is very emphatic. He’s making it very clear that, “Literally I did not speak out of Myself. Everything I said, none of it came from within Me,” Jesus is saying, that even though He is eternal God, in His ministry as Messiah, the Man Christ Jesus is taking every word from the Father, the ministry of the Spirit working through Him. He’s giving you exactly what the Father tells Him to say, so that if you reject His words, you are rejecting the words of God the Father. This explodes their comfort, the pretensions of allegedly faithful Jews, or those who wanted to be secret believers. He’s saying, “Listen, if you’re trying to be a secret believer, you’re not just rejecting Me, but you are rejecting Yahweh.” It is serious business.

Now, think about the manner of what He’s doing with His audience there of Jews, and how that would relate to how we deal with unbelievers. It’s not a small thing for someone to reject the Gospel. Maybe they’re a Muslim or a Hindu. They’re religious. They take pride in their religion, and it’s not just that that’s truth for you and that’s truth for me. No, you are rejecting—in maintaining and continuing your Muslim faith, saying you have some beliefs about Jesus, because Muslims do consider Him a prophet, you are not in a neutral position toward Jesus Christ. You are in a hostile position toward Jesus Christ. You are defiling Jesus Christ. You are dishonoring Jesus Christ, and you will be judged.

That is the reality, and that's what needs to come through. At some point in the conversation, we need to be willing to even say that with that clarity. To reject Jesus is to reject God, and to reject God is to bring judgment. That's what He says in Verse 47. "Though I'm not the one that's going to judge them, they're going to be judged. Verse 48:

***John 12:48 ~ He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.***

The idea too is it is a very serious thing to hear the Gospel, because you will be judged by what you heard. The reality is every single person who's ever lived, whether they heard the Gospel or not, heard enough to be judged by it, because they had the testimony of creation around them every day. They have the testimony of God in their own hearts, and the reality is, like Romans 1:18 says, what men do is they suppress the truth in unrighteousness. So every man that has ever lived, every person that has ever lived, has suppressed the truth in unrighteousness, and they will be judged based on how much they heard and rejected. This is why Jesus says a couple of different times in the Gospels, once in Luke 10, He says:

***Luke 10:13 ~ "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you.***

He's saying that the towns Chorazin and Bethsaida which He visited, in which He did miracles, in which He taught, they heard the word, they saw the word, they saw Him, they saw God the Father through Him, they heard God the Father through Him, and they will be judged on the basis of what they heard. You say, "Well, maybe we shouldn't share with anybody. They'll be better off." That's the kind of way we think sometimes. Isn't it amazing our thought processes? I've thought that before. I mean, I didn't think about it that long. It wouldn't make sense to be a minister and to really believe that, but the reality is that if they don't know, they're going to hell. Everyone who has not repented and believed in Jesus Christ is going to hell, and they're going to spend eternity separated from God. It will be worse for some than others, but all are in misery. And like Penn Jillette said, "If we know the truck is coming bearing down on them, we ought to care enough." We ought not hate them so much that we don't tell them.

The reality is once we tell them, we've given them the access of God. We glorify God in proclaiming His Gospel, and we've given them the opportunity to know the joy of His Gospel, and God works through that kind of proclamation. He works through the proclamation where people who believe His word and who just share His word in weakness, trusting in His grace, that is how He causes someone to be born again. Sometimes they go away at first and then they believe later, but they need to have heard from someone who was earnest, urgent, and grave serious.

In fact, there's an interesting point. I mentioned Luke 10 that I just read to you in Verses 13 and 14 about Chorazin and Bethsaida. It will be worse for you than for Tyre and Sidon. And then He goes on to say:

***Luke 10:15 ~ And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!***

Capernaum rejected Him and He's saying, "You heard. I lived there in Capernaum," Jesus said. That was His headquarters in Galilee. But look what He says after that in Verse 16. Listen to the echo of John 12. He's telling His disciples as He's actually sending them out, the 70 disciples out on mission, this is wrapping up His statement to them. "Listen, you're going to go places and they're going to reject you," and then He interjects what I just read about Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin, because when they reject you, know that God's going to judge them. He ends up in Verse 16. Listen to the echo of John 12:

***Luke 10:16 ~ "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me."***

Do you see that? He takes it one step further. Jesus is saying in John 12, "If you reject Me, you reject the Father." Here He's saying as you and I go out, if they reject us, they reject Jesus and they reject the Father. It's still serious business to reject the emissary sent by Jesus. There's urgency, gravity, and there's also generosity. The urgency of the Gospel needs to be evident in the way we deliver it, but also there needs to be gravity, the gravity of the Gospel, and finally the generosity of the Gospel also needs to come along in everything that we say.

### 3) The Generosity of the Gospel:

We see this here in John 12 as well. I mean, you're reading Verse 46, and you see:

***John 12:46 ~ I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.***

He's saying, "I've come to bless." Look at the heart. The reason Jesus came is not to judge. He came to bless. We're proclaiming a message of a Savior who longs to bless and to save. His desire is genuine. Though we believe in the sovereignty of God in salvation and election, the reality is He genuinely longs to save all people.

***1 Timothy 2:3-4 ~ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.***

He desires for all men to repent and come to a knowledge of the truth. The heart of God toward every single human being on the face of the earth is that they would repent and come to a knowledge of the truth. The fact that none of us would and none of us will apart from His grace does not change the genuineness of His heart toward us. It just magnifies the grace that He would then choose some, haters of Him, willful rebels of Him, who as He holds out His hand offering kindness and salvation, run away from Him and curse Him, some He would change their hearts.

What an amazing God, but we are to offer the Gospel as a genuine offer, because that is what it is. The call is to repent and believe, and the only thing keeping you out of Heaven is your own unwillingness to repent and believe. That's why Jesus when He looks about this time in His ministry, the last week when He is looking at Jerusalem, one of the days as He goes with His disciples to Jerusalem, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how I long to bring you to Myself as a hen brings her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing." The heart of God is genuine. We have a God who is all love, lovingkindness, mercy, tenderness, and so that ought to be a part of our Gospel. We're offering a God to them who is beyond their wildest dreams. It's a serious message, yes. It's an urgent message, yes, but it is a wonderful, wonderful message. A kind God, a meek God, a God who was willing to leave the glory of Heaven and come down and communicate with us with such clarity, and He became a man so that He could fully disclose His character to us. He could fully disclose His desire to save, and we are offering a God who not only has a desire to save, but when He saves, He saves to the entirety of a person's need.

I mean, this Gospel John has been unpacking for us, the words of Jesus, and as Jesus makes this appeal and John includes it in his Gospel, he understands that the people reading this realize what they've been reading before. Look at the character of Christ. He says, "I am. I am the bread of life." There are the "*I am*" sayings in John. "I am the bread of life. You are hungry. I'm what you're hungry for, and I've come down to feed you. I left the glory of Heaven to feed you. Moses didn't give you bread from Heaven. The Son of Man is the Bread of Heaven." He said, "I am the Light of the world. He who believes in Me will not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life (John 8:12). You are in the dark. You are blind. You were born blind, but I am the Light of the world. I'm exactly what you need and I've come down to shine My light upon you."

Here He is earnestly pleading with them, "The time is short. You only have the Light with you a little while longer. Believe in the Light. Walk in the Light so that you will not remain in darkness." Do you hear the heart of the Savior? They need to hear the heart of the Savior in our hearts to them. "I am the door of the sheep," He said in John 10:7. Sheep are stupid. They don't know where to go. They don't know how to find safety. They need to be protected. They need to go in a door whenever possible at night. Not a house but a stable or whatever you call a sheep pen, I guess. They need to be protected. How can we get protected? How can we find refuge from all that assaults us in this world, the difficulty of living in the world, the difficulty of sin in our own hearts, and evil all around us, and death, and just the challenges of life? Where can we find refuge?

Jesus says, "I am your refuge. I'm the door. Come to me." He says, "I'm not only the door," and then He says a few verses later, "I am the Good Shepherd." We not only need a place to stay at night, but we need someone to walk with us and to lead us. We need someone as the shepherd in his relationship with the sheep. What a beautiful thing the metaphor God created for us. He's not a cattle man riding a horse, cracking a whip. He's a Shepherd out in front who knows His sheep and calls them by name. You need someone to lead you. "I will lead you." Then He said in John 11, "I am the resurrection in the life," there at Lazarus' tomb. With Lazarus' body in the grave, He says, "You are dead in your sins. You have no hope. You're dead to the things of God and you need to be born again. I've got good news. I am the resurrection and the life. Come to Me." He is everything that we need, and so when we offer the Gospel, we're not offering something that's just, "Hey, you might want to consider this as a lifestyle adaptation. You might want to add this to your life." We are offering you the most important thing that you could ever hear.

“The words that I am sharing, though I don’t know what I’m saying very well, and I’m just stumbling along here trying to share with you Christ, whatever comes through of the word of God is the most important thing that you could ever hear.” Now, it’s not because I’m important. No, this is the whole problem. We think that we’re acting like, well, it’s because it’s our opinion. No, it’s not my opinion. It doesn’t matter what I think. It doesn’t matter a hill of beans what I think, but it matters everything what God is saying, and what He has said is all that matters. And so when we offer it, that’s how we have to present it. “Look, it’s not my opinion. It is clearly what He said.” “Well, that’s just your interpretation.” No, there’s only one interpretation, and if you study, and you work at it, and you look at the word of God, and you go to it carefully, you can find the interpretation. He’s even given His Spirit to help you if you’ll ask Him, if you want to obey, and this is the clear teaching of the Bible.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said that the Christian—this is what our witness ought to be—the Christian is the happiest man on earth, and he simply wants others to be happy with the happiness which he has found. This is why we share. We have found the Bread of Life. We have found the Light of the world. We have found the door, the way into safety. We have found the Good Shepherd. We have found the resurrection and the life, and we are so content and so joyful in Him, and He is such an amazing God. He’s so generous. He’s so kind. He’s more wonderful than anyone ever imagined. Trust Him. Believe in Him. Give yourself to Him, and find that in giving to Him and dying to yourself and following Christ, that slavery to Jesus Christ is the most wonderful freedom that a man could ever know. He is everything that I’ve ever longed for.

Other people may have contentment and a measure of contentment in their religion, but they don’t have the reality of knowing the one true God. There’s only one true God, and He has made Himself known in His Son Jesus Christ. The Gospel is an urgent message. It is a serious message, a grave message, but it is a generous message, and so joyful generosity ought to be a part of our hearts as we share with unbelievers. We understand that we’re no better than they are. It doesn’t matter what sin they’re caught up in. They have that sin and I’ve got my sin. I still look at myself every day and say, “How in the world can God save me?” So if we keep looking at ourselves, we keep then treasuring Jesus looking at Him. I love the verse in the song *Before the Throne of God Above*, the second verse: *When Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within, upward I look and see Him there who made an end to all my sin.*

Satan has ground every day to tempt me to despair by looking at the sin that I have in my life, and every day I need to look at Christ and say, “There before the throne of God I have a perfect Savior, and I’ll never be cast out, because of Him.” And so we go through life humble and joyful, and when we share the good news, when we share it with that joy, and generosity, and seriousness, and urgency, then God will from time to time use that message, though it comes through a haltering tongue, our weakness, even our sin wrapped around it, yet the word of life is so powerful that there will be times where someone we’re talking to, at the moment we’re talking to them, the light comes on. Or maybe it didn’t happen when we were talking to them, but later we run into them and they say, “You know, when you shared with me, I couldn’t stop thinking about that, and Jesus found me. He saved me.”

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, I’m reading his biography right now, and it talks about a wonderful ministry he had in Wales. He was an English preacher in the 20th Century, and his ministry in Wales, he had a number of people come to faith in Christ, and one man was the town drunk. I forget the guy’s name. They all had a name they called him. He was known to be a drunk. He would often be asleep drunk in his wagon, his mule would be pulling him home, and he would be passed out. Apparently he had a good mule and it got him home anyway. The people there didn’t try any gimmicks. They just were so joyful in Jesus and they went out sharing who they were now in Christ, sharing the love of Christ, and this man gets saved.

They said that after he got saved, this was like in the 1930s, and he had three pictures that he kept in his house right above his hearth, the mantle. He had three pictures. The first was a picture of him drunk and passed out that somebody had taken of him to mock him and had given him. The second picture was a picture of him at one of the Bible studies at Lloyd Jones’ church with a group of Christians. The third picture was him in a suit dressed up to go to church on Sunday. The first picture, he wrote below it: *Lost*. The second picture there with the Bible study with the group, he put: *Found*. The third picture there as a new man: *Saved*. I was lost, God found me, and now I’m saved.

That is the glory of the Gospel that we possess. We have treasure that is the most important treasure that any person can ever come in contact with. We need to celebrate it ourselves, walk in the joy of it every day, and realize that as we share it, we are sharing something that’s so valuable not because of who we are, but because of who He is. May God help us do that.

Let's go to Him in prayer...

*Our Father, we stand in awe of who You are and what You've done, of who You are and who You continue to be, a God who is holy and righteous and just, who is committed to punishing sin, and yet a God who has made salvation available by punishing the sins of those who believe—in Your Son. We praise You for being a God who saves. We praise You that Jesus did not come to judge but to save. Father, help us never lose the wonder of the Gospel, and Father, for those that are here today who have not truly given themselves to You, Lord, regardless of what other people think or what our public persona is, church member, teacher, You know our hearts, and we pray, Father, that if there remains in the heart this wavering back and forth, an unwillingness to really sell out to You like those among the Pharisees, that You would break through right now and grant true repentance and true faith, and an all-out surrender to the Savior. Don't let them rest, Lord, until they have given themselves to you, and thrown themselves upon You, and have the assurance of the forgiveness of sins, and the assurance of eternal life. Father, may Jesus Christ be exalted in every heart. May He be exalted more every day as we become more and more satisfied in Him. We pray this in His Name, Amen.*

This audio presentation, description, and transcription by Providence Church in Duluth, Georgia, USA, is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 License.

 Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

Attribution:

Based on work at Providence Church, Duluth, GA, USA and found online at <http://www.providenceduluth.org>. Permission for use beyond the scope of this license may be requested by contacting Providence Church, Duluth, GA through their website.