

The Sufficiency of Christ and Outreach

Colossians 4:2-6

Pastor Bryan Clark

Of course we understand our mission as believers is to take the wonderful message of forgiveness and share it with people who do not yet know that that's true. But how do we do that? How do we do that in a way that someone will actually listen? That's what we want to talk about.

I would say at least toward the top of the list of things my wife hates to do would be go car shopping. I don't know, something happened somewhere along the way, but she's got real issues with car salesmen. For those of you in that business, I'm terribly sorry. I can go get a car and drive it home, and she'll look at it at home. But it's quite an effort to get her to go with me to the car lot. Sometimes when she goes, salesmen will come out and be very professional, very kind, very helpful—everything you'd want a good salesman to be, and I can just see her tensing up. I'll say to her, "You know, honey, in order to buy this car, at some point they do have to come out. And you do have to have some sort of a conversation with them. That is the way it works, and I actually find that quite helpful." But she doesn't tend to see it in quite the same way.

We had a similar experience last year. We went to a resort down on Table Rock Lake, just the two of us, to celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary. While we were checking in, we were made aware that if you take this, I think it was a 90-minute time share tour, you got I think it was \$250 toward all the restaurants and everything they have there. Well, you know I'm doing the math in my head. That's a bargain! And she's saying, "I don't want to do that!" And I'm saying, "Now, honey...."

So a long story short, we went on the tour and it was nice. The salesperson was very gracious and we got to see what they offered. I had no intent of ever buying. I'm just kind of going for the ride and told them that right upfront. Of course we get to the end and they get you in the little room, and you know what's coming. They work us over, and I'm saying, "You know, we're not interested."

So then she leaves and in comes the manager, and he gives you one last work-over. I can see Patti starting to twitch and she's about ready to take him out, and he was probably one sentence away from saying, "You basically are an idiot if you don't take this plan." In my mind I'm thinking, you know, *Nice try. You gave it your best shot. Give me my prize and we'll be moving on now.* So, anyway, we got through that fine and we ate the rest of the time and all the restaurants were free, basically, so quite a deal.

About two months after that, a friend of mine, Chan, and I we were in a hunting/fishing outdoor store. I love the store. We were picking up something for his boat and we were about the only ones in the store. So we began to converse with the manager (what we thought was the manager), and he was telling us about this and that, and then he started talking about the resort where Patti and I were. I talked about the time share thing, and he said, "Oh, one thing we never do is apply pressure." So I told him that wasn't exactly my experience. And before you know it, then, he's trying to sell us a time share and he's really putting the squeeze on us. Several times we told him we needed to leave and he wouldn't let us go. We basically had to walk away—so traumatic that the next time Chan and I were in the store we actually went all the way around that area of the store in case he was there again.

Now all of us could share stories like that. Nobody likes to be pressured that way. Take those emotions, take those thoughts, take those fears—move it into the world of the unbeliever who has at some point been treated that way by a well-meaning Christian who has done more damage than good. All of us probably know neighbors or people we work with or family members and they just don't want to talk about it. Probably what has happened is somewhere along the line they had an experience much like one of these experiences and they just don't want to talk about it again.

Probably most of us have had experiences where we realize we really have to spend a lot of time undoing the damage before we ever get far enough to be able to present the message of Jesus. It's very important to remember it's not just getting the message said; it's getting the message heard that matters.

Early on in my ministry career, I learned this, strangely enough, through the ministry of funerals. In a small town you learn a lot of interesting things you don't necessarily learn in a larger town or city. One thing I noticed is the Bible-teaching churches, the more fundamentalist, evangelical churches kind of had a mindset that when somebody dies and you have a funeral, you have a captive audience and this is your moment to lay it on them. You even hear that terminology thrown around. They're a captive audience and it's kind of a hellfire and brimstone—lay it on them, where there's five minutes about the person that has died and 30 minutes is really the salvation message.

There are two different things that happen out of that. The preacher goes back to the reception and the church family is in the kitchen and they're all high-fiving him because he laid it on them. It's kind of a love fest among the Christians. But then you go to the café and you hear the people talking at the table next to you, and what you realize is they're on to that. It didn't make a dent. As a matter of fact, they are very resentful because they dearly loved the person that passed away, and what they wanted in that moment was comfort. What they wanted was some compassion. And what they felt like is that they got used. Rather than pulling them more toward Jesus, they've been pushed further away.

I found myself hearing enough of those conversations behind me at the café that I began to think, *There's got to be a better way to do this. I don't think Jesus would do it that way.* How do we present the message of Jesus in such a way that people will actually listen?

We've been talking about the sufficiency of Christ, this idea from Colossians that Jesus is big enough. Jesus is adequate. Whatever your fear, whatever your longing, whatever your desire, whatever your struggle, Jesus is big enough. It's one thing to say that, but what does that look like lived out in the most practical areas of our life? So we talked about what does the sufficiency of Christ look like in a marriage? What does it look like between parents and children? What does it look like at work?

Then last week we had this wonderful example of what does it look like lived out in the life of Joel, telling this remarkable story. One of the lines I remember best from last week, and I was in all three services, was when Joel said, "The power of Jesus Christ transformed me more than any fire ever could." That line right there was worth the price of admission—powerful.

Tonight we want to talk about what does the sufficiency of Christ look like as we try to reach the people around us? If you have a Bible, turn with me to Colossians chapter 4. I would suggest to you that the bad methodology by well-meaning people ultimately flows from an unwillingness to

really believe in the sufficiency of Christ. That's why we do those things. In chapter 4, verse 2, Paul says:

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.

(Colossians 4:2, *NASB)

The word "devote" means to be persistent. It means to hang on and not let go; be persistent in prayer. One of the things we have to wrestle with is the reality that when we truly believe in the sufficiency of Christ, we will be a people of prayer. Those two things have to go hand in hand. It's not just getting up in the morning and having my quiet time and a little season of prayer. It's realizing if He's really sufficient, then I am totally dependent upon Him and my way of life is a life of prayer, of awareness of this dependence upon God.

Now I have to be honest with you, this is one of the areas where I struggle the most. Where I see my lack of belief in the sufficiency of Christ is I can tend to be very self-sufficient. And that's where I get myself into trouble—to remember my sufficiency is in Christ and that should show up in the way that I devote myself to prayer.

"Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it"—not just keeping alert, keeping alert in your prayer. Now this doesn't mean staying awake (although that's a good thing—to stay awake when you pray). It's a Greek word that was used to describe a soldier that was like the lookout, the scout. And he knew that the enemy was out there and the enemy was going to come in at night. So his job was to listen and be alert for any sign that the enemy was moving in. So you can imagine that level of alertness and anticipation.

Paul is talking here about when we pray, it is warfare. And when we pray, we need to be alert. We need to be sensitive that the enemy is trying to lure us away. The enemy is trying to convince us other than the sufficiency of Christ. So when we're in prayer, we're at war. We are alert and we're dialed in and we understand what we're doing. It isn't ten minutes before I go to work, saying, "God, bless this and bless that...and ask for this and ask for that." I mean, we're engaged in this thing because we understand what's at stake.

When he says "**keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving**," that's been a theme in this book. That's the sixth time Paul has talked about thanksgiving in four chapters. We talked about this before, that when you're truly thankful for something—not kind of an offhanded, "Lord, thanks for the food or thanks for the weather"—but when you're really thankful from your heart, you have to think about it. You have to focus on it. You have to dwell on it. You really have to engage whatever it is that you're thankful for. So in our prayers, when we are alert, there is an attitude of thanksgiving. In essence, we're dialed in to what's true.

Everything as you go back through the Book of Colossians that's true about the sufficiency of Christ, if we were in our prayer life to constantly be thankful for that, it means we'd have to think about it. We'd have to process it. We'd have to come to some understanding of what it is. That gets us focused. That keeps us alert. That dials us in.

I would suggest to you that even though there's nothing wrong with asking in your prayers—Jesus Himself said you have not because you ask not, so I think we need to ask—but if your prayers are predominately asking, I think that's going to tilt you toward the old way of thinking, because it's very consumer-like. If you choose, instead, to be dominated by thanksgiving, I think it's going to tilt you toward the sufficiency of Christ, because you're focused on and rehearsing what is true and

how that looks in your life. So I would suggest that to you, to be much more active in your prayer in thanksgiving and being alert and engaged in order to focus on that which is true.

Verse 3:

...praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned.

It's very interesting to remind ourselves that Paul is in a Roman prison and he's asking for prayer. If you were in prison and you were asking for prayer, what would you be asking for? I know what I'd be asking for. "God, get me out!" That's not what he's asking for. What he's asking for is an open door for the Gospel. "Pray for us that God might open a door for the Gospel, that I might be able to present the mystery of Christ, the Gospel of Christ, in such a way that others might come to know Jesus as Savior." He reminds us that it was through an open door that he declared the Gospel of Jesus that landed him in chains in a prison.

Many of you may know that recently Jeff and Mark were in India doing some work with our India pastors there. Shortly after they got back, they received word of a story that sounds like it's out of the Book of Acts and reminded us of what's going on over there. It fit so nicely with the text, I asked Jeff if he'd come and share with us a little bit about what has transpired in the last week or two.

Pastor Jeff Peterson: As the three of us had the opportunity to again travel all around India and connect with our more than 300 church planters, it was just amazing to see what God has done in the lives of these men. We were able to go to locations and literally spend time trying to teach and train and encourage the men all across India.

One of the places where we spent time was in north India, in the state of Haryana. While we were in Haryana, we got the chance to just again be with some of the guys. As I was sitting in the back of the room when we had all of the guys in the room, I just kept looking at these men and thinking back to just a few years ago when it was just an empty room. As we watched all of these men together, I just kept thinking, *It's an army. It's an army that God is sending out to this place where there are so many people who don't know Christ and so many communities without any churches.*

You know, when you're thinking of that and you're looking at that, you're thinking of all of the positive things that that means. But sometimes I think what we forget is when we think of God sending out an army, it's because there's a battle and it's because there's opposition. One thing I've often heard when I bring people to India, when they spend time with the pastors, that they're struck by how they pray—the alertness, the fervency, the intensity in their prayers.

They're also struck by how they worship. I know it's always an encouragement and an inspiring thing to me to watch these men worship. I've noticed on the last couple of trips, particularly in north India, there has seemed to be a sense of the heightened possibility of persecution. It was only a couple of days after we returned back home that I received an e-mail that said:

"Dear Jeff, two of our churches in Bawani, Haryana, have been beaten up by a mob of Hindu fundamentalists. And then these two men, Silwont and Daniel, were arrested by the police. After a mob had beaten them, the police showed up, and instead of arresting the

mob they arrested the church planters. The complaint is that these two men were trying to convert people by offering them 10,000 rupees, which is about 250 U.S. dollars. The allegation is totally false."

He goes on to say that they will be taken to court, and asked that we will pray for them. Having just been in a room with Daniel and with Silwont (Daniel was one of our first leaders in that area), it was such an overwhelming thing to be back here in America and to think, *Here I am, home from a trip and going on with life, and Daniel and Silwont were in pain, having been beaten, and were sitting in jail.*

So I began to send out e-mails to people to ask people to pray. It was actually while we were together with our entire LBC board at a retreat when I received an e-mail a day later about what God had done:

"Dear Jeff, greetings from Delhi. Thank you for your prayers. I just wanted to update you about the Bawani case. We praise God that Daniel and Silwont are now out on bail. We had a really big problem because we didn't have any local people who could take their guarantee. You see, you have to have someone to vouch for each of these people. There are no Christians in this place except three or four nominal Christian families. So the lawyer arranged two people from the village to give a personal pledge of guarantee for them.

"Yesterday we were in the court the whole day, meeting with different authorities and standing outside the jail for four hours. There were 50 pastors and leaders who came together and stood alongside with us. As soon as Daniel and Silwont came out of the jail, everyone received them with high enthusiasm and shouted in their language, 'Praise the Lord!' They put a decorative garland around their neck and they brought them to the lawyer's house.

"The lawyer suggested they should have a medical checkup, and when they went to the hospital the doctor said they needed to be admitted for X-rays. Daniel was complaining about pain both in his chest and in his back. So they were admitted to the hospital and they stayed for a night in the hospital. During the whole thing there was a lot of media coverage. On the first day all of the media coverage was negative about us. After people had been praying, on the second day the coverage turned and was all positive.

"The good thing that happened is that the two people who said they'd give their personal pledge for these men—the two people who vouched for them in the court—they came to meet the church planters in the hospital last night. These men said they knew just a little bit about Christ but they want to know more. They also said that our church planters can visit their village and they have 40 young men who would be interested to know about Christ. The second person who came along with them said that he was the president of the government college, and he said he'd take care of things to ensure that there wouldn't be a problem again. This assured us God's work cannot be stopped.

"Please continue to pray as the hearing of the bail is continuing and there are actually five of our church planters all together who have been charged in the case. Thanks again for your prayers. With regard, Depak."

What do you think when you receive an e-mail like that? For me personally, it was both humbling and even embarrassing—to think that somehow we think we are over there to teach them, when in reality it is the faith of men like Daniel and men like Silwont that we need to learn from and to be inspired by.

You know, when we think about the apostle Paul, when I read that e-mail the first thing I thought is, *It's just like out of the Book of Acts. Where in the world do you hear about people getting beat up and then they're arrested for being beat up. And then they're in jail. Then people gather together and pray and worship. The next thing you know, God is turning that whole thing into an opportunity for the advancement of the Gospel. That sounds just like Paul.*

I hope for each of us that we will learn from that story the importance of being committed to alert prayer. And I hope that we also in our own lives will look for the opportunities God wants to do right here to open a door for the Gospel.

Pastor Bryan Clark: Thanks, Jeff. You know, one thing I do think is interesting is why is it that we are so quick to believe that prayer accomplishes that *there*, but so slow to believe that it could accomplish that *here*—with a guy across the hall or in the next office or next door or in our school?

The text goes on to talk about God opening a door so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ. Thinking about that idea of an open door reminds us why we're dependent on the sufficiency of Christ, why evangelism always starts with us getting ourselves dialed into what's truth. It starts with us on our knees.

I think when you think about a closed door, we tend to make one of two errors. One is that we see the door as closed and we say, "You know, the door is closed; we can't do anything about it." And we move on. You know, statistics show the average person has to hear the Gospel about eight times clearly before he or she responds. It's easy to share the Gospel with somebody that doesn't respond so well, and we say, "Well, that's it. The door is closed. Move on." We don't believe in the sufficiency of Christ to change a heart, to open the door.

But I think the other way we err is the door is closed, but by golly we're going to get that message out there, so we're screaming through the door. And some who are really bold, they kick the door down. We get it in our minds, *I'm going to present this even if it kills me.* And then the exchange is very negative and we kind of sigh a sigh of relief and say, "At least I got that guilt off my chest. I got the message said." But rather than trusting God to open the door, we just thought we'd kick it down ourselves. And then we wonder why it didn't go so well.

I think we need to learn to be very sensitive to open doors. We start on our knees. We ask God to open the door and we're sensitive to those moments.

He says in verse 4:

...that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

That's interesting to me that Paul is asking prayer that he may make the Gospel clear. I mean, this is the guy who literally wrote the book on the Gospel—wrote the Book of Romans, 11 chapters explaining the Gospel. But he's saying, "Pray for me that I might know how to share the message."

There is a reminder in this that the Gospel is not ultimately a memorized presentation that we just kind of force into a conversation, hoping somehow that will work. As a matter of fact, what we like to do is kind of have these two or three things that we define as the Gospel. But interestingly enough, there's nowhere in the Bible where it's really presented that way. As I understand the terminology in the Bible, the Gospel is Genesis to Revelation that culminates in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. But the whole message is the Gospel. And I think there's wisdom in learning how to share it in a way that the person listening to it will find it meaningful—will understand it.

That's what Paul is saying—that he would have discernment in how to share the message in such a way that it will be heard.

One of the things that I find very helpful is that when you hear kind of the "each one reach one" or I'm supposed to talk to the people I work with or my neighbor or somebody I go to school with, a lot of people will say, "I don't know how to do that. I don't even know where to start. I don't know what to do." You know, not many people run up and grab you by the collar and say, "What must I do to be saved?"

One of the things I've found to be extremely helpful is to ask lots of questions. I'm going to call it a hundred questions, and ultimately what you're doing is pursuing them. You're trying to find out: What are their hopes and dreams? What are their pains? What are their fears? What are their struggles? You're just pursuing trying to get to know them, and what you're looking for is where does the story of God intersect with the story of their life in such a way that they will find it meaningful?

People find that very valuing. They find it to be very honoring because you're taking the time to get to know them and listen to them and hear from them. You're trying to understand where God intersects with their story. So one of the things I'd suggest to you—instead of going into presentation mode where you're waiting for a lull in the conversation to kind of cram it in there—I'd suggest that you ask questions. And maybe over a period of months you're processing and you're pursuing this person, and you're asking questions and you're trying to understand where God fits into their story.

I would suggest to you that it would not be possible to literally ask someone a hundred questions without ultimately engaging in a spiritual conversation. Eventually you're just going to get there and it will come out quite naturally.

Verse 5, Paul says:

Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

"**Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders.**" "Outsiders" would be unbelievers. "Wisdom" is a word that means to be skillful. How can we be skillful with those who do not yet believe? Well, he says "**making the most of the opportunity.**" That's actually a business term. It was taken right out of the business world of the first century. It basically means to seize the opportunity or to seize the moment. Those of you who are in business understand this. There are things that come along that change in the world and the culture and the economy. There are those moments, and you can capitalize on those moments to start a business or advance your business. That's part of the science of it.

Well, Paul is taking that terminology and saying that somewhere along the way in people's lives there are opportunities. There are these moments—you might call it a window of opportunity—where we can interact with them and share with them in a unique way. My experience has been those windows don't stay open very long. There's a lot of wisdom in discerning when those moments are and how to carefully and kindly and compassionately take advantage of that moment as an opportunity to share with them the message of Jesus. So he's saying that's part of wisdom—seizing the moment.

Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt. (vs. 6a)

"Let your speech *always*...." If you're inclined to underline in your Bible, I would underline that word "always" be gracious. We talked two weeks ago about the danger of becoming so politically charged that the conversations at the water cooler are very confrontational; they're very intense. Pretty soon you have so many people conflicted and we've really done too much damage to the environment to share the Gospel.

It's very easy for people to say, "But I took my stand." Maybe it's a social issue and I'm going to stand up and I'm going to have my say. And we go home and we give one another a high-five and "Man, we really took our stand today." But we never stop to think about the fact maybe we did more damage than good. And where does the Bible tell you to do that? What I'm reading here seems pretty clear. It says, "May your speech *always* be gracious." Grace is that favor that God has poured down on us that we should then demonstrate to others in what we say. Regardless of their behavior, regardless of what they say, we respond with grace—with an unmerited favor, with something that represents the reality of God's grace in our lives.

"Seasoned with salt"—salt is used in different ways in the New Testament, but seasoned with salt always has to do with flavor, the idea that your conversation has been so seasoned with grace that it has a good flavor, that it's attractive, that it causes you to want more. As a matter of fact, that's something that I would use as kind of an indicator.

Each time you have an exchange with an unbeliever, you'll know if you were skillful or not by discerning: *Do you think that person is more likely to want to talk to you again in the future, or less likely?* If we are gracious, seasoned with salt, the reality is they're probably going to be more likely. They're going to come knocking on the door and say, "Hey, can we talk about this some more? Can we talk about this again?" If their experience is like mine at that store where you're more likely to go way around the perimeter of the store—*I don't want to see that guy again; I don't want to talk to him again*—we probably were not very gracious and our conversation probably was not seasoned with salt.

He ends the paragraph by saying:

...so that you will know how you should respond to each person. (vs. 6b)

The "so that" goes back to the skill. "Conduct yourselves with wisdom"—skillfully. Part of that skill is in how we talk. Part of that skill is in seizing the moment. And part of that skill is in treating each person like an individual. The Gospel is not a "one size fits all" canned presentation that just fits everybody in one little kind of pre-memorized script. Every person is an individual. Every person is someone made by God. They have different hopes and dreams and different experiences and different hurts and pains. But every single person has a point where God's story

intersects in their lives in a meaningful way that is the beginning of that road that ultimately has to lead to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus—salvation by grace through faith.

This year we've been talking about "each one reach one." It's a very relational strategy that fits this text perfectly—that we may understand each person as an individual, each person as someone that God loves, each person as someone that Jesus died for. You think of the person in your school or in your neighborhood or in your office that irritates you the most, and you have to remember: *That's somebody Jesus died for. That's somebody that Jesus loves. That's somebody that God created and He wants them to know the reality of His forgiveness.*

What does this have to do with the sufficiency of Christ? When I really remember the sufficiency of Christ, I start on my knees and I'm alert and I'm thankful and I'm dialed in. I get my perspective right. Then I remember God is the one who has to open the doors. God is the one who has to help me know what to say. God is the one who has to help me season my conversation with grace.

When I don't remember that, then my methodology tends to get me into trouble. I start yelling through doors. I start kicking doors. Or I start believing that that door is never going to open. So I don't end up sharing the Gospel with anybody.

Years ago Patti and I had a great example of exactly what Paul is talking about here. We were back in our previous church and there was a foreign exchange student that came to stay with one of the families in the church. This was September and he had been in the United States probably about two weeks, and the host family was gone for two weeks. So he stayed with us. He was from Norway. His name was Steve. We just started to build a relationship with him when we had this singing musical group come to the church. I was not familiar with them. They had come to the church before. The church people said they really liked them. I really didn't do any investigation. That was my first big mistake.

They came and they made their presentation. It was kind of a hellfire and brimstone thing. At the end, they're really working the crowd hard to get people to respond, all the way to the point where these college students actually got off the stage and walking down the rows they were eyeballing everybody and basically they would say, "Are you sure you're going to heaven?" And if somebody was unsure, they'd kind of take them out with them and go somewhere in the building and work them over.

I'm up in the front and I'm really not real clued into what's happening. The service comes to an end and I'm really uncomfortable with what just transpired...and I realize Steve is nowhere to be found. We waited and we waited and we waited. If I had it to do over again, I would have gone and found him. But I didn't. Finally the church was almost all dark and out he comes with one of these students, and he was just furious. He was red in the face; he was so upset. And I was well aware of the fact things hadn't gone well. He gets in the car, doesn't say a word. We drive home. He immediately goes down to the basement, which is where his bed was.

Patti and I are just kind of wondering what to do. About an hour passed, and he came up and was still very angry. He said, "I'm going to ask you a question, but all I want you to say is yes or no. Don't say another word." I said, "Okay." He asked something, basically, "Is it true if I did not accept Jesus there at the church tonight, I can never go to heaven?" I said, "No." He went down in the basement. This happened probably four or five times. Over the next couple of weeks it never

came up again. We didn't bring it up; he didn't bring it up. But we just started to build some relationship.

Steve and I became friends. We lifted weights together. We played racquetball together. He came to church. He came to the youth group. But nothing of the Gospel was ever brought up until after Christmas. After Christmas he was in a car accident with another student. He was just a passenger, but it was a pretty serious accident. He called me, and I came and picked him up from the accident and took him home to his host family. He had a host family where he slept, and then he lived at our house, basically. So I took him back to his host family.

As I was dropping him off, all I said is, "Steve, if you would have died in that wreck tonight, where would you be?" He kind of shrugged. I said, "You probably should think about that." Two days later he gave me a call. He said, "Can I come over?" He came over and he said, "I haven't slept in two days." He said, "I can't get that question out of my mind." We unpacked the truth of the Gospel, and that night he accepted Jesus as Savior and over the next couple of months grew dramatically in his newfound Christian faith.

Patti and I were able to stay in contact with him for years after he went back to Norway—but such a great example of what happens when you forget the sufficiency of Christ and you try to kick the door down, and what happens when you trust God to open doors. You trust God to help you seize the moment, to make sure that your conversation is seasoned with grace. You treat each person as an individual and you let God do what only God can do—to be part of that moment when someone goes from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.

My encouragement for all of us is that we would be prayerfully considering who is that person—at home, in the office, next door? The reality is if you're going to involve yourself in relational evangelism, there is a price-tag. It takes a lot of effort. It takes a lot of time. It is very inconvenient. And it's very easy to say, "I'm not sure that I'm up to that."

I think one of the reasons we like to back somebody into a corner and lay the Gospel on them and walk away is it's easy. It demands nothing of us. We've kind of fulfilled our part, and we can kind of put a little salve on the guilt. But to really engage in people's lives is very costly. But about the time we think, *You know, the price-tag is too hard*, then we think about our brothers in India and in China and the Middle East, and we think, *You know, we don't pay a price at all*, and we commit ourselves to what God has called us to do: to introduce others to the life-changing power and grace of Jesus.

Father, we're thankful that You are a gracious God, that You respond to us with Your grace and Your mercy as we've been reminded tonight. Lord, help us to respond to others the same way—that we might trust You to open doors, that we might be sensitive to those special moments, Lord, that we would know what to say and how to say it in such a way that others might listen, might find it tasteful, Lord, might have a desire to come back and hear more, that we might come to see others know the life-changing power of Jesus. Lord, for every single one of us here tonight who has trusted Jesus as Savior, may we take seriously the call for each one to reach one. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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