

Series: Because of Christ Week 6

Value: We send God's people to all people

Speaker: Spence Shelton

Text: Romans 10.8b-17

Series Recap

Today is our final sermon in our series "Because of Christ." Where we have laid out our vision and values that will carry us forward over the next 5 years.

Our vision for the next five years is not a destination we will arrive at, but instead a picture of who we hope to become.

Because of Christ, Mercy Church is devoted to becoming a maturing, multiplying, multicultural church.

Because of Jesus – Hebrews 12.1-2. Fixing our eyes on Jesus...Everything we do and everything we are is because of Christ. And each week we've talked through a ministry value. A guiding principle that will shape how we will realize our vision. Here they are.

- **We keep the gospel at the center of all we do.** It's about working from our salvation and not for it.
- **We expect God to change a life today.** Remember the guys who tore the roof off to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus? They expected Jesus to change his life if and each of us likewise believe Jesus is going to change our lives & our friends lives when we get close.
- **We help people take their next step as followers of Jesus.** Matthew 28. Make disciples. everybody, whether you are a brand new Christian or been with Jesus for a long time, everybody has a next step God is calling them to take.

- **We pursue multicultural unity under the name of Jesus.** God is glorified as we receive the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural unity he has won for us in the gospel.

Today we close up with our last value. Because of Christ, **we send God's people to all people.**

And this one gets me so excited because it's the one that gives words to an opportunity God is extending to each of us. To participate in the work he is doing in other people's lives. No matter your age, or how long you've been a Christian. This is for you.

Intro

There used to be this hole in the wall restaurant on Franklin Street in Chapel Hill called 'The Wicked Burrito.' Ya'll that place was awesome. HUGE burritos & chips for \$5. Can't beat it. So naturally that was the location that my bible study leader and I met in every couple of weeks. We'd talk about how to apply the bible to life. Which is a big deal ya'll. The deeper you go in the bible the more applicable it will be. But if you are like I was, and like I still am, you need some people to process how to apply it. We help each other take next steps in following Jesus. So anyways I'm sitting there and my friend Chuck says "Spence, you need to give up your summer, go to East Asia, and share the gospel with people who have never heard it before. Christianity is outlawed there but they love having students come attend their university. You can enroll and then share the gospel as you get to know fellow students." Man listen – I hadn't really traveled much at all outside of North Carolina by that point. I had spent a couple

weeks in Europe on a school trip in high school but that was it. And now all of the sudden I'm gonna go into a country closed to the gospel? And share an outlawed faith?

I was like sure chuck. Something is in your burrito that isn't in mine. It's like extra spicy or something. And I tried to ignore the idea. But couldn't. You know what I mean? When you are like...Am I really going to do that? And it's like 98% NO. But you can't let it go. And then overtime 98% no becomes...let me learn a little more...to eventually you wind up standing in the middle of a 60,000-person college campus entirely across the globe from where you live and you are like...I can't believe I'm really here.

I want to share with you today how God took me from NO to YES. It happens constantly in my life. Sometimes in BIG decisions that will take me to new places and sometimes in a small moments. And repeatedly at the center are a few truths about God & his plan that my fears & doubts are just put to rest by. So my hope today is to show you the JOY of Giving God your YES and also the path from NO to YES. From No God I can't (or won't) to YES God I'll go where you are sending me.

To see these truths, we go to Romans 10. Starting in the second half of verse 8.

This is the message of faith that we proclaim: 9 If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

We begin with the gospel. Those of you new to Christianity, or maybe just coming back. Or maybe have church baggage or maybe saw some Christians on the news doing crazy

stuff...This is the bible right here telling you our SIMPLE message of faith:

Jesus IS LORD and God raised him from the dead. In other words, Jesus has the power to save you and loved you enough to go and do it.

Jesus is Lord – That's belief that he is God. Remember Matthew 28? Jesus claimed to have all authority over heaven and earth? The apostle Paul is saying right here that this is central to the Christian faith. You can't have Jesus as savior and not Lord. Jesus is Lord.

God raised him from the dead – That's Paul saying he loved you enough to pay for your life with his life. And he was powerful enough to actually defeat death. Which matters because if we share in his death, we share in his resurrection. So the power for new life resides in me when I believe.

And if you believe it, you will be saved. A confession is a verbal expression of what you believe.

10 One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.

Confession is the expression of the belief. Righteousness does not come apart from salvation nor salvation apart from righteousness. So too belief in the heart & confession with the mouth come together in a package as well.

When I became a Christian...I confessed it. I heard this message. So lean in right here. You and I are created to know God and have a relationship with him. But the bible says each one of us chose to walk away from God. That's what sin is. Choosing our way over God's way. We ran away from home.

And we got lost. Became orphans. And so God made a way for us to come back home. But it's not a to-do list. That's not what message we announce is. No it's good news.

The word gospel is the word used for a messenger who would come back from the front lines of battle in ancient days and declare WE HAVE WON THE BATTLE! And the people in the town...who did not fight...celebrated because the battle was won for them. The Christian message is that you are lost in your sin. But GOD went and fought the battle against sin and death. Jesus who is LORD went and died in your place. And then he DEFEATED death. He declared VICTORY over death. And because of what he did...if you believe it...YOU ARE SAVED!

The Christian Message is not tasks to do, its news to believe!
My king has won the victory!

So there at student camp I said to my student group leader – I believe! He said awesome. And actually had me call my parents to tell them too. And I did. It was a little scary because it made it real & we didn't usually talk about that stuff. and then really cool. But I did it because true belief expresses itself in words. That's what baptism is. A Confession of Faith. I believe! That's why baptism in scripture comes AFTER belief. It's a public profession. So let me ask you...have you been baptized as a profession...I BELIEVE? Some of you may be hesitant for any number of reasons and to you I want you to read verse 11-13

11 For the Scripture says, everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame, 12 since there is no distinction between

Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all richly blesses all who call on him. 13 For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Man what a truth to celebrate today. EVERYONE. ALL. Who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. Doesn't matter your past. Everyone kneels as equals at the foot of the cross. And the Lord blesses...richly blesses...all who call on him. How? He SAVES YOU from your sin. And he promises you will not be put to shame. Maybe you are afraid if you believe others will shun you. Fear not, you will not be put to shame. God will accept you. His people will accept you. Maybe you are afraid your family will not understand. Fear not. You will not be put to shame. Maybe you are afraid because you've been attending church for years and you've been faking it. And you are worried that if you finally say you know what "I've never really believed until RIGHT NOW" ...that you will be put to shame. Fear not. Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame. God receives you today. Call on the name of the Lord and be saved. Today. This is the first truth that changes a NO into a YES.

Truth: The Gospel is the news that you are saved by believing in what Jesus has done for you

I know the word "saved" sounds a little old school church but it's really the right word. Rescued could work I guess. But you were dead in your sin and God *saved* your life. God has looked at you and said YES. I love you. I want you. Repent of your sin and come back home. And all we say YES! To him. The first motivation for saying Yes to where God wants me to Go is the

salvation, joy, and restoration I found when I said YES to his love for me!

14 How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him?

They. How can they. Everyone. All peoples. How can they call on him? I want you to hear something that is embedded in this. And is drawn out more clearly in the rest of scripture. God loves all people. And he is waiting to bring his mission to an end because he desires all to come to repentance and saving faith.

6 For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life -- John 3:16

Truth: God loves, and wants, all people

God loves people. For God LOVED the world. He loved me. He wanted me. And that same love he has for me...he has for others. And the YES I found in God's love for me, he offers to others. And what happens the longer you walk with Jesus is you begin to love what he loves. And God loves people. My foundational definition of love started to be re-worked. It's love not based on what you can do for me, but instead my love for you...it's based on God's love for me! So I love you like God does. That's hard. That's sacrificial. That's one-way. Do I love my friends like God does? Do I love my family like God does? The stranger? The poor and oppressed? The young man in the tribe in northern Pakistan who has never met a Christian or heard the gospel. God LOVES that young man. Man GOD LOVES him as much as he loves me. Same is true

with my neighbor, and with the cashier at the grocery store. And the prisoner doing 25 to life. God LOVES them. Do I believe that? We will never embrace God's calling on our lives until we embrace God's love for people.

Which led to a prayer, God help me to love who you love. And help me to love LIKE you love. And with that heart, we are ready for what Paul says next. For God's invitation into his redemptive work in every single person

14 How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent?

I love the simple chain of thought. Paul works back from...Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. OK...well how do they get to that moment of CRYING OUT YES! Well they have to believe in their heart. How do they do that? They gotta hear about God's saving work. How are they going to hear? Somebody is going to have to tell them. Who? Some from among us must be sent to them.

Truth: God sends his people, to proclaim his gospel, to all people

In other words, we are his plan for bringing salvation to the world! Isn't that crazy? Out of all the ways he could wire that up. He chooses to send fallible, messed up people to share the gospel with people. And I love this about God. His primary plan...for communicating his incredible plan of redemption...IS

using you. His primary way of sharing his incredible love...is through your clumsy words. It's incredible.

That trip to southeast Asia...Man I was 19, had never really shared the gospel. Let alone tried to climb over a language barrier to share it. And then we started sharing and this guy came to faith in like week 3. After 3-4 conversations. And I was like. REALLY? You understand? This is amazing. But that's how God gets glory. When clumsy vessels declare glorious truths and lives change...All that's left to believe is...THIS IS GOD DOING THIS. We are just preachers, not saviors.

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." -- Acts 1:8

See when you understand that this is true for you. That the Holy Spirit lives in you...and that with him is the POWER of GOD...oh my goodness. You get courage. Not cockiness, but courage. GOD is with you. And he LOVES your family member, your friend, and the stranger across town and across the world. You have no power. You are powerless. But the God in you...Oh man he has power. And he has given you not just salvation, but his presence. SO GO WITH GOD! And as you are in that conversation this week wondering if you should make that right turn into spiritual stuff...GOD IS WITH YOU! That's not a 'wondering' that's a prompting from God. This is why I pray over my meeting schedule each day. GOD, help me see inroads to the gospel. Because YOU WILL BE THERE. And I WANT TO SAY YES to you in that moment because when I

do...OTHER PEOPLE GET THE CHANCE TO SAY YES TO GOD. And I want to be a part of that!

This was big in turning my NO into a YES. The reason I was hesitant, is because I was making it about me. About how I would be perceived. I was caring about my perception more than God's glory and more than that person's salvation. And these things started clicking. The gospel says I have all the acceptance I will ever need. No shame, no condemnation. God is the one who saves. And in his grace he's invited me to get in on HIS saving work in the lives of others. That FREES me to go.

This year I want us to pick back up the Who's your one challenge. Who is one person who is far from God, but close to you? Write their name down. Not just mentally. Physically with a pen or with thumbs. Write it down. And pray God...let me be a part of their YES story. I want them to say YES to you. I don't know how exactly we would count this but what if Mercy Church had 2021 gospel conversations in 2021? That's like each one of us proclaiming the gospel 2-3 times this year. That's 2021 opportunities for God to save. Then we just see what he does. Who is your one. Should be a community group question. Let's expect God to change a life! TODAY! And while we will offer you training, you need ZERO training to go and share what God has done for you. And to call people to believe it. And you will get swept up in something beautiful as you do it. Paul quotes Isaiah 52.7 with one alteration.

As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.

In Isaiah the herald is singular. The feet of the one who brings good news. Now its plural. Because now it's all of us. And it is a beautiful work we do. Bringing good news of the gospel. And it's a joyful work we do as well. This leads me to the truth that actually keeps my yes on the table.

Truth: Going and proclaiming increases our joy in Christ

See amazingly enough, Jesus has wired up our lives in such a way that the more we obey him, the more joy we get. That's John 15:11. Jesus says...obey all of my commands. And he adds

11 "I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. -- John 15:11

When you continue to say YES to God...your JOY abounds. If you are feeling right now in your faith like it's just a dull or dry season spiritually, let me ask you the question pastor Scott is always asking: when was the last time you were radically and completely OBEDIENT to God's commands? Go obey Jesus. And see if that doesn't unlock joy. Say YES to his calling.

Truth: The Gospel is the news that you are saved by believing in what Jesus has done for you

Truth: God loves, and wants, all people

Truth: God sends his people, to proclaim his gospel, to all people

Truth: Going and proclaiming increases our joy in Christ

Let me give you a couple of application steps for us as a church.

1. We are sent to our community

- There is a reason we end every single service with the simple commissioning. You ARE SENT. Because we believe it. You are sent. God is sending you. God is also going with you. God has already gone before you. But you and I are ambassadors for Christ
- 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God." -- 2 Corinthians 5:20
- This is why we want to be a multiplying church. Because we believe when we make appeals with the power of Christ...God is going to save. And if each of us sees a friend or family member or coworker receive that hope...then math tells me we'll double the number of people in the mercy family. Praise God. That's why we are launching a mercy church campus in Northeast Charlotte in 2021. Because we want to mobilize our people up there to be able to make disciples and having proximity to our worship gathering will help. Because while many are driving, we know your lost friends probably won't drive 30+ minutes. This is why we are planning to launch a mercy campus in Union County in 2022. Same reason. Multiply the gospel.
- We are ALSO planning on planting churches. Both here in Charlotte and across the U.S. and the world. One church cannot reach the city. Ya'll over 2000 people move into this metropolitan area every month. We need to plant a mega-church a month just to keep up

with population growth. And in fact our campuses will become communities for future church planters to grow and develop in. So we will multiply campuses and churches and YOUR YES might be to join a campus launch team. I've had so many conversations about Northeast Charlotte this week that I believe God is bringing something special to that work there. Go to our website or come talk to a pastor after service.

2. We are sent across the seas

- The church has been following God to foreign people groups since Paul wrote these words. Actually before that. Missions is not the American Church gracing the world with its unique first class understanding of the gospel. NO. God's mission is a global mission that doesn't need the English language or the American church to flourish. BUT, he invites us in. And I'm telling you getting to participate in the building of the global church...What a glorious honor. What JOY! Our goal in the next 5 years is to send 10 members of mercy church to live overseas sharing the gospel. To put your YES on the table and let God put it somewhere on the map. You could get to be a part of a whole people group saying YES to God!! 3.23 Billion unreached people in the world today. HOW WILL THEY HEAR? Maybe it will be because you went.
- Maybe it will be taking your professional skills and going to a lost people group and using those skills to better the community there and then share the gospel while you do it. Sometimes we think being a missionary is only for people who can't get a job or

something. No. Church history is filled with people who took their skills and went somewhere with them. And it's still happening today. Josh Byrd, member of our church, going for a couple of months overseas to see if he can take his professional skills and go serve God's mission there. Missions isn't for people who can't get jobs. It's for people who want to leverage their job to get in on the glorious calling of proclaiming. We are building a missionary sending program here. In fact, our introductory class called The Mission of God will be starting soon. Reach out to our missions pastor Scott Urbanek for more information.

Yes. Yes will cost you. But getting in on the mission of God is worth more than any fortune you could build for yourself here. One of the most well-known missionary stories – Jim Elliot. He said he is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

Killed in Ecuador by the very people he was sent to proclaim the gospel to. Saw God's mission as better. As worthy of his life. His feet covered in his own blood as he lay dead were beautiful. They looked like our savior's feet, covered in his own blood as he hung dead. And because Jesus said yes to Jim Elliot, Jim could say Yes to proclaiming the gospel even if it cost him his life. So that others might hear. And say yes. I recognize maybe that will be some of you.