June 1/2, 2024

Outreach

Re-Think Series

Mark 1:14-39

Pastor Jeff Petersen

When I was in college, I entered into a relationship with Jesus, and God led me to be a part of this church. I also met a man who was a member of this church and was involved in a ministry on campus who took an interest in me and offered to begin to teach me more about Jesus. He became a life-changing mentor for me, meeting with me week in and week out. And when I was going through difficult issues, he would open the Scriptures and show me who our God is and what He had to say. I was so thankful, and I so enjoyed our times together.

Then one week, when we got together, he said, "Hey, I have an idea. Instead of us just always meeting together, next week I would like us to go together. And you can come along with me while I share about Jesus with another student." I said, "Okay," but inside I said, "Not on your life!" I was terrified. So then I literally had a strategy that I came up with. Every week, for the next several weeks, before I went to that meeting time, I came up with some really important questions—issues, things I needed him to open the Bible and teach me about—and I literally stalled and stalled for weeks. And then one day I was coming to our time at the Student Union—we met inside the Student Union—but I didn't get inside the Student Union, because he was waiting outside the Student Union. And he said to me, "I have an appointment with a freshman, and we're going to go over and share Jesus with him."

And once again, I said, "Okay," and as we began to walk from the union, I can still picture where we were on R Street, and there was a five-alarm fire going on inside of me. Literally, so much so, that along R Street, he looked over at me, stopped and said, "You don't have to do this." I said, "No, it's okay." But we were going to a fraternity that I was quite familiar with. I was familiar with most of the fraternities through the process of running for student body president, and this fraternity I really knew well. And so, as we started getting toward this fraternity, I kind of took charge. And that was on purpose, because I purposely led us to the back stairs, where no one would see us. Going up the back stairs, we went to the third floor, and we went inside. I sat in nervous panic while he shared the good news of Jesus with this freshman. When we finished, we went back down the stairs, and slunk out of that fraternity house.

And everything about the sharing of Jesus was just fine…except for me. I was in complete turmoil in my heart and in my soul. Why…why? I didn't know then, but what I know now is, "Man, I really needed to rethink my view of outreach, because my perspective on it was so twisted. I did not realize just how good the good news really is. And you know, honestly, still to this day, I regularly need to rethink my perspective on sharing the good news. Honestly, I think it's something we all need to regularly do.

Last week, we finished our *Kingdom Story Series,* looking at the parables of Jesus. Next week, we're going to start our summer series going through the book of Ecclesiastes. But we wanted to take a week as a part of our intermittent *Re-Think Series,* to—today—just pause and, together, rethink our perspective on outreach.

I think a great way for us to do that is by looking at Mark, Chapter 1. So, if you have your Bible with you, let's turn to Mark 1. More than any other gospel, Mark's Gospel is concise and to the point. He begins immediately with John the Baptist's ministry. There are no genealogies, no Christmas story, no "in the beginning," like at the beginning of John. He's just ready to roll with what we're going to talk about today. So Mark tells about John the Baptist as the forerunner to Jesus, Jesus' baptism, Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, and then we come to verse 14, which is where we pick up the story:

> **Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."** (*NASB, Mark 1:14-15)

If I were to give a test and say to all of you this morning, "Now, take out a piece of paper and a pen, and here's what I want you to do. I want you to write out the gospel." What would you write? Most of us would write something about the death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus, how He died to pay for our sins and rose again to give us new life. We might even use a four-point outline or a familiar illustration, right? But did you notice what we just read in verses 14 and 15? Look at it again. "***Now, after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."***

Twice in these verses, Mark speaks of Jesus preaching the gospel. But what do you think Jesus was actually saying at this point? Do you think he was telling these people about His coming death, burial and resurrection? No, because there is actually far more to the gospel than a four-point outline. In fact, the entire books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are called the Four Gospels. So what was it that Jesus was actually saying at this point?

Well, Mark tells us. Look again at verse 15. Jesus was saying, ***"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel." The time is fulfilled!*** These people had been waiting for the coming of the kingdom of God, and we are told by Jesus Himself that ***the kingdom of God has come near…is at hand***. They had been waiting for this kingdom, and here Jesus is announcing the kingdom…declaring that the kingdom of God ***is at hand!***

So, again, what is the kingdom of God? I believe a simple way to say it is: the rule and reign of God. In its most simple and practical terms, it is where what God wants done is done. And the good news, as we are told in verse 14, is called the gospel of God. God is both its source—it is from God—and its object—it is about God. And this gospel, it is good news—the very best news to ever come into the hearing of mankind. Consequently, men and women are called to repent and believe, to change their minds and change their direction, and turn toward God and embrace life under His rule and reign. This is the good news that Jesus is announcing, the good news that the kingdom has come. It is at hand! The word "gospel" is a word that announces an event, and the event is God is coming new into the world, which is even now, at this point in Mark 1, breaking into the present!

Now, wait a minute. Didn't we just spend the last two weeks talking about waiting well for the coming kingdom? Didn't we talk about waiting for Jesus to return and establish His kingdom, and we're supposed to be prepared and wait and invest our lives in the meantime? So, I thought

we said this is a future coming kingdom. Now we're saying the kingdom is at hand!

And the answer is, "Yes…yes for the reality is that the kingdom still is yet to come in all of its fullness. But it is currently present, and it is advancing as God's people, in the power of His indwelling Holy Spirit, submit their lives to Him, and bring His goodness into a dark world by the power of God, according to the direction of God. And today, all over the world, are pockets of places where what God wants done is being done to a degree that simply did not exist at all in the first century. And how is that kingdom of God advancing? Well, it started with Jesus inviting people to taste of that kingdom themselves. Verse 16:

> **As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him.** (Vs. 16-20)

Here we have the calling of the first four disciples: Simon, who Jesus would later call Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James and John, the brothers, the sons of Zebedee, who would later actually be called *The Sons of Thunder.* And Jesus calls out to them, but to what? What did Jesus call them to? Well, there's a couple things right here.

First and foremost, Jesus called them, and Jesus calls us to a *relationship*. In verse 17, Jesus said to them, "***Follow me.*** Come, be my apprentices. Live with me; walk with me; eat with me; talk with me; learn from me." This is the picture of what discipleship was for them, and what, for us, will actually look like. We're called to a relationship with Jesus.

But notice, too, they were called to a second thing. They were also called to a *purpose*. Jesus said to them, ***"Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men."*** These four happened to be professional fishermen. That's what they did for a living. But Jesus comes walking along and says, "Oh, that's great. But let me just tell you, I've got something for your life that is far more extraordinary. You're going to go from fishing for fish, to actually fishing for men." And they will progressively learn that they are called to a purpose: to proclaim and build and advance this kingdom that Jesus is announcing and Jesus is revealing. But notice, too, the immediacy of this kingdom, look at verse 18.

Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Verse 20***: Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and went away and followed Him.*** Mark will use the word that is translated into English "*Immediately*" eleven times in just chapter one! I want you to notice that as we go through the text. Notice the urgency and the importance with which Jesus sets out to declare and to begin to advance the kingdom!

But Jesus not only declared the kingdom. He not only invited others into the kingdom, He also demonstrated the kingdom, and he did so in two ways. Verse 21:

> **They *went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the**

> **synagogue and *began* to teach. They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!" And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him. They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." Immediately the news about Him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee.** (Vs. 21-28)

And so here we see the beginning of Jesus demonstrating the kingdom, and He begins with a transcendent demonstration of authority over evil and the establishment of the kingdom as God's. God's unstoppable rule and reign, is coming with a greater authority and a greater power than any other kingdom on earth, or even in the unseen spiritual realm. And the demon, upon seeing Jesus, shrieks in fear, *"What have you to do with us?"* But Jesus was demonstrating this at-hand kingdom of God is a kingdom of true authority, both in word and deed, and is able to even conquer the bondage of the reign of evil in our midst. "Have you come to destroy us?" Jesus simply said, "Be silent."

Why is it that here and many other places in the Gospels, Jesus tells the demons to be silent before he casts them out? I believe it's because this kingdom will be declared, it will be defined, it will be revealed on God's terms, in God's way, in God's timing, not undercut by the demons, who would have loved to have prompted the people to seek, through Jesus, an earthly political king rather than a kingdom with a servant king, like God was intending to bring.
And then notice how true that is in verses 27 and 28. They were all amazed, saying, "***What is this? A new teaching with authority,***" and ***immediately the news about Him spread everywhere***. How quickly the news begins to spread!

So, we see a transcendent demonstration of authority. And then next we will see an imminent demonstration of authority. Verse 29:

> **And immediately after they came out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately they *spoke to Jesus about her. And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them.** (Vs. 29-31)

What a beautiful picture!

> **When evening came, after the sun had set, they *began* bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city had gathered at the door. And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who He was.** (Vs. 32-34)

Here we find an imminent demonstration of authority over a fallen world through the caring, goodness and power to bring life right into the middle of our brokenness. And this King is one who will one day make all things new. He is a King who will one day take away every sickness, disease, bondage, and suffering. And right from the beginning, He is revealing and demonstrating the beautiful reality of the authority of the kingdom of God.

But notice verse 32. Why does it say? ***When evening came, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all of these people?*** Why did they wait till evening, after the sun had set? Well, what day was it? What do we already know from the context? What did Jesus just do? He spoke in the synagogue; it was the Sabbath. And here's the thing. They had gotten this whole thing so twisted up, that they literally believe that the kind of good and love and mercy and the things that they just saw Jesus do, couldn't be done on the day we're supposed to think about and worship God. So, it wasn't until the Sabbath ended, which was at sunset, that they began to come and to experience something very different than they were experiencing in their religion. They began to experience the wonder of relationship with a King who had loving imminence and helping them with their struggles.

And so, there was this late-night ministry that took place, and you can just picture the scene. It's incredible! The text said ***the whole city had gathered at the door***, and Jesus is caring for one after another. And this must have gone late into the night. You can almost picture them just beginning to say, "Man, we've got to get some sleep." And everybody probably kind of collapses right where they are and goes to sleep, sleeping until morning, except one. And we will see Jesus declaring the kingdom of God, inviting others into the kingdom of God, demonstrating the authority of the King in the kingdom. But we also need to see just how important it was for Jesus to stay aligned with the Father, for this is the Father's kingdom. And this is the gospel of God, verse 35:

> **In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left *the house*, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.** (Vs. 35)

Everybody is asleep except Jesus. You could just picture Him getting up and carefully stepping over everybody and slipping out of the house. He goes to a solitary, secluded place. Why? To pray, to be with His father. Why did he do this? Why did He go to be alone with God? I believe it was to be strengthened with a strength greater than sleep. But I also believe it was to be aligned, to ensure that the kingdom He is declaring and demonstrating, will be in lock step with the Father's will and no other will. Now, how can I say that? Where did I get that out of verse 35? Well, I believe we can definitely say that based on what happened next, verse 36:

> **Simon and his companions searched for Him; they found Him, and *said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You."** (Vs. 36-37)

Just picture the scene back at the house. People start waking up, and they realize, "Oh, man, last night was incredible! Where's that guy?" They started looking at Simon. It's his house. "Hey, where is He? what happened?" Simon is feeling the pressure, grabs his companions and says, "Let's go find Him." They're searching for Jesus. And once they finally find him, they say, "Hey, man, what are you doing? ***Everybody is searching for You***. Let's go. Let's get to work."

Now, I personally believe that nearly every pastor, every church, and every ministry today would be prone to responding just like Simon Peter and his companions. “Come on, man. Let's go. Let's get to work.” And why wouldn't they? I mean, God is blessing. Things are happening. And there are needs, needs, needs! This is good ministry. Is this not what they're supposed to be about? I mean, if we here at Lincoln Berean had an evening program, and all of a sudden, amazingly, the whole city is gathered at our door. I can just picture an early morning staff meeting and the flurry of activity. “Let's go. Let's get organized. Let's get to work. This is *it*.”

But is this *it*? Well, there’s two things that need to be seen and considered in the text. First, what is it that they were actually looking for? Was it the King and His kingdom, or was it the miracle-working Santa Claus and his bag of gifts? Notice what Mark calls the followers of Jesus in verse 36. He calls them, **Simon and his companions**. Later, of course, they will be called the disciples, but they don’t even have a clue yet of who this King really is, and what this kingdom is truly about.

After all, what is the primary reason that Jesus even did miracles? It’s the reason we just talked about. It was to demonstrate, to validate, the authority of this King and of this kingdom—this *at-hand* kingdom—which was coming into their midst. But the miracles could very easily have become the end in themselves. The second thing that we need to consider is what we just read in verses 14 and 15. What was it that Jesus was seeking to do? ***To preach the gospel of God, to declare that the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand? Therefore, repent and believe.***

And so what Jesus says next, I find to be one of the most shocking things I've ever read in all of the Bible. Simon and his companions come, and say, “**Everyone is looking for you. Let's go**.” Verse 38:

> **He *said to them, “Let us go somewhere else.”** (Vs. 38a)

What…what? Can you even imagine the response of Simon and his companions? “What do you mean, ‘somewhere else?’ This is where the action is happening. The whole town is looking for you. Oh, and besides, whose house is this happening at?” What do we see in verse 29? ***And immediately after they came out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John!*** This was home, and there were needs at home, real needs at home. “What do you mean, ‘let’s go somewhere else?’”

You know, it will always be primary to you and me to focus on our own home, our own needs, and the needs of those closest to us. Of course, it makes sense. We all have needs, lots and lots of legitimate needs. But here is the thing. If we are not regularly and actively and continually seeking the Father in prayer, it is quite likely that our lives will be almost entirely driven by those immediate needs. And we might actually even be missing out on the will of the Father. Verse 38;

> **He *said to them, “Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for.” And He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out the demons.** (Vs. 38-39)

Let us go somewhere else, to other places, for that is what I came for, to preach the good news of

the gospel of God, to declare and demonstrate and proclaim the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. That was a message that was so desperately needed. It was desperately needed in Peter's own synagogue, where apparently at least one of the members was actually living under the bondage and control of a destructive demon. It was desperately needed in Peter's own home where his own beloved mother-in-law was suffering and hurting. That message was desperately needed in Peter's own town, so much so that an entire town would come and gather at his door just to meet Jesus and taste just a taste of the goodness He was bringing into this new kingdom. But what did Jesus say, after seeking the will of the Father? ***Let us go somewhere else to the nearby towns that I may preach there also; for that is why I came.***

Wow! Jesus' goodness. His message, the declaration of this at-hand kingdom of God is so good and so important that its declaration, its demonstration and the invitation to become His disciple, must be shared with everyone, everywhere. And that calling extends to you and me, His disciples, who can build His kingdom today, under the rule and the reign of God. And who have not only been invited but entrusted with sharing the good news of this kingdom with those who have not yet heard. And perhaps the calling of some people sitting in this room right now, will actually, literally, be to go somewhere else, just like Jesus and the first disciples, to people who have never heard.

But undoubtedly, even if we are not called to go somewhere else, every single disciple of Jesus is called to go to some*one* else…to the people who God wants us to share our story with, to share His love with, to enter into their brokenness and their hurting, to bring hope and to bring life.

And certainly, as you as a church, investing regularly in the work of this church, are seeking to do that. And God is extending that impact literally to the ends of the earth. But it's not just about what others are doing. Every single one of us can get the privilege of personally being a part of this, sharing and bringing this hope, this good, good news to others who do not yet understand this King in His kingdom. This is our opportunity. It's our privilege. It's our calling. Not only are we here to come together to know Jesus, and to become more like Him, we are also called to help others do the same. For that is what He did. That's what He came for. And it is good. It is joyful. It is wonderful. It's a privilege, not a burden, for the gospel truly Is good news.

So why, then, when I was in college, did my mentor's invitation to joining him and sharing the good news create turmoil in me? It's because my perspective was completely twisted. I assumed that sharing Jesus was something that good Christians had to do, but it was a bitter pill to swallow. Why? Because I assumed that people did not want to hear the gospel. But is that true? Do we think that, you and me? Do we actually sometimes believe that? And if so, have we considered, recently, whether or not that statement is actually true? Do people not want to hear the good news of the gospel?

Maybe we need to rethink this. Maybe some of the way certain people have gone about supposedly preaching the gospel, with anger and judgment, has caused even us to recoil at the thoughts of gospel proclamation. But here's the truth. The gospel? It really is good news. And people? They really do want to hear it.

You know, when I was in college, thankfully, I got the opportunity to begin to rethink my perspective on outreach. Now make no mistake. I am still very much in the process on this, and

the journey continues. And I need to continue, even today, to rethink my perspective on this. But do you want to hear something really cool? Something God did? Well, about a year after my first experience with outreach, I found that, as I sought to rethink things, God had grown me. And he had strengthened me. And by His grace, about a year later, I went back to that very same fraternity. Only this time, I wasn't slinking in the back door. I was walking with confidence in Christ into the front door. You see, because I had been student body president, we were able to arrange a meeting of the entire fraternity—every person who was a part of that fraternity—where I could speak to them. And make no mistake, I was still nervous. But I walked into that room and I stood before all these people, who knew me in a very different way, and I shared my story. I shared what God had done for me, and the good news of the gospel of Jesus. And how did those fraternity guys respond? Those guys that I was so sure would reject me, disdain me, no longer respect me. How did they respond? When I finished speaking, they gave a standing ovation. Every single guy in that fraternity, and it was amazing what God did. And what a lesson I learned! What was the lesson? The lesson was that this good news really is good. And that other people really do want to hear about our King and the good life in His kingdom. I am so thankful that back then, I had and still today, have the opportunity to rethink outreach.

And here at Lincoln Berean, we come together to know this King. We come together to become like this King, but we exist for something else. That is to help others do the same. And we want to help you as you seek to rethink outreach in your own life and story. That's why I'm excited this morning to call up Pastor Jacob Erb, who is our Director of Outreach, to share with you just a little bit more about how we're seeking to do just that.

(Jacob):
Hey, thanks, Jeff. Thank you for the opportunity just to share with you guys a little bit about our outreach vision, as a part of this Re-Think weekend. I do think it's really great that it's coming off our Kingdom Series, as we've been looking at the parables of Jesus and trying to figure out, "Hey, how does this inform us as we live as kingdom citizens in the context that Jesus has put us in?"

So this has actually been really important in my own story. This whole idea of God's kingdom is what woke me up in my faith. So, when I was in my early 20s, I was living abroad in South Korea, and it was there that I really had like an aha moment with Jesus that changed the trajectory of my life. So, I was in a little church in Gangnam, which is just downtown Seoul, and the preacher had been preaching for a while. I'm going to be honest with you. I don't remember the text that he was preaching from, and I don't remember the context of the question that he asked, but he asked a question that I had never heard before, or I certainly had never considered before. He said, "Is what you're doing in your life, enhancing the kingdom of heaven? Are you enhancing the kingdom of heaven?" And I remember thinking to myself, "Hmm, I didn't even know that God had a kingdom, that there was a kingdom in the heavens, so this is this is news to me." And I really didn't know that I had any part in making it grow or enhancing it. But a little bit more simply, I think what he really asked was, "Who are you living for in your daily life? And in the decisions that you make? Who are those for? Are those for you, or are those for God?"

And when I thought about it, I didn't like the answer. It kind of shook me because up until that point in my life, I had primarily been thinking about me, and living for me, and it had

never even occurred to me that there might be more to life than just getting what I wanted, or that God might have a greater purpose for me. So that shook me, and that moment really changed everything for me. It simplified some things. Now, it didn't make things any easier, but it really did simplify them. Because what I did, whenever I had to make a decision, I sought to run that decision through the question, "Hey, who is this decision for? Is this for me, or is it for Jesus?"
And then I would seek to try to align my life to what Jesus wanted for me. I do think that's a lot of what following Jesus is like. It's asking, "What does Jesus want for me? And what does Jesus want from me?" …and then seeking to do that.

And that's exactly what we want to be about in Outreach. We want to be about inviting people into the kingdom of heaven. You know, had I not encountered this kingdom question, had I not encountered this opportunity to think about my thinking, and to think about what it means, I would not be the same. My life would not be the same, and I don't think it would be for the better. This experience with Jesus that changed my life is exactly why I am so eager to invite others in, to invite them into what God is doing. Because, like Jeff said, "It is good!"

So, we really do, today, we want to rethink Outreach. We don't want to think about outreach as having various complex programs in our city, around our world, or our humanitarian efforts, though all of those things are really good. Now, as a church, when we think about outreach, we think outreach happens at the individual level. It's from people to people in relationship. So, it's our desire at Lincoln Berean Church, that every single one of you would regularly be thinking and praying, "How do I help the people in my life know Jesus? And how can I help them become more like Him?"

You know, Jeff made it clear that Jesus had a very clear calling to go somewhere else. And then for us, what does that mean? For some of us, it might be going somewhere else. But for every single one of us, that is to someone else. We are called to invite people in. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Jesus came to invite people into more. The kingdom of heaven is here, and, as Jesus followers, we want to be about what Jesus was about. And we want to follow that Jesus model, that disciple learner, that apprentice learner, and do just as Jesus did. We want to seek to become Jesus' people.

So, we want to equip you, because the good news of Jesus spreads through people, to people. So, we want to equip you—our people—to be kingdom people, to be the type of people that invite others in because it is good. So, for an Outreach Ministry, that means working through our Life Groups, and our Next Gen, and our discipleship ministries, to give you tools to share your faith with those around you, wherever God has placed you, because we are called to be His witnesses. So, we want to equip you to help people know Jesus. We want to expose you to what God is doing in our city, but also all over our world. And then we want to send you. We want to help you go wherever it is that God has called you, whether it's in your neighborhood, down the street, or if it's to the ends of the earth. We want you to be feeling out what God has for you, wherever He has placed you.

We want to be active. God is active. He's actively seeking people to join Him, and we believe that God is inviting people into His kingdom through you. And that is what Outreach is…and

that's exciting! So, we are so excited to partner with you in inviting people into God's kingdom. And that's a big picture vision of what we're trying to do in Outreach.

Now, on a little bit more practical scale, what we're doing in something specific, is we want to partner with you to give you the tools to feel confident in sharing your faith. So, we have put together a workshop. You guys might remember I came up here a couple of weeks ago, and I wanted to invite you into our Re-Think Workshop. It's actually happening next Saturday, and it really aims to be a practical, hands-on look at: "How do we share our faith with people? How do we invite people in? How do we help others do the same?"

And so, many people have already signed up, and that's awesome! I'm so excited to walk through that with you. If you've signed up, that's great. I do want to let you know that space is a little bit limited because this is not intended to be a class where you come and sit and you learn. It's supposed to be relational. It's supposed to be interactive. So, we do have limited space because of that. But if you do want to sign up, we have space for maybe three or four more Life Groups or a handful of individuals to join us. I look forward to working through this with you, to partnering with you as we help others do the same.

Thank you, Jacob. So, where do we start? I think the place to begin is simply by seeking to think about and remember our own story. What has Jesus actually done for me? I can honestly tell you, "He has done everything! For me, I would be dead without Him. I am so grateful for who He is, and how I long for others to know His love. The only reason we share our faith is because of love for others. I'm so thankful, too, that Jesus has given us a means of reflecting, of remembering what He's done. So, I want to bring our Worship Team back up. I want to invite the ushers to come down with the elements of the Lord's Supper. We want to take a few moments, as we close the service, to remember who Jesus is and what He has done in this good news. The ushers will pass out the elements, so just hold those and I'll come back up and we'll partake together:

Our Lord Jesus, on the very night in which He was betrayed, He sat together with His disciples, knowing full well what was coming. And He said, "Take this bread," as He broke it. "Eat this bread. This is My body that is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

And again, in the same way, He took the cup. And He said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. As often as you drink it, you proclaim My death until I come again. Do this in remembrance of me."

Jesus, thank You that You came, that You declared and invited us into Your kingdom. Thank You that You redeemed us. Thank You that You have changed our stories; you've changed our lives. Fill us with Your love to go forth from this place to help others do the same. In Your name we pray, Amen.

Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE
Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1987, 1988,1995
The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.
Lincoln Berean Church, 6400 S. 70th, Lincoln, NE 68516 (402) 483-6512
Copyright 2024 – Pastor Jeff Petersen. All rights reserved.