Transcript* - Missio Dei – Pastor Jay Gjurgevich – 10/18/2026

A good morning, everybody. Great to see you all here this morning. My name is Jay, one of the pastors here at Broadway. Excited as we get started into a new series this morning called The Bridge. We're really excited about this one. And I know we say that about every series that we start. But I don't think you'd want us to do a series that we're not excited about, right?

But I also think that this one's going to hit a little bit differently, because we're going to be talking about the idea of the mission of God. And just as we saw in the video there, the idea, of course, is that we know that Jesus is the ultimate bridge to salvation. But at the same time, we also know that as believers, our lives function in the way of a bridge and way in terms of bringing Jesus to people and bringing people to Jesus.

And there are ways in which we are all called to be bridges in that way in our lives. And so because if you think about it, this is true for everybody who is currently a believer. If you're in this room and you're a believer, there was one person at least, or likely several people in your life who served as bridges to connect you to Christ, who either brought you to Christ or brought Christ to you.

Whatever that looks like. It could have been a pastor preaching a sermon on a Sunday morning. It could have been a family member or a friend praying for you. It could have been somebody who shared the gospel with you in a conversation. It could be all of those things and more. And all of those people served as bridges to the gospel in your life if you were a believer.

And so the question for us as we continue through this series where we begin the series is really, who are you a bridge for in your life? Because we often talk about when we teach up here on Sunday mornings, how a message might impact your life, your individual life, your relationship with God. But we're going to be asking the question a lot through this series.

How is your faith impacting someone else's life as you go? So in this series, we're going to be talking a lot about being on mission. And to start, here's a critical thing to understand. We are on mission because God is on mission. God is the original missionary. He is the one that from the beginning is seeking and saving that which is lost.

And we're going to explore throughout this series all the ways that we see that in the old Testament and the New Testament. We see God as a missionary, but understand this big idea. This is what we're understanding that God is the one who is on mission, but at the same time, he calls his people to be on mission with him.

In the church, there's a common name for this a common phrase. It's called the missio de the mission of God. It's this rich theological idea that God is the initiator of mission, but at the same time, attached at the hip is the idea that God calls his people out into mission from the beginning. And so when we talk about what this means, I think Christopher Wright, who's an author and theologian, explains this well, practically what this looks like for us in the church.

He says this it's not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church. The church was made for mission. And here's what that means, practically speaking. You know, we have a tendency when it comes to mission.

We think about mission in the church to think about it as just one of the things that we do. It's one of the ministries of the church, just like small group ministry or men's and women's ministries or youth ministries. We also have missions ministries, and we even structure the church like that in some ways. We have a missions pastor.

We have a missions team. We have a missions budget just like all the other ministries. But if this is true, if it's a if it is in fact true, that mission was not made for the church, but the church was made for mission that redefines everything that we do, because it means that everything that we are supposed to be doing as a church is to be on mission.

That is the priority of everything that we do in being a part of the church together. So the question might be, well, what is this mission and what does it look like? I'm going to start by looking at Luke chapter 19, verse ten, because Jesus defines his mission very succinctly and clearly in this verse. And he says, For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

You know, Jesus makes this simple statement about his mission right after his right after his encounter with Zacchaeus. Now, you may remember this Jesus goes into the city of Jericho and he's there in the crowds are surrounding him. And there's this little man named Zacchaeus who is a tax collector. And you may know him as a wee little man because he is a short little guy, and he so he can't see.

I got one laugh out of that. Somebody heard the wee little man, but he can't, so he can't see above the crowd. But he wants to see Jesus. So he climbs up into a tree to see Jesus. And Jesus sees him above the crowds. And he says, Zacchaeus, I'm going to your house tonight. And look, this is a huge statement because Zacchaeus is a hated tax collector.

The Israelites considered him to be the worst of sinners because literally, he stole money from their pockets and he assisted, he assisted the Romans and oppressing and exploiting his own people. So

he was hated the worst of sinners. And for Jesus to say, I'm going to go dine at your house tonight is Jesus saying, look, I am I am going to associate myself with you.

And you might imagine the blowback that Jesus got from not only the religious leaders, but the Jewish people who were gathered there. And they say, this man eats with sinners. What kind of teacher? What kind of Messiah could he possibly be? And Jesus states that he uses this to say, this is exactly why I have come to seek and to save the lost, especially those whom the world has given up on, who even religious people have given up on, those who seem far from God's salvation.

To call back those who are far from God, who have been lost through salvation. Now, with that in mind, think about the fact that the mission of Jesus is the mission of God, which is also the mission of the church where the mission. This is where the mission starts to seek and to save the lost, those far from God.

That's the purpose of the church. It's what the church is made for. It's not a ministry of the church. It's not a program of the church. It's what the church is all about. Okay, so how do we do that? Well, come with me to Matthew chapter 28, verses 19 through 20 says this. Jesus says to the disciples, after the resurrection, go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the very end of the age. Now you may recognize these words from Jesus to his disciples. You may have heard these before. We often know this as the Great Commission, because it brings a lot of clarity to what the mission of the church is. Jesus is commissioning and sending out his disciples as the church, according to the missio de the mission of God.

At the same time, though, this is a very personal commissioning as well. It's not just for the organization, it's not just for the group, it's for every person who would follow Jesus as a disciple. This is your mission. This is your calling. And here's why that's important to understand, because we sometimes read this and think, okay, this is the great commission that's for the church leaders and the church who are responsible for doing this to complete, to fulfill, right, the pastors and missionaries, they're the ones who go out and make disciples in the world, and they teach people and they baptize them.

And there's a sense to where that's true, right? That's the ministry of the church. And church leaders have a role in leading us and doing that. However, this is a very personal and individual calling. At the same time, it's not just for the pastors and the missionaries to accomplish, it's every disciple who is given this mission because it takes a disciple to make disciples.

You cannot make a disciple without being a disciple. And if you are a disciple, if you are a follower of Jesus, Jesus is saying, this is your calling. You are called to make disciples. And we hear in Scripture where we're told we're too late. When we first come to faith in Jesus, we're to lay down our lives and to pick up the life of Jesus.

I think at least, at least part of that is laying down our previous mission for our own lives and picking up the mission of Jesus as priority in our lives, so that now my life mission is defined by the mission of Jesus that he gives me as I follow him into mission in the world. Does that mean that you have to be a teacher or have a master's degree level understanding of theology?

No, it doesn't mean any of that. What it does mean, though, is that we all have different roles and callings within the bigger calling to make disciples. We share in this calling together. It's not just given to the professionals in ministry. This is for every one of us and everyone has a calling. If you were a believer, you're a part of God's Church, of the Church of Jesus, and you are a plan and you are the plan A for accomplishing his mission in the world.

Acts chapter one. Listen to this in verse six. This is Jesus talking to the disciples. Of course, after he or meeting with the disciples right at the event of the Ascension. This is after the resurrection. And he spent 40 days with them. And it says this in verse six. So when they had come together, the disciples asked him, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?

And he said to them, it's not for you to know the times or the seasons that the father has fixed by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

And while they were gazing into heaven, as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes. And they said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way you saw him go into heaven. So after the resurrection, Jesus spends 40 days with his disciples larger group of disciples.

We're told even at 500 people at one time in one case. And what we just read happens after those 40 days. What we know as the Ascension event. These are the last words. Then, that the disciples hear Jesus speak and he tells them a couple of things. First of all, he says, the Holy Spirit will come upon you first and foremost, and then you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth.

I want you to notice how those things work together. First of all, is that it is the Holy Spirit who will empower you for mission and witness. It's important for us to remember that, because I think sometimes we overlook the essential nature of the dependance on the spirit as far as mission goes.

And then secondly, that they are called to be or we are called, and they are called to be the witnesses of Jesus in the world.

Let's start with this idea of witness for a minute. What is a witness and what does a witness do? Well, in the world of the Bible, being a witness was a serious matter. It was actually considered a sin under Old Testament law to fail to speak up for a matter that you had seen or experienced as an eyewitness, if that matter, went to court.

And there's a reason for that, much like today, right? The testimony of an eye witness can literally change the outcome of a court case. Because if you get somebody who's in there that has just as powerful testimony of what they've seen, and they're a reliable witness who's telling the truth, right, about what they've seen and experienced, there are a few things that can hold up to that.

The same thing goes for those who have been saved and transformed by Jesus. The firsthand testimony of a life changed by God is a powerful, undeniable truth, and anyone who has experienced that has the ability and the calling to be a witness of what you've experienced with God through Jesus Christ, what you have seen and heard and experience, no matter who you are, you're called to be a witness because that could potentially be eternity changing in the spiritual courts of heaven.

One of the earliest New Testament witnesses about Jesus was a Samaritan woman that Jesus meets at a well in John chapter four. And it's amazing to see how simple in many ways her witness actually was. There was this light. She has this life changing encounter with Jesus where Jesus begins to kind of read her life. He tells her everything.

She's struggled with. He hits on the shame and the despair that she's experiencing in her heart at the time, and he offers her, instead of the water, that she's drawing from the well, living water. In other words, he's offering her eternal life rather than the life that she's living out in the moment. And she's so impacted by this encounter with Jesus that she immediately runs back into her hometown and tells everyone who will listen about this man who just told me everything I ever did.

And then she says, could this be the Christ? And as a result of her witness and her testimony, we're told that several people actually believe right there on the spot that this is the Christ. But many others in the town, they want Jesus at least to come and talk to them. They want to meet Jesus, who is this guy.

So they invite him to come into the town to spend the night with him. And they begin to talk with him. And as they meet with him, by the time Jesus leaves, almost the entire town says, indeed, this is the Savior of the world. So what happens there? God uses the joyful and willing testimony of one woman

who has just encountered Jesus and just tells her story of what happens to save almost an entire town and bring them to faith in Christ.

And I think what stories like this show us is the power of witness, but even more so the power of the spirit and mission. In the end, the mission of God is a spiritual mission. And I don't mean that is just ethereal and it just affects our spirits, but it's spiritual with a capital S in the sense that it is Holy Spirit empowered.

It is Holy Spirit guided, and it is Holy Spirit accomplished in every way. We cannot accomplish the mission of God without full dependance on the spirit. Notice when Jesus gives this command to his disciples. He says, you are to be empowered by the spirit and then go and be witnesses. If anyone could just rely on their own eyewitness testimony, it would be these disciples, right?

Because they had spent three years with Jesus. As John says, we saw him with our eyes. We heard him with our ears. We touched him with our hands. And yet Jesus says, the testimony is important, but you cannot. But what? The testimony will fail without the power of the Holy Spirit. Your testimony alone will not save people. It's the power of the spirit that saves people.

In the end. And so this combination of they speaking of the importance of the spirit before Jesus even gives the disciples the mission that they're to carry out as the church, he does something very interesting. On the night of his resurrection, the disciples are still gathered in a room outside of the city of Jerusalem, behind locked doors. They're cowering in fear.

They're afraid that the Jewish religious leaders are going to find them and do the same thing that they did to Jesus, to them. And even though they've heard this testimony, the story about Jesus rising from the dead earlier that day, they don't seem to quite believe it because they're still in hiding and they're locked behind these doors. Fortunately, they can't lock Jesus out.

He shows up right in the middle, right in the midst of them. In that room, fully resurrected, fully bodily resurrected shows him even the scars in his hands and the scar in his side. And as he does, there's a room full of witnesses now who have witnessed the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, but also what the resurrection says about who he is.

That Jesus truly is the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of the world. And to this room full of witnesses, listen to what Jesus says. He says, as the father has sent me, I am sending you. Now that you have witnessed this, you're ready to be sent out into the world. And then right after this, rather, if he says that he does this in John chapter 20, verse 22, and when he had said this, he breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit.

I think one thing we really need to see here is the connection, really the dependance of the Holy Spirit for mission. As Jesus breathed on his disciples and said, Receive the Holy Spirit, he's representing and foreshadowing the event that would ultimately come known as Pentecost. In Acts chapter two, it says this when the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place, and suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind or breath, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting, and divided tongues as a fire appeared to them, and rested on each one of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance. So this is just the beginning of the event that we know as Pentecost that really the event of the beginning of the spirit filled church on earth. And notice that immediately in that setting, if you continue to read that chapter, what you see is one of the first things that happens is that the apostle Peter stands up in front of thousands of Jewish people who are gathered there in the city of Jerusalem for the Pentecost festival, and he begins preaching a gospel story, preaches the gospel, talks about Jesus and the death and the resurrection

of Christ. But then he also says this to a crowd of Jewish people and Jewish religious leaders. He says, you are the one who crucified this man. Now repent. Consider how bold that is, right? You are the one who have crucified the Messiah, the Son of God. Now repent. And so what happens is Peter get dragged off to jail.

In that moment, no 3000 people come to faith in Christ as a result of that message. Now, I want you to think about the difference between Peter a few days before that event and Peter now with the Holy Spirit before that event. Right. Peter, days before is denying Jesus to a servant girl, denying Jesus three different times in his hour of need.

And now Peter is preaching in front of thousands of people who can actually put him to death if they wanted to. And 3000 people get saved. And he's preaching boldly about the gospel. Notice the difference? This is what Jesus meant when he says, The Holy Spirit will give you power for mission. And the thing is, is that that was not just for Peter.

That's an example of what's supposed to happen among all of us in the church as believers. The question then is, why doesn't that happen more in the church today? Well, I think that in some ways we really can't fully answer that. But I think there are four things, at least, that we can look at and say, these are things that we can engage in our lives to be, to be a part of the spirit of the Spirit's mission and seeing how the Holy Spirit moves in this world to be engaged on mission.

And the first one is this it's simply to rest in God. And when I say rest, I don't mean passive. I mean rest in the sense that, you know, Augustine would use the idea of rest. Augustine once said, our hearts are restless until they until we find ourselves in you, O Lord. In other words, we find rest and true spiritual contentment when we're able to rest in God.

Rest means contentment in all of this. And so contentment in God is a starting point for mission, because you have to first believe that the gospel is good news and be content with the gospel as being good news. The question that I'd ask you is, do you believe that more than anything in this world, the gospel is the best news for people to hear?

Do you believe that? Because the only way you truly believe that is if you find your own contentment in the gospel, if you've experienced it, have you witness to the fact that the gospel is actually good news? Do you find contentment in it because you cannot take people to a place where you have never been? And that's true about belief in the gospel.

So we need to rest in the good news of Jesus until our relationship and our discipleship in Christ gives us contentment, and we need to rest in God's Spirit and seek God's Spirit until we see the centrality of God's mission in the world. And I think this is important to realize, because we can affirm the gospel and we can believe the gospel and still not share the gospel.

And why is that? I think a big part of the reason is we lack contentment in the gospel. We become, and what results is we become self-conscious rather than spirit conscious. Self-consciousness says, I can't do that. I don't know enough. I don't want to lose friends. I'm afraid of what people will think about me if I bring that topic up.

It's not polite to bring up a religion, so I don't know what's going to happen. Let me just say that all comes from self-consciousness rather than spirit consciousness, and we need to become Holy Spirit conscious, but we need to do it by resting our contentment and our identity in him. So that's the first step. The second step is to pray.

Again, this is a spiritual mission that is not controlled by us. It is controlled by God. And prayer has a way of reminding us of that reality. Prayer both informs us for mission as we meet with God and empowers us for mission. As we join with the spirit in a spiritual act for spiritual results. When the Apostle Paul was in prison preaching the gospel for for preaching the gospel, I should say he asked the Colossian Church in Colossians chapter four to pray for him.

And he asked them to pray for two things. Specifically, he said, pray that I would have open opportunities to share the gospel. And in that case, Paul's in prison. So like the interactions he had was basically the prison guards and maybe some cellmates. So maybe ten people total each day. But he's saying, pray for me that I would have opportunities with those people to share the gospel.

I may be in prison, but the gospel is not in chains. And then secondly, he says, when I have those opportunities, pray that I would speak about Jesus clearly and wisely in those opportunities. And look,

I think that's a great guide for any of us to embrace in our lives if we just pray those two things. Lord, give me an opportunity today just to show someone hope.

Just encourage someone in some way, maybe to pray for someone or maybe even to share the gospel. Secondly, Lord, when that opportunity provides itself, allow me to be able to speak with wisdom and boldness and clarity. That's what he's praying for. And look, I use this prayer guide that I think is sometimes helpful for people. And I just give you this and as an example, to think about what does it mean to be intentional about praying on mission?

I don't know how well you can see that, but there are five circles there, and on the bottom there, it kind of correlates to each one of the relationships or spheres of influence that many of us have in our lives. So there's family, relationship, friend relationships as it goes out, neighbors, coworkers, and new relationships or acquaintances. And what this does is it, you know, the idea is that you write down specific names in each one of these areas of relationship that you have in your life.

For people who don't know Jesus yet and you're just praying for them, it's just a beginner. It is just begin to pray for them and have intentionality about being on mission. And what this does is it reminds you as you pray for them to be intentional on mission. Because how many times might we pray for those opportunities and then those opportunities present themselves, and we totally miss them because we weren't being intentional.

And look at how this might open our hearts to those who are around us to be intentional about encouraging people in the gospel. And the third step then so pray, and then the third step, then, is to know and go, this is really the heart of mission, and it comes straight from the Great Commission itself, right? Jesus said to his disciples, go and make disciples.

And do this by being my witnesses all over the world. Wherever you go is this mission is not just a mission for us to be kind and to love people and to serve people. Although that might be part of the mission at its heart, this is a heralding mission. It's announcing a message. It's announcing the good news of Jesus.

So we have to know what is that message that we're announcing? Well, so much of this series is about that. We're going to be talking about how we see the gospel presented over and over and over again throughout Scripture, from Old Testament to New Testament. But at its most basic gospel mission is announcing the good news that Jesus is King and Savior, and that all people are invited into his eternal kingdom to be reconciled to their creator and receive eternal life through the salvation work of Jesus.

Now, in order to receive that salvation, we must acknowledge that we are in need of a Savior and confess our sin and repent. And we receive God's forgiveness. Then, through faith in Jesus salvation, work on the cross and through the resurrection so that we can be reconciled to God, our creator, and we can submit to Jesus as King in our lives.

That's the heart of the gospel. And look, I realize this. That gospel proclamation feels sometimes like it's intimidating. How do I communicate that to somebody? But I want to tell you on the front end, before we even get to that, please consider the amazing responsibility, the privilege that we get just to bring that kind of good news. Listen to a place like Isaiah 52 verse seven, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, Your God reigns.

This is the good news we get to, and we get to announce in verse ten, the Lord has bared his holy arm before all the nations, for the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Here you go. If you ever wanted to have beautiful feet, forget the pedicures.

Just share the gospel. Write. But seriously, look how much of a privilege this is to be able to do good news. Peace. Good news of happiness, salvation. I mean, who doesn't want those things? In the end? Now, that doesn't mean that everybody's going to respond to it as if it were good news. People are broken and they don't always recognize the good news when they hear it.

But we have to have confidence in the fact that what we get to do is an amazing, amazing opportunity. We get to declare the good news that our God reigns. John Oswald says this about the good news that God reigns. He says, what does the what does God's rule entail? It entails a condition where all things are in their proper relation to each other, with nothing left hanging, incomplete or unfulfilled.

It entails a condition where creation purposes are realized. It entails a condition of freedom from every bondage, but in particular the bondage resultant from sin. Where God reigns, all these things follow so we know. And then we go and look. The going sometimes looks like going to the other side of the world to be a missionary. Sometimes it looks like going somewhere locally to start a church or be a missionary locally.

But for most of us, what it's going to look like is kind of as you go, as you meet people, as you live your life and the relationships that are around you, are you the feet that's bringing good news to them? Because going as much as it is a physical thing is also a mindset. Am I someone who understands that I have been sent to go into the world?

Remember the scene with the disciples at the Ascension we talked about earlier in acts chapter one? There's this hilarious interaction that happens at the end of that scene, at least I find it hilarious. It's after Jesus has said, Go to Jerusalem, receive the Holy Spirit. You're going to be my witnesses to the ends of the earth. And then he goes up into heaven.

He ascended into heaven and it says, the disciples are just standing there staring at the sky, and they're apparently staring at the sky so long that two men in white robes who are probably angels, come along side and say, man, why are you staring at the sky? I think in some ways it's probably obvious why they just saw a man just completely disappear up into the sky, right?

That's probably one reason why they're staring at the sky. Another might be because this is not just any old man, it's Jesus. And they were just talking about Jesus. Are you going to establish the kingdom right now here in this place? And then all of a sudden he's gone. But the angels remind them, look, he has told you what to do.

Now go to Jerusalem, receive the spirit, and go live out the mission. And I think this is such an important picture for us to consider, because this is what happens to many of us, both as individual Christians and the church. We are told what we need to do. For most of you in this room, this is not your first time hearing about the mission of God, and that we're called to be witnesses in the war world, right?

And yet, how many of us are just staring at the sky or prioritizing the wrong things when it comes to the kingdom? Because right before this, the disciples are asking Jesus, Hey, Jesus, are you going to return the kingdom now to the kingdom of Israel, right now to the world? And Jesus says, look, that's not for you to know.

Instead what you're to know is the priority of mission. Go and be my witnesses. And look, I like theological debates as much as anybody but these disciples. And what's going on here remind me of what happens when we are asking the wrong questions and seeking the answers that are not priorities for God. And as Christians, I think at times we have a way of majoring in the minor issues, being preoccupied with our own theological distractions, arguing about this doctrine or that doctrine, being upset about the way the church does this, or the way that church does that.

I mean, we don't rather argue about end times theology in many cases. Then remember the priority of the mission that we have in these times right now, as the average Christian, about the end times, that they'll engage immediately, but then ask the average Christian who they shared the gospel with recently, and you'll probably hear crickets so many times.

We are just like the disciples in this moment, and what needs to be, what needs to happen is we need to realign ourselves with the priority of mission. That's what this series is all about. We need to hear

Jesus say, I came to seek and to save that which was lost, and you're to do likewise. And finally to engage with God's mission through our lives.

We need to build the bridge. You know, in many ways, we're going to talk over and over again in this series about what it looks like to be the bridge. Another big idea again, again, the big idea in all this is everyone who is a Christian has had somebody who was a bridge to the gospel in their lives.

The question for us is, who is that in your life? Who are you a bridge for in your life? A bridge for the gospel? And I realize that for some of us in this room, maybe a lot of us, one of the reasons why we aren't really building bridges in our lives in this way is that it sounds intimidating.

You don't feel qualified. You aren't. You don't feel like you're knowledgeable enough. You don't feel like you're faithful enough or good enough. If you think that disqualifies you, I want, I want to remind you again of one of the first witnesses that we saw in John chapter four, the Samaritan woman who just told her story about meeting Jesus.

And then an entire town came to faith in Christ as a result, in many ways, this woman would have been the last person you would have imagined to be an effective witness. First of all, she was a woman, and I don't want to be offensive. But it was truth at that time that a woman's testimony was not even admissible in court at that time.

It wasn't considered to be a valid witness, whatever she said. Secondly, she was a Samaritan, which the Jews considered the Samaritans to be second class citizens because they were mixed ethnically. And then third, she was a woman who had obviously done some moral that had done a lot of moral things that were inappropriate, some immoral things, including having a reputation for sleeping around with a bunch of men.

And you can see as a result, probably of that she had been a social outcast of her town. And we know this because she's in the middle of the day. She's drawing water from the well by herself, when it was typically that the the women of a town would go together at the beginning of the day, in the cool of the day, she's by herself in the middle of the day, which indicates that she'd been probably socially outcast for her reputation morally.

And yet, this is the person who was one of the first witnesses of Jesus in the Gospels, and an entire town gets saved as a result of her just telling her story of how she met Jesus. You still think that God can't use your testimony? Your witness? The bridge here on stage was specifically built for this series. And if you look at it closely, you can tell this is professional quality, right?

I mean, and you better say that because our friend Bob Helton built this, and Bob's a professional contractor, and so he built this. But if you look at this, this is not just a prop bridge. It's actually a bridge that is made to be walked on. It can support weight. I trusted enough to walk across this. I trust Bob's craftsmanship enough to walk across this, but as you look at it, I don't know if you can see the details of this, but a lot went into building this bridge.

It was a process he had to kind of plan out. Okay, what does it look like for structural integrity? How do I get, you know, the right boards in the right places? How do I measure and cut exactly in the right place? What do I fastened to? What. And not only is it a functional bridge, but it's actually a really good looking bridge, right?

It's esthetically pleasing to look at. But all of that, of course, is a process that comes together plank by plank, fastener by fastener to form a bridge. And the reason I say that is that the same thing happens with building bridges in our lives. It often starts with a process just build one piece at a time. It can be as simple as just praying for people in your life.

Pray for opportunities like we talked about earlier. Look for opportunities to just serve someone and give them hope in some way. Whoever God brings to mind, who's that person that just needs hope right now that you're aware of? Go and give them hope. Encourage them. That's building a bridge. I want to close this morning by telling you a story about one of the bridges in my life.

Just like I think many people in here, there were several bridges in my life to Jesus. But I want to tell you about one this morning when I was younger, in about seventh or eighth grade, I had a Sunday school teacher by the name of Gary Howard, and Gary taught seventh and eighth grade boys Sunday School. So if you've ever done that before, you know how much of a struggle that is just from the front, just from the jump.

Just from Jump Street, right? Well, our church at the time was a little smaller, and so our class was maybe eight boys at the most on a given Sunday. And there were three of us in particular in that class who were really close friends. And we made it our goal on a weekly basis to mess with Gary as much as possible in that class.

And our goal was to see who would Gary throw out of class first, because this happened basically every Sunday and give you an idea of what we did. We were big Saturday Night Live fans at that time, and that was the time where, like Adam Sandler and Chris Farley were on that show. And so we would reenact Saturday Night Live skits during class and during the teaching time, not during like the hang out time or before or after class.

We would wait for the teaching time, and then in the middle of the teaching time, we'd be doing like Matt Foley van down by the river or whatever, fallen on tables, doing all kinds of crazy things, and we

would mess with Gary just to see again who he would kick out of class, which basically happened every Sunday. Now it got so bad, by the way, that I remember one week Gary decided to do a Saturday Night Live skit in the middle of his teaching.

He decided like he's going to connect and relate with us and it went so badly. But but here's the thing that I appreciate about Gary, even to this day. And this is how Gary was a bridge. I don't know how many of you would have done. How many of you would have done in that situation? Like, what would you have done if that was your kid?

Because he's a volunteer, he's not getting paid. I think most volunteers would have been done after 2 or 3 weeks. That's actually how bad it was. I know I would have been done after 2 or 3 weeks, but Gary never gave up.

He showed up every Sunday and he taught us the Bible, whether or not we were listening or not. And here's the secret we were listening. At least I was. Between the SNL skits, I heard the gospel every Sunday from Gary. Gary faithfully built the bridge every Sunday, and he probably, I'm sure he had no idea how much God would use that, at least in my life.

Later on. And now, because he was faithful in building that bridge, I get to teach those lessons every Sunday. Because Sunday, by Sunday, Gary built that bridge, plank by plank. And look, sometimes that's all it takes to be the bridge. You weren't always going to be the one who sees the fruit of your faithful work. But we aren't called to bring fruit.

The Holy Spirit does that. We're called to be faithful. We're called to build a bridge to Jesus, to proclaim the good news that the world needs to hear. But what we say and what we do. So where can you build a bridge this week as we begin this series, where can you plan it out? Where can you add a plank?

Where can you fasten one board to another in the relationships that you have all around you? Just right now? Let's all start there as we move through this series together and see what God does among us. Let's pray. Lord, we do give this this mission to you. We know that it is yours, Lord. We know that it's what you have called us to do.

And we ask, Lord, that you would open our eyes to ways that we've just been staring at the sky. When we know what you've told us to do, would you help us, spirit? Would you guide us? Would you give us power as we go out? Just as Jesus promised the disciples 2000 years ago, we asked today that you would give us a renewal of your movement in this, in this church and among our lives.

Would you renew us by the power that only you can give us? Spirit? And would you help us to be people who not only relish in the good news, but share the good news everywhere we go? May this place be full of beautiful feet who bring the good news everywhere we go. We pray all this in Jesus name, Amen.

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