

**Sermon Transcript from March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016**  
**The Water**  
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If you guys want to turn to Romans, that's where we're going to be this morning. Today, we start a new mini-series that is going to take us into Holy Week and into Easter. And this short series is intended to prepare our mind and our heart to go into Easter rightly. So, we are calling this short series "The Symbols of Christ." It's a four-part series which will include a Good Friday service. So, three Sundays and a Good Friday service. And it's meant to get us to start thinking about: what are the things that Christ has given us to remember Him, to connect with Him and to connect with each other as the family of God as we move into Holy Week and Easter. Alright? So, that's what we're doing the next four weeks.

But, we should pause before we get into today and just recognize that, in our culture, in America, in evangelicalism, we don't hold these things called "symbols" or "rituals" or "sacraments" or "ceremonies," we don't hold those the way that they've been held in the past. We tend to distance ourselves from anything formal or stuffy or that don't make sense, and we get disassociated with those symbols and with those rituals and celebrations of our faith. So, it seems foreign to us. But, I want to just maybe challenge you this morning with the idea that you're more familiar with symbols and rituals and celebrations than you might think in our American culture. Okay?

I'll give you an example. If you were in Oakland last night – one person from Oakland. Awesome. If you were in Oakland last night, you may have been gathering with a tribe of people. Alright? And this tribe of people would have known this certain symbol very well. This symbol right here. Okay? You might see that symbol and you're like, "Yes. That's my people."

Alright? Or you might see this symbol, a similar symbol, and you're like, "Yes. Okay. That's my people."

You would definitely not see this symbol and be celebrating. You would not do that. Okay? Those are not my people. Those are not my people. Alright? So, if you were in Oakland last night and you're gathering and you are in your Warrior tribe of blue and gold and you're entering an arena, right? You're entering an arena. And listen, this arena is a ritual unto itself. Alright? There's specific kinds of food that you don't normally eat there. Okay? There's really only one type of beverage that everyone is drinking there. Alright? The language that you use is different there than it is in your office or at home, right? And everybody knows. Okay?

And then the weirdest thing happens. Right? You're all gathering in your blue and gold and you're getting ready for this thing, this event, to start. But then everyone stops and everyone stands up and everyone sings together. And everyone knows the words. And they all turn and face this other symbol. Right? What a weird thing that we do. This is a part of American culture. I don't care if this was when you were in high school or if you go to professional sporting events now or concerts or whatever. There are rituals and there are symbols all around us that we are connected to. And there's an intent with those symbols and those rituals. They are intended to connect you to something bigger than yourself and to the other people in that tribe. Right?

So, if you go to a Warriors game, you're going to wear the jersey, you're going to wear the shirt, you're going to wear the thing and you're going to yell for a certain people, but not others. You're going to high-five someone you've never met before, you don't know at all. You might even hug that person at the end of the game if things go well. Okay? These are not normal things. But, we rally around them. We rally around them. Okay? So, my argument today is that you're more familiar with these symbols that we're going to be talking about the next four weeks than you think you are. You are more familiar with this idea than you might think you are. And yet, in the Church, for some reason, we have distanced ourselves from symbols and from rituals. We are going to attempt to re-establish as a church what these things are, what they mean and why they're important, and they are centered and focused around Christ.

Right? So, for the next several weeks leading into Holy Week and, eventually, into Easter, which is our greatest celebration of all in remembrance, we'll be looking at four symbols of our faith. Alright? Four symbols of our faith. Baptism. We'll be looking at the table; communion. We'll be looking at the cross and we'll be looking at the grave. These things that hold unique significance within our tribe and our community and our family of God that we may have grown distant from or misunderstood or become disassociated with, we're going to try to reengage. Okay? Does that sound good? Well, we're going to do it anyway. So,

buckle in.

Alright. So, now, with that, turn to Romans 6 with me if you're not there already. If you need a Bible, we may have already passed that out. But, if you need a Bible, maybe raise your hand. Maybe there's one usher still out there that can get you a Bible.

Romans 6:1-14. This is Paul speaking, and here's what he says: "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

"For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin."

You might want to underline that part. "That we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin."

"Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died for sin once for all; but the life he lives he lives to God.

"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace."

Underline that as well, will you? Verse 14. "For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace."

Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, far be it from me, God, to carry the weight of these words. Far be it from me and my finiteness, Lord God, to try to explain who You are and the mystery and the power of our death to life in baptism to our church. So, Holy Spirit come. Holy Spirit come. Would You clear my mind and my tongue, Lord? Would You open the hearts of Your people? Open their ears, Lord. Give them new eyes to see. Lord, would You do something that is beyond what any human could do in any teaching capability? Far beyond it, Lord. Would You move the hearts of Your people? In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

Okay, church. So, let's start with this idea of baptism. What does our culture, our evangelical culture, say about baptism? Well, it's all over the map. It's all over the map. I'm sure if we took a poll, you all have varying degrees of connection with baptism at varying levels based on what you grew up with. Some say it's a way that you show that you're a Christian. It's your personal declaration to everyone else of something you have done and decided. Some, maybe you have no idea. Maybe you were baptized as a baby, for all you know. Somebody told you that. Maybe you were baptized as a baby. Or maybe your parents made you go to a class at your church and then someone sprinkled you with water at the end of that. I mean, it's all over the map. Some say you must be baptized to be saved. Others say you don't even have to believe, but if you're baptized, you're in. Okay? It's all over the map.

We're not going to address every one of these veins of baptism today. But, instead, we're going to start from a place of trying to understand what Scripture says about baptism. Alright? I think that's a safe place to go. So, we are going to start with the first place that we hear about baptism, and that is in Matthew 3. Will you guys turn with me there? Matthew 3. This is our first introduction in Scripture to baptism as we know it. I'm going to read Matthew 3:1-17, and you don't have to read. Maybe you close your eyes and just sit with this story, this plot line that's unfolding. Alright?

Matthew 3:1-17, "In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is he who

was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

"A voice of one calling in the wilderness,  
'Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.'

"John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the River Jordan.

"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.'"

Would you guys underline that? That's super important. We're going to dive into that.

"And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax has been laid to the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

John says, "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

And then, Jesus came.

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?'

"Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.' Then John consented.

"As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'"

Church, this is our introduction to baptism as we know it, and it's incredibly significant, this moment. Remember, one of our tools as we're going through the Year of Biblical Literacy is that anytime you're introduced to a new thing or a new idea, that very first time, it holds enormous significance to the overall story. We're looking here, in Matthew 3, at a pivot moment in the story of God and the story of Israel and the story of us. This is a momentous event that's happening. So, let's unpack this quickly.

Notice that John is at the River Jordan. Does anybody remember what happened at the River Jordan? Why is that significant? It was the place where Israel, after being delivered from slavery and wandering for 40 years in the desert, it was the place they crossed to go into the promised land. Where they crossed to become that nation that God had promised them. That's what's happening. They're back at the same place, and that's significant. John is baptizing people from all over the region at the very place that Israel crossed to become a nation, the nation that God intended them to be. To give them the land that He had promised them.

So, this is a significant setting that we're in. But maybe, even as we dial in a little closer, let's talk about this element of water. This element of water and the significance of what that would have meant to the people of Israel. Israel has a very different experience with water than you and I do. You and I shower in water. You and I cook with water. We play in water. We have water parks. Alright? So, this is different than the Jewish people. The Jewish people didn't vacation at the beach, alright, as our sermon team was talking about. The Jewish people didn't vacation at the beach. Water was a scary thing. The sea was a scary place. Moving, living water was frightening. The idea that you would put your son or daughter on a water slide and send them down into a pool of water is like blasphemous. Like, abusive. You don't do that. Alright?

Water is scary stuff, and maybe you can relate a little bit to that. When I was in college, it was 1997. I was 20 years old and I was in way better shape than I am now. It was El Nino, it was a winter El Nino of 1997 and I was going to school in Costa Mesa in Orange County, Southern California. And – alright. Come on. El Nino winter comes to Huntington Beach and there are waves, there are sets, up to 10 or 12 feet, which is not normal for Huntington Beach at all. And, of course, being the young, stupid, testosterone-driven guy I was and the people I chose to hang out with, we said, "Oh, we'll go do that."

So, we go out to Huntington Beach in winter of 1997 with our surfboards and I remember standing on the beach and I'm looking out – I was so stupid – at the ocean and these are mountains of water. Mountains of water that are coming through at Huntington Beach. I remember standing there with my surfboard thinking, "This is probably not a good idea."

But, of course, as happened far too often in my youth, a friend next to me turns and says, "Go big or go home, 'B,'" and runs into the water. So I, of course, am not going to be that guy who stands back and lets that be the last words I hear. So, I charge on after my buddy. And we're waiting. It's in between sets and we paddle out and the water is rough, but it's not that crazy and we're waiting. The way the ocean works is waves come in sets and then there's lulls and breaks. We were sitting in one of those lulls and breaks and then the sets start rolling in. I clearly remember sitting on my board watching this thing roll in at me and thinking, "There's no way of getting away from this. There's no escaping what's about to happen."

So, being a foolish 20-year-old, I paddle toward the wave, I get into position, I paddle as fast as I possible can and, very quickly, I realize this is not going to go well. This is something bigger and faster and more powerful than I have ever experienced in my life. Okay? And I grew up surfing in San Diego, I lived in Hawaii for a portion of my life. So, I'm familiar with the water and I'm familiar with the ocean. This is something I've never experienced before. And I'm paddling as fast as I can and, very quickly, this thing is picking me up and I look down and it's like looking down the face of a cliff. Like, this thing is like the side of a mountain. Like, I'm just looking down and I'm not getting up. I'm not going to get to my feet. So, I just jump and it's like falling down an elevator shaft. It just feels like Wile E. Coyote. Like I'm just falling forever and I'm having conversations with myself as I'm going down.

I hit the water. Now, if you've grown up in the water, around the water or the ocean or anything, you know that when you hit this point and you know this has gone bad, you have to stay calm. You have to keep your breathing as relaxed as you can. Relax your body. Don't try to fight it. And so I do all of those things, and yet, what I experience is like something I have never experienced before. I'll never forget it. The mountain of water that was pouring over that wave was pressing me down and holding me down and I was going into this place in the sea that I had never been before. It was dark, I was completely disoriented. I didn't even know which way was up or which way was down. It was like being in a washing machine where you're just thrown all over the place. And you're waiting for any sense of relent so you can get back up.

And it wasn't happening. And I'm down and I'm down and I'm down. And this thing is dark. And I can just imagine for a moment that this idea of baptism that you go down into the depths and die, that something dies, that's never been more real, more visceral for me than this experience where, yeah, I can imagine those thoughts are going through my head. I might not live out of this. Right? So, for Israel, this was all they knew of the sea. There was no play, there was no exercise – obviously I made it out. I survived. Yep. This is all Israel knew of the water, and it wasn't just their own experience. There's a narrative through all of Israel's story about what this water means, right? We've read through this if you've been reading the Year of Biblical Literacy with us that, in Genesis, the earth is so corrupt, man's heart is so wicked, that God sends a flood and it wipes out, it swallows, completely engulfs, humanity.

And there's just a remnant named Noah who's left. His job is to go and start over the creation story. So, God uses water. He swallows up evil and He leaves a remnant to go and start things all over again. In Exodus, the people of God are brought out of slavery in Egypt and they're up against the Red Sea and God parts the sea, He makes a path for them, they go across and they're a remnant. Now they are intended, as they cross from slavery on one side of the sea to freedom on the other side of the sea, they are intended to be a remnant of a people that begins the new story of God entering the earth and redeeming all things. And God swallows behind Israel, as Pharaoh and Egypt, the very picture of slavery and a slave master and oppression, rolls into the sea, God swallows completely up evil, darkness, brokenness, oppression. He swallows it up. Rebellion, all of it. He swallows it up. And Israel is a remnant left on the other side.

This is Israel's story. So, there is a theme here throughout the story of Israel that God

uses this element of water to enact His judgment on the world and destroy sin. That He swallows it up and it's dead. It goes straight to death and then there's a remnant on the other side that is meant to bring new life and reorder creation and redeem the world. That is the narrative that Israel understands. So, you might then understand a little bit of what John is doing here when we get introduced to this in Matthew 3. John is calling for repentance. He's out in the wilderness, middle of nowhere, and not just Israel, but all these people groups are coming to hear what John has to say. He says, "A new kingdom is coming now. So repent."

And "repentance" is a word that means to turn completely from the direction you were going. To turn completely and move in the other, opposite direction. As far away from that thing as possible. So, it's not just something we do with our mind, it's not just something we do with our words where we say, "I'm sorry. I repent," but it's actually like a repositioning of the direction we're going. It's a reorientation when we repent. And that's what John is calling all these people groups to do is repent and change direction. Change your direction. And then, when they do that – and so many people are doing that, it's just like thousands of people are coming out to John – and they make this declaration, "Yes. I want to repent." Then John says, "You know what a natural thing for us to do? Remember what God does with that old thing? That slavery to sin? That disobedience? That rebellion? Let's kill that thing. Let's kill that thing. Let's destroy it."

So, he welcomes people into the Jordan River, this moving, living body of water, and he takes them down under as God dealt with the earth in the flood. Right? As when Israel crosses over. As Pharaoh was swallowed up. The people are lowered down into this water and then they're brought back up. And the whole idea here is that God's judgment swallows up that thing that you have repented from, that brokenness, that slavery to sin. God swallows that up in the waters and you come out a remnant, a new person, a new people. And you have an assignment, you have a charge as a new person. That's the significance of what's going on here with John. It's hugely important. And then, as John is doing this and more and more people are coming, it awakens the attention of the religious establishment. They say, "Wait, why is everyone going out there and not coming to the temple? Why is everyone going out there and doing that different thing? So, let's go check it out."

And they go out and John just meets them and calls them out immediately. And he says this really significant thing to them. You know, he calls them a brood of vipers, and insults them and calls them out and all this different stuff. But then he says this really significant thing in Matthew 3:9. He says, "And do not go and think that you can say to yourselves, 'Well, we have Abraham as our father.'"

"'Well, we are God's people. Well, we are the ones that have been chosen already.' Don't think that you can say that anymore."

And that's a significant shift in the storyline of God. It's a significant change. Because, up until this point, there was only one way to be God's people. If you were born into the nation of Israel, if you were an Israelite, then something significant – there was a ritual that God had given Abraham in Genesis 17. He says, "I'm going to make a covenant with you and people are going to know you're my people because you're going to undergo circumcision."

Ninety-nine years old, by the way. "Ahh" is right. Ninety-nine years old. "You're going to undergo circumcision. And then, Abraham, because I'm making a covenant, this is a brand new thing, you're a new people, I want you to circumcise your whole house and I want you to circumcise all your servants and I want you to circumcise anyone else that comes into your house from this day forward. And I want all of your generations, on the eighth day they're born, I want them to be circumcised."

And it was this sign, it was this ritual, it was this ceremony, it was a symbol that these were God's people. This is the way God established it. And yet here, in this moment, John is bridging from that place where Israel had this ritual and this way of being God's people, and then they'd completely fallen apart, completely disobeyed, completely turned their back on God. From that moment, John is bridging what the prophets talk about, and we're going to get into. While Israel is in exile, while Israel is in their lowest point where they feel abandoned by God, God has completely just displaced them all over the region, and they've been overthrown by their enemies, and the prophets in Jeremiah and Isaiah, God gives this word: "I'm going to do something different. This is not going to be the way it was before. I'm going to bring someone. I'm going to bring a servant, I'm going to bring a rescuer, I'm going to bring a representative of myself to come and do what I wanted Israel to do. And there will be a new way."

And this isn't just for Israel anymore, this is for all nations. I'm going to throw the gate wide. Everyone come in. This is what John is bridging for those religious establishment people. He's saying, "No. That's not the way we do it anymore. You can't just say, 'I am a son of Abraham.' That doesn't do it anymore. God's doing something new now. And you don't believe me? Well, guess what? The Kingdom of God, the kingdom is near. It's near. It's near. Oh, wait. It's walking up right now."

It says, **"Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John."**

Of course, John fights Him on this. "I'm not worthy. This can't work." But, in the end, he consents. And then this radical thing that changes all of human history happens. Hear this. This radical thing happens at this moment of baptism with Jesus.

It says, **"As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up from out of the waters."**

Those waters of judgment. That place of death. Representing. When He came up out of that. At that moment, heaven broke open, the Spirit of God descended like a dove on Christ and people heard God's voice say, "This is my Son, whom I love; I am well pleased with him."

Okay, this is a shift in all of human history and this is significant for us. You guys, hear this. Okay, this, at this moment, things will never be the same. As Christ goes down into the waters – and listen, He didn't need to be baptized, right? He had no sin, right? He was the perfect representation, He was the perfect embodiment of God in man, right? There was no brokenness, there was no sin, there was no separation between Him and God. And yet, He does this for us. He does this for us. He connects to us this way, that all righteousness might be fulfilled, He says. He goes down into the waters and, when He comes up, there's this word that's used. It's called "schizo manisch." It's a Greek word and it's a violent word that means heaven was not just opened like a window opened, it means there was a ripping apart, a violent tearing apart of what had separated us, humanity, from the Kingdom of God. And now, the Kingdom of God has broken in. It's arrived. It's here.

You guys with me? The Kingdom of God has broken in in this moment, and things will never be the same. This is a new story that God is doing. So, this should mean something to us when we go into or offer ourselves up to this ceremony, this symbol of baptism. There's so much meaning. There's so much purpose for us in the story of God, but there's also this incredible thing on the other side of the waters. This incredible thing that happens. We are united with Christ in this. When Christ was baptized, He was previewing. He was foretelling what would happen three years later. That He would go to the cross, that He would take all of the wrath and sin and brokenness of the world on Himself, He would say, "It is finished, it is done now," He would take it to the grave all the way to death and He would come out the other side. He would come out of those waters of judgment and wrath and everything would be different.

Do you understand that when that happened, we now live in a resurrected world? That does not mean that everything is perfect. We live in this in-between state. This is the verse we read from Romans that Paul is saying: "Don't you know that all of us who are baptized in Christ were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life."

When you go into baptism, when you repent and make that declaration: "I am not a slave to this anymore," it's a picture all the way back to Exodus. It's the same language that Paul is using when he says, "And, therefore, you are no longer slaves to sin. This is not your master anymore."

He's talking in those same words as Pharaoh. That Pharaoh picture, that overlord, that master over you. You can say to that thing, "You don't own me anymore. I don't belong to you anymore. That thing has died. I've turned and moved. And now, as I go into those waters, that thing is put to death once and for all. I come out of those waters a resurrected being in a resurrected world. It is all new. It's a new game."

So, listen, for us, you guys, this should be a significant game changer. If you're a follower of Christ and you have not been baptized, there's nothing in Scripture that says, "You must be baptized to be saved and go into heaven."

There's actually examples of people who were invited into heaven that were not baptized. Okay? But listen: why wouldn't you? Why wouldn't you? I mean, this is something, as Julie Barrios puts it, and I think it's beautiful:

"Baptism is a prayer that we make with our entire body."

We spend a lot of time declaring and confessing and repenting – I hope we do, we should – of the things that we are walking away from, the things we don't want to have mastery over us anymore, the things we want to be liberated from. We talk about those things. But, baptism is a place where we physically say, "All of who I am, into the grave, I am united with Christ. Out of the grave, I'm united in new life."

And then, listen, that's not just the end. We don't just pat ourselves on the back at that point, okay? Listen to what N.T. Wright says. He says:

"Christian living means dying with Christ and rising again. That is part of the meaning of baptism. The starting point of the Christian pilgrimage. The model of pilgrimage is helpful since baptism awakens the echoes of the children of Israel coming out of Egypt and going off to the promised land. The whole world is now God's holy land and God will reclaim it and will renew it as the ultimate goal of our wanderings."

As we go throughout this world, as you go into your tech company, as you go into your graphic design firm, as you go into your school, as you go into these places, you are a remnant of God to this world and you take with you the resurrected life of Christ. The Word says that everywhere you set your foot is holy ground because of the Spirit in you. So, we have work to do. We have a job to do. To go be the thing that Israel was meant to be at the beginning. To be the light unto the world that all nations might be drawn unto Christ. That is our assignment. And this is, again – I'll finish with this. This is how N.T. Wright puts it. It's beautiful:

"The revolutionary new world which began in the resurrection of Jesus, the world where Jesus reigns as Lord having won the victory over sin and death, has its frontline outposts in those who, in baptism, have shared His death and resurrection. The immediate stage between the resurrection of Jesus and the renewal of all things or the renewal of the whole world is the renewal of human beings, you and me, in our lives of obedience, here and now."

And this is where I'll close, church. Listen. If you have believed in faith in Christ and you've been baptized, I want to remind you that that master of sin has no claim to you any longer. It died in the waters of your baptism. It died at the confession that Christ bore all of that for you. You are free. Remind yourself of that daily. You are free. You are no longer under the yoke of that slavery. You've been liberated. And, if that is true, then we have this assignment to be the people in San Francisco that God called Israel to be at the very beginning. A holy people. Your holiness matters. What you do with your body matters. What you say with your mouth matters. We should be people of prayer and intercession that long for God to break into the places all around us that He has placed us. We should be the people of justice that fight for those who cannot fight for themselves. We should be the people of radical grace that don't harbor a grudge, that don't put other people under a yoke of slavery.

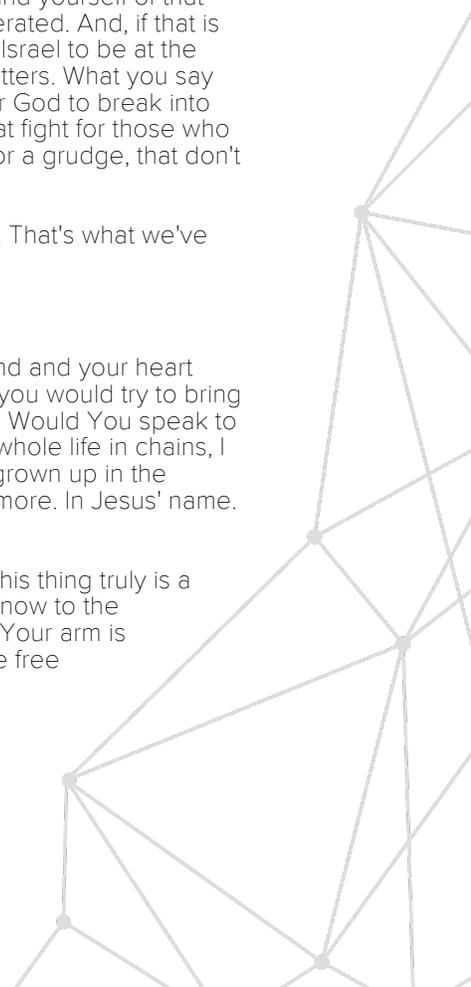
Instead, we are those that go with keys, unlocking that yoke for the people around us. That's what we've been given. That's what we are called to be.

Let's pray.

Church, I just want to wait on the Lord for a moment. I ask that you'd just quiet your mind and your heart from any distraction. Holy Spirit, come. I say the Lord rebuke you, Satan, from any lies you would try to bring in to this moment right now. Holy Spirit, would You just guard this moment; this space? Would You speak to Your sons and Your daughters, Lord? Lord, if there are places that we have lived our whole life in chains, I just sense there's so many of us that have lived in chains. Even those of us that have grown up in the church and have been told the Bible stories have lived just in chains of bondage. No more. In Jesus' name. No more.

God, if there are places that we have just accepted that we will never be free of, that this thing truly is a master over us, ruling over us, Lord, would You minister? Would You speak truth right now to the hearts of Your people? Nothing is greater than Your love. We are never too far gone. Your arm is never too short to reach down and rescue Your people. Never. Would You set people free today, Jesus? Would they see You like they've never seen You before? King. Warrior. Faithful. Full of truth and power. Sovereign. Would You free Your people?

And God, I just want to pray for my brothers and sisters who have never known You.



Who are here today and they've never known who You are. God, would You reveal, by Your Spirit, in ways that words can't, who You are? Or would they hear those words from You that You spoke to Christ? "This is my son, this is my daughter in whom I love and I am well pleased."

Maybe they've never heard that. Maybe you have never heard those words from any human before. I want you to know that those are the words of God for you. As we identify with Christ in His death and new life, those words for Christ that this is my son and daughter in whom I love and am well pleased, that is what He says over you as you come to Him, you trust Him, you open your heart to Him. Thank You, Jesus.