

Sermon Transcript from February 28th, 2016
Act 5: The Story and the Spirit
Pastor Ruthie Kim, Reality San Francisco

Let's turn to Acts 2 and we're going to start with verse 1. It says, "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

"Now there staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!' Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?'

"Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'

"Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: 'Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!'

This is not San Francisco.

"No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

"Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. David said about him:

"I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let my body see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

"Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him an oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

"The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I made your enemies a footstool for your feet.'

"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.'

"When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'

"Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.'

"With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

Let's pray.

Father, I thank You so much that the grave could not hold Jesus. Father, I thank You that we are here today because Jesus is alive. And Father, I pray that this morning that You would open our hearts to who we are and the story that You've invited us to get involved with with You. Father, I pray that all distractions, God, would just be quietened, God. And all resistance would be pushed back in Jesus' name.

We say "yes" to You this morning and to what You want to speak to our hearts, Lord. In Your name we pray, amen.

Well, I wonder why you're here this morning. I wonder if you've ever considered, "Why do I go to church every day?" Not every day. Every week.

"Why do I walk through these doors on a Sunday morning? Why am I here? What it is about it?"

Is it because we feel guilty? Do we come because this is what good Christians do? We're supposed to? Have you ever stopped and considered, "Why do I go?"

Is it to feel really good like to get together with friends and maybe have brunch beforehand and just have a good Sunday morning? Or is there more to the Church? What drives us to be here? This morning we're going to be talking about the Church. We just read the story of Pentecost and that's often referred to as the birth of the Church. But, before we refer to that and we look at that in a little bit more depth, I want to start at the beginning.

Now, if you've been with us for a few weeks, you've been following along in this series called "The Story of God." If you've missed any of the sessions, I want to encourage you to go back and listen to them on the podcast. You can find them on the Reality website. The reason for that is this series really builds upon itself. So, if you're here this morning and you're hearing me speak, I'm going to be referring to some things, referring to this story of God. And if you've missed those weeks, you're kind of going to be like, "What's this all about?"

I want to encourage you to go back and look at those. So, we're in this series "The Story of God" and we've been asking ourselves, "Where do we find ourselves in this story? What is the story that we see through Scripture? What is this narrative, this story arch of Scripture?"

We've been looking at that the last few weeks. And today, we're going to look at the Church. But, in the beginning, I want to start there. In the beginning, if we go back to the very beginning in the Garden of Eden in Genesis, we have God. And there's something that we learn about God from the get-go that's so foundational and key to what I'm going to share today. So, we're going to refresh it and we're going to touch on it again.

If we look at Genesis 1:27, it says, **"God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.**

"God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the earth.'"

See, God has always been about relationship and co-rule. And again, we've been learning about this over the last few weeks. It's priority for Him. It's right at the front. It's like everything He ever wanted and it's right there at the very beginning. We open our Bibles, flip, it's like, "Hey, you guys. I want to bless you. So, go multiple and go rule. Go enjoy this world that I've created."

And this is the complete opposite of another character we see in the Old Testament, and that's Pharaoh. If you've been reading through The Year of Biblical Literacy, you will have been familiar with the story of Pharaoh. He was, of course, ruling over Egypt and over the enslaved Israelites. And we see in him the characteristics of slave-driver. We see someone that wanted to control. He didn't like that the Hebrew people were growing in number. He felt threatened by that. He wanted to control them, make demands of them, enslave them, give them no choice, give them no opportunity for contribution or blessing.

But guys, God is not Pharaoh. God is not Pharaoh. His heart has always been about choice, relationship, co-rule, participation. It's always been about partnering with us. See, this tells us something about God that's really important. This truth about Him being so focused on relationship tells us something really important about us. That we are called to be participants and not observers of this story. This story, this mission, this narrative, this thing that God has been about since sin came into the world, of coming back in, of restoring, of making things right, of bringing shalom. We are not supposed to be observers of that story. We are called to be participants of it.

See, there's a huge difference between observers and participants. When I go see a movie or if I read a book, I'm observing. I'm sitting there, maybe eating some popcorn, I'm watching from a distance, I'm somewhat disconnected. I might have an opinion. It might be good. I might be like, "Wow. This is a great story. I really appreciate this story."

Or I might be like, "This kind of sucks. Like, I don't like this story."

I might have criticism about this story. I'm just observing. I'm just watching. I have no input in the story. It doesn't matter how I feel about it because I'm not participating. The story's not going to change because I didn't like an ending. It just is what it is and I'm just watching and I'm observing. Guys, some of us are living life like we're observers. We're living life like we're just watching. We're just watchers from a distance.

And we're walking to church on a Sunday morning and we open our Bibles and we read about the story of God and we examine it and we study it. And those are great things. And then we close it and we put it away and go, "Hmm, I have formed some opinions about that. I am watching the church. I am observing what God is doing in His story."

But we're not actively participating in it. You see, the role of a participant is much more like an actor in a theater. There's a story playing out and you know that you have a scene and you're involved and if you don't come in, it's like, "What's going on? We're missing somebody."

We have a significant role to play. It matters. Our involvement matters. We're supposed to be involved. You see, this is from the get-go what God has always been about. "I want to participate with you. I want to partner with you."

And I want to challenge you this morning that God is calling you to be a participant in the story of God. God is calling you to be a participant in this mission that He has for San Francisco, for the Bay Area, for the world. He wants to shift us to being involved.

I have an almost two-year-old, my son, Phoenix. He likes to watch this show called "Dora the Explorer." Now, if you've yet to be introduced to preschool TV, let me just tell you about Dora. Dora's this little girl, her best friend is a monkey called "Boots," and they go on adventures. The whole show – and don't judge my parenting here, I know he's not two yet. Okay? He likes to watch TV. What can I say?

But, they go on this adventure, right? And they're climbing and they're swinging and they're making decisions as they go. And one of the reasons I think he loves this show is

because it's interactive. Because in some moments, Dora looks at the screen and she's like, "Hey, why don't you climb?" or, "What's your favorite part?" or, "Let's go!"

And there's these songs and he's really interacting. It's really fun to watch kids at this age being like, "Yay!" And they're climbing. They're in it. And he's living into the story. He's living into the story of Dora. And you know what's really fun, too? When Dora is not on, he still lives the story. Right? Like, we'll be just doing stuff and he'll be like, "Boots, climb! Climb!"

I'm like, "Yeah! That's right. Keep living it."

And, you know, he's even woken up in his sleep talking about these characters. He's absorbed into the story. And guys, I think there's something that we could learn from children. They dive in and they're like, "This is my story."

And that's what I think God wants to say to us this morning is like, it's His story, but it's our story. It's His story, but it's our story too because we are called to participate. We are called to have a contribution. God wants to do this with us. If you look through Scripture you can see countless times again and again that God has chosen to partner with humans in order to fulfill His mission.

If you just start looking through Scripture of that lens of like, "Okay, how did God get this done? How did God move the story along? How did this come about?"

"Noah, go build an ark. Abraham, have a son and start a nation. Deborah, lead Israel to victory. Esther, be a queen and save a nation."

He's chosen every time to work through humans; men and women like me and you. That is how God has chosen to fulfill His mission. God is passionate about relationship. And then here we are and here's Pentecost, right? And here's Peter getting up and he has something to say. How did Peter know that he was supposed to do that? Like, he just received the Holy Spirit, he's probably feeling really good. He could've been like, "You know what? I'm just going to go head home, tell my family, soak in this a little bit, feel the blessing, enjoy a meal together, just hang out, have a holy huddle."

It's like the moment he received the Holy Spirit he's like, "I've got to get out there and participate in this story."

And I would pose to you this morning that there's two reasons why he and the early church knew that they were participants in the story and this is the story and the spirit. The story and the spirit. You might be thinking, "Well, okay. I'm familiar with the Great Commission. Jesus sent out His disciples right before He ascended to Heaven. You know. Go into all the nations. Maybe the early church had that in mind."

And it's possible. Maybe they did. But if you read through the book of Acts, it's not explicit. It doesn't say, "Here's the Great Commission. Go do it."

So, what was driving them? Like, how did they know that God loved the nations? How did they know? How did Peter know like, "Hey, I want to get up. I want to get involved. I have a part to contribute. I have something to do."

I think it's because they were so connected to the story of God. This was their story and I think that's where we miss it. Somehow we get disconnected. Like, "That's a cool story over there. I'm just going to observe it." They live their lives as if they were living the story. Like they were key actors in the story. Like they had something to contribute. So it was like this immediate compulsion of like, "Wow. Yeah. We know history. We've seen the story of God, the narrative of God. There's always people involved moving the story along."

So it's like they were compelled by this story. I believe that they were missional in their approach to the world. They were people on a mission. They were participants. Are we missional? Are we on a mission? Are we participating in what God is doing?

There's a church planter and an author of a book called "Organic Church," Neil Cole. He says, "The Church is not sent on a mission by God. Rather, God is on a mission and the Church is called to join Him."

That's just a very slight shift in our thinking, but God is on a mission and we're called to join Him. What does that mean for our families, our workplaces, San Francisco and beyond and wherever we're from? What does it mean that God is already on a mission, God is already doing something, God already has intentions and we are invited? This morning we are invited to get on board with what God is doing. It's His mission. It's His story. But, it's also ours.

Are convinced of God's mission? We've been reading through The Year of Biblical Literacy. We've been going through this sermon series, "The Story of God." But, are you convinced, are you absolutely, to the core of who you are, know that you know that you know that God is still on a mission? Because, if we're not convinced, we create our own missions. Right? Our own stuff, our own story. Our stories of distraction, pursuing our own kingdoms, serving our own selfishness, seeking our own prosperity which ultimately leads to these stories of destruction. Right? Where we've made these bad choices and we look at our lives and are like, "How did I get here?"

But, if we're convinced that God is up to something and we are Christ-followers, then we will be driven to enter into that story. How can we not be? The only way we can not be is if we've chosen to be an observe and a watcher of the story. And let me tell you that if you look at Scripture, that isn't really the option for the Church. There was no place of like, "Hey, guys. Here's Jesus and here's the Holy Spirit and just go to brunch and just chill. Just study it and just talk about it."

Like, that's good and I'm not saying we shouldn't brunch. I mean, we all like a good San Franciscan brunch and we should study and we should examine, but it has to go beyond that. Right? We have to get convinced to the point of action. And this morning I sense that there's people here and you're kind of like, "Oh, man. That's totally me. I'm an observer. Like, I'm going to CG and I'm coming to church every week and I'm reading the story and this is a good story. Yeah. Oh, I don't know. I have problems with this story. What do you think about this story?"

And we're examining and we're studying together, and then that's it. This morning, God wants to shift our hearts to say, "That's my story. I'm in. I'm convinced. I want to be involved."

But, they had more than a story, and this is where we want to land for most of this morning. They had the Spirit, right? They had the Spirit. That story of Pentecost is kind of wild. It's kind of wild imagery. We've got fire, we've got lots of languages going on, we've got Peter getting up and getting real excited. Now, Pentecost was a Jewish festival. It was celebrating the giving of the Torah and people, Scripture says that Jewish people came from all nations, they came from all over, speaking different languages, and they gathered.

And halfway through that, you might have caught it, it really struck me when I read it. So, they're hearing the Gospel, the good news is being shared in all their languages, and suddenly they say, "What does this mean?"

We need to ask the same question this morning. What does this mean? Is that just a story that's thrown in the New Testament to get all of the Charismatics excited or does it actually carry deep meaning in the context of the story of God? I think it does. I think it does. I think this is the next act in the play. Right? We just had Jesus come and He died, rose again, made it possible for our lives to be restored and renewed. And then here He is and He gives a message, a word, to His disciples in Luke 24.

He says, **"I'm going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."**

See, God knew He wasn't done. Jesus knew it wasn't over. There was a whole world to touch and reach with the story of salvation and restoration and renewal and that we as the church were called to be that, humans. But, this was an incredible task ahead of us. What did we need? We needed power. We need to be empowered to go and complete this call, this mission. See, Pentecost is not just a spiritual high or an experience, it's a crucial part in the story of God.

Alan Hirsch is an author and leader in the missional church movement, and he writes:

"This is the Church as God intended it to be. A Gospel empowered, unfettered people movement perfectly designed for nothing less than the transformation of the world and the destruction of the forces of evil."

That is who the church is, and that is the task in front of us. Transformation, destruction of evil and here we are we're like, "We're just humans."

And God's like, "I know that. So, I'm going to empower you. I'm going to clothe you. I am going to give you what you need."

And this is what Pentecost is all about. Don't get lost in the imagery. Get lost in this big story of God. This was the next act. This is what we needed. This was God moving the story along, that we as His Church would be empowered. See, we had Jesus and we had Him in the body and then we have the Holy Spirit. Jesus left and gave us His Holy Spirit in our bodies and Paul picks up with this imagery in the New Testament that we're suddenly the body of Christ.

Do you get that transfer? We had the body of Jesus and then He gave us the Spirit so that we are all part of that body and suddenly Jesus is now touching all over through us. We are parts of the body. We have something to contribute. We are participants. We are not a dead, hanging piece that's unnecessary. Every single person in this room is needed for this mission, for this story to be fulfilled.

When we start talking about power, some of us start feeling a little bit uncomfortable. I think that's totally understandable in the world today. As the Church, we are not called to go on a mission for God with violence and force, bullying, manipulation, coercion. That is not the Kingdom of God. When we think about how God is moving His story along and how what we participate with that, we need to remember who's leading us. The servant King who laid down His life. You see, we belong to a kingdom that says to lay down your life and you'll get it, where the first will be last and the last will be first. When we move in forgiveness and selflessness and sacrifice.

That's the kingdom that we're wanting to usher in. But, don't think for a second that that means that this kingdom and this movement called the Church is powerless. This Church, as God intended it to be, the people of God worldwide, we are accessing power at a deeper place. It is not a worldly kingdom and a worldly power that says, "You must. You have to." It's a kingdom that says, "I will lay down my life. I will sacrifice. I will give up because of what Jesus has done for me and because I want you to have that."

We are accessing a more divine power. Are you guys with me? Like, this is not a human power. This is not a power that forces and manipulates. And, if you've been in a church and you've been in a community where that's been the norm or where that's been the culture, let me tell you it's not the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom of God comes from this place that we don't understand. It's upside down, it's shifted, it's different, it's weird, it's not human, but it's power at a divine level.

When we enter into that stream of laying down our lives and saying "yes" to Jesus no matter the cost, that's when we access real power and we see the world transformed. See, we couldn't do this without Jesus, right? And we don't want to skip Him because He's like the everything, right? We couldn't do this empowerment thing, we couldn't go out and change the world. Jesus had to come, He had to die and be resurrected because our hearts, we couldn't change them. We can't do it without Him. We can do a lot of good works, a lot of moral works, but we can't be transformed at a heart level without what Jesus did on the cross and through His resurrection.

You see, some of us think that Jesus came to give us a golden ticket so that we can be like, "Phew. Okay. Getting into heaven."

And let me tell you this morning that it's not about your golden ticket. Jesus didn't come so He can be like, "Here you go. Here you go. You guys are good. Peace out, chill and eventually you're going to get to heaven."

He came to completely transform us, and that wasn't so we could just go home and say, "You know what, guys? I'm different. I feel so good about myself. This is so great."

It was for the purpose of transforming the world. So, Jesus came, He died, He rose again, He did what we could not do, He restored and renewed our hearts so that this whole world could be restored and renewed. We can't do it without Jesus.

So, what is the church? Paul uses this Greek word "ekklesia," and it's literally translated

to "gathering" or "called out ones." When Paul uses the term, he's not talking about a building. It doesn't matter where we meet. It doesn't matter whether we meet here in Everett in a school, in a cathedral, in a small little hut in Vietnam. Like, it doesn't matter about the building. This word "church" or "ekklesia" denotes more about our identity. What's really fascinating about this word is that, at the time that he used it, it wasn't just a religious word. It actually had more connections to political and social spheres. It was a word that was used.

At the time, it was used to describe a gathering of elders of a community. And these elders had the role of discussing social and political issues. Like, they were involved with their community and they were discussing issues at hand. They had a purpose for their gathering and that was to bring about harmony and wellbeing for the wider community. See, they were a community within a community, making a difference, bringing about wellbeing, bring about change, adding value to that community.

So, if Paul's using this word when he's talking about us here today and he's saying, "Hey, Church," it's not just like, "Hey, people that get together in a building and talk about Jesus and feel great," but, "Hey, Church that's supposed to be a community within a wider community, San Francisco bay area or wherever you're from." And you're actually coming together with a purpose to see your communities bettered, to add value to your community, to bring about harmony, to discuss issues that go beyond reading Scripture or, you know, how are your kids doing or how are you feeling today? But actually the big issues, actually the things in our city, in our world that need to be addressed.

Paul is saying we, as a Church, are supposed to be involved in that. We are supposed to be participating in that. God's story is not just about us. And guys, I really want to shake us this morning because it's so easy – and I do it too – to fall into like, "Oh, my CG," or, "my church," or even, "my family." Those things are great. We should come together on Sunday and encourage one another. You know, that's why I read the end of that chapter. We should be breaking bread together and having relationship and having community. But, it doesn't end there, guys. There's so much more that the Church is called to be involved in.

When we look at homelessness in San Francisco, we are called to participate in that. When we look at the tech companies in San Francisco, we're called to be involved in tech and business. We're called to be involved in reaching more families, more kids, all of this stuff that makes up our community, we are a community called out, filled with the Holy Spirit, anointed for the task, sent out to go and do something.

N.T. Wright has this beautiful quote which I've kind of been hanging out in. He says:

"Those in whom the Spirit comes to live are God's new temple. They are individually and corporately places where heaven and earth meet."

Man, that imagery just grabs my heart. That we are a new temple and that in us it's where heaven, Holy Spirit, Jesus, touches earth. Like, we meet. We meet in that place. When we separate and go out from here back into our jobs and to our workplaces and to our homes and to our schools, it's like we're carrying that little bit of heaven, that divine, the Spirit of God and that's where it touches earth. I want you to think about that this morning.

What does it look like for heaven to come where God has placed you? What does it look like for heaven to come in your family, in your marriage, in your workplace, in your school? That we're almost like this portal to Jesus and that, when we show up, heaven shows up, Jesus shows up. And it's not that He wasn't there before, I mean He's doing His thing. But, He has chosen to partner with us. That means it matters. It matters how you show up. It matters if you show up. It actually matters if you know you're part of the story. It actually matters.

There's a weight of that, as the Church, that we need to walk in with Grace, but just knowing that it matters if we're partnering with Jesus on this mission. Just like Abraham, we're called to be a blessing, to be a source of peace and abundance and life; the Kingdom would come through us. See, this morning I think there's an invitation for us to participate with God. But, some of us are observers for a reason. Some of us have grown up feeling that we had no significance. And you might be like, "You know, I've got a good job and my family's doing okay and I'm kind of holding it together." If all of that was stripped away and underneath, do we know that we are significant in the Kingdom of God?

See, some of us disqualify ourselves. We hide behind, "Oh, yeah. You know, I'm busy."

"I'm just not sure that's really for me." But, let's dig deeper this morning and let's just push all of that aside. Some of us have disqualified ourselves because we think, "I've made so many dumb choices. I've missed it. I've missed it. There was a moment the Jesus train came along and He invited me on and I just turned my back and I went the other way and now I'm sitting here listening to this message, but it's not for me."

Let me tell you this morning that this is for you. And, as I was speaking, as I was preparing to speak this morning, the Lord so heavy put on my heart that there were those of you here this morning that feel like you've missed your opportunity to get on board in this story of God and this mission of God. You felt like you should've made different choices, should've had different relationships, you've missed out, you've gotten tangled in your own stories of distraction and destruction, you chose drugs, you chose pursuing your own goals, and the Lord says to you this morning, "I still want you. I still want you."

And I want to encourage you because I feel like, so strongly, there's hearts here and you need to be encouraged and invited back in. Let me tell you, there's is nothing that you could do that will disqualify you from being part of the Church. Some of you have felt like you've been on the edges, you've felt like you don't belong. I just want to expose that as a lie of the enemy this morning. The enemy would love to tell you you don't belong in church, whether it's this one or another one. "Those people don't want you. If they only knew about your story. If they only knew the decisions you'd made. If your parents only knew."

And this is the stuff, the accusation, that just comes because there's power in a church united. So, let's just pick them off one by one by one. And we think it's just us, but let me tell you in this room there's a ton of you here today that are feeling that and that are feeling like you've disqualified yourself from the story. You haven't. Jesus still wants you. There's an invitation this morning.

Some of you here this morning are like, "Yeah, gosh. I'm an observer. I've been an observer my whole life." And it may not just be with the story of God, it's in relationships or it's in your family, it's in your work and you're stuck in this place of just like, "I want to, but I don't know how. I feel like I've got nothing to contribute."

God wants to move you this morning and He does that by His Spirit. It's like we don't have to muster it up and strive. When we say "yes" to Him and we say, "God, I want to make that move," I tell you, somehow He does it. It's like a divine work of Jesus. It's actually what He's very good at. That's His thing. Like, He's kind of like a professional at that. So, when we say, "I do want that but I don't know how," just tell Him that. Just come forward this morning, come grab the prayer team and be like, "I don't know how. I want to say 'yes' and I've made bad choices, but I want to get back on."

Jesus will do it for you. He will do it in you when we come into agreement with Him. I sense that this morning there's people here and you have been hurt by the Church. You have been hearing the mission of God your whole life. In fact, your family was on a mission so hard that you were neglected, you were ignored. It was all about doing God's work, it was all about ministry and missions and laying down our lives. And, in the meanwhile, you just got pushed to the side and ignored. And now it's just like the Church is kind of arms length. Like, "I don't want any of that religion."

You know what? I don't want any of that religion either and neither does Jesus. I want to say to you this morning that if you have been a casualty of someone not realizing that you were part of the mission, that you were part of the story that should never have been neglected, never have been tossed aside or ignored, I want you to come forward this morning for prayer because God wants to heal you. There's some of you that have like, "Ah, church," and there's this underlying experience, maybe as a child, maybe as a young person, of being pushed aside by religion or told that you had to, you had to, you had to. And it was all about working and all about striving. That is not the Jesus of the Bible.

Let me tell you, He's after the nations and He's after your heart. Like, there is no difference, right? Some of us grew up in church or we've had an experience in church with ministry and it was like, "Go work harder. Go do more because God cares about those people."

But, you never heard the message that God cares about you. And He does. It's not either/or, it's both. He loves you. He's just enamored with you. The story of the Bible is God going after us again and again. Even we turned around, even when we're Israel and we go, "I don't want that," God's just like, "I'm still here."

You can't shake Him. He just loves you so much He's going to pursue you. If that's been

your experience of church, if that's been your experience growing up, there's a healing, there is just an anointing for healing here this morning. There's a verse, 1 Peter 2:9. It says, **"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."**

As we close this morning, I want to encourage you, church, to get into who you are. It's not that you need to do something to get there, it's who you are called as the Church. You're a holy nation, a royal priesthood, chosen by the Lord. But, it's not just so we could feel good. It's so that we can declare His praises, so we can go out and we can affect the world, that God has called us to be a community within a community.

Let's pray.

Father, I thank You so much that, Lord Jesus, You were about the nations. Lord, we see that in the story of Pentecost. All these languages, all these languages so that You could reach everyone. You've always been about the nations. You've always been about going out there and touching and reaching everyone. You're calling us to be a missional church that would say "yes."

There's some of us even here today and we're called to overseas missions and we've been ignoring the call of God on our life and the Lord wants to remind you of that call this morning. There's some of you in this room, you're called to go and you've been putting it off and you've been resisting because you've been worrying about money, you've been worried about if you'll ever get married, you've been worried about because it's so scary, the unknown, and the Lord wants to remind you this morning He is inviting you into an adventure and a story.

Lord, I thank You that You are moving our hearts, even as we're here this morning. Lord, I pray for those that have grown up in families or churches where it was all about the mission and never about the heart. Where neglect and just not being heard were just staple in the family and the church. Lord, I thank You that You are such a loving God. You love us, You love San Francisco. Wherever we are right now, Lord, I pray that You would begin to drop in our hearts how have You called us to be missional? Where have You placed us? For some of us it's to go, some of us it's right here.

The nations are on our doorstep here in San Francisco. People that have never heard about You. And Lord, I believe You're stirring Your Church this morning and that some of us just need to say, "Yes, that's me. I don't know how to do it, but I want to be a participant and not an observer."