

Acts 2

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 May 2022

Preacher: Anselm Beach

[0 : 00] So yeah, before I start, I'm going to release the children for table kids if they have a new friends. Just in case, they're formally released.

Cool. So, hello everyone. My name is Dan Salm Leach. I am very grateful for the opportunity to be speaking before you all today as we continue our called together series in the book of Acts about the birth of the church.

The implications that that has for us today here as people who are aiming to follow, will follow along with those who follow Lord Christ.

So I don't have a PowerPoint slide with me today, so hopefully my voice and my wisdom personality will help you all stay engaged as you go through this year.

So, as I said, we're talking about the book of Acts, and Acts is written by Luke. Luke was a Gentile historian who became a follower of Christ. I actually went on a number of journeys with Paul and a lot of the people we read about in the book of Acts.

[1 : 11] So before I start about what he wrote in the book of Acts, I want to go backwards a little bit into Luke. I'm a filmmaker very much inspired by artists like Quentin Tarantino and Spike Lee and all this like.

So as a filmmaker, we play with time, right? And the more that we're watching films, the more that we as an audience are able to play with different timelines and all that kind of stuff.

So I'm going to take you back, I'm going to take you forward, and then we're going to be bouncing around in time. So I hope you all are okay with that. So there's a good story that Luke tells in chapter 17 of Luke, in which some Pharisees walk up to us and they say, Hey, Jesus, right? When will the kingdom of God come?

Now Jesus replied, as he often does, in a cryptic way to people who kind of come forward with questions that are rooted in the very traditional understanding of the Hebrew text.

It says the coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed. And the more people say, here it is, or there it is, because the kingdom of God is in your midst, right?

[2 : 24] Now for somebody who's approaching Jesus and asking about the kingdom of God and the coming of the kingdom of God, you know, these are people who were steeped within a tradition, a history of prophecies, even as knowing of their own histories, having once had a kingdom established on earth, that the coming of the kingdom of God would be like a geopolitical kingdom that would come, I probably, you know, hopefully peacefully, but if necessary, through sword and through war, as kingdoms have come before and will continue to come until God makes it right, right?

And so when these guys are asking Jesus, like, when is the kingdom going to come, they're expecting, like again, like there's going to be something observable, clear event of some like political or force or strength of nature, and then after that event, they'll be able to say, oh, there's the kingdom over there on 10th and G, right?

So, and that's when the Jesus is, no, no, no, no, no, it's not going to be like that. It's not going to be a geographical place you can go to. It's not going to be something that is brought about the way that you human beings have constantly brought it out and continue to be written about your own kingdoms.

It's going to be something that you will be able to experience among you, amongst the people, right? And that's what we get here with this series about called together. It's not like how the church is in a sense a way for the kingdom of God to exist, not bound by time and space, not advanced through war and violence, all these things that Jesus was totally against, but advanced through the love that Jesus exhibited to us and to his followers, right?

And so, I want to kind of go back a little bit to what we talked about two weeks ago, because I'm continuing and picking up from there. You know, Pastor Siena and Anthony talked about, Acts 2, verses 1-13, about the day of Pentecost, right?

[4 : 24] Before we got the Spirit. It was a wonderful, wonderful message about how this language event, right? And I see the roots and the beginnings of a truly diverse church that celebrates everybody's culture and what they're bringing to the table, right?

So, it's funny. Something that Pastor Siena said last week that really, our tweets are really stuck in my mind. She said that, you know, this chapter, Acts chapter 2, is something that's typically taught or preached on once a year, right?

On Pentecost Sunday, right? That was not my experience where I was coming from, right? So, the church that I previously was a part of, I also was a minister for that church for about seven years, right?

This passage, Acts chapter 2, featured centrally to the entire doctrine and movement and work of the church. Not only have I preached on this chapter many times before, but I have taught it hundreds of times in the small, personalized Bible studies that were meant to introduce newcomers to the teachings of the church that I was part of, right?

So, it was really cool when I saw that this particular passage was available. Given the journey that I have been on, one that probably is very similar to the journeys that many of you have been on to that, that brought you to the table.

[5 : 43] So, I was like, I'm going to be on that journey. I jumped at this full circle opportunity to be able to recontextualize the passage in the light of the journey that I've gone on to, on this faith journey.

It's led to, it's led to, oftentimes, places where I no longer believe what I used to believe about this. It's been challenging, it's been exciting, and I really hope to bring some of that to you all this evening as we hop into this.

My goal, before I start, before it really happened, I always have three goals whenever I get a chance to preach. One is to encourage. We need a lot of that. We need courage and heart to go out there and face a lot of the difficulties and challenges that are going on out there in the world.

I want to challenge. I think that the Bible has a lot of the teachings that are challenging and pushes us to be, not just better people, but to be the real life, to realize the vision for people, for humanity, that God has always had for us.

But ultimately, I also want to inspire, and that is to fill us with the inspiration brought into going likewise, as Jesus has said. And so with that, I'm going to hop in, if you take notes, if you like titles, the word title of the sermon is, The Kingdom in Our Mist. Here we go, right?

[7 : 05] So I mentioned again, like, Acts chapter 2, right? Like, if you may be familiar with something called the Roman Road of Salvation. I guess you may be familiar with that concept.

It's basically like a selection of scriptures from the book of Romans. That basically, like, everybody needs to know to get saved, right? To get salvation. Again, for the church tradition, I can't believe it's more like the action plan, if you will, about how to do the same exact thing, right?

So, you know, it's really like, oh, if you read it, okay, it's pretty straightforward, right? Where are we at at this point in the story? Jesus has resurrected and ascended, right? The Spirit has just been poured out on all of mankind.

Peter's next up to address the crowds and preach what is likely to be the inaugural sermon of this newly empowered church. And if their church is anything like the churches of the High Court, but then it was broken, then the sermon is going to end with the altar call to come up and be saved, right?

Simplify that. If it was indeed the same churches back then that we grew up here today. And that's what gives me to my first point when we talk about something like this. There's no such thing as simply reading the Bible.

[8 : 21] Right? Because when we go to read the Bible, we are always bringing our own culture and experiences to it. Alright? You know, through our culture, we inherit our beliefs about life, society, family, and religion, right?

And if we were raised for any significant amount of time in Western or colonized society, that's pretty much all of us here for the most part, then you can talk about the Bible probably before you even had a chance to read it.

So there's no reason that showing up to the Bible and saying, oh, I can just read this and know exactly what it is saying, right? And so I wanted to test that out a little bit by getting a little bit of an interactive.

Can we give you an interactive group this evening? Yeah. Alright, awesome. So I wanted to turn to the neighbor and very, you know, very socially distanced if you can, you know, as close as you can. I want to, like, I want you to talk about the question. What is salvation?

Alright, let's take about 30 seconds here and I'm going to learn what is salvation. So, would you like to share something that they talked about in their little group real quick? Yes?

[9 : 29] I was in a Catholic, so I was in a Catholic, and you get a spiritual culture compared to myself as a person. Awesome. So, up next, I was like, you're golden with infant baptism, you get a spiritual water, and then you're meant to go.

Right? That's the salvation of the experience. That's how it happens. Any others? Yes? Yes? We talked about being safe in our sinful nature.

Being safe in sinful nature. Okay, okay. One more. We talked about salvation being a process, and that it is about justice working on all the areas of our lives, so for the things done to us, and the things that we've done, things moving towards rightness and fullness.

Absolutely. I love that definition. I appreciate all of you all sharing here. You know, I think that it's funny. It depends on how you view what salvation is, it oftentimes affects how you approach the Scriptures.

Especially because where we're coming from, in our society, the Bible has been positioned to be a book that tells you about getting saved. That's the purpose of the Scriptures, right? Many of us may have experienced that.

[10 : 45] Many of us may have heard the acronym Bible Center, basic instructions before leaving her. Right? Like that's not the important position, right? The Bible has far more than just basic instructions before leaving earth.

But, depending on how you answer, and I'm going to talk a little bit about salvation here. I think it ties into this theme of the kingdom being in our midst, right? I think it's been factoring very cheaply to the text that we're reading here as well.

Because as I mentioned before, Acts chapter 2 for me, for most of my time with experience, spiritual reading and interpreting, the Bible has been a salvation proof text. So I want to try to deconstruct that a little bit, dissect it, and I think shift it to where I think it might be truly there, right? So, I want to go back to what this gentleman here said about salvation. I think that like, in our culture, this is my experience, salvation is often tied to sin.

And it's salvation from sin, and from the effects that sin has on our life. Not only is it a mess of our lives, but ultimately, Romans chapter 6 verse 23, the wages of sin is death, right?

[11 : 57] If that is how you have approached salvation, you're out of need, you're getting an understanding about what the purpose of the gospel is, about what we're being saved from, then you can read passages like Acts chapter 2, or Romans chapter 6, or Hebrews all over, and you will see that very, very clearly.

But it's possible, and I argue that it's actually, I think, more true to the fuller story here, that salvation is more than just about being saved from sin so that we can avoid death, but perhaps it's being saved from death so that we can be freed from sin, right?

Let me break that down a little bit here. There's a book that I read a few years ago that was pivotal to this kind of paradigm shift in this journey that I've been.

It's called The Slavery of Death by Richard Beck. Has anybody heard of Richard Beck before? Or this book? It's a little tiny booklet. It was published in 2015 or something like that.

And basically, his thesis from this book is that there are kind of two approaches to understanding the gospel message, right?

[13 : 08] There's one that's kind of more like the Western route, which is what I mentioned here, that we're being saved since sin causes death. And so the gospel message is that through Jesus' atoning death on the cross, right, for our sins, our sins, our sins are forgiven through his sacrifice.

And so because of that, we can now experience eternal life through Christ Jesus, right? That's a, that understanding of the atonement is what I know that in this space we have really talked a lot about.

But a lot of us have kind of come from that background, right? He also mentions, however, that there's in kind of the more Eastern experience of Christianity, it's actually very different. The gospel is not about Jesus conquering sin and therefore saving us from death.

But it says, Jesus is conquering death. It can free us from slavery to the fear of death and the resulting sins that come from that.

You know, he references 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 54. It says, Death has been swallowed up in victory. Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?

[14:20] Now the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

See, he says here that, the scripture says here that the sting of death is sin. You know, Richard Beck here in this book, breaks down about how our inherent fear of our own death and mortality produced within us the acts of what can be called, what is often times translated as, our sinful nature.

But what many Christians actually bring back to, right, is more accurately, our flesh. The part of our body that decays, the part of our body that breaks down, the part of our body that we know that our minds are able to comprehend the cosmos and deep philosophical concepts.

The body that traps that greed in something that ultimately will break down and decay. Let's get a little quiet. Because this is a very tough topic for us especially to talk about.

We live in a society that has expertly sanitized itself from the presence and the view and the grappling of death.

[15:37] Right? If you think about just a hundred years ago, maybe a hundred fifty years ago, right, people did not pass away in hospitals for the most part.

They passed away at home. Everybody in the household was a part of taking care of those who were sick. And when they died, everybody in the household was a part of burying this person or commemorating their memory.

Right? As advances in medicine and grown, you know, we are seeing less and less that life, or we're seeing more that life is prolonged and less and less the effects of the illness and the fact that our bodies break down.

That's the way that we, like, move and push that out of our view. What we eat. Right now, I know a lot of you have become ethically, ethically vegetarian. Ethically, I mentioned that.

Ethically vegetarian or vegan because of the effect that animals have been killed for that. But a lot of you still eat and consume meat and animal byproducts.

[16:42] And before, it was like virtually everybody in human existence knew what it looked like and felt like to slaughter them. Right? But very recently, now all that gets taken place, and it takes place in the factory, is packaged, you can pick it up at the store, and, you know, there it is, meat, and completely separated from the fact that a creature died a very violent and horrible death to get that.

I'm still, again, I'm still someone who needs meat, and you just think about that, I feel a little sad. But really good question. Right? Or if you don't want to look at the wrong meat, you just go to the restaurant and it's cooked right there, then, in there, for you.

Um, elderly, the elderly, right? Again, as I said before, it used to be that the elderly lived with the family pretty much throughout the rest of their lives. You know, for us, in our society, there are places where the people go once they are, you know, aged, and they, again, are able to remove that from our everyday view.

Homelessness, right? There are, many of us are able to escape and not view, or be able to, um, not have to view the effects of extreme poverty.

And, and, the way that can often times lead to death, those who experience that, because, you know, as our, uh, as our communities, our cities, really go about cleansing us of that.

[18:07] And so, through all of these many ways, we have become people who have a very hard time grappling with and wrestling with death. And there, that puts a weight and an anxiety on us, according to this book that I mentioned here, and, and, and, you know, a few others that, the book that the author mentions here.

That puts some anxiety on us, that can push us towards finding ways to chase away the fact that we are weak. That we can be. We are prone to it. We are prone to it. We are prone to it. We are prone to our own mortality. Right?

We can accumulate wealth as a means of saying, look, I can prolong the, uh, the, the, my life through having wealth. We go out and have these jobs and we obtain these titles that can remind us, like, oh, I, my life is something more than just this, the corporal body that is here. I've made a name for myself. There are names of, names on buildings all throughout the city, all throughout the world, of people who have successfully found their way to cheat death, if you will, by having their names last forever.

Um, you know, that, there is that, I mentioned that part of, of that death anxiety. So I think that's something that, for us here living in, um, D.C., I think many of us, uh, you know, probably come from, uh, or maybe I didn't say come from privileged backgrounds.

[19 : 33] We are experiencing, uh, more of a more privileged lifestyle now than others. And so, in the world, I think that's probably something that we can relate to far more than that survival of anxiety and, like, oh, in order for me to survive, right, I need to have all of my supplies and my materials with me, all my resources.

And I need to make sure that no one else can take that from me, right? Uh, greed, hoarding, resource stuff, hoarding, all of that. These are all things that stem from that fear of death. So, in this part, and I think that, for me, when I read this, it really opened my eyes to see all the ways in which my desire to feel as though I'm that, or that my existence supersedes this realization that I will someday, this existence will someday, and ever before that it is now, there are so many things that can stem from that.

Some of these conditions, rivalry, competition, etc. And I believe that it's that same anxiety that has inhibited people from being able to realize the Kingdom of God in our midst.

So, I gave all of this background, and now that I've given it, I want to actually comment to the text and read what we have here. So, I hope that having received this background here, that it might help us to read what's going on here in a different light, okay?

[21 : 06] Let's look at Acts chapter 2, and I'm going to start in verse 14, read the parts of it, and skip around here, so you guys can get the gist. So, first of all, remember, where we last left off, the disciples were speaking in different languages, and people were like, you guys are fairly drunk, and Peter stood up with the 11th.

Raise his voice and address with our 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 9 in the morning.

Now, of course, that was pre-pandemic days. It's not a man. They're not getting up in the pandemic. They're not getting up. No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.

So, in the last days, God said, I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your bold men will dream dreams.

Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days when they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs from the earth below.

[22 : 15] Blood and fire and billows of smoke. We'll get into that. That's a little bit of apocalyptic literature. It's, you know, just like any old type of literature. It's meant to be read in a particular way and is understood in a particular way.

Usually, we have these large and grandiose images of blood and fire and smoke and things that go out and all that. It's oftentimes a commentary on the ending of the current status quo that is oftentimes exacting and oppressive and unjust measures upon the people.

In verse 21, any parent who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Now, fellow, let us realize, listen to this. Jesus of Nashville is a man pregnant 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 delivered plan and foreknowledge, and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing 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. You know, Peter essentially summarizes the Gospel message about Jesus coming and the wonders that Jesus performed there among them, and that ultimately happened, as many of them probably may have heard for the first time of them visiting Jerusalem for the first time that we're hearing about.

[23 : 39] And I find it very interesting that Peter chooses to kind of put the onus upon the crowd. Many of whom of us learned two weeks ago were visiting Jerusalem for the holiday and probably weren't even really from there.

And he places his father, we'll get to that in a little bit. He goes through and spends a few verses looking at prophecies from the Old Testament. He says, look, this idea of somebody resurrected from the dead and kind of taking place as Lord, as Messiah, is not a new Lord.

David wrote them. We've read these things before, the ways that these prophecies have kind of hinted us at the fact that death can be defeated, and that death would be defeated.

And so, as he goes through that, basically verses 25 through 35 there, he talks over verse 36 to close out. It says, therefore, let all Israel be assured of this.

God has made this Jesus whom you crucified the 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?

[24 : 49] I would give you a little bit of a peek back to my old ministry life, when I would be studying the Bible with somebody and trying to convince them that the way that I and the people around me viewed the Bible was the only way to do it.

When we got to this point, I always ask them, now why do you think it is that these guys are cut to the heart by this message? Of course, the answer that we wanted them to see from that, and it was the answer that happened, not maliciously, this is what we believe.

This is how we approach the Scriptures even before we ever read it, because of the way that we were brought to the text. But the answer that we were hoping for them to find was that they were so crushed by their sins, and realizing what Jesus had done because of their sins, and the wrath that God was the problem, because of their sins, that, you know, that's what broke them.

And in a similar way, we must be broken if we really, truly want to hear this salvation message. I don't think that that is clearly something that's being stated there.

I think it's very clear to see that if that is how you are approaching the Scriptures, you can read that into the text here, right? I think it has something to do with what Jesus, or sorry, what Peter said earlier about you and the people would be putting him to death by knelling to the cross, right?

[26 : 14] Again, going back to this idea about our anxiety, about death, and our desire to avoid having to deal with that, like, even in a society that looks far more steep, that is something that is natural and nature to our existence as human beings.

And at the time that Jesus was around, Jesus represented a way of, or Jesus represented the possibility of death for a way of life and a way of living that many people at that time did not want to lose, right?

And so, Jesus was coming here and preaching about, you know, these things that some people interpret as, oh, you're going to make trouble with the Romans.

The Romans have the empire that we are living within, and kind of make sure that we can continue living in peace and harmony. And so, if we lose that, then we will lose our lives.

And so, with the help of, you know, quote unquote, wicked men, that's, if you look at the subscript there, it can mean those without the law or the gentiles.

[27 : 32] Basically, with the help of the Romans, the people who kind of led the community, who led the society, were able to convince themselves and other people of a way to avoid the death of their way of life.

And their understanding of life, that this man, Jesus, needed to die. And so, because of that way of living, that way of thinking that's what led to.

I don't know what Peter is commenting on here. It's not even saying that the almost is not on you because, like, you individual person, like, your sin was so great that Jesus needed to die.

But it's that your desire for comfort, your desire for peace, your desire to maintain this particular way of thinking that Jesus challenged you, like, we were all complicitly pushing for this huge, deep action of injustice upon this man.

And so, upon hearing that, I believe that is what led these people to be cut to the heart and asked the question of brothers, what shall we do? Now, Peter closes out by saying, repent and be baptized, every one of you.

[28 : 41] Then 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 pleaded with them, save yourselves from this corrupt generation. And those who accepted his message were baptized, and about 3,000 were added to their number that day.

Again, I want to cycle back to this idea of what is salvation and how do we view it? If you view it, salvation, as being the forgiveness of sins and therefore being able to escape death, then yeah, this text makes it very clear. You can be baptized and you'll be forgiven, and then that's it. You're good to go.

Right? But the fact that it only mentions that so briefly, that it's so much time to proving that resurrection can happen to these people here.

Proving from the text that this resurrection can happen, and that the real thing that Jesus did was not just about forgiving sins, but it was about having victory over death. Like, I believe that these things are like, and these are things that you are already familiar with, but now we can recontextualize that in, these are acts that don't just like help you to be a part of the Jewish community, but now help you to be a part of this new way of living that is one where death no longer needs to be something that we are enslaved to.

[30 : 13] Like, the fear of death is something that we no longer need to be enslaved to. I do want to say that, like, death is scary. And the goal of this sermon, and I don't believe that it's not true, I don't believe it's the goal of the Bible either, to say, hey, don't be afraid of dying ever.

More so, I believe about what is more so, it's closer to what is said here in chapter 2, verse 14, where it says, It says, Jesus might destroy the one holding the power of death and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death.

You know, there are things that I believe that can hold us, sorry, I believe that this fear of death has such a strong grip on us that it holds us to, um, sorry, one second.

Right. Yeah, so there are things, I believe that, you know, that this fear of death can be so strong that it enslaves us to the point, right, prevents us from being able to do acts of loving kindness that might be considered as something that is sacrificial, right, that might be more difficult for us to do. I think a really good example of this, again, my ultimate hope again is to inspire, and I know that this is a very challenging topic for a lot of us. Um, you know, we as a country are prepared to hit one million deaths as a result of COVID-19.

[31 : 49] Um, and it is something that I believe you will be grappling with now and for many, many, many years to come from here.

I don't think that we fully experience the implications of that yet. I think a part of that is because of a reluctance to allow us to feel that. I don't know what you want.

But, like, I don't, like, the idea that there are a million people who are gone and a million more families that are now living in the wake of that, as our society pushes so fast to say we're done, it's over, we don't have to worry about this anymore.

There are, at the Autrana, an article that was made a script the other day about how many families feel left behind by a society that has rushed so quickly to declare that we had victory over this thing that is still having such an impact on human life.

Um, you know, I think even just mentioning what happened yesterday in Buffalo. Right? It's still hard for me even to talk about because I feel like these things are continuing to happen.

[32 : 58] It was just, you know, how many years ago it was, uh, the shooting at the A&E Church in South Carolina. Right? And what was the reason behind that?

Oh, a fear being replaced. A fear that my way of life may end. A death and anxiety. Um, I believe that what Peter is offering here in this sermon, and offering in this text, and what we've seen here with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, is that just in the same way that God's breath breathed life into the, out of the evening, this pouring out of the Holy Spirit, can have a intention to breathe a life within us that can shake off this anxiety and this fear of dealing with the fact that, yes, we may, our lives right now may one day come to an end, but there's so much power and potential in living self-sacrificing lives, um, to be able to bring about goodness and justice in the community.

And I think that's all of what we see in the remainder of the chapter. So I'm going to close out the chapter, I'm reading verse 42. It says, After at least 3,000 people were baptized, it said they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the break of their bread, and to prayer.

And they said, And the Lord added to their number, David, David was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All who believed it were together and had everything in common.

They sold property and possessions to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread and came home to eat together with glad and

sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.

[34 : 40] And the Lord added to their number, daily, those who were being saved. Right? Look at the kind of community that was created after this one experience, after this one message.

I think what's amazing about this is again, the fact that everybody held things in common, and that people were selling their property and their possessions so that other people could have needs. Can you imagine, like, people who kind of moved into this city and bought their homes at a cheaper price that pushed people out of the city? You know, there's a much longer conversation here. And again, I'm not trying to, like, yell indict or convict him here of that. But we're saying that that is the truth of what's happening here. You know, imagine, like, people being willing to sell it so that those people who are struggling to find housing and finding homes would have their needs met. Right? There was nobody among them who had needs. That's what it says a few chapters later. It's going to come in a few weeks in Acts chapter 4. Right? They broke bread together. They were able to live lives that helped other people among them to have their needs met.

[35 : 55] I think that this is the kind of giving, the kind of self-sacrifice that, I don't know about y'all, but I don't experience the mind that the forgiveness of my sins is something that has pushed me necessarily to do this kind of good, right, in my life.

Maybe for you, but for me, that's not been something that's been personally motivating for me. I think what has been motivating is the fact that it's questioning, why am I holding on to something that, like, I feel that I am called to give?

Whether it's something that is tangible, whether it's my time, whether it's my talent, you know, what is it that's causing me to hold on to this? What is it that's causing me to feel rivalry or, again, like a competition against the people who I work with, right?

Or against, like, the people who I'm literally driving and trying to race to the streets. You know, I think that road rage is a part of that low-dead anxiety, because it's like, we don't want to lose or do another one little thing!

You know, but, like, what if we could be like, hey, you know what? It's cool, right? Like, yes, that is something that, like, it's coming down the line, whenever it comes, it will come.

[37 : 11] But right now, like, I, because of, I've seen, these guys are familiar, because we've seen or heard of a man coming back from the dead, and that there's this promise for us to experience that same thing, we don't need to hold on anymore.

You know, what implications, as I, you know, move to close here, what implications does that have for us, for our community today, right?

You know, I think that when we read about what these people did, you know, in 2000 years ago, we have to have said that was a very different society than what we're in today, right?

And so, the society was set up back then to make it easier for people to be like, hey, just come on a little bit home, you know? Or, come on, just like, share what we have here, you know? It was a different society. So, I think today, there is, there are some things that, you know, given the times that we're in, you might have, you know, you can't just do exactly what we see here.

But, I think for you, start with what you envision, right? What is something that excites you about being able to do that, that is, or what is something that excites you about creating and building community within your sphere of influence, right?

[38 : 26] You know, for me, I was thinking about, I mean, I never thought I would think about this until very recently. But, I thought a lot about the possibility of being able to, like, move one day and to, like, buy some land, like, where we could farm and, like, grow our own crops.

And then just invite a bunch of people, like, with different professions, and look at it, all around the cupboard. And kind of link up in this community where, you know, invite people in, where we could help take care of ourselves, and empower others to take care of themselves and others as well. That's a vision, that's a goal, that, like, can happen, right? This passage here, like, shows us that this is something that we, that can happen, that there are steps that we can take to doing that, right?

I think that, like, think about what is a way that you are looking for and that you need community? And what are some of the things that might be preventing you from experiencing that? Is it the fear of, like, putting yourself out there and being rejected?

That's that anxiety, that's that death anxiety if you think about it. The fear of being seen as a needy. I think that, you know, weakness is something, again, that we've sanitized ourselves from needing

to feel, especially in a town like D.C.

[39 : 44] We have to be under peace and peace the entire time, right? Maybe that's something that we can, that we no longer need to be held by, because of this promise of living a resurrected life through the Spirit, you know?

I think that, let's see here. The last thing I'll say here in the closeout is, I love seeing, like, one of my ways I love to nerve out with the Scriptures is seeing, like, Old Testament, like, prophecies or Old Testament, like, attempt at, like, realizing the vision of, like, Shalom and God's healing here on this earth being realized in the Scriptures and what that means for us today.

You know, in Deuteronomy chapter 15, I'll read this real quick, and then we will match. In verse 7, you know, the Bible says that if there is a poor person among you, one of your brothers within any of your gates, in the land the Lord your God has given you, you must not be hard-hearted or tempted toward your poor brother.

Instead, you are to open your hand to him and free the loom enough for whatever need he has. Be careful that there is no, this wicked thought in your heart, oh, in seven years, I mean, he talks about, like, these rules and ways to cheat the system so that you can, like, not have to forgive people of their debts.

Basically, it says in verse 11, for there will never cease to be poor people in the land. That is why I would command you, you must willingly open your hand to your afflicted and poor brother in your land.

[41 : 22] You know, this is something that, a law that God gave to the Jewish people, the Israelites, in order to realize a sense of a social utopia in their midst, a place where everybody had their midst met.

And one of the ways in which, and I think the rest of a lot of what we read in what is called the Old Testament, is showing how time and time again the realization of that vision was for you, because of the people who were more focused on prolonging life and better, I guess, you know, prolonging their way of life and chasing away the sphere of losing that by, you know, trusting themselves in the king or engaging in war that would allow them to expand their territory or, you know, putting their support behind a religious leader or a political leader who would make them feel more secure. And time and time again this vision was thwarted. So many of the prophecies in Greek are about how the poor go unfed. You know, the unhoused remain unhoused. Those who are oppressed remain oppressed because of how much the people are so focused on themselves and what they're doing.

What I love about this chapter here today is that we see a glimpse of that social utopia realized. I think it's one that if you look at this landscape of Christianity today, it's one that can be very hard to find.

Because many of us have fallen back into this way of, again, triumph and success and not seem weak and holding on to what we have as a way of feeling as though this event that we know is, you know, is on the horizon is long and far off.

[43 : 12] But I do believe this that we saw here in the chapter here that we hold to and accept this promise that salvation again is not just about being freed from our sins, being freed from death and therefore slavery to the fear of death, that we can recognize the kingdom of God in our midst.

Thank you.