

Jesus Unfiltered

Session 2: An Unexpected Messenger with an Unexpected Message

Unedited Transcript

Brett Clemmer

Good morning, gentlemen! It is great to see you this morning. Thanks for coming out. I know we're on tape, and I know that half the country doesn't care about this, but it was 28 degrees this morning. This is Orlando, Florida. That's just not supposed to happen, right? Twenty-eight degrees, but I went outside. It was nice, no wind. Just put a little hat on and a windbreaker, and we're fine, right? Well, I'm glad to see you.

We are in this new series called Jesus Unfiltered. We're in the second week of Jesus Unfiltered, and it's been ... Pat and I are really excited about this series, and the whole goal of the series is really just to help all of us really know who Jesus is, and know Him in the sense that you know your friend, in the sense that you spend time with somebody, in the sense that you have a relationship with somebody, a real relationship, so that it's not just some academic intellectual pursuit, some religious objective, but it's actually a relationship that we have. We really are excited to talk about what does Jesus look like in the New Testament unfiltered, without a lot of the sort of cultural things that come into it, and so we're going to talk about Jesus Unfiltered.

We do a shout-out most weeks, and so this week I wanted to actually show you how you get to be a shout-out. If you go to mimbiblestudy.com, that's the website for the bible study, and all of the bible studies are listed here. What we show here runs on a two-week delay for the website. If you miss on Friday, you have to wait two weeks to see what it was, but you can still watch it two weeks later. We have to get the video master and all that stuff, but if you go to the website, the most recent study is always there, but there's also this menu item that says, Make Disciples, and then if you click on, Become a Bible Study Leader, it gives you the outline of what we call a Bible Study Table Leader agreement, and all of our Table Leaders here have signed this agreement every year that basically says what are the responsibilities of a table leader.

We ask, if you're going to download the Bible study, or stream the Bible study, and have a group, this is a good template for you to use for what the expectations are for running a Bible study group. If you fill that form out and return it to us, give us a little information about your group, then in the next few months we will, hopefully, be able to do a shout-out for you. So, if you're watching us online and you have not done this yet, become an MIM Bible Study Table Leader, please go and do that, or a Bible Study Leader, please go do that, and then we'll give you a shout-out when the time comes. All right, so that's the shout-out.

What are we talking about today? Today, we're talking about "An Unexpected Messenger with an Unexpected Message". Pat talked last session, and he started in the book of John. You can turn to John, if you have a Bible with you, turn to John, or click to John on your phones, John, chapter 1, and we have

this iconic, this very well known verse, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," and this is ... John, basically, is following the pattern of Genesis. "In the beginning ..." what's Genesis 1? "In the beginning ..." You have to talk now. [Was the Word]

No, in Genesis 1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word is with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning. All things were made through Him," so John is hearkening back to the creation story and he is saying, "Hey, guess what, Jesus was there." Jesus was there. One of the things that we want to make sure that we understand about Jesus is that He didn't start to exist on Christmas Day at 0 AD, or 0 BC, or probably 4 BC, actually, but that's a whole another story, right? He didn't start to exist then. Begotten doesn't mean born. Begotten means unique. Only begotten means unique, one of a kind, but it doesn't mean born. Jesus has always existed. In His divine nature Jesus has always existed, but on that first Christmas morning Jesus came into the world as a baby. That's when we saw the manhood, the humanity of Christ come into existence in this world, but Jesus has always existed.

From that moment on Jesus has had humanity. Jesus has had a corporal existence, a personal existence, and He sits right now ... The Bible is clear, He sits right now at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, intercedes on our behalf. He's still there. Jesus always was and Jesus always will be, but when He came into first century Palestine, into first century Israel, He was a unique experience for the world. He comes into the world. We all know the Christmas story.

Part of the Christmas story that we sometimes talk about is that six months before Jesus was born His cousin, John, was born. John was the son of Elizabeth, Mary's sister. His cousin, John, is born, and then John grows up, and John becomes a messenger that announces the arrival of Jesus, not the arrival of His birth but the arrival of His ministry, the arrival of Jesus becoming a Rabbi, a teacher. We're going to pick up in John 1:14, and we're going to read through verse 28.

Before we do that, let me tell you about a phone call I got the other day. Very, very weird phone call. I mean, a great phone call but a weird phone call. I have this friend. I'll call him Mike, and Mike and I do a lot of stuff together recreationally. We have some common interests in the rock climbing area, and coaching. Mike's been a friend for a long, long time, and Mike is Jewish. Mike was raised Jewish. He married a Catholic wife and so it's a little bit of a crazy household. Mike calls me up. He actually texted me one morning about two weeks ago, at like 6:30 in the morning. He's like, "Hey, are you up." I'm like, "Uh oh." Text 6:30 in the morning, text from friends are usually not a good thing. I'm like, "Yeah, are you okay?" My phone rings. He says, "Hey, do you have a minute?" I'm like, "Yeah," and I can tell by his tone of voice that everything's okay.

He goes, "All right. Well, I got two questions for you. There's no way we're gonna be able to talk about both of them." I'm like, "Okay." He goes, "All right, here's my first one. What's an Evangelical?" I'm like, "What!" What's an Evangelical? His question was birthed by all the political stuff that's going on. Here, this guy he's a secular Jew. In other words, he's been raised in the Jewish faith but he's not really practicing. He is, probably, the most moral man I know, a man who has a set of beliefs, a world view, a set of principles, and he lives by them faithfully, but he's not religious in any way. He does believe in God. We've had that conversation. He's very fascinated with my belief system. We've had many conversations around campfires about the Bible, and Jesus, and what I believe about Him. He's intellectually curious, but the Holy Spirit has not pricked his heart yet to bring him any farther than that.

He calls me up and he says, "What's an Evangelical?" After I found out what he really wanted to know is, "Who are these crazy people who say they believe in Jesus but vote for child molesters?" That's really what he was asking me. So, we had a conversation. I said, "Well, you know, there's political Evangelicals. Those are people that the media's kind of created that have sort of this set of characteristics ..." I'm not going to say them, because I'll offend half of you, and most of the people watching.

"But then, there's people who have a belief system that's what we would call Evangelical," which is probably what most of you in this room would agree with. You would say, "The Bible is true, Jesus really lived, He really died, and He really rose again, and the only way you get to Heaven is to believe in Jesus." That's sort of the basic tenants of Evangelicalism. Republican is nowhere in the Bible. I just had to ... He said, "I didn't think so, but, you know, I've only got the first half." He likes to say that to me. "I only read the first half, you know."

But, we had this fascinating conversation, completely unexpected that at 6:30 in the morning I would get a phone call from my buddy, my Jewish buddy, asking me to explain ... You know, we went from the political to the religious pretty quickly. He's just a guy that I know from the climbing gym. Why would I have this conversation? These are unexpected opportunities, unexpected times when God puts these people in front of us. I didn't expect to be the messenger that day, but God had other plans.

Now, when you look at John, John The Baptist here, he's an unexpected messenger. Let's read what he said in John 1:14. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." John bore witness about Him and cried out, "This was He of whom I said, He who comes after me ranks before me, because He was before me. For from His fullness we've all received grace upon grace, for the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." Let me say that again, "For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." There's a progression here that John is talking about. "No one has ever seen God. The only God who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known."

This is the testimony of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask Him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny but confessed, "I'm not the Christ," and they asked him, "What then, are you Elijah?" He said, "I'm not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." So, they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the Prophet Isaiah said."

Now, they had been sent from the Pharisees, so they asked him, "Why are you baptizing if you're neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know. Even He who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie," and these things took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing. This is sort of a synopsis of John's interaction with the religious leaders of the day, and sort of the launch of Jesus' ministry, really. Jesus ministry was launched by John The Baptist.

Now, who was John The Baptist? In fact ... Let me show you the outline here. So, an unexpected messenger with an unexpected message. "Who are you?" Who are you? Then, an unexpected message, and then the audacity of the message, and the audacity of the messenger.

WHO ARE YOU?

Let's look at, "Who are you?" But, let's look at who John was. If you turn back to Matthew 3:1-6, we see John introduced by Matthew. "In those days John The Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,' for this is he who was spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah when he said, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make His path straight.'" Isaiah 40.

Now, John wore a garment of camel's hair. Listen to this. "John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then, Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins." We'll talk about why that's so crazy here in a minute. Turn over to Mark. John was so important to Mark that Mark starts his gospel with John The Baptist. "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah, the Prophet, 'Behold I send my messenger before your face who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness.'" Mark starts the gospel with John The Baptist. "John appeared baptizing in the wilderness, verse 4, and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins."

Now, do you understand the strangeness of this? Listen to what he is doing. He's proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. We believe in that, right? This is before Jesus. Jesus hasn't come yet. His ministry hasn't started yet, and John's already teaching baptism for the repentance of sins. Wild, huh? I mean, we just take it for granted, but baptism for the repentance of sins was something that was going on before Jesus. The people that were baptized in that day were non-Jews who wanted to become Jewish, and so they would baptize those non-Jews, and they would become proselytes, they would come into the Jewish faith. But, John baptized Jews.

I have a friend who is an evangelist. He's actually a local pastor, and I love him. He told me this story about when he started out in ministry he was a pastor in this church, and he decided he would have a revival meeting in the church. He had a revival. He preached the gospel very plainly for a week, and about half the church came to Christ, and the elders were not happy about that. Like, "What are you doing, your confusing people." "No, no, no, I'm not confusing people," he said. "These people didn't understand the gospel. Now they understand the gospel, and so they have become true Christians. They're really following Christ."

They did what every reasonable Elder Board would do, they fired him, right. Because, people who think they know how it's supposed to work are uncomfortable when you show them that they really don't know how it works. They're very uncomfortable with that. We see that in this story with John when they come ... We're sort of jumping into the middle of the story, but the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" Then they say, "Are you Christ?" He says, "No." "Are you Elijah?" "No." "Are you the prophet?" "No." Why would they think these things? Why would they think these things?

Well, if you go to Malachi ... You don't have to, I'll read it for you. If you go to Malachi, the actual last words of Malachi, Malachi 4:5 and 6 said, "Behold, I will send you Elijah, the Prophet, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes, and he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction." So, the Jews are like, "Oh, you're Elijah come to turn the hearts of fathers to their sons and sons to their fathers." He says, "Nope, I'm not Elijah."

"Well, maybe you're the prophet." If you go back to Deuteronomy 18:15, Moses is talking to the Israelites and he says, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers. It is to him you shall listen, just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly." So, they're like, "Oh, well maybe you're the prophet that God promised us." See, the people are looking for the promised messenger. They're looking for the person who's supposed to come in and save them in one way or another. They don't really know what that means. Is it like just turning our hearts towards the fathers and sons, or is it just sort of some familial fix, you know, or a prophet like me that will lead you out of bondage?

That's what Moses was known for, was for leading the people out of bondage, and this was an occupied country at the time. The Romans were there and occupied Israel, and they were a region of Israel paying heavy taxes, and that's what the people were hoping was it would be one of these two things. John's like, "Well, it's not me. I'm not doing either of those things. There's one coming that will." There's one coming that will. Now, remember, he was dressed in camel hair with a leather belt. I think that means like a piece of hide sort of cut and tied, eating locusts and honey, living in the wilderness. Probably not like running water, showers, soap, right.

They're like, "I'm glad he's baptizing people, at least he's in the water, you know, maybe that'll clean him up a little bit. Wait, he's not even baptizing correctly, because he's baptizing the wrong people. He's baptizing Jews. Jews don't need to be baptized. We're God's chosen people. Why is he baptizing us?" Why is he ... They, basically, say to him, "Who do you think you are?" Who do you think you are. "Why are you baptizing, in verse 25, if you're not Christ, or Elijah, or the prophet?" John clarifies. He's like, "Look, I baptize with water, but there's somebody coming ..." Another passage says, "... who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." In other words, "I'm washing the exterior as a symbol, but the Messiah is coming," Christ is coming, "and he's gonna clean people from the inside out."

I'm calling people to repentance, and to turn away from Sin. Jesus actually takes the sin away, actually takes it away. That's what's coming. "Who are you?" He's a messenger. That's who John is. He's a messenger. Isaiah 43, "A voice cries in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight ...' In the desert, John comes out of the desert, right. 'Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'" He's coming. We don't need a path for Him to come on. We don't need a trail for Him to come on, we need a highway for Him to come on.

Just a little aside here. Fascinating that this would be the Word that they use, considering there were no Roman roads when this passage was written, but there were Roman roads, the first paved-type roads, and that's when John shows up. Fascinating. Fascinating God's plan.

AN UNEXPECTED MESSAGE

So, "Who are you?" An unexpected message. What's the unexpected message? Well, it's this guy, Jesus, that he's talking about. It's who they don't expect Jesus to be. It's who they don't expect the Messiah to be. If you look at this, if you just start at verse 15 and you go down, and you say, "What does John say about Jesus?" He says that Jesus "ranks before me even though He comes after me, because He was before me."

You could do a whole sermon on that. I notice there's pastors in the room. You could do a whole sermon on that, right? He ranks before ... I'm six months older, so in the culture of the day I kind of have some

seniority. Guess what, not only do I not have seniority, he came after me, but He's a lot more than six months older than me. He's eternal. He's been around forever. He's the Son from the Father. Now, this is another radical concept, an unexpected concept, because in the metaphor, or in the cultural understanding of the context, the son is equal to the father, like it's the name, it's the name that is passed down, right. The son is equal to the father, the son represents the father.

Now, Jesus subjugates Himself to the will of the Father, but in the way that they're thinking when you say, "He's the Son," and then you look down at verse 18. "No one has ever seen God, the only God who was at the Father's side, He is made known. In other words, no one has seen the Father but, guess what, we can see God because we can see Jesus. These people are like ... I mean, their heads are spinning. They're like, "How are we gonna go back and tell the Pharisees this? They're gonna kill us." I don't even understand it, how am I gonna explain to them, and then they're gonna call me a blasphemer," you know. "How are we gonna get through this?"

Who is Jesus. Jesus is full of grace and truth. Moses gave us the law, but Jesus gives us grace and truth. Now, the law brings grace. The law is a way for us to live right, live rightly. You all agree we shouldn't murder, we shouldn't steal, we shouldn't steal our neighbor's wife, or their stuff, right? So, the law is full of grace, but Jesus completes that grace. Why? Because, Jesus actually gives us the ability to follow the law. Without Jesus we can't follow the law perfectly. Jesus gives that ability. He's full of grace, and He's full of truth. He's the fulfillment of the law. He's the unseen God made visible. These are all things that are radically unexpected.

Jesus was not who first Century Israel wanted Him to be. Jesus is not who 21st Century men want Him to be. He is not who people think He is. Jesus Himself is a radical message. Think about the resistance that there is to the gospel today. Do you realize that most of the resistance to the gospel today is totally irrational. Okay, so let me get this straight. God loves people so much that He took on human form, that He would live a perfect life on our behalf, that He would die a death that He didn't deserve, that He is, though the power of God He would rise again from the dead. He would give me the ability to live forever with Him. He's the essence of goodness, the essence of righteousness, the essence of beauty. "Nah, I don't want that. In fact, that's threatening." Right. I mean, people get angry when you tell them that you believe in Jesus.

I'm from New England. I don't know what it is. You can say Christ, but if you say Jesus, people get a little ... "That's a personal thing. You just keep that to yourself," right. Why? Why is Christ okay and Jesus ... Because Jesus is a person, Christ is a title. Jesus is a person. What people don't like is they don't like to come face-to-face with the person of Jesus. It's intensely uncomfortable. They hold you at arm's length and they come up with irrational arguments to keep you there. Frankly, we don't always make it easy either, right?

John comes and John says, "You guys don't know what the Messiah really is. I'm gonna tell you what the Messiah really is, and to get you ready to even hear the message, I'm gonna call you to live a pure life, I'm gonna call you to repentance, and faith in God before you've even met Him, because when you meet Him I want you to be ready to meet Him." That was John's message- "I want you to be ready to meet Him," because when you meet Jesus if you've got all these other things pulling you away from Him, all these sins and wrong thinking that are pulling you away from Him, it's gonna make that encounter that you have with Him that much more uncomfortable."

That's what John was there to do. He was there to make a highway, make a path, try to clear out some of the sin, and decadence, that was present in the people that were the chosen people to hear of Jesus' arrival first. That's the unexpected message. This is the Big Idea then, that **Jesus is rarely who people expect Him to be**. They wanted a conquering hero. Jesus was not gonna be a conquering hero, not in the military sense that they were hoping for. They wanted Him to turn the hearts of the fathers towards their sons, and sons toward their fathers, but we know that Jesus even came and said, "I'm gonna rip families apart," not on purpose, but, "I'm gonna rip families apart, because the people that believe in me are going to be so radically committed to a relationship with me that their families aren't even gonna understand."

They said, "Well, maybe you'll be a prophet that will lead us to ..." "No, no, no. My Messiah-ship ... I'm not anointed to be a military leader, I'm anointed to save you from your sin and give you eternal life. I'm anointed to bring you in right relationship with God like Adam and Eve were before the fall. That's what I'm anointed to do, and I'm gonna clean you up from the inside out," and that scares people to death. Jesus is rarely who people expect Him to be.

Today what do people think Jesus is? Well, a moralist, a judge, somebody who makes them feel guilty about who they are and what they believe in, a bunch of people, a bunch of crazy people, he has a bunch of crazy followers who like get together at 7 o'clock on Friday mornings just to study the Bible together. What are you nuts? Name another book that people ... I mean, people won't do that. We do that, because we want to know Jesus. Because, He's rarely who we expect Him to be either. The process of deepening your relationship with Jesus is the process of getting to know Him for who He really is. Who John is, "Who are you to even be saying this to us?" The unexpected message, and then the audacity of the message, and the messenger.

AUDACITY OF THE MESSAGE (and the messenger)

I want to give you two things to think about as we close here. The message is audacious for two reasons, more than two reasons, but for these two reasons anyway. First of all, the message of Jesus is counterintuitive. The message of Jesus is counterintuitive, because we expect ... The Jews expected that the message of the Messiah would be to repent, to follow all the laws, and then to be saved from occupation by the Romans. Like, "If we're just good enough, if we can just ..." It's like the, if you saw The Elf, there's the Christmas spirit meter in the sleigh, in Santa's sleigh, and if enough people believed the Christmas spirit meter would go high enough that the sleigh could fly. Since not enough people believed in Santa, the sleigh couldn't fly. So, what did they do? They put a rocket engine on the bottom of the sleigh, right? That's what they did. Not enough of you have seen this movie, because nobody's laughing, all right.

That's what they thought. They thought, "If we could just get enough people to believe, enough people to act rightly that our Santa belief meter will go up high enough and we'll be free from the Romans. No, that's not what He was there to do. Today, the message of Jesus is counterintuitive. Today people think the same thing. "Oh, well that Jesus He just wants me to do the right thing. He just wants me to, you know, don't drink, don't smoke, don't chew, don't go with girls who do, right? They think it's all about their behavior, and we said this in here 100 times, Christianity is not about behavior modification, it's about heart transformation, and people don't expect that. They don't understand that.

They don't want their belief system changed. They just, "Give me five things to do." It's like a diet, "All right, keep my fat grams here and my protein grams here, and my carb grams here, and I'm good to go. I

can do that." They don't realize that the only way to have a true relationship with Jesus is to not be in control. It's to just be obedient. That's a scary thing. It's counterintuitive. It's not what we think it's gonna be. The other thing is that it's counter-cultural. The message is audacious because it's counterintuitive, but it's also counter-cultural.

There was a businessman here that I was talking to. Every year for 39 years we had the Thanksgiving Leadership Prayer Breakfast in Orlando. I was trying to get some new business leaders involved in that, and so I was meeting with a young business leader here, and was really putting the full-court press on him to take it over and to be the sort of the business leader that would run the breakfast. We were talking about the speaker that we came in. He said, "What your goal with the talk?" I said, "Well," and this is a dumb thing for me to say, but this is what I said, true confession. I said, "It would be really great if people in Orlando, if business people in Orlando, had a place that they could bring their non-believing friends, and they could see that Christians aren't a bunch of like wackos, that we're real, relevant, normal, authentic people."

He went, "Are you crazy? Of course we're wackos!" I was like, "Oh, yeah, we are, like in this culture we're weird." If you are not weird because of what you believe then you don't believe it enough, or at least you're not living it out. We're supposed to be weird. We're supposed to believe things that are different than the world believes. We're supposed to act differently. We're supposed to love everyone. We're supposed to have an eternal view, not a temporal view. It's not, "Get ahead. Do what I have to do today to get ahead tomorrow." It's, "Believe what I need to believe today so I can live forever, that's a little weird, right?" It's the audaciousness of our message. That means that we, as messengers, that we're called to be audacious, too.

Now, please do not come in next week dressed in camel hair, with a leather thong around your ... Certainly, if you wear a leather thong, please wear the camel hair robe over that, okay. You get what I'm saying, though, like we're called to be audacious, because the message is audacious. If people don't think that your Christianity is a little weird, they may not be really seeing what true Christianity is, because in this culture, in this day, in that culture in first Century Palestine, in that day, believing in Jesus is an audacious, crazy, wild thing to people that don't know who He is. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we want to know you better. We want to know the Jesus that John The Baptist was proclaiming, this great man that you sent ahead of you. Lord, the man that you said was the greatest among men. John The Baptist, Jesus, you said was the greatest among men. We're so grateful for his message, for him getting us started and grounded in the foundation of who you are, who you've always been, and who you always will be. Lord, help us to really understand the message. Help us to be messengers of that audacious, counter-cultural, counterintuitive message as we go out and share the gospel, share the truth, the good news of who you are and what you've done for us. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Well look, guys, let me just say this, that somebody's gonna ... Like people don't read God billboards and go, "Oh, well, that's a cute, pithy billboard. I think I'll find a church to go to and find out about that." People come to Christ because they're invited to come to Christ. That's the great benefit, that's the great privilege that we have. You know what, maybe inviting somebody to church that you know is not a church person, maybe that wouldn't be the right first step, but this could be a first step. Everybody in this room knows a guy who needs to know Jesus and doesn't. This could be a place. We want this to be a place where guys can come in, be comfortable, hang out, meet some other guys, hopefully some of you are cool, right, and be a place that they want to come back so that they can learn more and just make a

decision. One of my personal goals is that I just want people to know who Jesus is, and then they can decide. That's between them and the Holy Spirit. That's not my job.

My job is to be the messenger. My job is to make sure that if they choose to not follow Jesus, at least it's a decision based on having the right information, on having the right experience, and then what happens from there is between them and God. John was a voice crying out in the wilderness, but I want to give you one other thing. I said that the audacity of the message is that it's counterintuitive, and that it's counter-cultural, but the other thing that's audacious about the message of the gospel is this, it is comforting. Truly the message of the gospel is comforting.

Listen, we talked about this voice crying in the wilderness, but listen to the two verses before it. "Comfort ..." "Comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins." In other words, everything that your sin cost you, you get double back. A voice cries in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'" Why? So that people can be comforted. The gospel is supposed to be comforting.

The message of Jesus is that your sins are forgiven. I'm glad you had a hellfire and damnation preacher give you a direct gospel message, but that's not the whole gospel message, right. The whole gospel message ends in peace, and forgiveness, and being comforted. Your iniquity is forgiven. Your sins are wiped away. That's a message that the world needs to hear. That's who Jesus is. Let me pray for us real quick and then we'll be dismissed.

Father, would you please give us this audacious, comforting message to people. Would you open the eyes and hearts of the people that we interact with, so that they could see that the gospel is good news not bad news, not condemning news, but forgiving news. Lord, would you bring people to you. Would you spark a revival, Lord, in people in Orlando, in people that are in the communities where people are watching this Bible study right now. Would you spark a revival, Lord, with the comforting, audacious, counter-cultural, counterintuitive message of knowing you, of knowing the living, risen, Jesus. In your name we pray, amen. Have a great week, Guys. Thank you.