



## PEOPLE MUST KNOW

By Rev. Will Nelken

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Last Friday, for our Third Friday PrayerPOWER, Linda led us in a prayer exercise, based on a familiar passage of Scripture: John 3:16.

She broke it down as follows, and had us pray through each line, one by one:

*God so loved the world (this is what compels Him)*

*that He gave His only begotten Son (this is His marvelous remedy)*

*that whoever believes in Him (this is our part, anyone's part)*

*will not perish (what would have been, will never be)*

*but have everlasting life. (the LIFE with neither beginning nor ending)*

What an illuminating time of grateful prayer together!

The world *without* God is desperately lost. We're not just mildly misguided, but undone, hopelessly and utterly lost, incapable of healing ourselves, headed for eternally inescapable aloneness—without God.

There are two kinds of people in the world: those who think they can manage life's uneven road, and those who doubt they ever will. Or, put in terms that relate to God's plan—those who think they are worthy of love and favor, and those who feel utterly unworthy of anything good.

These are actually two sides of one coin, and all of us are tossing it into the air to see what today will be like. Heads, I'll be all right! Tails, I think I'll stay in bed.

We all vacillate between these two opinions, until God rescues us, and our hearts become joined in Jesus Christ.

For God conceived all that is and by His Word brought all things into being, and then set His love upon us. He didn't simply approve or admire what he had made (Saying, "Good job" or "Well done."), but He loves what He made—passionately, unconditionally, unwaveringly.

Draw a deep breath and just take that in for a moment...

## **Our Way, His Way**

And when we, the product and object of His love, prefer ourselves to Him, and our way to His—ignoring, disobeying, rebelling, rationalizing, excusing, disregarding—He sends His one and only “well-beloved” Son to buy us back and bring us back to Him.

All that frustrates you and breaks your heart, all that frightens you and leaves you anxious, or disappoints and grieves you, is all the product of people sinning against God in those ways. And you get caught by the undertow or clobbered by the waves.

And there are others who suffer in similar ways as the result of *your* sins, even the unintentional and unknown sins. Because hurt people hurt people. I suffer, you suffer, we all suffer, because of people’s sins—yours, mine, and theirs.

Yet God has set His love on us, because He alone can rescue us from that not-so-merry-go-round. He can overcome the wickedness within us and give us a new heart—a righteous heart, a truly loving heart—like His.

Whoever you are, whatever your background, whatever you’ve done amiss or failed to do aright, the God of the universe has set His wondrous, saving, liberating love on you. He’s never forgotten you, and He’ll never abandon you.

He wants you to be with Him, because He knows that just being with Him will transform your heart and life.

Oh, what a Savior! Do you know Him?

## **Only Jesus**

No one compares with Jesus! God and man wedded together in one bodily frame, in one Person. He came from the Father, and He returned to the Father. He remained faithful to the end—the dreadfully bitter end.

Opposed by the leaders of His faith, and deserted by His own disciples, He was beaten as a traitor and executed publicly as a criminal—yet He was called King of the Jews, and we know Him as the Christ, the Savior of the world.

No one else died as Jesus did. Oh, many thousands were also crucified by Roman might, but none of them died as he did. The sunlit sky turned dark in the middle of the day, and as He drew His last breath, the earth trembled and shook in response. Buildings crumbled and graves burst open, and many dead came back to life.

Jesus released His Spirit back to the Father, and the Father released His Spirit on the earth, tearing the Temple's great curtain in two, from top to bottom.

God and man—all humanity (the Jew and the non-Jew, the good and the bad)—could be joined together again, restoring and renewing their fellowship in unity and love through Jesus Christ.

God's mighty saving grace would clear their consciences, and soften their hearts, and give to them a new birth, a spiritual birth, leading to a newness of life.

Do you know Him this way? You *can*! Everyone can. ANYone can! That's what Jesus provides.

Whoever wants to, whoever chooses to, whoever trusts His provision and responds. That's not *my* promise; that's the promise of God!

### **Come to Him**

When you come to Him in the way He has chosen, He will surely receive you. His way brings hope and delivers freedom.

Believe Him. Believing in Him today, come!

Give your heart to Jesus. Move your self off the throne and make Jesus King of your heart today

Once you do that, nothing and no one will ever be able to separate you from His love again. You'll thank the Lord and love Him forever.

What did He say? You will not perish. To perish is more than to die; it is to cease to exist, to never be remembered anymore—as if you never had been born at all.

But that won't be you, if Christ is in you. He will share with you His eternal life—the life that has neither beginning nor ending. The God-kind of life. It only grows. It never stops bearing fruit. That's the power of an endless life!

That is the story—the Good News about Jesus.

Will you take that step right now? Bow down and make Jesus Lord of your life? Receive Him as He receives you?

Let the love of God wash over you. Let His Spirit embrace you. Then give your all to Him. Just say, "Lord Jesus, I'm Yours. I'm all Yours."

Many of you now know His love is real. You are grateful that He has shown you mercy. Your life is in His hands, come what may.

Easy days, or difficult days. Having much, or having little. Feeling good, or feeling bad. Life comes in many ways, and at different paces. But Jesus is always working for you, because He has set His love on you.

Even when you can't see Him, He's working. Even when you don't feel Him, He's working. Even when it seems that nothing is working as it should, Jesus is still for you, and He's working for you, and working all things together for your good. For there's nothing impossible for Him!

People must know this. And we must tell them. Who else could? Who else would? Who else should?

### **Divine Strategy**

God has strategically placed you in a family, in a church congregation, in a neighborhood and community—perhaps in a school, at a job, or at a grocery store, a bank, or a restaurant. Strategically!

He knows who you are. He knows what you know. He knows where you've been. And none of it is wasted in His hands. You are useful as a partner in His plan. A partner.

Jesus' first disciples thought their Master was like other leaders of men, who only use men as tools to accomplish their own dreams. But He is not like that.

After He had risen from the dead, they thought their dream of emancipation from Roman occupation was about to come true. They thought Jesus had come back in order to make them bosses, instead of slaves. *They asked Him, "Lord, is this the time when You're going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"* (Acts 1:6)

*"Are you going to put us on top again? Make us the head, and not the tail? So we can do things our way again?"*

*Jesus told them, "You don't need to know about times or periods that the Father has determined by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes to you. Then you will be My witnesses to testify about Me in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* (Acts 1:7-8)

Don't occupy yourselves with things that are not in your power to control. We are so like them! We fascinate ourselves with things over which we have no power. We like to imagine that we should have a say in how all things go.

## **Something to Say**

Jesus said we will have something to say, and we will have power to say it with effect. But it is not about the kingdoms of men that we will speak. And it's not about who's on top, or who has what. That is too limited a structure and purpose for us, because we are partners with the Living God, whose Kingdom is coming to the earth. And that's what we have to say to others!

And that's what the Spirit's power has been given to us for. Because people must know.

We have been appointed by God to serve others with love. And we must also be anointed with wisdom and courage to carry out our service. We must be empowered by the Spirit to tell others of God's extraordinary grace to all through Jesus Christ.

Only then will the Gospel be taken to the ends of the earth. Only when you receive power after the Spirit comes upon you will we be able to carry the Message of redemption to the very ends of the earth. For that matter, we ourselves live at the "end of the earth," relative to the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus spoke those words! And the Gospel has come to us. But it doesn't stop with us. Our assignment is global—inclusive of every other nation and people group.

## **To the Ends of the Earth**

Nearly 8 billion people live on the planet today, in nearly 12,000 people groups. 4.7 billion (more than half!) belong to people groups of whom fewer than 2% of the group are evangelical Christians.

274 million people belong to people groups without any Christian presence at all. They represent 34 people out of every 1,000—moms and dads and kids. Without a clue about the God who has set His love on them, or about Jesus Christ who died on their behalf. *Is that nothing to you?*

Reaching the world starts with you—your relationships and sphere of influence.

How can you rise to the challenge? You need the right tools for the job. You need the skills to use them effectively. And you need the power required to do the work.

I want to equip you with as many tools as I can. And the Holy Spirit has been given to empower you. But you must wait (just like the saints of every generation) for the promise of the Father—the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

You are called, and you can be equipped, but you must also be empowered. Like your salvation, empowerment with the Spirit is received by faith, when we ask the Lord Jesus to baptize us.

Dedicate yourself to the task—your part of the global task—and ask Jesus for the power.

Then, rejoice! Because you have become part of God's plan to reach everyone with the Good News about Jesus.

I'll pick up this theme again in two weeks, so that we may learn to share the faith of Jesus Christ more effectively with all kinds of other people.