

Message Transcript

WHEN YOU KNOW HIS NAME, BUT NOT HIS POWER | THE KING'S
POWER AND THE PEOPLE'S UNBELIEF | AARON BROCKETT |
MAY 2 & 3 2026

Alright, how's everybody doing? Are you guys good? Good to be with you. Hey, we've had an incredible weekend so far, kicking off on Friday night. We had our Men's Night. This room was packed out with a bunch of men.

And, man. It's always so funny. Here's my little observation every year on Men's Night. When we open up the first worship song, the guys just kind of stand there and they have their arms crossed and they are like, "We ain't singing." By the end of the night, man, they are blowing the roof off of the place. And we saw that this last Friday night.

If you notice, here at the Northwest location we've got a few crosses around the room. And one of the things we had challenged the guys with is to just to write down on a piece of paper that stronghold or that thing that was keeping them from God. And maybe they are reaching out to what it is that God wants for them but they are also holding onto that thing. And we just asked them to come and nail it, crucify it, to the cross. So, we just tried to leave those up as powerful reminders.

All weekend long, man, from Men's Night to all of the earlier services this weekend... I don't know we've had already somewhere around 100 or a little more than 100 baptisms. And we've just been watching God move powerfully through the weekend. It's been really a sweet, sweet time.

If you have a Bible go ahead and find Mark, chapter 6. That's where we are going to be together. And as you are turning there and settling in, I just want to do a couple of housekeeping items to kind of set the table for where we are headed as a church over the next two to three months, beginning next weekend.

It's Mother's Day and I'm really looking forward to having some close friends of ours, Ashley Weece and her husband, Justin. They are some of our church planters. We helped them plant Iron Coast Church in Brunswick, Maine, which is not an easy place to start a church. They've already got several hundred people there gathering after like a year or so. I've asked Ashley to come and she's going to deliver the Mother's Day message next weekend. So, excited to hear from her.



Then two weeks from this weekend, I will wrap up Part 3 of our Mark series. Now, if you are relatively new to our church, since the beginning of the year we've been taking all of 2026 to just work our way through the gospel of Mark, verse by verse, chapter by chapter, dividing it up into parts. So, two weeks from now we'll finish Part 3 and it will be my last weekend to preach before I head off on Sabbatical until August.

Now, typically in the summer I will be on what's called a study break, which means that I'm still working, I'm just not preaching on the weekends. But a Sabbatical is different. It's every five years. And it's a complete step away from the role. And it's really, really important for me because there are very few jobs where your spiritual health is connected to what you do for a paycheck. And that can mess with you if you are not careful.

In fact, my friend Craig Rochelle put it this way, "Hey, I never want to be a full-time pastor and a part-time Christian." It's this idea of always having to be on, always having to prepare, always having to have the answers.

And I'm kind of like a hard driver/achiever—go, go, go and tackle the next thing. And I never want to get so far out in front of God where God has been talking but I haven't been listening because I'm too busy accomplishing for Him. Anybody else with me in that?

So, just to be able to take the Pastor Aaron hat off and go, "Hey, I'm a son of God first." And just take some time to say, "Hey, God. Would You speak over the course of the summer?" And I'll be doing a little bit of travel.

I've got something I'm really looking forward to. It's something called a Life Plan, which is two days away with a facilitator. And it's really trying to provide some direction into what it is that God is primarily calling me to do. Because I can find myself responding to all kinds of things and maybe begin to take my eyes off of the direction God is leading in my personal life and the life of our church.

Last time I did one of these I was 38. And over the last decade it has proven to be very, very fruitful in keeping me focused. I just turned 50 two weeks ago. I'm like, "It's probably time to do another Life Plan. So, what better time to do it when I'm on Sabbatical? That's all coming up.

And I want you to know that I'm going to take care of you, man. I've got some great guest speakers this summer. Back in October we did a series called I've Got a Word For You. You remember that? I brought in some pastors who know our church who are connected to me personally. I said, "Man, just come and bring a word for our church."



So, June is I've Got a Word For You Summer Edition and I've got some great pastors, a different set of pastors coming. You're going to be blessed by every single one of those messages.

Then in mid-July we will resume our study in Mark. Pastor Carl Cool, who was here a couple of months ago, if you remember him, is going to be here two weekends in a row and then you are going to hear from some of our pastors on staff.

Guys, it's going to be a great summer. And I'm just really grateful for your prayers as I step away on Sabbatical. I'll preach two weeks from now. That will be my last time until August. And I'll definitely see you then.

Let me go ahead and pray right now and then we'll jump into the passage. Father, I just ask over these next 35 minutes or so You'd speak. And we just pray that we could have an encounter with You to know that it isn't just the words that You are saying to us, but it's something very unique and very specific that you are saying to every individual listening to the sound of my voice right now that you are calling them to do. So, I pray that you would make that very, very clear in the next few moments together. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, if you were here a couple of weeks ago, you might recall, as we were wrapping up chapter 5 of Mark, that Jesus has been sort of on a traveling tour with His disciples. And some really miraculous things happened in Mark, chapter 5. Jesus and His disciples go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee because He was advancing His Kingdom across the Sea of Galilee and beyond to the Gentile side.

And as they go they get caught up in a physical storm and then Jesus calms the storm just by talking to it. Then they get to the other side of the lake and they encounter a guy who has 2,000 demons living in him and he, himself, is living in a graveyard.

Then they go back across to the other side of the lake, where they were, and Jesus resurrects a little twelve-year-old girl from the dead and He heals a woman with an issue of blood. And at first He didn't even realize He'd done it until He felt the power go out from His body. Pretty impressive, wouldn't you say? That's a lot of miraculous things that Jesus had been doing.

So, you might phrase it this way: Jesus has been navigating and calming a few storms: literal natural ones, supernatural ones, circumstantial ones, and spiritual ones. And now, as we come to chapter 6:1-13 we're going to see Jesus navigate some relational storms.



I'm kind of curious. Any of you in a relational storm right now? Any of you scared to raise your hand because your relational storm is sitting right next to you? All of us have got that going on. That's part of what it means to be a human, whether it's a co-worker thing or a marriage thing or a boyfriend/girlfriend thing or child thing. Relational storms can pop up from time to time. Jesus is fully God, fully man. And so He is not exempt. And we learn some things from Him.

Now, out of all of the miraculous things that He has been doing, word is getting around about Jesus. And this is all before social media. News is spreading fast, man. because of the things that He was teaching and the miraculous things He'd been doing. So, you would think that it would just stir up more belief in the changing of power of Jesus, not less.

But what we are going to see in our passage today is that, actually, there was a group of people who should have—if there was anybody who would believe in the changing power of Jesus, it would have been them. But they are somewhat unconvinced. And I want to look at why that is and why we might be susceptible to the same thing.

What we're going to see in our passage is that the name and fame of Jesus is spreading and there are some who know His name but miss His power. And I'm just wondering if there is anybody who can maybe relate to that today. You know His name. You grew up in church. You've heard the sermons. You've read the passages. You've sung the songs. And yet, you can still miss His power.

The very people that you would think would see it and know it the most... And ultimately that is what happened, because there was a group of people who knew His name but they nailed Him to a cross because they missed His power.

Now, the set up here is that Jesus has been on the road, as I said, traveling. And I've got a map behind me so you can kind of see, visually, what has been going on. Jesus was kind of camped out in Capernaum. He'd gone to the east side of the Sea of Galilee. He'd gone back to Capernaum. Now, for the very first time since He has started His public ministry, He goes back to His hometown, Nazareth. The place where He grew up.

Have any of you ever moved away from the city or the town you grew up in and then you go back for a visit? Maybe it's a holiday or maybe a high school reunion. And the people you grew up with see you out on the street and they still kind of talk to you and look at you like you're 12. Like you are accomplished in your profession, you graduated with a degree, you are married with kids, you're doing grown up things but they still think of you like they remember you, maybe when you were a kid or a teenager.



I know every time I go back to my hometown and it's been a long time since I've been there, maybe I'll bump into people who I haven't seen in years and they see me and they are like, "Oh, man. Little Aaron Brockett." "I'm 50." It's like, "What are you doing now?" And then I tell them.

It's awesome when I bump into an old Sunday school or a small group leader. "What are you doing now?" "I'm a pastor." And they are like, "What? You?" Yeah, so maybe some of you have had that happen with people in your hometown. Jesus isn't going to get any respect in His hometown either. Look with me at verse 1. Mark writes:

"Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed."

So, we've already talked about this before. Jesus went to church, by the way. Jesus is the perfect, sinless Son of God. He goes to church. We probably should too. And the synagogue was just the church gathering of the day. So, Jesus pops in and I don't know, man. Maybe this was his home synagogue. Maybe this was the synagogue where He went to Sunday school, when to camp. He was in the youth group.

And He goes back to town. The pulpit is empty for the weekend. He's like, "Hey, I can pitch hit." So, He steps up to preach and it says that the people were amazed. Now, they weren't amazed like in an impressive sort of way. They were amazed in a disbelief sort of way.

And the reason why we can say that is because of the questioning that comes next. And the questions—they could go either way. They could be positive or negative, but ultimately we're going to see that they were negative because of the question that opens verse 3. Look at your Bibles with me. They said, as He was teaching:

"'Where did this man get these things?' they asked. 'What's this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing?'"

Alright, that could go either way—positive or negative. We know it's negative because of the next question.

"'Isn't this the carpenter?'"



There it is. They are questioning Him. Now, understand that Jesus knows these people personally. He had likely grown up with them. He had played on the same t-ball team with them, graduated high school with them, and they are amazed because they are like, "Now, wait a second. I went to church camp with Jesus. I remember some of the pranks He pulled, like the whole walking on water thing.

"I remember You never studied under a Rabbi. You're not technically qualified to be teaching these things or doing these things. You went to community college and you've been working in Your dad's workshop making tables and chairs. What qualifies You for this?" And then this is an instance where with familiarity here they miss the power of who He is. And then they hit really below the belt in the next verse. They say:

"Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?' And they took offense at him." (NIV)

What they are doing is sort of normalizing Jesus. And then it says that they took offense at Him. That's interesting. The Bible says that in the end days there will be a spirit of offense. People will be offended. Imagine that. Isn't it true? Everybody is offended now a days. By everything.

And here it says that they were questioning Jesus by what authority He is doing this and then they were offended, "Okay, He's just a carpenter. He's Mary's son." We may read that and go, "Well, that's not that big of a deal." If you were to go back to your hometown and maybe you see somebody and they are like, "Oh, You're so and so(s) child. That's not a big deal."

However in that time period it would have been an unusual way to frame it because the way that you were identified was primarily through your father's name. Or, in the very least, your father and your mother's name. Never your mother's name alone. So, what they were doing is, they were likely suggesting, somewhat passively, that Jesus was illegitimate. They were like, "Oh, yeah. Where's your dad? Oh, yeah. Your mother, she was a virgin." Wink, wink. Oh, man. They were well aware of the prophecy down in Isaiah 7:14 that we read at Christmas every year, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call Him Emmanuel." They knew that prophecy. The sign was there. This was a prophecy about their own hometown. That Jesus is the Son of God, born of a virgin in that town.

They were withholding that information and here's why. If they can discredit His divinity, it is easier to dismiss His authority. And, oftentimes, that's what happens in our culture. We are fine with Jesus as a moral teacher. We're fine with Jesus as an example. But not so fine with Jesus as fully divine. Not so fine with Jesus as the perfect Son of God who came to atone.



So, if we can discredit that in Him, then we can sort of protect our autonomy so, "He doesn't have to be Lord over all of me. I'm fine with Him being Lord over some of me, but not Lord over all of me."

So, they are dismissing His divinity to dismiss His authority in their life. This brings up an important question for you and me. I just want you to be intellectually honest with yourself, especially if, I don't know, you are deconstructing or right now you're sort of teetering on faith, like, "I don't know if I'm in or if I'm out." And you've got some really honest curious questions. By the way, this is a safe place to bring your questions.

Can I just maybe ask you to consider this:

Are the arguments I have against God in my head or in my heart?

Are the arguments you are having with God right now in your head or in your heart? There is a difference. See, oftentimes we can come to God with what we might think are head questions, like logical questions. And by the way, He can handle all of those. And then other times what we're doing is we're sort of like leaning with the head questions and really it's an issue of the heart.

And it doesn't matter what answer you get is, it doesn't matter what book you read, it doesn't matter what evidence you find, you're still not going to follow it because it affects your heart. So, you are like, "If I can't logically get there, I don't want to get there because to go there means I've got to change some things and I don't want to change some things."

Is it because I'm hurting and I'm angry? Is it because if God is really God then that means that I'm going to have to change some things about my behavior. That means that I have to change some things about the way I think about money and resources. That means that I'm going to have to change some things about sexuality.

See, notice. They go from questioning His legitimacy to immediately being offended. That's usually the line. That's usually where it leads. And so they just throw out all of these questions, which are a bunch of logical fallacies. If you don't know what a logical fallacy is, you can google it later. It's this idea of, "Instead of contending with the idea that is being presented, I'll just attack and dismiss you." And it's filled in our culture.



If you notice, especially in the comment section, which is where the devil lives in social media, when an idea gets presented, instead of being curious about it, instead of just simply saying, "Well, I don't know if I agree. Let's talk about it. Let me ask some other questions." It's like, "Well, let me run off on this Red Herring down this trail. Let me bring up 'what about?' let me attack you personally." It's all logical fallacy.

We see that here in Mark 6. They don't like what He's saying. So, rather than being curious about it, "Hey, Jesus tell us a little more about this." "Let's just attack His credibility and demean Him, 'This is just the carpenter. This is just an illegitimate child.'"

And Jesus is willing to offend for the cause of what is true because the truth will set you free. And it is the only thing that will set you free. And, yes it is true that Jesus is love. That is absolutely true. And, yes it is true that Jesus will receive you as you are. That is absolutely true. And, Jesus has a heart for the broken. That is absolutely true.

And yet, at the same time, He refuses for you to continue to be enslaved with lies. So, He is willing to offend for the cause of truth to set you free. The Bible says that words from a friend can be trusted.

Oftentimes I'm reminded of the rich young ruler. And that's just a great example of how Jesus is willing to offend for the cause of truth to set this brother free. The guy comes up to Him and he's like, "Jesus, what do I have to do to inherit eternal life?" And He's like, "Well keep all of the commandments." He's like, "All of those I have done since I was young." Pretty amazing track record.

And Jesus says, "One thing you haven't. Go sell all that you have. Give it to the poor and come and follow after Me." Now, is Jesus saying that in order for him to receive salvation he had to empty his bank account? No. But Jesus knew the idols in that boy's heart. And He knew that would become his functional savior. He wanted to know, "Are you willing to be offended with the truth and to do something extreme in order to come follow Me?" And the guy wasn't willing to do it. And he went away sad.

I've always been struck by the fact that Jesus didn't like, sheepishly go, "Oh, wait a second. Get back here, you. Maybe I overstated that just a little bit. I was just testing you." He didn't do that. He let him walk.

Now, I think God, in His sovereignty and grace, would probably pursue that young man. I'd like to think that maybe, eventually one day, that guy did come to recognize his need for a Savior and gave his heart to Jesus. But, in that moment, Jesus was not willing to compromise. He was okay with offending for the cause of truth to set him free.



And Jesus is going to right-size their opinions of Him by saying what He says in verse 4:

"Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.'"

So, what Jesus is saying is, "I've been doing some pretty miraculous and amazing things, even in a Gentile country, and now I come back to my hometown, the place where I should be the most supported. The place where I should be the most seen. The place where they should be cheering Me on. This should be home field advantage." And He comes back and His family and His friends end up rejecting Him. That had to be so discouraging.

And maybe some of you know exactly what that's like. Maybe some of you, you're the only Christian in your family. You're the only Christian in your office. You are the only Christian in your home. And sometimes sharing the gospel with family can be one of the hardest places to do it. You ever notice that?

Have you ever noticed that maybe you could be quite articulate with people you don't know very well, but then when it comes to your own family, your tongue feels like it's 100 pounds, "I just can't articulate this thing. I just can't get it out."

I think part of that is spiritual warfare stuff going on because the enemy knows the stakes there. I also think it's this. They know you at your worst. They know your past. They know you pre-Jesus. And so it's easy to dismiss the credibility of your testimony by going, "Well, you're not perfect." And it shuts us down. See, Jesus, in His hometown, this is what is happening. And then it says in verse 5, this is really fascinating, it says:

"He could not do any miracles there,"

Think about all of the miracles He just did in the last chapter, in hostile territory. But here in His hometown He couldn't do anything there:

"except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them."

I don't know, people had some colds and stuff. Easy softballs. And then it says: "He was amazed at their lack of faith." (NIV)

So, something is going on here. There was something in the environment of Nazareth, something about their skepticism, their cynicism, their lack of faith that limited His ability to do miracles there. And it wasn't that Jesus was less God in Nazareth, it was that their receptivity to the things that He wanted to do—something was blocking them.



I like how my friend Pastor Jon Tyson, in New York City, says this. I'm quoting him. He says this:

"Western secularism, cynicism, and unbelief have become a type of 'Nazareth'—not because God has stopped moving, but because we've stopped expecting Him to."

"Western secularism," that's the world in which we live, by the way, "Western secularism, cynicism, and unbelief have become a type of 'Nazareth'—not because God has stopped moving, but because we've stopped expecting Him to."

I've seen things overseas on the mission field, supernaturally, that I've never seen here. Some of you have maybe seen that yourself or maybe you know missionaries, or some of you lived overseas for a while. There is something about it. I don't know what it is, man. When you are coming back into US airspace as you are getting ready to fly into JFK or something, it's like all of a sudden the Spirit is like, "Well, I can't go any farther." I'm overstating that but am I?

Guys, there is something in the western world. We do cynicism really well. And I'm not saying you shouldn't ask questions. I'm not saying you shouldn't hold accountability. I'm not saying you should be naïve. There is a difference, though, between that and cynicism. And he says that in western civilization, the world in which we live, we're doing ministry in a type of Nazareth.

Think about this for a minute. In the last couple of chapters Jesus has been standing before the demonic, and it's affects. And saying, "In the name of God come out." Modern secularism now stands before God and the impact of His Kingdom coming and says the opposite, "In the name of humanism, God, You come out."

And this has and usually is the response that people have to Jesus. And it explains why some of us can know about Him and yet still not know Him. To be familiar with Jesus, to be fond of Jesus, you may even say you love Jesus—it doesn't mean that you've been changed by Him.

That is not an accusation. That is a question that only you have to ask of yourself, "Do I know Jesus' name but am missing His power?" And if people in His own hometown missed His power, then you and I living 2,000 years later, it's certainly possible.



n Matthew, chapter 28, after Jesus' physical resurrection, He appears to over 500 people. And He tells His 11 disciples to go and meet Him on a mountain so that way He could give them the Great Commission. And I've always been struck by how Matthew says this in verse 17. He says:

"When they saw him," referring to the disciples, "they worshiped him;"

And who wouldn't? You're seeing the resurrected Jesus right in front of you. But then notice this,

"but some doubted." (NIV)

You've got to ask yourself the question: How is it that some are in awe of Him and some dismiss Him? It's the same Jesus. The same resurrected power. Just think about this for a minute. Jesus is physically standing three feet in front of them with the scars in His wrists and His side, and some of them are going, "I don't know, man. I had an uncle who did weird things like this once."

Guys, is that a rejection of the head or the heart? The proof is there. They just didn't want it to be there. Because if Jesus is physically standing in front of them, that means they have to change—and we often don't want to.

You know the most sobering thing that I think Jesus ever said, I almost hate reading it because it's so convicting. But I'll read it. In Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus says this:

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,'"

In other words, "Not everybody who calls on the name alone:"

"will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

What is that? That's called obedience and application. So, none of this easy believism stuff. That's like your criticism of Christianity, "Oh, this is just a bunch of hypocrites calling on the name of Jesus but are unchanged." Jesus would be with you because He's not down on that either. So He's like, "This is a group of people who are professing the name of Jesus but refusing to invite anything that He has said into their life. They are not following Him."

And He goes:

"Many,"



That's a scary word—many. He doesn't say a few. He says many:

"will say to me on that day," meaning Judgment Day "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?"

I don't know, guys. All of that sounds really impressive. I don't know how many of us have prophesied or driven out demons or done miracles in His name? But they've done that. And then Jesus says:

"...I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you.'" (NIV)

Guys, what He wants is a relationship. What He wants is not your perfection. That's impossible. He just wants full devotion. And if the people who grew up with Jesus, His own family and friends, who were around Him a lot, if they could miss His power, then it's certainly possible that you and I could as well.

So, how do we ensure that that doesn't happen? Can I just give you a few things to think about? These are meant to be encouraging, but it doesn't mean that they are not challenging. Understand, for us not to get to that day and say, "Lord, Lord, didn't we do all of these things?" and He says, "I never knew you." Here are some things to do right now :

Know Him relationally, not theoretically

Put a stake in the ground and say, "I want to know Jesus relationally, not just theoretically." Where you are not just reading the stories. You're not just understanding Him with your head. It's full heart devotion.

Know Him personally, not vicariously

And you're choosing to spend time with Him, to know Him personally. You don't just know Him vicariously. We can do that. We know Jesus vicariously because we had a grandma who was just a giant of the faith so we somehow think that some of her faith kind of rubbed off on us. No. She laid the ground for you, but you've got to make it your own.

Know Him fully, not selectively

Or, to know Him fully, not just selectively. Guys, this is not buffet Jesus, where it's like, "I'd like a little bit of this and a little bit of that. And I'm going to stay away from that over there because I don't really like that. It seems a little old fashioned." No. This is not buffet Jesus. He's Lord of all or He's not Lord at all. Here's a really convicting thought:



If you are never 'rejected' because of Him, you may not be fully following Him

If you are never rejected because of Jesus, you've got to entertain the possibility you may not be fully following Him. I know that's not a very fun thing to think about. I'm sorry. I'm not just here to give you great news. I'm actually in it with you. Because there is a people pleaser in all of us. There is a people pleaser in me.

And there have been some times in my life where I am like, "You know what? Things are going pretty good and I actually haven't had a negative email in a while. And everybody thinks I'm awesome." That's a problem. Because if I'm following Jesus, there should be somebody taking shots.

Now, listen. We've got to be so careful with this. It's one thing if you are taking criticism because you're just a jerk. It's one thing to be rejected by others because you've got bad breath. Maybe literally and otherwise. It's one thing to be marginalized if you don't have very good people skills, you don't have a high EQ. I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about being loving and kind and gracious and wise and faithful and obedient—you're just following after Jesus to the best of your ability and you're still taking arrows. And if you never take any arrows for the things of faith, you've got to ask, this is just an honest question, "Am I really following Him?" Or, is it buffet Jesus?

You might be like, "Pastor Aaron, where are you getting this? Well, I'm getting it from Jesus, Himself. Jesus said this in Matthew 5:

"Blessed are you when people insult you,"

That's such a weird thing to say. Because if I get insulted, I'd say that's a bad day. And Jesus says, "No, actually blessed when people insult you:"

"persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you," here's the thing that changes all of it, "because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Matthew 5:11-12 (NIV)

So, Jesus is saying, "Hey, listen man. If you are going to follow Me, if you are going to associate with Me, if you are going to be connected to Me, if I'm going to be Lord of all then you can expect much of the same treatment that I received. And if they despised and rejected Me, then don't be surprised if the despise and reject you."



Because the whole aim of the Christian life is to become more like Christ, to grow more and more into the image and likeness of Jesus. So, we've got this decision where either we are going to be formed into the image of Jesus or we will form Jesus into the image that we would like Him to be. Those are your options.

So, what does this look like in real life? Students—do not be surprised when you choose conviction over fitting in, whether that's sexual purity, honesty, or refusing to gossip and trash others. Don't be surprised when you get labeled as judgmental or holier than thou and friends distance themselves from you. That's what that looks like.

What does this look like? Don't be surprised, young adults over the age of 20, you are on the dating scene, you set clear boundaries and you prioritize Christ over chemistry and then you don't get the second date. And they belittle you as too intense or pressure you because saving yourself for marriage is unrealistic. That's what that means.

In your career you refuse to cut ethical corners and exaggerate numbers and put yourself in a compromising situation, you're seen as naïve not a team player, slowing down the pace of business, promotions and opportunities pass you by because your integrity is quietly threatening people who have grown comfortable in compromise.

Parenting—parenting is not for the faint of heart. Can I get a good amen? It doesn't matter how old your kids are. And you desire to lead your home, in this cultural moment, with some intentional discipleship. Meaning... Here's half of it. Pay attention. I'm just going to be watchful over what my kids are exposed to and consumed with.

And I'm going to set some appropriate boundaries over what they consume, which means that they may not get a phone when they think they are ready to get a phone or they are like, "Oh, man. I really want social media because all of my friends are on social media and I feel left out." And you are like, "Well, we've got to determine an appropriate age for this because I want to make sure you can handle it."

Or, maybe you decide to prioritize church over travel soccer. Oh, I got way too close on that one. Right? Or you're like, "You know what? We're going to look for opportunities to foster a biblical worldview in the home and other parents and other people say that seems a little extreme, a little bit too out of touch. March for your values. That's what that looks like.



In culture you speak up with clarity on challenging topics with both truth and grace, refusing to bow the ideological knee to pressure while maintaining love for all people. And you quickly get labeled as intolerant, legalistic, or odd for God. And people attack you with logical fallacies of their own. And they unfairly assume things about you that are not true.

What this looks like is faithful obedience in the face of suffering. You choose to keep your heart soft toward God, trusting in His timing and goodness. You choose to forgive instead of holding onto bitterness, to be generous instead of self-protection. You choose contentment over chasing more. And others don't get it. And your humility looks like weakness to them.

That's what this looks like. And to not just know about Jesus but to know Him, you can expect rejection of some kind. And it looks different, but you can expect it. Which means many of us are going to need to cauterize the nerve that wants to be liked too much. And you are going to have to right size other people's opinions of you because we live our lives, at least we should, for an audience of One. Guys, Jesus' opinion is the only one that matters.

So, receiving criticism and accusation and slander from other people is like being in a snowball fight. And at first you're like, "Oh, this is going to hurt. Oh, that's just a snowball. I'm actually living my life for Him."

Now, if you think I'm overstating that then listen to Jesus' words in Luke, chapter 6, verse 26. This is something in a series of something called the woes.

And here's how you'll remember it. Whoa means slow up. I've got a 90 pound silver lab at home. And whenever I let him out the door to go to the bathroom in the morning, he gets a little rambunctious and he wants to get away before I put him on the leash. And I go, "Whoa." That's a really weird illustration, but you'll remember it every time you come to this. And I'm not calling you guys dogs. Alright? I might have by accident.

Here's what He is saying, "Woe," all it means is, "Hold up."

"Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you..."

Isn't that so counter intuitive? If everybody speaks well of me, I'm like, "That's awesome." He's like, "No it's not." If everyone speaks well of you there might be a problem:

"for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets." (NIV)



In other words, he's saying, "If there isn't anyone who is coming against you in some way (to your devotion to Jesus) then there might be something wrong and you might not be following.

Now, immediately after this rejection, Jesus is not going to be deterred. He stays on mission and He's going to send His disciples out to continue to take ground for the Kingdom. And I love that. In the face of this dismissal, in the face of this criticism, in the face of this derailing, Jesus stays on mission.

The takeaway for you and me, in the face of the same kind of rejection and resistance, you keep your eyes on Him and you keep living for Him. Look at the end of verse 6. It says:

"Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits." (NIV)

So, what I want you to see is that Jesus—it's the first time that He begins to commission them and they split up. So He's like, "Hey, we've got a lot of ground to cover here." At this point they'd all been staying together. So now He goes, "I'm going to start sending you guys out so we can cover more territory, two by two.

Now, keep in mind that the disciples were young men. Mostly teenagers. Peter was likely the oldest one. He might have cracked 20. And they had likely never been more than 100 miles away from home. And now Jesus is sending them out on their own. And up to this point, they'd just been with Him listening to Him preach, watching Him do miracles, and now He's saying, "You preach the sermon. You cast out the demons. You do the miracles." Think about that for a minute. How wild that might have been.

Any of you remember (maybe you have to go way back like me) when you got your first driver's license? A little bit of freedom. And you were allowed to go and do adult things without adults. I remember the first time I got a driver's license and my mom came in and said, "Hey, could you run to the grocery store and get a gallon of milk?" And I was like, "Really?" I was like, "This is awesome." You know? And so I get in there. I was doing adult things in the car. I was so nervous.

I remember the first time somebody came up to me and said, "Hey, Aaron. Would you consider leading a small group?" "Would you consider preaching a sermon?" And I was like, "Really, you would trust me with that?"



This is the first time for the disciples. Jesus goes, "Hey, you've been watching what I've been doing. I want to ask you guys to do the same." Imagine how overwhelmed, ill equipped and unqualified they might have felt.

Some of you don't have to imagine that because somebody came up to you and asked you to lead a Rooted group or to be a Difference Maker and you felt the same thing, "I don't know if I could do that. Who am I? I'm not quite sure."

Guys, that's how discipleship works. You raise somebody up and then you send them out. This is Jesus' strategy for multiplication. And they had no resources. They had no strategy. They had no marketing. Here's all they needed. Jesus goes, "I give you My authority."

It's a really good description of being a follower of Jesus. Here it is. You'll want to jot it down. It's really complicated. Believe in Jesus and do what He says. Guys, let's not make this any more complicated than it is. Believe Him. And then apply. And the Holy Spirit is a conservationist. He gives power as it is needed.

Some of you are like, "I'm waiting for the Holy Spirit to show up." No, He's like, "I'm waiting for you to step out." And so He goes, "Hey, man. I want you to go with my authority." And this is sort of like a trial run before the Great Commission. He's going, "Hey, before we go to the nations, let's go village to village."

He's training them. Jesus knows what is coming. He's going to go to a cross. He's going to resurrect from the dead. He's going to ascend to heaven. These are the young men who are going to start the church. He's like, "Let's start training now." He's preparing them. God is intentional.

And in the same way He is preparing you for that thing that He has planned for you and there is no season where God is not preparing, even if, maybe especially if, that season is painful.

Guys, I just want you to know if you go back to the Old Testament look at David. God is like, "Hey, David. Before I trust you with big things, will you be faithful with the small things?"

And He's still asking that question.

"Hey, David. Before I trust you to lead Israel, will you be faithful to tend My sheep in the pasture? Hey, David. Before you go off and kill Goliath and they start writing songs about you, will you be faithful when nobody is looking and kill the lion and the bear? Hey, David. Before you author the Psalms, the greatest book of worship ever, will you worship me alone in the wilderness?"



And He's still presenting that to you and to me. Some of us are waiting on God for something. You are waiting for a relationship. You are waiting for a job. You are waiting for a career opening. You are waiting for some financial independence. You are waiting for that fog to lift—whatever that thing is.

And, listen. God is going, "Hey, I'm trying to prepare you right now in the midst of this obscurity. And it's actually on the anvil that we talked about a few weeks ago. And it's painful and nobody likes it. That's where God does His best heart-shaping. And some of us are frustrated with God because we want that thing so badly. And God is like, "I'm trying to prepare you for that thing." And there are no shortcuts with God.

Can I just say this to you very lovingly?

The worst potential thing God could do is to give you the thing He's called you to before you are ready—it would crush you!

Some of you, your giftedness has outpaced your character. And God is like, "I need to develop your character to handle the gifting and the opportunity."

Guys, it was about 20 some odd years ago (I've shared bits and pieces of this story in the past) that I was a struggling church planter in California in my late 20s. And, honestly, I felt called by God but there was still some formation that needed to happen. And, I'm still in the formation process. Still asking God to shape me and use me, refine the rough edges and prepare me.

The older I get the more grateful I am that He is so patient with me. I'm just going to be honest, man. I'm a knucklehead. There are some things, God is like, "Hey, Aaron. We could do this the easy way or the hard way." And I'm like, "The hard way." I'm so grateful for His patience. And He's forming me and He's shaping me. I got into ministry and I got out over my skies, man. I'm like, young family, newly married, and working so hard. And I was like trying to accomplish all of these things. My motives were way off, man. And it was like, honestly, God needed to humble me. And, man, He did. He just brought it down.

There are a lot of different contributing factors to this. But I was about burned out and I realized: this is unsustainable. I was like 28 or 29 years old: this is unsustainable. And I wanted to be a lead pastor for life, but, "If I keep doing it the way I'm doing it, I'm going to hit a wall."

The only thing I knew was, "Let me just get out of being a lead pastor and go learn and be mentored and be discipled by somebody who is doing it well. So, I sent resumes all over the country just begging every lead pastor I knew of, "Can I just come and be your teaching pastor?" And it was, "No." "No." "No." Shut door after shut door after shut door. Including my hometown, by the way.



I remember going back and meeting with my home pastor, the pastor I grew up with. And he was like, "Hey, I've been thinking about this, I'm going to retire in like five years. Why don't you come back, start a young adult service, you can preach for me once a month and I'll hand the whole thing off to you." Never happened. And as I look back I'm so grateful that it didn't.

That was frustrating, man. I got to this place where nothing was happening and I knew I couldn't keep doing what I was doing. And I was in a season of depression and anxiety. And I was like, "God, I've got to get out."

And I remember having, in my desperation, a conversation with my wife's uncle who sold RVs in southwest Missouri. I said, "Do you think I could come and sell RVs with you?" And he was like, "Well, we could probably figure something out."

Guys, I'm not even exaggerating. As soon as I had that conversation (it was like the next day) there was a church in Louisville, Kentucky that reached out to me and said, "Hey, we're looking for somebody to lead our outreach department and preach once a month." And I thought, "Well, that's better than RVs."

So, we went and it was like a year-and-a-half, two year process of just healing, recentering myself, figuring out what my motives are, getting alone with God and saying, "God, I don't just want to be a full-time pastor and a part-time Christian." All of those of got realigned. And it was painful.

And then this church up the road from there, I don't know if you've heard of it, Traders Point Church, reached out to me and said, "Hey, would you consider coming and being our lead pastor?"

And I laughed. I was like, "You've got to be kidding me, man. For like two years I was sending out resumes all over the nation: rejection, rejection, rejection. I didn't apply for this thing. They asked me if I would want to come." It was as if God was going, "Hey, man. You are ready to listen."

The reason I why I'm telling you that whole story, number one—this is like... I love this. I love doing this with you. I never want to go anywhere else. I feel like I got to grow up here. It's like I'm living right in the middle of God's will, purpose, and plan for my life.

Here's why I am saying all of that to you. It was not a straight line. I would not have been ready, character wise and other to go from California to here. So, God said, "I'm going to keep you in the pressure cooker to form you."

Have you ever heard that phrase: God's eye is on the temperature, and His hand is on the thermostat? He was like, "I know how much you can take. I'm trying to form you. I'm trying to get your attention." And I had to go there to get here.



Now, that's my story. What's yours? You contextualize that for you.

Some of you are like, "Man, I'm right there in that waiting room right now." Good, man. Good. I don't want the pain for you, but I'm glad you're going through it because He's going to shape some stuff in you. And it's for the long gig.

I'm way over time. Let me finish it up in verse 8:

"These were his instructions: 'Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts.'"

Any of you, does that sound like a smart packing plan? Any of you go to the lake for a day or you're getting your kids ready for camp, "Hey, guys. Don't pack a bag. No money." It's like, "Jesus what are you doing?"

"Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them. They went out and preached that people should repent."

That was the message.

"They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them." (NIV)

Regular, teenaged boys doing miracles. How in the world did they do that? Jesus granted them His authority. And they had His Spirit living within them. Hey, I'm just going to give you this. I'm going to wrap up with an invitation here. I got this from my friend, Pastor Kevin Queen, in Nashville. He summarized these verses with these four things:

Pair up
Travel light
Don't bounce
Dust off

Like, hey man. Pair up. He sent them out two by two. You cannot do this alone guys. You've got to find other people. Godly, influencers in your life. If you don't have other godly women or godly men speaking into your life, find them. That's why we say find your crew.



The next thing is: Travel light. Jesus was like, "Guys, is there anything holding you back, holding you down? Do your hands feel full of some things?" You need to travel light and trust God that He will be your provider. Can I just ask you this question? Is there anything right now that you are holding on to too tight and God is calling you to let go of it?

The third thing is: Don't bounce. We're oftentimes tempted and distracted to look for the next best thing. It's not a bad thing to do when you are on vacation. If you check in at the hotel and you are like, "Okay, is there a possibility that we could get upgraded for free? Get better accommodations?" That might be nice on vacation.

But, guys. We're on mission. And I think it's tempting at times to think that the grass is greener on the other side. Isn't that true? You're in a relationship. Grass might be greener in another relationship. You're in a job. Grass might be greener in another job. You're in a church. Grass might be greener in another church. Maybe. Or maybe the grass is greener where you water it.

We've got this little phrase up in one of our conference rooms that says: Be the church you've always wanted to attend. And I love that because it shifts the mentality from just being a consumer to being a contributor.

In other words, you looking for a friendly church? Here's the question. Are you friendly? Hey, are you looking for a church with no hypocrites? Good luck, man. Hey, are you looking for a church with deeper teaching? I'm all about that. Are you deeper applying? That's not even a word, man. You will only go as deep as the truth that you apply. Can I just ask you this question?

Where do you find yourself looking for an upgrade when it's time to commit? Any of you commitment adverse and you're looking for an upgrade? Maybe it's time to commit.

And the last thing is: Dust off. He just said, "Hey, guys. Do not let their criticism hold you back. You shake the dust off of your feet. That's another way... There is a little phrase that they would use, to say, "Do not let that criticism get to your heart and keep you pinned down."

Have you guys ever noticed that somebody (this is true for me) can walk up to you and give you a great compliment. And it's hard to receive it. There could be a lot of reasons for that. And it's almost to me, whenever anybody comes up and gives me this really glowing compliment, it kind of feels like cotton candy. It tastes good initially, but it evaporates really quickly.



But if somebody gives me one piece of criticism, I will chew on that thing like a grisly piece of fatty meat all day long. It's like, "Augh." And Jesus is saying, "Hey, guys. Sometimes people's criticism derails you. You need to shake the dust off of your feet and keep going."

I am reminded of Nehemiah in the Old Testament when he's going back with this noble task to rebuild the wall. That's a pretty noble thing, man. The walls of Jerusalem were down in a rubble and he is rebuilding them.

And then the critics come out of the woodwork. One guy in particular by the name of Sanballat. And Sanballat is like hurling insults at Nehemiah as he is doing this noble task to rebuild the walls. And he's taunting him. And Nehemiah says, "You know what? I've got work to do. I'm going to continue to focus on the wall."

Who are the Sanballat(s) in your life? People taunting you, criticizing you, tearing you down from a distance. And you know at some point you've just got to set the boundaries, shake the dust off of your feet, "I'm living my life for an audience of One. I'm not perfect at all. That's why I have a perfecter. That's why I have a redeemer."

Today, here's the deal. One day I will hand this church off to whoever comes next. One day I will stand before God and give account to how I pastored this church. And I do not want to pastor a group full of people who knew the name of Jesus and missed His power. I want you to know His name and to know His power.

And that happens with full devotion, man. When you are fully following Jesus. And don't make this as complicated as we might make it. What that simply means is... Here's your daily prayer, "God, what are You saying to me? What are you asking me to do? Would you give me the courage to do it?" And guys, that's what a relationship looks like. You are just taking one step of faith after another step of faith after another step of faith. And watch what God might do in that.

Today we're going to celebrate a bunch of baptisms. And this is not a hard, high pressured pitch. If you want to be one of them, if you are ready... Maybe you're sitting there going, "You know what, man? That's me. I know the name of Jesus. I know all of the stories. I'm not living in His power. It is not too late. Surrender your life to Him. Confess your sin. Ask Him to live inside of you. Ask Him to help you follow Him. And then come and be baptized.

Let's pray together.



Father, we come to You right now and I thank You for this church. I thank You for the opportunity to pastor this church. Thank You, God, that the line that got me here was not a straight line, but it was a crooked one because You had to do a work in me. And You are still doing a work in me.

Father, I just pray that we could be a group of people who, one day, when we stand before You, it would not be true of us that you would look at us and go, "You did all of these things in My name, but I never knew you." God, I pray that You would look at us and say, "Oh, man. You did all of these things in My name and we knew each other," because we were obedient to what it is that You have called us to do.

God, would You help us to be obedient? Whatever that is, man. Some of us need to have a hard conversation. Some of us need to go and break up with somebody. Some of us go put in our two-week notice or we need to go fill out the application or we need to go back to school. Whatever it is, man. We just need to be faithful. I pray, God, that we would have the courage to do what You are asking us to do. And we ask this in Jesus' name. And everybody said: Amen and Amen.

