
Traders Point how are we doing today? Are we doing okay? Awesome. Hey, it is so good to be here with you guys. If we haven't had a chance to meet, my name is Kyle. I get to serve as one of the pastors here.

I just want to take a moment to welcome everybody who is here at any of our campuses, anybody who is tuning in online. Welcome to all of our guests who are joining us today. We are so glad that you are here.

If you aren't a guest, if you call Traders Point home, if you've been around for a while, you probably have heard and seen that we're kind of entering into a new season, so to speak. We have a number of new things that are happening that are very exciting, actually.

We have new service times that are happening at some of our campuses. Our five o'clock p.m. service is here. We are excited about that. And yeah, we can celebrate the five o'clock—let's do it. I'm excited for the opportunity that it is going to provide for people who cannot make it to a morning service and a way for people to gather and connect with others and connect with God in the evenings on Sunday.

Some of our ministries have new things going on. Kids' Ministry, Youth, all of that. So it's great.

Not just a new season though for our church. Maybe you can relate personally. Maybe you're entering into a relatively new season as we come out of summer vacation and the break. School is starting back up. Maybe work rhythms are changing. There is just a lot of newness right now.

And new is just a little different, I would say. Maybe you're one of those people who you like new and new represents something innovative, maybe a fresh start. Maybe you don't like new. Maybe new represents change and change is hard because you have to adjust, and you have to adapt. Regardless, new is something that is apparent and relative to all of us. I think all of us over the past year have experienced some sort of new.

There is a phrase that's popped up more and more over the past year-and-a-half—new normal. Anybody here hear that phrase over the past year-and-a-half? Anybody sick of that phrase—new normal? Can we be honest. Yeah, me too. Yeah, me too.

But new normal represents something that initially is different, right? It's different until it isn't, until it becomes something that is widely accepted, widely experienced. Something that is common. Something that is like, "Okay, this is the way things are now."

Life in the pandemic provided a sense of new normal for a lot of us. I was able to find a few memes that I think captured a little bit of our experiences over the past year. I want to share them with you.

This one: Working from home [a picture of a mom in front of her computer with her three children, hands feet bound up, lying on the floor]—any parents on the verge of doing this over the past year? You can be honest. We won't judge you here in church.

This next one: Day one. Quarantine will be fine. I can finally catch up on all of my shows. Day twelve. Congratulations. You've completed Netflix.

Or this one, my favorite: I'm on a Zoom call. Do not walk out naked.

Listen. I won't ask if you were the one writing the note or if you were the one that the note was for. Two different camps here.

No, 2020 provided a new normal, whether we like that phrase or not. But the tendency is that with a new normal, suddenly there is this desire to go back, right? To go back to the way things were before. Back to how things were—the status quo if you will.

And sometimes that can be good. I think that we are seeing that all around us right now. Vacations are at an all time high. People are traveling because their plans were ruined last year and now, they are like, "We're going everywhere." Restaurants are busy again, which is awesome. Kids are going back to school in person. Can I get a hallelujah from some parents?

There is a desire to go back to what was normal before. Life the way that it was. But the question that I have is, is there an aspect of life where a new normal was actually a good thing. Where God has designed us to actually experience something that doesn't require us to go backward.

And I think what we'll find is that the Bible is actually one, unified story that points to a God who represents newness. He wants to do something new in His people. He says, "Hey, I have this new way for you. This new way of living." And on the onset on the surface it sounds good. People respond. They are in. They are like, "Yeah."

Until new clashes with what is comfortable. Until it disrupts some personal preferences or distorts some habits that we were used to having.

So, if you have your Bible, I want you to turn with me to 2 Corinthians, chapter 5. If you're new to the Bible, you have the New Testament, which is where 2 Corinthians is. You have Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Then you have Acts and Romans. Then you have 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians.

And what we'll find here is actually that Jesus offers this new way of life. This uniqueness about how we are to live life. It says, "Hey, you are to live differently." And it's different initially, right? Until it isn't, until it becomes normal, until this is a way for Jesus followers to live.

It is still different to a world that is watching, a world that isn't following Jesus. But it becomes normal to those who are. And it's a new normal that for 2,000 years has been changing the world one person at a time.

So we're going to be in 2 Corinthians, chapter 5. If you have a Bible, great. If not, no worries. Everything will be on the screen next to me. We're going to start in verse 11. 2 Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 11.

What I'm going to do is I'm going to read the verses in entirety and then what we'll do is we'll go back, and we'll break it down. We'll read 11 through 17, alright? This is what Paul says. He says:

"Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart."

"If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life."

"He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them. So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view."

"At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now!" And then he says, "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"

Yeah, we can celebrate that. So to give a little bit of context here, this is a letter. This is a letter that the apostle Paul is writing to a church that he started in a city called Corinth. And Corinth was this vibrant, cosmopolitan city in Greece. And man, everything was there. What happened in Corinth stayed in Corinth. If you wanted to find something in Corinth, you could find it. You have greed and you have lust, and you have corruption.

There was actually this temple in Corinth. It was a temple that was dedicated to the Greek goddess Aphrodite. Now, this isn't anything that is strange. A lot of the cities back then, during Paul's time, had these temples dedicated to Greek gods and Greek goddesses. But this temple, they weren't going there to worship. It was actually known for prostitution.

So Corinth was like this crazy lustful city and all of these things were going on. And the thing is that Paul actually goes on a missionary journey, and he preaches the Gospel there to these people and he starts a church in this city. And he not only tells them about Jesus, but the Scriptures say that he stayed there for about a year-and-a-half discipling them, showing them what life with Jesus actually looks like.

So a few years go by, and Paul has left and now he is writing back to this church that is being influenced, still, by the culture a little bit. We have two letters of his to the church in Corinth. And these letters are a little bit different. They are different in tone and tenor, but they are also different in function.

As I said, the church was still being influenced by some of the cultural norms at the time of Corinth. It was crazy. So the first letter was almost correctional. It's almost as if you had shown up today on a Sunday and instead of me being here on this stage, we pipe Aaron Brockett in via Zoom or Facetime, and he just starts telling us everything he hates about what we're doing while he is gone. Like, "You guys are messing this all up. At the top of the list is that you're letting Kyle Riley preach today." No...

That's kind of like what happened. He's like, "I have this problem with what you are doing. Please stop doing this. Please do not do this. For the love of God, please don't let them do that."

There is actually a moment in 1 Corinthians where he rebukes the church because they have allowed someone in the church to start living in sin with his stepmother. Awkward. "You guys are allowing that to happen. Please get this under control. This isn't what I told you to do or how I showed you to live." 2 Corinthians is a little bit different in function and even in tenor. He takes a little different approach here.

Parents, have you ever taken a different approach when you are correcting or disciplining your children because the first one didn't work so you've got to go draw up a new play, "Okay, huddle." Huddle together with your spouse, "Okay, that one didn't work. Let's try something... I know it was my idea. I know it was my idea.

Yeah, okay. What else do we got? Oh, I know. Let's go for the cell phone. That always works. Take the cell phone. Too extreme? Okay, yeah, yeah. What have you got? Alright. Let's go with that one. Ready, break." And you go back in and try a different approach.

That's kind of like what Paul is doing here. There are still some issues within the church, but they are a little bit different. There are actually people in the Corinthian church who were actually questioning the authority of Paul and some of his homies—the fellow disciples and apostles who helped start the Corinthian church. And Paul takes this different approach.

He's like, "Alright. I'm not going to list off my credentials, I'm not going to self-validate myself of why I'm worthy of speaking to you this way or helping you to know Jesus. No, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to include myself in the story."

Did you notice how much “we” language was in what we just read, “Hey, this is what we have experienced.” And what it is is Paul saying, “I’m not just some coach who is yelling on the sidelines.” You ever experienced a player coach, never played the game a day in their life, but they seem to have all of the answers? It’s not what he is doing.

He’s like, “No, no. I have actually experienced the love of God, the life transforming power of Jesus and I want this life for you too. I’m in the game with you. We are in this together.” That’s why he is talking about this experience that “we” have had.

So I want us to kind of break this down a little bit. We’re going to go back to verse 13 and break down verse 13 and we’ll go one by one and see this life that Paul talks about, this new life, alright? So he says in verse 13:

“If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. Either way, Christ’s love controls us.”

So evidently Paul and his guys were so different that some of the people in Corinth, the church, they saw them as out of their minds. And what I want to look at is, this isn’t new to Christianity. The church has always been trademarked by something different. People in society have always looked at the church and said, “There is something a little different about them. Maybe a little bit off, but there is something different.”

There are two phrases that come to mind, actually, when I think about this. The first one is the word for church. In the Greek it’s called Ecclesia. Everyone say Ecclesia. Ecclesia was a way to describe an assembly or a gathering of people. But technically it means the called-out ones, those who are called out of society of living a certain way. Now there is this new way, this new way of following after Jesus.

That is what the bride is. The church is the called-out ones who assemble together. But they don’t just assemble together they assemble then to go out and influence others.

The second phrase is actually the word Christian. Today, in my opinion, Christian has more of a cultural meaning. But in its origin the term Christian was actually a derogatory term. I don’t know if you knew that. And so we see it first—the followers of Jesus in the city of Antioch were first called Christians and it was almost like an insult by the world because the word Christian means, literally, little Christs.

So it was like the people were saying, “Look at those little Christs over there. Can you believe it, those little versions of Jesus?” They were mocking them. So next time you get in an argument with another believer, and you want to cuss him out, just call him a Christian, alright? That’ll work. It will be insulting enough.

No, but Paul says, “Hey, if we are crazy, if it seems like we are different there’s a reason for it, there is a call behind the craziness. It is to bring glory to God. And he uses it as a foundation then to set up everything else that he says next. Look at what he says in verse 14. He says:

“Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.”

If you have a Bible, I want you to underline or highlight that verse, verse 15, and I want you to draw a line out to the margin and I want you to write the word “purpose”, because what Paul is saying is that a new normal with Jesus means that you have a:

NEW PURPOSE

He’s saying that the reason that Jesus died wasn’t just so that you could go to heaven when you die. Imagine that. It means that He died so that you can have a new purpose, that you can help earth look more like heaven.

And this has everything to do with the question: Why am I here? You would be amazed at how many people can’t answer that question. I sit down from time to time with people who are seeking some direction in their lives, are looking to make some decisions or to really figure out what life is about.

And this could be somebody who is a young adult who is just trying to figure out what life looks like, or this could be a CEO of a fortune 500 company who is just up in arms because he has found that he has been living according to what he does.

And I’ll ask them, usually, two questions that kind of help set up a baseline of where we are going. The first question that I’ll ask is: Who are you? Who are you? And I’m not talking about what you do. I’m not talking about the role that you have in life. I’m talking about your identity. How you see yourself. And the second question that I usually ask is: why are you here? What is your purpose?

And you would be surprised at how many people can’t answer that question. And the danger of that is when you can’t answer that question, society answers it for you. Family, and friends, and media begin to influence you and fill in that blank. And it’s almost like they have this set pathway for you to follow, right? Go to a good school. Get a good job. Then you get married. And then you live this happy, comfortable life, right? You live your best life.

And it sounds good. Some of those elements are good in and of themselves, but here’s the thing that I have against that. Most of it is temporal. Most of it is temporary and it leaves us clinging for more, wanting more, desiring more. We forget that our hearts were made for something so much deeper.

It almost reminds me of what author Nancy Pearcey talks about in her book *Total Truth*. I want to share this with you. She says:

No one can live without a sense of purpose and direction, a sense that his or her life has significance as part of a cosmic story. We may limp along for a while, extracting small installments of meaning from short-term goals like earning a degree, landing a job, getting married, establishing a family. But at some point, these temporal things fail to fulfill the deep hunger for eternity in the human spirit. For we were made for God, and every part of our personality is oriented toward relationship with Him. Our hearts are restless, Augustine said, until we find our rest in Him.

And man, there is so much truth in that. No pun intended with the name of the book. But, what Percy and Paul are both saying and make very clear is that when we become a follower of Jesus there is a new normal when it comes to purpose.

Everything changes. You no longer live for yourself. You traded that in. You died to that. You have new marching orders, because only what you do for Christ will count. And only what you do for Him will last.

There is a question that I often have to ask even myself from time to time just to make sure that I'm calibrated. I just want to share it with you because I think some of us actually need to sit in this question for a little bit. And I have to ask: Are the things that I'm living for worth Christ dying for? Are the things that I'm living for worth Christ dying for? What are you living for?

Some of us are living for the weekend. If we can just get to Friday, man then we can enjoy life. Some of us are living for the things that life can actually bring us, the material things. And we find ourselves continuing to be empty because they don't satisfy. What are you living for?

I have to ask myself this question because if I'm not careful I will drift and I start seeing my purpose according to what I do or what I want or even what I deserve. And I have to remember that when I stand before Jesus, He's going to say, "Hey, what did you do for me? What did you do for me? Why were you here?"

So, all of us have to have this sense of understanding of, "Hey, these things are good, a life with family and having a good career—they are nothing bad, inherently, in and of themselves—but that is not why we are here. We are called to make a difference."

Each and every one of us are here to know God and to make Him known. Each of us are called to reflect Jesus everywhere we go, to spend our entire lives telling and showing other people about Jesus.

Now, what that doesn't mean is that all of us are called to full-time, vocational ministry. So don't misconstrue what I'm saying. Not all of us are called to be pastors or teachers or to even work within the church. God knows that. He doesn't call everybody into this. All of us, though, are called to use the gifts and talents that we do have to represent Him in the environment that we are in.

Not everybody is called to be an overseas missionary, but everybody is called to be on mission where you work, live, and play. So don't go to work tomorrow putting in your two-week notice because Pastor Kyle said that you work for Jesus now. I'm not saying that. But what I am saying is: How is your purpose being lived out where you already are?

We need followers of Jesus in the marketplace. We need followers of Jesus in corporations, in classrooms, and in the media, and in politics, and in the arts. We need them there. So, when you are there now your purpose is different than those who are around you who aren't following Jesus. Your purpose there is now to show people the hope and the help that can be found in Jesus. That's the first thing Paul says, "Hey, as you follow Jesus, this new normal that you have is all about having a new purpose."

So let's continue reading. Let's look at verse 16. What he says next is awesome. He says:

"So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view." Man I love this. "How differently we know him now!"

So if you're taking notes, underline this verse and then out to the margin write perspective. You have a new purpose and now you have a:

NEW PERSPECTIVE

A new normal means you now have a new perspective. The technical term for this is called worldview. And it has everything to do with the lens that you see the world and the people in it, because when you become a follower of Jesus everything is now filtered through that lens. In other words, your perspective of God shapes your perspective of life and of others.

Did you notice how Paul explained that he now has this change of perspective? He stopped viewing others in a certain way, the same way that he stopped viewing Jesus in a certain way. He said, "Man, how differently do I know Jesus now."

For some of us, we need to have that experience. Maybe you've thought of Jesus one way, "I agree that He was a good person. He had good moral character. He was a good teacher. That's about it." Or maybe you're looking at Jesus through the lens of your family and your parents are believers, but they're still figuring things out, which is okay.

But you cannot get to heaven on the faith of somebody else. There is a phrase that I love, and it says, "God has no grandchildren." I love that because you have to have this personal relationship for yourself, you have to see Him for yourself. And then it changes everything about you.

Paul knew this because he experienced that first hand. He saw Jesus one way—he actually hated him. He was persecuting the church. And on the way to arrest some Christians he encounters Jesus and then Scripture says that scales fell from his eyes, and everything

changed, which is metaphorical for saying that he had a change of heart. And Paul goes from being a church persecutor to a church planter.

He says, "Man, how differently do I know Jesus now."

So, my question for you now is: How do you need to have a change of perspective? Now that you see Jesus a little bit differently, how does He change your view on some things? What is your worldview as you come to know Jesus?

Maybe you need to have a change in perspective in the way that you see people where, instead of people being objects that you can use to talk down on or gossip about, you now see them, each and every person, as somebody who is made in the image of God. Somebody who has inherent dignity and inherent worth.

If I'm honest, some of us need to stop primarily seeing people according to their Enneagram number. Nothing wrong with that, the Enneagram, but I have people come up to me and they'll ask, "What number are you on the Enneagram?" And I'm like, I'll tell them.

And they are like, "I knew it. I knew it. Now do you wing to this number, or do you wing to that number?" And I'm like, "I don't like winging anything. I like to be prepared for things that I do." Or it's like, "What's your Myers Briggs? Are you ENTJA?" And I'm like, "I'm JESUS. That's the only thing that matters to me."

Again, I don't have anything against self-awareness. I think that personality tests are important. And emotional intelligence—all of those are helpful tools. So if you are a life coach, please do not email this week with your thesis on why those things are important. Use them. They are tools to compliment us in viewing people in the image of God, but they should not replace it.

Maybe you need to have a different perspective in how you see circumstances. Instead of immediately going to the negative in a scenario or to worry or to fear, you need to ask yourself, "How could God be using this circumstance to draw me into a deeper relationship with Him? How could He be using the scenario that I'm in, whether it's good or even if it seems bad, to deepen my reliance upon Him, to release some of the control that I have in my life or that I want?"

Maybe you need to speak Romans 8:28 over your life where Paul would say:
"God works all things together for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose."

And did Paul say that all things are good? No. He said, "God is orchestrating all things together for our good so that we can deepen our relationship with God." So maybe you need to have a change of perspective in your circumstances.

Have you ever met people who always see the good in things? Isn't that annoying? No, the world can be falling apart around them, it could be chaos, but they have joy, and they have a sense of peace. That should be the new normal as followers of Jesus. There is something attractive about that.

Maybe you need to have a new perspective because you see Jesus differently in how you perceive relationships, where instead of them being something that you use to fulfill your personal desires or to have your needs met, you use them as an opportunity to serve people and to love them unconditionally.

Maybe it's finances. I don't know. Maybe instead of money being something that you use to acquire more things that ultimately don't matter or to impress people who don't matter, you use it as an opportunity to be generous and create opportunities...

The list goes on, alright? There are so many things that we could have a change of perspective about because we see Jesus differently, because we have a new perspective of Him.

One of the ones that I think is very prevalent right now for us, as a church, as we encounter Jesus and continue to grow in relationship with Him, is our perspective on how we represent Him to a watching world, how we represent Him in our speech and socially, even online. Because when you have this encounter with Jesus, you're now mindful about how you represent yourself and how you represent Him to those who are watching around you.

A number of years ago I read this book called *Twelve Ways Your Phone is Changing You*. And if it sounds pretty convicting, it is. I about traded my iPhone in for a flip phone after reading it. And the author, Tony Reinke, he's a believer, and he's a digital content creator by profession. So he spends his time writing blogs and creating videos and all of these things. But he writes this book on how you can use a lot of this stuff for good. Whether it's speaking or replying to a text or posting something online.

I just want to share a few of these with you because they've helped me over the years. Maybe some of you can either take a picture of these or write them down. He said:

Before you text or post online, honestly ask yourself: Will this ultimately glorify me or God?

Will this stir or muffle healthy affections for Christ?

Will this merely document that I know something that others don't?

Will this misrepresent me or is it authentic?

Will this fortify unity or stir up unnecessary division? Will this build up or tear down?

Will this heap guilt or relieve it? Will this fuel lust for sin or warn against it?

Ah, this one will get all of us.

Will this potentially breed jealousy in others?

I feel like that's the whole point of social media. How can I make people jealous of my life?

Anybody want to just curl up in a ball after reading some of these? It's like, "Dang it. I was going to post a beach picture from vacation, but now I can't do it."

No, I think a lot of this is good. This has helped me from time to time. And I don't always get it right. But I have to kind of run it through this filter of, "What is my motive? How am I representing Jesus with what I say, what I send, or even what I post?" Because all of us have an opportunity to grow when it comes to changing our perspective and how we represent Jesus to someone who may not know Him.

So how do you need to have a change of perspective? And maybe as I went through the list a couple of minutes ago, while I was saying maybe it's in relationships or circumstances or money—maybe that isn't really it. Maybe none of those really apply to you. Maybe the first thing that you need to have a change of perspective on is how you see yourself, who this person is.

And it's almost as if Paul knew this, that we would be wrestling with this after the Corinthians read this because what he says in verse 17 is remarkably beautiful. He says:

"This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"

Listen to me clearly. This is all about becoming a:

NEW PERSON

Underline that verse and don't just highlight it. Put three exclamation points next to it. The new normal, when it comes to following Jesus means that you have a new purpose, you have a new perspective, but you are also a whole new person and I think somebody here is wrestling with that truth. Somebody is having a hard time believing that.

You need to know, clearly, that the Good News of Jesus is all about restoration. He restores what has been broken. He repairs what was severed, namely our relationship with God.

He wrapped Himself in flesh, came to earth, lived a perfect and sinless life, took the sins on the cross that we deserved and now the righteousness that was deserved by Him, He placed on us. And the unrighteousness that was deserved by us, it was put on Him. And He was put in a grave, and He was raised three days later, and now He says, "Now you are a whole new person."

We see people being baptized here at Traders Point, their shirts say: Made New.

Some of us are wrestling with this because of our past because either what we have done or what was done to us. And as you are trying to follow Jesus, maybe you are hearing the lies of the enemy reminding you of who you used to be, of what you used to do. Maybe those voices

are coming from people who are around you, your family members, your friends who are reminding you about your past.

Can I tell you something? If you are following Jesus, you have the ability to say, "Hey, I'm not that person anymore. That is who I used to be. That is the person that I used to be. That is what I used to do. I am now a new person in Jesus. He is changing everything about me."

Can anybody celebrate the testimony of Jesus, that He makes all things new. You are not just turning over a new leaf. You have begun an entirely new life. And the beautiful thing about that is that when you do that, when you start living in that reality, people notice.

People see. And they say, "There is something different about that person. Yes, he still has some things he is working on. No, he's not perfect, but there is something different about him. There is something attractive about that."

And they'll begin to ask questions. They'll notice that you've actually been with Jesus.

One of my favorite Scriptures in the Bible is not Jeremiah 29:11 as great as that is. God says, "I know the plans that I have for you, not to harm you, but to prosper you and give you hope in the future."

It's not John 3:16. It's this little Scripture that is tucked away in the book of Acts. And if you skim by it too fast, you'll miss it. The context is that Jesus has just died, and He's gone back to heaven, and He's given His Spirit to His followers, His disciples.

He said, "I have this new mission for you, this new normal. I'm going to send My Spirit to live within you and you're going to preach with boldness. It's not even going to be your words that you are saying; they are going to be words that the Holy Spirit has given."

And then we see people like Peter, who denied Jesus, Peter standing up with boldness and he's preaching the lights out—3,000 people come to get saved. And they are healing people left and right. It is wild. If you've never read the book of Acts just take a moment to read it and see all of the crazy things that begin to happen.

Well, there's this moment in Acts, chapter 4 where Peter and John have healed this guy and the religious council is furious. They are like, "What authority do you have to do what you did?" And Peter stands up and Scripture says that he was filled with the Holy Spirit. And Peter says, "Salvation is found in nobody else. Jesus is the only way."

And that's not even the Scripture that is my favorite. It is the response of the religious council. It's what they say in response to what Peter has just said. Because they say in Acts, chapter 4, verse 13:

“The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.”

Man, I found this verse when I was a relatively new follower of Jesus. I felt this burning call in me to tell everybody about Him and I was trying to figure out what my purpose was. I’m like, “Do I go to Bible college? Do I go to seminary?” And I saw that God took 12 ordinary men, fishermen and tax collectors, people who were at the bottom of the totem pole of society, and He turned the world upside down.

He put His Spirit in them and it was clear that they had been with Jesus. And we are here, 2,000 years later, because they were obedient to what He told them to do. And I heard God say, “Okay, there are some people who are called in this moment to go sit in a classroom and learn about Jesus. I inspired the Scriptures. I can teach them to you.”

So I would pour myself into the Bible. I would just read it. And I would say, “Okay, God. This is what you did. This is what you said. Alright, I’m going to do the same. This is what the disciples did, and this is what they said. Alright, I’m going to go and do the same.” And God just began to use me in incredible ways.

I saw that God can use each and every one of us. We don’t need special training in the Scriptures. Jesus died so we have direct access to Him. You don’t need a priest to intercede for you anymore.

But then there was that verse that said it was clear that they had been with Jesus. That’s what the members of the council noticed. So, now, my question for you is, when people are around you or when they leave your presence do, they say, “It’s clear that he has been with Jesus.”

Do they take notice that you have been with Jesus in your conversations, in your countenance, in your perspective, in your joy, in the way that you lead your family, your peers, or your business or your company? Is it clear that you have been with Jesus? Not that you are living a perfect life, but you are striving to live a life that reflects the fact that you have been with Jesus.

What if that is the new normal? What if the new normal is a life that reflects that we have been with Jesus? What if every time that we interact with people they walk away recognizing that we have been with Jesus?

What if we normalize loving those who society has pushed to the margins because we have been with Jesus? What if we forgave those who hurt us, not because we want to let them off of the hook, but because we know that Jesus has forgiven us when we don’t deserve it? And we recognize that because we have been with Jesus.

What if we normalize not acting like our lives are all put together on social media but instead confess that we are broken individuals desperately in need of God's redeeming love because we have been with Jesus? What if that is the new normal?

What if a new normal has less to do with the way of life in a pandemic and more about a way of life in Jesus? What if that is the new normal because the world is searching for the answers that we have. The world is watching, and they are waiting on a church that doesn't just come into a building and sing a few songs and listen to a good message and they go and have brunch and go about their lives.

They are waiting on a church that is marked by new purpose and new perspective and are new people. The world is not waiting for a new definition of Christianity. It's waiting for a demonstration of Christianity. Traders Point are we going to be that demonstration? They are looking for a church that is evident that they have been with Jesus.

I want to ask everybody, no matter where you are at all of our campuses, to go ahead and stand. And we're getting ready to worship, but I want us to worship like we mean it. I want us to worship like it's clear that we have been with Jesus, that Jesus is with us, that He wants to do something new.

I want us to worship like we believe that we are new people in Jesus. That the old has passed away and all things have become new. I want us to worship like we are marked by something different than society so that when society and culture looks at us, it's apparent that we have been with Jesus.

We're authentic. We're not acting like we have it all together or that we have all of the answers, we're just being clear that, "Hey, I'm following this person who is changing everything about me."

I want us to sing like we want God to do something new, that we want His Spirit to move, that we are tired of the cultural Christianity, the lukewarmness. We're ready to be on fire for Him and to impact those who God has placed around us.

And as we do that, I think that would be attractive to a watching world where historically the church has had a tendency to look like a social club that is only meant for certain groups of people. No, but the church is a hospital for everybody, for all broken people. We want you to come along with us in this ride and we want to walk with you.

We want to tell you that, "Hey, I'm not a coach who is screaming at you from the sidelines, I'm a player in the game. I have experienced and am experiencing the life transforming power of Jesus and I want the same for you.

So let's pray together and I want us to worship like we mean it.

God, thank You. God, thank You for new life. God, thank You that we can come to You and experience a whole... Not turn over a new leaf, but to begin a new life. We are new people in You. The old has passed away and all has been made new.

God, I'm praying that if there are those who are watching or who are listening who have not yet experienced the life-transforming power, the new person that You want to make them to be, that You would speak to their hearts right now, that You will fill them with Your Spirit. That they would be bold enough to make themselves known, to tell us, "Hey, I want to begin following Jesus. I want this new life."

And for those of us who are, maybe, still hesitant about our purpose or our perspective, God, I pray that you bring freshness to that. I pray that we would no longer sit on the sidelines and say, "Oh, that's for those people. That's for the pastor. That's for the person who works in the church. No, I've been called to full-time ministry as a missionary right where I am. God, show me what You want me to do, give me purpose, give me perspective."

And, God, we believe that You are going to do something new. God, let Your Spirit move in this place. Bring revival to the city so that a world that is watching would say, "Hey, we want that. We want that. We don't believe that they are perfect. We believe that they are in progress as they follow Jesus."

And, God, as we do that, we will give You all of the glory, honor, and praise. We ask all of this in Your precious Son, Jesus' name. And the church says: Amen.