

# Does God Relate To People Of Other Faiths?

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Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

- [ 0 : 00 ]     Good morning, everyone. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day that the Lord has made.
- Let us rejoice. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day that the Lord has made.
- Let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day that the Lord has made.
- Welcome to Pendleton City Church. We are the Wheeling family. I'm Chad. I'm Jennifer. I'm Thayer. I'm Devin. I'm Lord. We are new members of this church. If this is your first time here, remember to pick up a welcome bag.
- You can receive it at the Connection Center or the Welcome Desk. And please take a moment and look in your bulletin to find the Friendship Card, where you can update your information or sign up to receive our newsletter. On the back is a place to express prayer concerns, blessings, or notes to the staff.
- [ 1 : 24 ]     Thank you for being with us today, and please enjoy the service. We are glad to have you here this morning. There's a couple of opportunities for ministry on the clipboards. One is to help with our rummage sale up in Niagara Falls.
- It's kind of an unusual rummage sale in that we don't have prices. We let people decide what they think they should pay for it, and it's kind of a good way to get some good things to them. The biggest need they need is to get the stuff from here to there and to collect some things from you all.
- So you can take a look at the clipboard on that. The second one is for our church picnic. We're going to have a church picnic in two weeks, two weeks from today, and there will only be one worship service. I know this is really making you crazy with the time changes, but we're going to have one service.
- We tried the two last year. That didn't work well. So we're going to do 10 o'clock two weeks from now, okay? Now, I don't want you to confuse you and have you showing up at 10 next week because next week it's still going to be 9 and 1045, but 10 o'clock on the last...
- Am I being clear here? You all got that figured out? We all... No. Well, so next week, 9 and 1045, the week after, 10 o'clock with a picnic.
- [ 2 : 29 ]     And also, we have some chicken. Oh, yeah. From the chicken barbecue, we have a handful. If you have a ticket, because there were some people who bought tickets who didn't come and pick up their dinners, so we saved them for you.
- So if you have a ticket, we could do, you know, obviously pick up your chicken dinner. But we have a few left over beyond that. Not many, but we do have some. So if you're interested in buying a chicken dinner for today, see me after service.
- And you'll see buckets in the back of the sanctuary. If you want to help with the Nicaragua Bucket Project, the instructions are on there to decorate them and fill them. And we do call that to your attention. And we have a kid's picnic next Saturday, which I know absolutely nothing about.

So see either Mr. Adrian or Miss Adrian, and they will help you to understand what that's about. All right? Let's turn to the Lord in prayer, shall we? Dear God, it is a great blessing to have you gather with us today.

We pray that you'll take away the distractions of our mind, take away the worries about our lives and our day, and just fill it up with the presence of God in this place. Touch us, move us, inspire us, and fill us as we pray in Jesus' name.

[ 3 : 34 ]    Amen. This morning we'd like to invite you, if you're able to stand, as we're going to sing together, Alleluia, Alleluia. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Give praise to His name.

Jesus is Lord of all the earth. He is the King of salvation.

Alleluia, Alleluia. Alleluia, Alleluia. Give thanks to the risen Lord. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Give praise to His name. Spread the good news to all the earth.

[ 4 : 42 ]    Jesus has died and has risen. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Give thanks to the risen Lord. Alleluia, Alleluia. Give praise to His name.

Come, let us praise the living God. Joyful listening to our Savior.

Alleluia, Alleluia. Give thanks to the risen Lord. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Give praise to His name. The Lord be with you. Take a moment, if you will, and greet your neighbor with the peace of the Spirit.

[ 5 : 39 ]    Amen. We can actually have those flowers over here.

We're just moving them over for confirmation. I'd like to invite the children to come up and join us now, if they'd like to. Any other kids want to come up?

What do you think this is? It is a teapot. It is a teapot, yes. It was a gift to me by a very dear friend who gave that to me, and I've enjoyed it. We keep it in our dining room so people can see it when they come to our house.

But most people never see it. Isn't it a pretty teak kettle? It's very nice, isn't it? Sometimes we have very nice things, and we keep them hidden away, and people never see them.

And we need to take them out and use them and show them to people and just tell them the things we like. Do you guys have things you like? Yeah? What do you like? Dogs?

[ 6 : 53 ]    What else do you like? You like animals? Yeah. What's that? Okay. You like the color pink?

Some of you like games on the computer or things like that. Yeah, toys. You know, if we share the things we love with people, it makes them happy too. And God wants us to do the same thing about him.

If we like God and love God, we need to share it with other people so that they can know about God too. All right? What are you guys thankful for this morning? Raise your hand if you want to share something. Friends and family.

Parents. Anybody else? All right. Let's pray then. Lord, we do thank you for our parents, our family, the special things in our lives. We pray that you'll bless us, move us, and keep us close to you this day and always and help us to share about the joy you give to us.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Okay. You guys can all go out to church school. All the kids are welcome to go out to church school now if they'd like to. Good morning.

[ 8 : 10 ]    Today we have a mission moment for us all. Alexandra Scott was a little girl who was a cancer patient, and she decided that she wanted to raise money for all children who have cancer that a cure would be found, and she decided she was going to sell lemonade so that she could go and do that.

And this ultimately became a huge national fundraising effort. Ultimately, to this date, over \$140 million has been raised through this effort, Alex's Lemonade Stand, and there are more than 690 pediatric cancer research projects that have been funded through this program.

We are going to have a lemonade stand out there, and you're welcome to have a glass of lemonade after worship, and you're welcome to use this envelope that you'll find in your bulletin to bring an offering toward that mission effort.

It is such a blessing to be able to gather in the name of the Lord, to gather with all of God's people, and to be able to offer our worship to God through all kinds of ways.

When we bring our gifts, tithes, and offerings, we are worshiping God. Amen? Let's bring our gifts, tithes, and offerings before the Lord. Amen?

[ 9 : 40 ]    Amen? Amen? Amen. Amen? Amen? Amen. Amen? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 11 : 38 ]    Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. over to you to know how to best use it for the furtherance of your kingdom. We ask especially that the offering for Alex's lemonade stand be blessed, Lord God.

[ 12 : 56 ]    You have given so many people gifts of understanding what is needed to bring healing into the lives of people. We just ask that you would help pour out your wisdom into them.

Make them well able, Lord God, to do your work in this world. But Lord, overall, we pray that each and every one of the people who is on this earth, who is touched by any of these ministries that you have gifted us to do and to support, that you would draw many to salvation in Jesus Christ.

For it is in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Please be seated. And we want to let you know that both Dale McKenzie and Pam Tavernier had a little bit of a stay in the hospital for some surgery.

They are both home and they are doing well. And that's a good thing. That's a very, very good thing. So we're grateful for those blessings and in prayer for their continued healing. And with these concerns and those that are on your heart, let's turn to the Lord in prayer.

From your seat or at the rail. You're welcome. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. God of all creation, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are in awe of you.

[ 14 : 30 ]    We are in awe that you love us, that you care for us, and that you desire to have us work with you, bringing about the redemption of all creation.

Lord, we are grateful that you call us. We are grateful that we can be your hands and feet in this world.

Be with us now and hear our prayer as we lift up all of those who are sick and infirm. As we pray for their healing, for you to touch them by your great power.

And pray that you draw them to yourself. And pray that each one of us, Lord God, in our brokenness, wherever that may be, however it may be, that we have been broken and remain broken in this life, that you would touch each of us as well.

Help us to do your work in this world. Help us to be your hands and your feet as your Spirit leads us. Lord, we pray for those who are grieving losses of all kinds.

[ 16 : 02 ] We pray that you would bring them comfort and peace. We ask, Lord God, that you would be with us during this worship service today.

That you would, by your word, through the songs of praise, through prayer, in all of these ways that we connect with you, Lord God, that you would wash over us and transform us into the people that you had intended for us to be.

We are not there yet, Lord. We are in a process of transformation. And we pray that you would help us to have willing hearts to allow those things in our lives that need changing to be changed.

To be changed into your image. One day when we see Jesus, we would be like him.

Now, Lord, we take a moment and lift up those prayers that are in our hearts that you have planted there that you may hear us and answer us.

[ 17 : 22 ] Now, Lord, as we continue in our worship, give us eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts and minds to understand and receive all that you have for us this day.

Be with Pastor Thomas. He delivers the message you have given to us through him. Let it be a blessing to him and to us.

And Lord, make all of our worship to be a blessing to you. For that is why we came this morning. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Shall we hear from the word of the Lord?

Good morning.

Today's scripture reading is John 10, 1 through 16. Very, very truly, I tell you, Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate but climbs in by some other way is a thief and a robber.

[ 19 : 03 ] The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger. In fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice.

Jesus used this figure as speech but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them. Therefore, Jesus said again, very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers but the sheep have not listened to them.

I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep.

[ 20 : 07 ] So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me just as the father knows me and I know the father. I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen.

I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Religion is a very touchy subject.

You know, about, oh gosh, it's a long time ago, maybe 20 years ago, I had my niece come and visit me out at the cottage with her friend. And they were about 11 years old or so and so they were curious about something and they thought they'd talk to Uncle Tom because they knew I was a pastor.

[ 21 : 21 ] They wanted me to talk to them about God. Now you would say that's not a very unusual thing for a couple of 11-year-old girls to do with their uncle who's a pastor, except that my niece was raised in a Muslim household and her friend was Jewish.

And I thought, ooh, this could be tricky. What do you do? What do you say? What are you about when you're faced with this question about God?

Is Christianity the only way to eternal life? Are all religions an equal path and just different ways of reaching God?

We're looking at questions each week that people actually gave us from our congregation and those are the questions we're going to look at this morning. Now if you're not getting your question asked or answered, on July 4th weekend, I'm going to answer whatever questions you put on one of these yellow cards.

I'm going to actually put them in a box and each service, I'll just draw them out randomly and we'll answer them as best we can right on the spot. I won't look at them in advance, so we'll just see how that works.

[ 22 : 33 ] I've done this before. So each sermon is going to be different because we'll be looking at different questions. If you have a question you want answered, you can go ahead and check that. By the way, if you're away 4th of July weekend, you know we're on the internet.

You can watch the sermons anytime. In this passage, Jesus says, I have sheep of other flocks, other sheep pens.

I must bring them also, they too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. That's a passage that's caused people to wonder, what's he talking about?

What are the sheep of other sheep pens? Are they other Jewish people that he's referring to? Are they the Gentiles that the Christian faith will end up reaching out to?

Are they people actually of a different religion? And then inevitably, people will quote John chapter 14, which says, I am the way and the truth and the life.

[ 23 : 36 ] No one comes to the Father except through me. Now let's take a look at some of the numbers. Christianity is the largest religion in the world.

I don't know if you're aware of that. 2.2 billion people consider themselves Christian. Islam is next with 1.6 billion people. Between the two of them, they have 63% of the people in the world that consider themselves religious.

Hinduism has a billion and there's a bunch of Chinese traditions that have quite a lot, Buddhism, and then all the others are 470 million people who don't believe in anything are over a billion people.

And then look at Judaism. People think Judaism is a big faith. I don't know if you know it. It's one quarter of 1% of the world's population. Kind of a small thing. But in our world, it has quite an effect because we came out of that faith.

As did Islam, by the way. I have sheep of other flocks. Jesus said that he was the good shepherd.

[ 24 : 47 ] And we need to understand a little bit about shepherding. I didn't quite fully understand this. When we picture the ancient world and shepherds, we picture them out on a hilltop with like, you know, a hundred sheep or something like that.

Some huge flock of sheep that they're keeping track of. As if people back then were that wealthy that they had all these sheep. The truth is, a lot of people owned sheep. Some had two. Some had six.

One had four. Another one had eight. And it wasn't practical for one person to watch all their sheep every single night. So what they would do is each village or town or community would have a big sheep pen with a gate.

And each shepherd would take their turn to watch the gate. And all the sheep from all the different little herds would mingle together in the sheep pen.

When morning came, the shepherd that was in charge of the gate that night of course would let all the other shepherds in because, well, the gatekeeper knew them. And then they would give their signal, maybe a whistle, maybe they'd blow a little instrument, or maybe they'd have a special call.

[ 25 : 55 ] And all the sheep knew which shepherd to follow out of the sheep pen. Kind of an interesting image, isn't it? You can just hear the noise in the morning as each shepherd is calling their sheep.

And they knew exactly where to go because they knew the voice of their shepherd. Someone said, well, how could they possibly know the voice? Have you ever called to dogs? They won't listen to somebody who's not a part of their family.

Have you ever heard your children cry in a mall and you know it's your child and not just some other random child? We know the voices. But Jesus says, I have sheep of other sheep pens.

It's quite interesting that Snoopy sometimes has a theological opinion. I hear you're writing a book on theology, Charlie Brown says. I hope you have a good title. I have a perfect title, Snoopy says.

Has it ever occurred to you that you might be wrong? That's a good question, isn't it? Can God speak through other people, through other religions, through other folks?

[ 27 : 02 ] Can God speak to people who are not Christians? Of course he can because he's God. Do you get that? God can do whatever God wants to even if you don't like it.

God can do anything God wants to. That's what makes him God and us not. You follow? So anybody that has the audacity, the hubris, the pride to say God can't do anything has already begun on the wrong track.

God can do whatever God wants. The real question is do we have any examples of this? Has God ever done this before? And God did. God spoke to people who were not Jewish in the Old Testament.

He spoke to Persian kings. Here's an example with Cyrus. In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word the Lord had spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus, king of Persia, to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing.

This is what Cyrus, king of Persia, says. The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem and Judah.

[ 28 : 16 ] Any of his people among you may go up and may the Lord their God be with them. In fact, I don't know if you know this, but in the Bible, God refers to King Cyrus as his good shepherd.

Interesting note, isn't it? Can God speak to Persian kings? Of course. Can God speak to people who are not Christians? All the people before Jesus came were not Christians.

Do you really believe that God didn't speak to Moses, didn't speak to Ezekiel, didn't speak to Elijah? Of course God can. And you'd say, but they were the people of faith up to that point.

Anybody ever read the story of Balaam? Balaam was a prophet that was not Jewish. God spoke to him and through him. And even more important, God spoke through his donkey.

Now you know what I could have said. And that's what we are when we try to say that God can't do what God wants to do. God can speak through and to anyone God wants to.

[ 29 : 18 ] John 14. Says, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Let's look at that a minute. The first thing he says is I am. That's the name of God. He told Moses that. My name is I am who I am.

That is not accidental in the book of John. No one comes to the Father except through me. Why didn't he just say no one comes to me or no one comes to God?

Because Jesus is pointing out our Trinitarian belief in God. And our Trinitarian belief in God says that in the beginning, the second person of the Trinity, the word, Jesus, if you will, the Christ, was with God.

He was the pillar of smoke and fire in the desert that led the Jewish people. He was Melchizedek who celebrated communion with the people of Israel.

[ 30 : 19 ] He was the one who was in and through the whole Scripture and in and through all of history. And when Jesus says no one comes to the Father except through me, he's saying no one comes to the great creator of the universe that we call the Father except through the Son, which is the Christ.

Which up until the time Jesus was born, we knew as one aspect of God but in Jesus, we got a perfect example of what that's supposed to be.

That Jesus, if you will, is the perfect example of God in this world. And the perfect example of God in us.

The Bible says that by their fruits, you will know them. You will know that if they are of God or not. We have a lot of anger. We have a lot of judgment and hate and hurt, self-loathing and fear.

Those aren't fruits of the Holy Spirit. Those are not the ways of God. Whether they're people who say they're Christians or people who say they're not, those are not the fruits of God.

[ 31 : 39 ] And if people are exhibiting that, they're not showing a God living and alive in their heart. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Somebody told me that, they showed me a bracelet yesterday they wear that has all those words written on there. I said, that's really cool. That's really cool. Against such things, Galatians says, there is no law, there are no rules.

If it looks like Jesus, if it talks like Jesus, if it acts like Jesus in this world, why would we oppose it?

Because it probably is Jesus. Does that mean that all religions are some kind of pathway to eternity?

I'll tell you the truth, I don't know. Fortunately, we don't decide who goes to one place or the other. I don't know if you're aware of it, but it's way above my pay grade, and I like it like that.

[ 32 : 50 ] I don't want to have to decide which ones of you are okay and which ones of you are not. And I sure as heck don't want you deciding that about me. Amen? We don't decide that.

God, himself, decides that. But I can tell you that I know that we have the perfect revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth.

The reason God came to earth was so that there would be no question, no mistake, no misunderstanding, no confusion about how God wanted to speak to and relate to his people.

And we have that answer. Everything else we're not so sure about. We're looking at other advice.

So I'm going to give you advice on cleaning a window. Now a lot of you clean windows, and most of you probably go out and buy this stuff. Right? We clean the window, and we smear the dirt around with this stuff, and it looks really good until the sun shines through it, right?

[ 33 : 55 ] And then we go, what? How come it's still dirty? I cleaned that. I spent a lot of time cleaning that window. So, I met a woman who worked for a professional window cleaning company, and she said they have a secret.

She said, don't tell anybody, but they have a secret. You know what the secret is? Dawn, dishwashing liquid.

She said, it can't be any old dishwashing liquid. It has to be Dawn. I have no idea why. I really don't understand this. But she said, this cleans windows without streaks, without that smeary stuff.

It makes them perfect. Now you know what they know. You see, the difference between our faith and other faiths is that at best, they're looking through a dirty window trying to figure out what we have absolute clarity about.

So even if it's possible for somebody to find their way through that type of an idea, why would we leave people in that condition?

[ 35 : 10 ] In John chapter 8, it says, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. We want to share the truth, not some sort of image or possibility.

My brother-in-law is from Palestine. He was raised in the faith of Islam. We've talked about it. I've learned a lot of things about Islam I didn't know before.

We were sitting around a campfire one night and I said, so are you raising your kids in your faith? He said, well, we go like once a year.

I said, well, do you pray at home or something? He said, no, not really. But I make sure they don't eat anything from a pig. Really? That's the whole faith you're teaching your kids is not to eat bacon?

See, here's the trouble. You raise your children with nothing, with nothing, and they become open to the worst confusion.

[ 36 : 17 ] The cults and the people that lead them completely astray and often a different way. I said to them, I would rather have your children raised in the faith of Islam than raised in nothing than I'm a Christian pastor.

So when his daughter showed up at our cottage and asked Uncle Tom about God, I didn't teach her about the Islamic faith.

I taught her about Jesus. Her and her Jewish friend. Just to keep that in mind.

Because ultimately, my biggest concern is there are people that have never, ever, ever been introduced to Jesus. the third largest religion on that chart was people called nuns.



I don't mean Roman Catholics. People that believe in nothing. Nothing at all. And some of them, in fact, many of them inhabit the religions of the world including the Christian religion.

[ 37 : 30 ] Now, let's get back to the story here. The Pharisees came to Jesus. The Pharisees came to Jesus right after they had just expelled a blind man because Jesus healed them and this blind man had the audacity to want to follow Jesus and not them.

So they kicked him out of the synagogue. The Pharisees, you see, were part of the religious and political structure of ancient Israel. And the way that the Pharisees held power was that they controlled the synagogue.

Synagogues were the places where people generally worship because otherwise you'd have to go all the way to the temple which was a long ways away where the Sadducees took care of things. The Pharisees, they had a place where people get together, they'd read the scripture, they'd talk about it, they'd sing songs, they'd pray, and they'd take up an offering.

Sound familiar? Yeah. And if you were kicked out of the synagogue, that meant that nobody in town would likely talk to you.

So they had a lot of influence. And the Pharisees thought the most important thing you could do in life was to keep the rules. Keep the rules.

[ 38 : 45 ] You ever meet anybody who says the most important thing is to keep the rules? We have lots of people in our culture that say that. Both Christian and otherwise. It says that they knew all about God.

But they didn't know God. In verse 6 of this passage it says, Jesus used this figure of speech but the Pharisees didn't understand what he was telling them.

The Pharisees who read the scriptures every day and knew all about God couldn't understand what he was saying. in this passage and as he called himself the good shepherd.

In the book of Ezekiel in chapter 34 it says, this is what the sovereign Lord says. Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves. Should not the shepherds take care of the flock?

You eat curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals but you don't take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured.

[ 39 : 48 ] You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. And God is not talking about sheep. He's talking about the religious leaders of Israel who are not taking care of the people.

He says that they're bad shepherds. Bad shepherds. What's in it for me? Shepherds.

Their primary goal seemed to be to protect their religious franchise. Protect their power. Protect their influence.

Protect their income. I don't want you to misunderstand. Religion is good. I've likened it to the manger that holds the Christ child. Without the manger the baby would be flopping around in the mud.

Without religion we'd have nothing to hold the faith that we carry. We'd have no place to go. We'd have no one to get together with. We'd have no source to keep the scriptures or anything else.

[ 40 : 57 ] Religion is a very good thing so long as it has the child in it. But once you take the child out of the manger it's nothing but a dirty old feeding trough. Once you take Jesus out of the faith it actually can become hurtful and abusive.

Religion is not about building the biggest church. It's not about self-help sermons or finding a lot of money or having a nice car or successfully protecting our religious franchise from the other ones down the street.

Religion is about something much more important. My sister called me up a number of years ago and we were talking and she said well I just got a new gizmo for my phone.

Maybe you've heard of this. I hadn't at the time. She says what you do is you go to the store and you buy this little gadget for about \$25 and you pay \$20 a month for your phone service and you plug it into the wall and it lights up all your home phones and you don't have to have a landline.

I had a guy call me the other day and said do you have a landline? I said sort of. I have another cell line that acts like a landline that has the same phone number as I used to have but it cost me \$20 a week instead of \$60 some dollars a week and all the long distance is free.

[ 42 : 33 ] Really? Why am I telling you this? I'm not trying to sell something for Verizon I'm trying to take money out of their pocket and put it in yours because this is so cool. Saved a lot of money doing this.

Don't you love hearing about stuff like that? I do. Don't you love hearing about how to clean your windows and about how to have good advice on things? Wouldn't you love to hear the good news about Jesus?

And don't you think other people would too? 2 Corinthians says this in chapter 3 God has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant not of the letter but of the spirit for the letter kills and the spirit gives life.

You see the problem is is the letter is about all the what of religion the spirit is about the why the letter is about the rules and the regulations and the forms and the actions the spirit is about what changes our heart what moves our soul bringing people closer to God by connecting them through the church is what we do as a religion it's the what of our faith but the why is something so more important let me show you the difference between what and why is what how do I know what but the key really isn't to know what the key is to know why because when you know your why you have options on what your what can be for instance my why is to inspire people to walk in purpose my what is stand-up comedy my what is writing books my what can be going out with some friends to eat so I met this one guy and he said that he teaches music at a school

I was like alright you teach music you know can you sing and then I'm just going to show you the clip check it so you're a musical director yes sir alright so let me get a couple let me get a couple bars of like Amazing Grace can you do the first part of that go ahead Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that saved that saved a wretch like me wow that bro can sing you know what I'm saying alright alright now now once you give me the version as if your uncle just got out of jail you got shot in the back when you was a kid I'm just saying let me see the hood version real quick if you know which version I'm talking about just see if that exists let me see what you got Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me

[ 45 : 50 ] I was I was lost but now right now I'm found was blind but now I I I see so here's the thing the first time I asked him to sing he knew what he was doing the second time I asked him to sing he knew why he was doing it The what?

It's what we worry too much about. What are we going to do to share our religion? What's right? What's wrong? Who's in? Who's out? What is important?

We bring people to God through the church. But the why is essential. Christ changed my life.

And he can do that for everyone. I was raised in a Christian household. I was raised in a Christian culture.

We would go to school and hear about God. But I was angry, hurtful, selfish. I didn't have a whole lot of friends.

[ 47 : 35 ] I was afraid. I didn't have much direction or much hope. And then Jesus got hold of me. The good shepherd spoke to my heart.

And my whole world changed. And I was transformed from brokenness and confusion and anger and frustration. It's an incredible joy.

An experience of power that I can't even express. Because it's so fantastic. Jesus says, I am the good shepherd.

I know my sheep. And my sheep know me. God makes himself known.

God makes himself known. Not through a book. Not even through a church. Those are all good things. But he makes himself known. But he makes himself known. Right in our hearts.

[ 48 : 33 ] Right in our souls. And that kind of faith can rock your world. Can change your life.

And transform this whole community and culture and nation we live in. Amen? That kind of a God. That kind of a voice. Can transform us from brokenness to life.

Can transform us from confusion to clarity. Can transform us from apathy and sorrow and sadness. To knowing exactly what we're supposed to be.

And that God wants to change our lives today. Our culture. Our world. Our people. Wants to change you. We focus on the what.

We'll spend all our time trying to protect the franchise. If we focus on the why. We'll change the world. The Pharisees.

[ 49 : 32 ] They don't get it. They don't understand. They're threatened. God can't do that. God isn't capable of that. And so they tell Jesus.

They tell Jesus. They tell Jesus he's wrong. Do you get it? They tell God he's wrong. We never do that, do we?

The sheep. It says the sheep. They listen to his voice. When he calls him out by name. And he leads them out.

Jesus said to the fishermen. Follow me. And they left their nets. Jesus said to the tax collector. Follow me. And he left his money behind. Jesus said to the rich young man. Come and follow me.

Jesus says to us today. Follow him. Follow him. Don't worry about the religious franchise. It'll take care of itself when we start changing people's hearts and lives and souls.

[ 50 : 33 ] Amen. Stop worrying about the what. And start worrying about the why. What about us? Do we say to Jesus.

You're wrong Jesus. It says so in the Bible. Do we say to Jesus. You're wrong. My church told me so. Do we say to Jesus. You're wrong. Pastor Tom once preached in a sermon.

And so you're wrong Jesus. Jesus said to Jesus. Well. Protect the franchise. Is this our idea of evangelism?

This little girl says. Sally. I would have made a good evangelist. You know that kid who sits behind me at school? I convinced him that my religion is better than his. How did you do that?

Linus said. I hit him with my lunchbox. You ever notice how some people carry around a Bible big enough that they can use as a club? Bam. You're going to believe in me or I'm going to make you.

[ 51 : 31 ] We're protecting the franchise. We're not bringing the heat. The sheep know him. And they follow him. I will follow him.

Follow him. Wherever he may go. There isn't an ocean too deep. A mountain too steep it can keep. Keep me away from you.

God. Is. The reason. Romans chapter 10. Says. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Isn't that wonderful? Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Not every Jewish person who calls on the name of the Lord. Not every Christian person who calls on the name of the Lord. Not every person who believes in Islam or anything else.

Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on one they've not believed in? And how can they believe in one when they've not heard?

[ 52 : 33 ] And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are seen as it is written? How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. We need to have Snoopy dancing right now.

How beautiful are the feet of the people who bring good news. Maybe if we learn to see God in others. Maybe we start looking for the fruits of the spirit.

Maybe we start bringing people to Jesus. Maybe if we start loving the heaven into people in this world. We won't have to send as many soldiers to the desert to die.

To protect us from somebody else's Pharisees. God wants to change it all. Little Jewish girl and little Muslim girl come to visit Uncle Tom at the cottage.

I talk to them about Jesus. I married the one girl. Basically a Christian service. She's okay with that.

[ 53 : 38 ] Not sure where she is yet. And the little Jewish girl. I had nothing to do with this. She went out and bought herself a cross and put it around her neck before she went home. Oh good God.

We see. We can never hesitate. We can never hesitate to share the good news of Jesus. Because if we can take the transforming power. The amazing grace of God.

That we have experienced. That turns the brokenness into life. That turns the darkness into light. That turns the world upside down for good. We can tear apart.

This anger and brokenness. This anger and brokenness and fear that we're living in this world. Luke chapter 4 says. It is written. Worship the Lord your God. Serve him only.

Not a church. Not an idea. Not a religion. Not a culture. Seek after God. And I promise you.

[ 54 : 41 ] He will find your heart. And speak to you. And then take that to someone else. That the world might become. Come before him.

To worship him. To love him. And then. Then. We'll see the peace of God break out. And the amazing grace of God. Transform everything.

Come. Come. Now is the time to worship.

Come. Now is the time to give your heart Come, just as He wants and wants you Come, just as you are before your God Come One day every time we'll confess you are God One day every knee will bow Still the greatest treasure remains for those Who gladly choose you now Come, now is the time to worship Come, now is the time to give your heart

Come, just as you are to worship Come, just as you are before your God Come Willingly we choose to surrender our lives Willingly our knees will bow With all our hearts, soul, mind and strength We gladly choose you now Come, now is the time to worship Come, now is the time to give your heart Come, now is the time to worship

[ 57 : 39 ] Come, now is the time to worship There is a candle in every soul Some brightening, some darkened cold There is a Spirit Who brings a fire Ignites a candle And thanks to God And thanks to God Carry a candle Come to the darkness Seek out the hopeless Confused and torn Hold out your candle

For all to see Take your candle Take your candle Go, light your world Take your candle Go, light your world Take your candle Be right Take your candle Be right Be right Be right Be right See how he's tried to Light his own candle Some other day See how your sister Been robbed and lied to Still holds our candle Take your candle Without a flame Carry your candle Run to the darkness Seek out the lonely Are tired and wrong

Oh, allow your candle For all to see Take your candle Take your candle Oh, light your world Take your candle Oh, light your world Take your candle Oh, light your world Take your candle Oh, light your world We are a family We are a family Whose hearts are blazing So let's raise our candles Light up the sky Pray to our Father In the name of Jesus Make us a beacon In the darkest night Carry your candle Carry your candle Run to the darkness To the darkness To the darkness Seek out the helpless Be safe and cold Seek out the helpless

Be safe and cold Oh, allow your candle Oh, allow your candle For all to see Take your candle Take your candle Close your candle But Dios Come, love your candle Far into the dark Bow where Feliness■yan Take your candle, go light your world.

Take your candle, go light your world. Take your candle, go light your world.

[ 62 : 22 ] Take your candle, go light your world.

Then let it start with me. Take your candle, go light your world. Take your candle, go light your world.

Take your candle, go light your world.

Fill my heart with your compassion. Free my mind from all this darkness. Here's my hand, set the captive free.

Fill my feet and follow after you. Oh, change the world and let it start with me. Take my light.

[ 64 : 08 ] All that I have told my own. Everything I am is yours, Lord. Let it start with me.

Open up my eyes. Fill my heart with your compassion. Free my mind from all distractions.

Use my hands. Use my hands. And the captive free. Move my feet and follow after you. Oh, change the world and let it start with me.

Oh, change the world and let it start with me. Oh, change the world and let it start with me. Oh, open up my eyes. Fill my heart with your compassion. Fill my heart with your compassion.

Free my mind from all this darkness. Fill my hands. Fill my hands. Set the captive free. Fill my feet and follow after you.

[ 65 : 12 ] Oh, change the world and let it start with me. Fill my feet and follow after you.

Please be seated. You know, we get caught up in everything else in life. And I work in the religion business, so I get caught up in my work.

Protecting the franchise. It happens. And we forget what this is all about. Some of you need to open up your heart and let the Good Shepherd speak to you.

I will tell you, it transforms your life in a way nothing else will. It makes everything in life, whether it's broken or good or easier or hard, something we can go through.

Because we've got God in our lives. Some of you need to be looking around. Stop being afraid to say the things that need to be said.

[ 66 : 28 ] I didn't even offend my brother-in-law talking to his daughter about Jesus. You know, we're so worried that we're going to offend somebody or look bad or something else.

That we're letting little children of the world go to hell. Not only the one to come, but the one here on earth.

They don't need to go through that. We have a why that will transform this world. So let's take our confession of our failings before God.

Because he said if we confess with our mouth and believe in our heart. Believe in our what? Our heart. We will find the salvation of God. Let's pray. Dear God in heaven.

I have failed. I have failed to completely let you into my heart. Open my heart.

[ 67 : 27 ] Open my life. And pour your spirit in. I have failed. To do the things that honor you. I have sinned.

Forgive me, Lord. Help me to do what's right. So that even the Pharisees are impressed. Lord, I have failed.

To bring the good news. About the good shepherd. To the people you give to me to share with. Forgive me, Lord.

Open up my eyes. Open up my mouth. Open up my heart. For Jesus. For it's in his name we pray.

Amen. God is going to rock your world. He's decided to change it all around completely.

[ 68 : 29 ] In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Jesus, love broke my soul.

Jesus, I will never let you go You've taken me from the miry clay You set my feet upon the rock And now I know I love you I need you Though my world may fall I'll never let you go My Savior My closest friend I will worship you Until the very end Jesus, lover of my soul Jesus, I will never let you go

You've taken me from the miry clay You set my feet upon the rock Now I know Now I know I love you I need you I need you Though my world may fall I'll never let you go My Savior My closest friend I will worship you Until the very end God loved us so much That he sent his son To take away our sins To make us one with God again

To bring us back into that relationship And that is what we celebrate here at the table Everyone is welcome To come and celebrate with Jesus To celebrate all God has done for us If you love God Repent of your sin And seek to live in peace As a disciple of Jesus Christ You are welcome to come to the table this morning Jesus calls you Come and meet with him here The Lord be with you Lift up your hearts Lift up your hearts Lift up your hearts Lift up your hearts Let us give thanks to the Lord our God It is right and a good and joyful thing Always and everywhere to give thanks to you Father Almighty Creator of heaven and earth In the beginning your spirit moved over the face of the waters You formed us in your image

[ 72 : 03 ] You breathed into us the breath of life And we turned away and our love failed But your love remained steadfast Your spirit came upon prophets and teachers Anointing them to speak your word So with your people on earth and all the company of heaven We praise your name and join their unending hymn Holy, holy, holy Lord God of power and might Heaven and earth are full of your glory Hosanna in the highest Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord Hosanna in the highest Holy are you And blessed is your son Jesus Christ At his baptism in the Jordan Your spirit descended upon him And declared him your beloved son With your spirit upon him He turned away the temptations of sin Your spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor To proclaim release to the captives

And recovering of sight to the blind To set at liberty Those who are oppressed And to announce that the time had come When you would save your people He healed the sick Fed the hungry And ate with sinners By the baptism of his suffering Death and resurrection You gave birth to your church Delivered us from slavery to sin and death And made with us a new covenant By water in the spirit When the Lord Jesus ascended He promised to be with us always Baptizing us with the Holy Spirit And with fire On the night in which he gave himself up for us He took bread He gave thanks to you He broke the bread And gave it to his disciples Saying take and eat This is my body Which I've given for you Do this in remembrance of me

When the supper was over He took the cup And gave you thanks and praise He gave it to his disciples Saying drink from this all of you This is the cup of my blood The blood of the new covenant Poured out for you And for many For the forgiveness of sin Do this as often as you drink it In remembrance of me On the day you raised him from the dead He was recognized by his disciples In the breaking of the bread And in the power of your Holy Spirit Your church has continued In the breaking of the bread And the sharing of the cup So in remembrance of these Your mighty acts in Jesus Christ We offer ourselves In praise and thanksgiving As a holy and living sacrifice In union with Christ's offering for us As we proclaim the mystery of faith Christ has died

Christ is risen Christ will come again Pour out your Holy Spirit On us gathered here And on these gifts of bread and wine Make them be for us The body and blood of Christ That we may be for the world The body of Christ redeemed By his blood And empowered By the gifts of the Holy Spirit By your Spirit Make us one with Christ One with each other And one in ministry to all the world Showing forth the fruit of the Spirit Until Christ comes In final victory And we feast at his heavenly banquet Through your Son Jesus Christ With the Holy Spirit In your holy church All honor and glory Is yours almighty Father Now and forever Amen Shall we pray together With the confidence Of children of God The prayer Jesus taught us Our Father

Who art in heaven Hallowed be thy name Thy kingdom come Thy will be done On earth as it is in heaven Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses As we forgive those Who trespass against us And lead us not into temptation But deliver us from evil For thine is the kingdom And the power And the glory forever and ever Amen Will those who are serving Please come forward Thank you ■■ Thank you.

[ 77 : 39 ] Thank you.

Thank you. Today, Jesus invites you to come and take him into your heart.

That's what we do at the table. Come to the rail for prayers for healing and anointing, to light a candle. Come, you're all welcome to join us at the table, God's table set for you. Come, let me be blessed.

Let's pray.

Let's pray.

[ 79 : 31 ] Let's pray.

Let's pray.

Let's pray.

Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

[ 81 : 45 ] Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. want to pass it on.

[ 82 : 53 ] I wish for you, my friend, this happiness that I've found. You can't repent on him.

It matters not where you're bound. I'll shut it from the mountain top. I want my world to know the Lord of love has come to me.

I want to pass it on. You know, unlike most people, I have a sympathy for the Pharisees in this story. After all, it's my occupation to protect the franchise.

That's what you want me to do. It's my job to make sure that the church is strong as a witness to the world. And if the church dies, where will there be a witness to God?

I understand the Pharisees. But we have to remember that it's not the what we do. It's not the how we do that drives our lives. It is my passion to bring people to a saving experience of Jesus Christ.

[ 84 : 04 ] It is my passion to see people change their lives and have the transforming power that I've experienced. And to be able to see light in the midst of darkness. And to be able to see hope in the midst of this broken world.

And to be able to see that there's a promise forever and ever and ever. When we lose track of the why, when we lose track of the passion, we've lost everything.

So hold on to Jesus. And pour him into your heart. And look for him wherever you go. And share him wherever you can. Even if God sends you a little Jewish and Muslim girl.

It's okay. May the Lord bless you always. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. erhalten. Amen.