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Is everyone's heart ready to receive our message this morning? I'm pretty excited. Because, normally, normally the way my week starts is I sit down at my computer, and I have no idea what I'm going to speak on for the week, and then I start to say about it, and suddenly I think I have an idea, and as I start to take notes on the idea, it just goes boom boom boom boom boom, and I just type out the whole sermon, and it just blows out of my spirit, and I know it's from God. And this week, I sat in front of my computer, and I stared, and I stared, and I prayed, and just had nothing. And I was a little worried, and I repented of the worry, first of all, and then I picked up my mom from the airport Thursday night, and she said, "Well, you know, if you'd like, I can try and come up with a message." And I said, "Well, okay, you want to try?" She's like, "But I've got no idea what I'm going to speak on." And I said, "Well, okay, well, I'm going to give it a shot." And she starts to pray about it, and next thing I know, I look over, boom boom boom boom boom, and she's typing out on the computer, and I was like, "Ha, I knew it. God's definitely got something to say through her this week." I don't know what she's going to say, and I'm excited to hear it. So I'm going to stop talking and turn it over to her now. You know, God has a tremendous sense of humor, doesn't he? I remember about 30 years ago sitting on this front row with three children, and I would sit between the boys to keep them from slugging it out. Mike would sit between Katie and David to keep him from teasing her. And now, look at today, here's my interim pastor son is introducing me. So, wow, God, you're something else. You really are. Praise the Lord. I'd like to just start with a word of prayer. Pardon me, being from Colorado, I have to have water. It's like part of my life, so I carry this everywhere I go. You may refer to it again. Okay, let's pray. Lord, may the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in my sight today, Father. I just pray, as You have been glorified in our music, that You'll be glorified in our words and our prayers here, and as we leave here today in the words and actions and everything in our attitudes, God, in the world around us so that everything will glorify You. In Jesus' name, amen. Am I going to be loud enough this morning? I said, you know, I have a very soft voice. I gave Aaron a heads up on that. Okay, well, I'd like to begin this morning by reading one of what I think is the most exciting pieces of Scripture in the Bible. It is from the book of Revelation, chapter 7, verses 9 through 17. "After this I looked and behold a great multitude that no one could number from every nation and all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne, before the Lamb, clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands, crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.' And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, 'Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever, Amen.' Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, clothed in white robes and from where have they come?' And I said to him, 'Sir, you know.' And he said to me, 'These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are for the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will shelter them with His presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore. The sun shall not strike them nor any scorching heat, for the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and He will guide them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." Glory. When we read this, it's easy to think of this as some scene, far, far time in the distant future, after the rapture, after the great tribulation and all. But when you think about it, this scene is going on in the heavenlies right now. Our sister, Marge Weaver, who went home to be with the Lord this week, what do you want to bet? She's got a front row seat, and she's watching it all right now as we sit here today. Glory to God. Why do I say that this picture from Revelation is happening now? Because the Word of God is going out to all the world. And people from many tribes and tongues are dancing around the throne of God. Just this past week, Mike and I sat down, for those of you who don't know me, Mike is my husband. He's back in Colorado Springs right now. Well, we sat down for a coffee with an old friend of ours from India. His name is Ramshand. He lives in Madhya Pradesh. He is actually a Y-Wammer. He's with Youth of the Mission, just like we are. And he lives in Madhya Pradesh, India. He's probably been ministering there about 20 years. The state of Madhya Pradesh just passed the strictest anti-conversion laws in all of India. If you convert from either Hinduism or Islam to Christianity, you can be imprisoned for two years and find the equivalent of $2,000. Well, we learned, Mike and I learned when we were having coffee, that one of the unreached people groups that we had videotaped when we were there, about 9 or 10 years ago actually, have now been reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Hallelujah. Now, this was not our doing, Mike and I. No, it was God using the Waiting World prayer videos that we produced to inspire intercession and outreaches to the bill from U.S. churches. It was using those same churches to help fund Indian Christians to reach the bill, one of India's lower castes. Those Indian churches raised up their own missionaries, and they teamed with other missionaries from around the globe and planted churches among the bill. And so today we have a good news/bad news scenario. The good news is that the bill people have their own churches and are worshipping Jesus. They are reaching their own. Many of those who were once told they had no value in Indian, Hindu, and Islamic society now know that they are valued sons and daughters of the Most High King. The bad news is there are still a lot of people around the world, over 2 billion in fact, who still do not know about the saving grace of Jesus Christ. The good news today is that when bill Christian people die, they are dancing around that throne. But the bad news is not all the tribes and all the tongues and all the nations are gathered around that throne yet. Again this past week, Mike got an email from his friend Pastor Andre in Beirut, Lebanon. We met Pastor Andre last April when we were at the Harvest Connection Conference in northern Jordan. God bless the Arabs. We love their culture. We love so much about them. But you know what I don't love? I do not love Arab tea or coffee first thing in the morning. I really, I'm sorry David if you're listening to this, I don't love Arab coffee. Our son loves Arab coffee. Anyway, we took our own little French coffee press and our own Folger's Plasti Gross coffee to Jordan. And every morning we would go to breakfast and we would make our own coffee. And Pastor Andre would seek us out. I like to think that he liked us. I think he just liked our coffee at first. But he and Mike became fast friends and they exchanged emails. And he was the one that when we said our goodbyes added, "See you in Lebanon next time we do this conference." Excuse me. Well since then Pastor Andre has been asking us to pray for his tent revival. He decided to do in Beirut, Lebanon. It was July 17th through the 21st. And you know just two weeks before that tent meeting started there were military tanks rolling through the streets of Lebanon. We prayed from here in the U.S. and we asked others to pray with us for the success and the safety of the attendees. Following the first night we got a report that 350 young people came to that meeting and many, many gave their lives to the Lord. When it was over Pastor Andre emailed us and told us that a thousand people had attended every single night of the revival. A thousand! Moreover many Muslims came forward for prayer. And in follow up they are reporting miracle healings of illnesses and disease. He added that 154 Muslims openly walked down the aisle and gave their lives to Jesus Christ. Now here in the U.S. we really have no idea what that means. You know if I were to ask for an altar call after this service, I mean I'm sure you all know Jesus. But if anybody were to come down it would be no big deal. Nobody would be thinking anything about it. But man in a Middle Eastern country to convert from Islam to Christianity is illegal in most areas for starters. You can be imprisoned for that. Perhaps worse you will be ostracized by your family. Your parents could put out a contract hit killing on you and honor killing. You will lose your job, you will lose your home, you will lose your children. You will lose everything. And so now we know that 154 people came forward during those meetings. I just wonder how many more Muslims sat in the stands and accepted Christ in their hearts but just didn't have the courage to come forward. And I can't say I blame them. I don't know if I'd have the courage to walk forward. Now if someone who attended that Lebanese tent meeting and accepted Christ say they die soon, they too will be dancing around that throne with the bills of India and with Marge and with all of our loved ones who've gone on before us. You see when you think about it, Revelation may have been written over 2000 years ago but it is telling us what is happening right now. Okay, well I could give you some more examples about the great things going on in Tibet and in Thailand and in Uganda. Uganda is a nation that has had one evil, evil regime after another. But did you know that the president of Uganda recently has rededicated that nation to God? In Kampala, the capital city, crooked politicians are being displaced and honest political appointees are replacing them. And most of it is being done by a spirit-filled, charismatic Christian woman of God, sitting manager, who's got bodyguards protecting herself and her young children because of all the death threats that she has received. You see in the midst of evil in the natural realm, this woman and the president of Uganda are pressing in to God, pressing on in faith, and pressing outward to change their nation and their world to the glory of God. Actually I looked at the front of the bulletin this morning and it is so appropriate. This runner has pressed in and to his training. He's pressing on in faith. He's going to compete and he's going to do his best. And he's going to press out by giving that baton on to someone else. We need to do the same and press on our faith, press on and give our faith on to the next generation. That is what I wanted to talk to you about today. Press into God and into his word. Press on in faith and in spite of what you may read or see in the news or in your own personal circumstances. And equally important, equally, perhaps the most important, press out into the world. Whether you feel led to change your family, your community, or this nation, or a nation overseas, don't give up now. Keep going, Church. If there was ever a time for us in the body of Christ to stand up for what we believe in and speak out, this is it. The time has come. Carmel Friends has a long-standing tradition of reaching out into the community. Remember those Easter baskets and those baby blankets for Africa and for Haiti and the work done by members of this congregation with the Gideons and search for outreaches to Belize and to Jamaica and so many other projects. You've got a great tradition. You have a great baton. Keep passing it on. Before Mike and I entered YWAM, I heard a message by a woman mission worker who was working with Muslims in a school setting. I won't say where and I won't say who she worked for, but I remember asking her, "How do they respond when you tell them about Jesus Christ?" And she said, "Oh, I never do that. I don't want to offend them." Now, her answer really blew me away. It really did at the time. And since I have worked with Muslims ever since, I mean for quite a bit of the time in YWAM, I know you can't always just openly approach them on the streets of Ammon, Jordan, for example. I really wish I had asked her in follow-up, "Okay, well, what if they ask you about Jesus? Do you talk to them then?" I pray she did, because if she didn't, what is the use in being his hands and his feet in a lost and dying world? Saints, we need to be, and I say we, as in the entire church all over the globe, we need to be the Acts 1-8 church. Jesus, in speaking to his disciples after his resurrection, said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." What does this mean? Does it mean we can only go to Israel and the Middle East? No, of course not. We love the Jews. We love the Arabs. By the way, did you know that a group of Jordanian Christians just had a great outreach to Israel to reach the Jews, the Palestinians, and the Druze people? The Druze are sort of a mystic Islamic group. Well, of course, these Jordanian Christians were rejected by some, but they were welcomed by many. They distributed 50,000 videos and pieces of literature over a two-week period. We love the Chinese, though, and we love the people of Haiti, and we love the Native Americans, and I am even working on loving the people like California and New York. Glory. That's kind of a Colorado joke, I'll tell you later. Anyway, they all need Jesus. The point is the people in the Body of Christ today here in America and around the world can no longer afford to be the frozen, chosen, the pewsitters, the bench warmers, the people who come to church on Sunday but don't affect change in their world Monday through Saturday. We can no longer afford to be silent. How do we start? Well, we've got to make sure that we are walking our talk. If you're a parent or grandparent, it starts with your words and your attitudes in front of the children that surround you and your family. If you're in the business world, that means that you carry out Christian principles in the workplace. If you're involved in education or in government or if you're involved in arts and the media, it means the same thing. You are known for being honest and for not sharing office gossip, for being that weird one on staff that everybody knows you better not tell the off-color jokes to because you are the one known for standing strong on your Christian convictions. And right here in the Body of Christ, we do not compromise the Word of God. We don't change it to make it politically correct or whatever. Now that doesn't mean that we can't hate the sin and love the sinner, but friends, we live in a wobbly world. We live in a wobbly society. Things that were called "bad" yesterday are being called "good" today. And you must decide for yourselves that you know I serve the God, the God of Jacob and Abraham and Isaac and so many other great heroes of the faith. He is the same yesterday, today and forever, and His Word does not change. It's really as simple as that. In Psalm 93 it says of God, "Your decrees are very sure. Holiness befits your house, the Lord forevermore." You see, we may stumble and fall in our daily walk, but we've got to strive for holiness in our lives. We serve a holy God and as His temple within our bodies, we've got to strive for holiness. "Holiness befits His house," Psalmist says. We have to live out that holiness in the world around us. And we need not be shy about sharing Jesus with those outside our Christian circle of family and friends. I'll give you an example. My brother is a realtor in Park County. If you need a real estate agent in Rockville, Indiana, go see Dave Leish. That's your commercial for today. He's an auctioneer as well, and for several years he has been starting his auctions with prayer. Everyone in Park County knows that Dave Leish is Christian. He uses scripture in his newspaper, adds an honest sign, and he shares his faith with others in the community. And as a result, he has been blessed with God, and he'll be the first one to tell you so. On the other end of the spectrum, he has lost business because of that. Sometimes he struggles financially. He does appraisals, and if a man's wife is suing him for divorce and a man lives in a very fine house, he may very likely not hire my brother to do the appraisal because my brother will tell the truth. He has this nasty habit of telling the truth. He's known as the honest appraiser, and so there are some attorneys that will not use him because of that, because they want to hedge a certain direction. Anyway, he still tells the truth. He lives out his faith. Okay, so we walk out our talk. We witness as often as is practical, and maybe over the edge as we'll witness when it isn't practical as well. We're Quakers, after all. I mean, come on, we do as we feel led. But if you find yourself sitting on the sidelines a little more often than not, maybe it's time to speak up. Remember that God has called all of us to pray, to give, or to go. So by all means, if you can go, please go. Whether you are volunteering at a homeless shelter, or maybe at the Crisis Pregnancy Center, or maybe it's a short-term trip to Native Americans, that's how our family got started. Maybe it's overseas. Please, if you can go, do it and share the love of Christ. I know that sometimes life today, here in America, is challenging. It is discouraging. All right, there are certain situations, even in this country, that seem hopeless. Maybe in your family life it seems hopeless to you, to me, to all of us. But we are part of the body of Christ, and we have His promises that are truth. His hope that cannot disappoint. His strength that does not fail. There is a sign that is painted on the Berlin Wall that reads, "Many small people who in many small places do many small things can alter the face of the world." Billy Graham once said he believed one reason for the fall of the Berlin Wall was the fact that many women were on their knees in their prayer closets, praying throughout the terrible years of the Soviet regime. These women were ones who had been introduced to God as little girls in Tsarist Russia. And then as the terror of Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev raged on, and they grew up in that oppression, they pressed in to God in prayer and in His Word. They pressed on in faith that God would rescue their nation one way or the other, and they pressed out to their families and friends as much as they could with all of their might until one day that wall fell down. Now, final thought that cannot be overlooked. Remember to praise God continually. You know, His Word says that He inhabits the praises of His people, and we want to seek His presence continually, and so we praise Him. But if you really want to drive the devil crazy, then praise God when everything seems to be falling apart. Trust me, if you are pressing in, pressing on, and pressing out, you will have an invisible target on your head. And Satan will tell you, you know, he works on the mind first. Satan always works on your mind first. He will tell you that you are too weak, that you are too small to affect change, that you are too old, you are too poor, you are too politically incorrect, you are too something. So when Satan calls that stuff, whip out the Word of God, those scriptures that you have tucked away in your mind, in your quiet time. In your daily prayer times, and hitting with both barrels, praise defuses the devil's devices. Psalm 103 is a great one, and I'm going to close with that. Remember as I read this Psalm that this is the very God we serve. The reason we are alive is to praise Him and share Him with others. One more simple one. Psalm 103. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good, so that your youth is renewed like the eagles. The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the people of Israel. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will He keep His anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love towards those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us. As the Father shows compassion to His children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him. For He knows our frame, and He remembers that we are dust. As for man, His days are like grass. He flourishes like a flower in the field, for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to those who keep His covenant, and remember to do His commandments. The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, O you His angels, you mighty ones who do His word. Obeying the voice of the Lord. Bless the Lord, all His hosts, His ministers who do His will. Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Amen and Amen.