SERMON TRANSCRIPT

# How To: Share the Gospel

**Emory Cothen**

How To: Growing in your faith | November 3, 2026 | Romans 3:23; Colossians 3; Galatians 3; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; Galatians 5:1; Psalms 5:4; Psalms 5:9; Galatians 5:13

*Prepared from the spoken message and lightly edited for readability. Scripture quotations and spoken phrasing are preserved as delivered.*

---

This is week three of our How To series. So far, we've done how to lead, we've done how to repent, and tonight we're going to talk about how to share the gospel. Tonight is as simple as that: how to share the gospel.

A lot of tonight is going to be about talking the talk, okay? Here's the deal. As we get going, I'm going to be very transparent tonight because this is what our faith is all about, okay? This is not good works. This is not coming together for a social hour. Everything we do and believe as Christians hinges on the truth of the gospel. If we don't understand that, it's going to be pretty hard for us to share it with other people.

One of the things that I don't love that kind of revolves around misnomers of the gospel is sometimes people will say, "Preach the gospel, and when necessary, use words." Have you ever heard that? You've got to use your words.

We're going to get into the walking and the talking tonight. If you're like, "What does that mean?" just hang out with me, okay? We'll get to it. But it takes teaching, speaking, and communicating what the gospel is to people.

Here's what we're going to do as we get going tonight. I'm going to give you a roadmap for what the flow of tonight will look like.

One, we're going to talk about this: you were not born a Christian. I think the roadmap should be on the screen. You weren't born a Christian. That's step number one.

Two, accepting means rejecting.

Then part three: get ready and stay ready.

That's going to be the flow of tonight. Just so you know, "You weren't born a Christian" is where we're going to talk about the culture and what culture says about being a Christian. "Accepting means rejecting" is the life that you should live as a believer and how you can share the gospel through that. But I would say we're going to spend most of our time, and the crux of this whole thing, on "Get ready and stay ready." This is talking the talk.

## You Weren't Born a Christian

Before we get too far ahead of ourselves, I think we've got to ask a simple question: What is the gospel? Is that a fair question to ask? It's going to be hard to explain something and share something if we don't know what it is.

The word "gospel" comes from the Greek word for "good news." Does anybody like receiving good news in here? Sometimes you get a text from people and it's like, "We need to talk," and I always assume that's bad news, right? It's a pleasant surprise when they're like, "Hey, something great happened." But we all love good news.

Now, if the gospel means good news, if there's good news, typically that means there's what? There's bad news. I'm glad y'all are awake tonight. Are y'all ready to go for this? I think you might need to roll up your sleeves because we're going to get into it a little bit, okay? Is that all right if we do that? Because if not, I'm going to just go home. But if y'all want to get into it, we can get into it.

The gospel means good news, but there's bad news as well. The bad news tonight, if nobody's ever told you this, I'm telling you this in love: you are a sinner.

Everybody's like, "Not what I was hoping I would get tonight," right? That's super encouraging. If somebody walks up to you at church and goes, "Hey, how are you? Glad you're here. You're a sinner," you're like, "I'm looking for a new church."

But I'll say this: we have to understand the bad news and the depth of it for the good news to make sense. Is that fair? It's not good news if we don't understand the bad news.

I want to remind you this evening - or maybe I'm telling some of you this for the first time - what the gospel is. The reason the gospel is called good news is that our faith points us to something greater than the bad news.

Our faith says that you and I were born sinners. Nobody ever had to teach you how to steal. Nobody ever had to teach you how to lust. Nobody ever had to teach you how to hate somebody, right? It's because you're a sinner, and I am too.

But the good news of the gospel is this: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came down from heaven, and He lived 33 years, a perfect life. He was tempted like you and I are tempted, but He never sinned. And He loved you. Point at yourself real quick. Just tap yourself on the chest. Jesus loved you so much that He lived that perfect life and then went to a cross.

If you don't know what that means, if maybe you've just seen the jewelry that Christians might wear, a cross was the most humiliating, embarrassing, awful way to die. Medically speaking, it was one of the most painful, excruciating ways that a human being could die. They would often bleed to death and asphyxiate. A lot of the time, they'd be freezing cold and shivering up there because of the blood loss and all this.

The Son of God went to a cross to die for you and for me. He took on the weight of all of our sin, and He went into a grave for three days. But He, being the Son of God, came out of that grave alive three days later, and He is now seated at the right hand of God.

Here's the deal: we've got to know that. We have to know that Christianity is not just moralistic therapeutic deism. If you don't know what that means, it means, "Do a lot of good stuff, kind of talk about God, and go on your merry way."

What this means is that everything hinges on the good news that you're not enough and I'm not enough, but Jesus came as our substitute to pay for our sin so that we could walk in freedom now and into eternity. This is good news.

We've got to know this. Some of us have walked into this room, maybe even tonight, with wrong assumptions. You go, "I'm good because I grew up in church, because my grandma prays for me, because my dad was a pastor, because, because, because, because."

Here's the deal. I love you enough to tell you this. I told you on the roadmap: you were not born a Christian. My dad's a pastor. My grandpa was a pastor. My great-grandpa was a pastor. I was born not a Christian. I was born a sinner in need of a Savior.

You and I were born needing God in our lives, and we were born far from Him. This is Texas, the buckle of the Bible Belt, as a lot of people say. A lot of people assume that everybody knows Jesus and is probably following Jesus. That's a problem because so many people know just enough about God or church to miss heaven for eternity because they think they're good.

I'm begging you tonight, if you've never heard me say anything before and you never hear me say anything else again, you and I both need the gospel. We need to repent of our sin. We need to follow Jesus.

Here's the reality: we've all sinned. We're born sinners.

> *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*
>
> — Romans 3:23

Not just on your worst day, but every day we fall short. If you're honest with yourself, if you took a catalog of your life, maybe even from the time you woke up this morning, you and I mess up. It means that we're in need because we fall short.

God doesn't take sin lightly. We have to understand this. The whole Old Testament - we'll get into it in a little bit - points to the problem. The law, the stuff that you skip over sometimes when you're doing your yearly Bible reading plan and you're like, "Let's keep moving," all of that points to our need for a sacrifice that we cannot make on our own.

Psalm 5:4 says:

> *For you are not a God who delights in wickedness;*
> *evil may not dwell with you.*
>
> — Psalm 5:4

What does that mean? It means that we, as sinful people, cannot be in the presence of a holy God on our own.

In verse 9 of Psalm 5, talking about lost people, sinful people, it says:

> *For there is no truth in their mouth;*
> *their inmost self is destruction;*

> *their throat is an open grave;*
> *they flatter with their tongue.*
>
> — Psalm 5:9

There's a problem. Sin is a problem. All of Scripture points us to our sin and our need for a Savior.

In the New Testament, Galatians 3 says:

> *But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.*
>
> — Galatians 3:22

You've got a problem, and Jesus is the only solution.

Tonight, I'm going to tell you at the beginning, I'm going to give you an opportunity to respond. We're going to teach you how to share the gospel, but the most important thing is that you personally have received the gospel, that you've given Jesus your life and followed Him in obedience.

In Colossians 3, it says:

> *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.*
>
> *Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*
>
> *For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*
>
> *When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*
>
> — Colossians 3:1-4

Have we all had enough of this earth? This is not cultural Christianity. There is a death, and there is a life. Some of us are trying to hold on to Jesus and hold on to our sin at the same time. Jesus is saying, "Let that go. I have something better for you." When you've died, your life is then hidden in Christ.

I've got to tell you this: you cannot share something that you have never received.

Think about that. You can't share something with somebody next to you when they're in need of something and you go, "Man, I think you need Jesus," but you just know about Jesus. You don't know Him. You can't share something that you've never received.

Sharing church attendance and morality doesn't change anybody's eternity. I'm not up here preaching, "Come to church." I'm not up here preaching, "Clean up your act." I'm preaching, "You and I need Jesus because He's the only way, and His way is better than any way apart from Him."

## Accepting Means Rejecting

Accepting means rejecting. What do I mean by that?

When you accept the good news of Jesus, when you ask Him, "Forgive me of my sin. Come into my life. Make me new. Be the Savior, the Lord, the King. Be over my entire life," when you accept Him, that means you also reject something else.

If you've ever heard the word "repent," it means to turn away from. When you turn away from your sin, you are turning toward Jesus, and so you can't hold on to both. Accepting the gospel means rejecting the world. This is walking the walk.

You've seen it, and I've seen it: people who, with their mouths, will say the right thing and people who, with their minds, have great theology, but with their lives, they live so far away from the life God's called them to live.

Then maybe unbelievers see that and go, "Man, I don't want that Christianity thing because I've seen how that guy lives his life. He says one thing, but he does something else."

If we're going to share the gospel, and you want to know how to do it, you've got to walk the walk. Don't run back to the things Jesus saved you from.

You've heard it phrased different ways, but we do that all the time. We come to church and go, "Man, I need You, Jesus," and then Monday night we go and tear it up. We post about it, and we brag about it. We go, "Man, I need Jesus," when Grandma's around or your friend you're trying to impress is around, but then you go live like the world the rest of the time.

Don't go running back to the things Jesus saved you from. Galatians 5:1 is so clear:

> *For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.*
>
> — Galatians 5:1

Do you hear that? That's not passive language. But some of us keep putting on the yoke of slavery because we're like, "Maybe there's hope in it this time. Maybe I'll find fulfillment in that sin that's been killing me for years."

Then we go back to it because we think Jesus might not be enough. We think if we just try something different on our own or listen to one more empty promise of the world, it'll fulfill us.

But it says, "For freedom Christ has set us free." So stand firm. Plant your feet in the ground and trust in the Lord instead of running backward and retreating, going back to the sin Jesus saved you from.

Later in the chapter, in verse 13, it says:

> *For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*
>
> — Galatians 5:13

Do you hear that? The beauty of the gospel is that it sets you free from sin. You are free from that. You're not a slave to that lifestyle anymore. God's called you to something better, and He gives you the power through His Spirit to walk in freedom.

I was in a context for a while where people would say, "Hey, I'm a Christian, so I'm free to do fill-in-the-blank: to drink, to smoke, to cuss, to do whatever." They missed it by a mile.

Man, as a believer, all I'm free to do is let go of anything that might cause me or someone else to stumble, because all I want is for someone else around me to experience freedom from all that sin and walk in the newness of life that comes from knowing Jesus.

First Thessalonians 4:7 says:

> *For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.*
> — 1 Thessalonians 4:7

Walk the walk. Don't be ashamed about it. Some of us are a little bit timid to walk around truly as Christ followers because we're like, "What would somebody think?"

Ask yourself that question again: What would somebody think? Maybe somebody would go, "Man, they seem like they have something that I don't. What's up with that?"

God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.

Last in this walking the walk: don't leave a question in anyone's mind that you live for Christ. Don't leave a question.

I'm not talking about going to church more and posting it more. I'm talking about when nobody else is around except that one friend and they see you in your worst, toughest, darkest moment, let those moments point them to Jesus. When you are at rock bottom and don't know which way is up, you go, "I don't know which way is up, but I do know that Jesus is my rock and my salvation. I'm going to sit here on my knees all night if I have to, cling to Him, and point people to Him that way."

Don't leave a question in anyone's mind that you live for Christ.

Romans 1:16 says:

> *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.*
> — Romans 1:16

Are you ashamed of it? Are you ashamed of the fact that Jesus died for you so that you could live? He calls you to walk in obedience and freedom. He calls you to walk in life, and then you go, "Oh man, I don't know. Somebody might think I'm weird."

I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for it's the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

At the end of the verse, if it's confusing to you, it says, "to the Jew first and also to the Greek." That just means everybody. If you grew up religious or if you grew up far from God, the gospel is for everyone.

Romans 12:1 says:

> *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*
>
> — Romans 12:1

Everything you do should be a living sacrifice.

For homework, just go home and read Romans 12:9-21. Just go read the whole chapter. Look at what it looks like to live a life that doesn't leave a doubt in someone else's mind that you live for Christ.

You should live differently than the world. Do you hear me? Not a little bit better. Not a couple of hours a week looking different. I'm talking about your whole life looking different from the world. We're supposed to be light in a dark world. That looks different.

Don't try to blend in. Some of y'all are trying to blend in tonight. You come here and don't want anybody to catch you in here, but you want everybody to catch you out there doing whatever else the world is doing. You're living in this conflict, and Jesus is saying, "Come to Me. My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." You can walk in freedom when you know Him.

Don't let your walk - hear me on this - disqualify your talk.

The whole deal I opened with, "Preach the gospel, and when necessary, use words," that's a great thought, right? But we've got to talk.

Sometimes you open your mouth to talk, and people go, "I saw you last weekend," and you go, "Oh no."

"Man, you say that you love Jesus here, but I saw you post that thing that suggests that you do not at all love Jesus."

For some of us, that's the reality. We know all the right things to say. We can play church. You've got the right answers to the test, but you've never surrendered your life to Jesus. Your walk looks different, but your talk suggests that you follow the Lord. It's leading people away from Him and not to Him.

How do we share the gospel? Your walk and your talk have to be aligned.

## Get Ready and Stay Ready

Here's the deal: get ready and stay ready.

Some of the guys in the room are like, "All right, let's do this." Every guy's like, "I wish somebody would break into my house. I've been watching jiu-jitsu on YouTube. I stay ready." It wouldn't work anyway, but here we go.

What do I mean by "get ready and stay ready"? Some of us gave our lives to Jesus when we were 10, and we haven't done anything since then. You're like, "All right, Jesus, You've got my eternity, but my life is mine."

You start playing the game of, "Yeah, I've got fire insurance," as some people say. "I know I'm not going to go to hell one day, but I kind of want the rest of my life to be mine."

But if we're going to get ready and stay ready, that means every day going back to the foot of the cross and saying, "Jesus, I need You. You are my Savior. You are my King. You are my Teacher. You are the leader of my life, and everything about me submits to everything of who You are."

If we do that, we've got to open our mouths, go, and tell people about who Jesus is.

This passage, as a minister of the gospel, yes, but just as a believer, is so impactful. If you've ever heard this before, you know how true it is. Romans 10:13-15 puts the weight on me. It puts the weight on you. Not social media. Not the pastor with the big following. Not somebody else. Me and you.

Read this with me. It'll be on the screen.

> *For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*
>
> *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?*
>
> *And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?*
>
> *And how are they to hear without someone preaching?*
>
> *And how are they to preach unless they are sent?*
>
> *As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"*
>
> — Romans 10:13-15

Can I get an amen? He hears us.

We've got to go. We've got to go where we are - in our workplaces, in our schools, in our friendships, and in our homes - and we have to proclaim and preach the Word of God. That's not just for me to do. That's for us. We've got to open our mouths.

Someone's got to go tell people, and that person is you. That's me. Don't wait for somebody else to do it. Somebody's got to go tell people.

The gospel isn't meant to be contained just to you. Sometimes we do that. Have you noticed that? Sometimes we get discontent in our faith. You walk in here and go, "Man, I just want to go deeper at The Grove." Yeah, sure. I hope so. I hope you walk in here with a proper expectation to experience the Lord and walk with Him.

But some of you want us to force-feed you Christianity because you're leaving here and doing nothing with it during the week. God's called you to go out there.

When you're at the gym and that guy - this happened to me recently, and I about died - I was in the sauna, and the guy next to me was like, "I'm about to get tore up this weekend."

I'm like, "Tell me about that." I've already been in there for about 10 minutes. I'm fighting for my life, right? I'm like, "Please tell me more about this."

He's like, "I'm going to go get blackout. I'm going to go do this. I'm going to go do that."

I'm like, "God, I need You to give me the strength, the oxygen, and the water to make it through this."

I started telling him, "Hey, there's a better way. There's a better way than this."

You're around people like this every day, every week, and every moment of your life. You're keeping it to yourself, and you're wondering why you're not feeling fulfilled and content in your faith. It's because God's called you to open your mouth and share the hope of eternity that is the gospel with the people around you.

If you want to share the gospel, here's the how-to. One, you've got to know the gospel. You've got to know the Bible, and you've got to know people.

We're going to go through this, but if you want to create your outline, here we go: you've got to know the gospel, you've got to know the Bible, and you've got to know people.

You've probably seen it if you've walked into the main building of the church. Kind of over where the library is, if you know where that is, there's a big three-circle thing on the wall. Y'all seen this?

One person. I'm really glad. You get a gold star. Everybody else, why don't you come to worship this weekend? We'll show you the three circles on the wall.

It looks like this. This is a way, and this is the way our church does it most often, that you can share the gospel. There are three circles. That's why we call it that. Thank you. I'm glad three of you were paying attention.

There's God's design, and then you see that arrow at the top? Sin comes into the picture, and God's design goes into brokenness.

I'm going to walk you through all this, but if you want to take a picture of this or jot it down, that's great. But I'm going to give you slides. I'm going to give you cheat notes so that when you leave here, you can explain every bit of this to someone. That's going to be your homework.

Sin leads to brokenness. You see all the arrows that are coming out of brokenness? When you're broken, do you not want to fix it? Can I get an amen on that? You try every way that you can to fix your brokenness. But every time you try to fix your brokenness, it leads back to more brokenness. It's this cycle over and over and over again.

The only way you can get from brokenness all the way back to God's design is through this circle at the bottom called the gospel. The only way that you and I, as broken people, can know the gospel is for us to repent and believe. That means turning away from our sin and believing in Jesus.

Once we come to know the gospel, that means we can recover and pursue God's design for our lives. It's as simple as that.

Here's a note I'll give you. When I share the gospel with people, a lot of people don't know what God's design is. Is that fair to say? A lot of people just don't know that today. But everybody knows what it feels like to be broken.

When you share this, you can start at the second circle because a lot of people are living in the second circle

and don't even know that God's design, that circle, exists.

Here's the deal. I'm going to give you a cheat sheet.

The first thing is God's design. There's going to be Scripture for all of this. If we're going to do what Mark 16:15 says, we've got to know everything about it.

> *Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.*
> — Mark 16:15

God's design is this:

> *And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.*
>
> *And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*
> — Genesis 1:31

Actually, in Genesis 3:8 - I sent that wrong. I'm sorry - it says:

> *And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.*
> — Genesis 3:8

If you can imagine, God's design was Adam and Eve and God walking together in the garden. Can you put yourself there in your mind? Don't you long for that if you're a believer, just to walk with God like that? This was God's design for us.

In Psalm 19:1, it says:

> *The heavens declare the glory of God,*
> *and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*
> — Psalm 19:1

God designed a good thing. God's design from the beginning is that you, me, and all of us would walk with Him.

But sin enters into the picture. Go home and read Genesis 3.

> *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*
> — Romans 3:23

All of us. Not most of us, and you're the exception. All of us have sinned.

The first part of Romans 6:23 says:

> *For the wages of sin is death.*
> — Romans 6:23

If you've sinned, what you earn from that is death and separation from God's design. If it ended there, that's

the bad news, right? But it doesn't end there.

Sin, as you know and I know, leads to brokenness. What does Scripture say about brokenness? Brokenness is what we get when we twist God's design.

> *Because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.*
>
> — Romans 1:25

Do you get this? They worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator. We get things backward in our brokenness.

We try to drink the pain away, have sex so the pain goes away, or build a following of ourselves so the pain goes away and other people will just tell us how good we are. The brokenness leads to more brokenness, and we start worshiping things that were created rather than the Creator.

But the good news is this:

> *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*
>
> — John 3:16

Whoever believes in Him would not die, would not perish, and would not spend eternity away from Him, but would have eternal life.

Colossians 2:14 says:

> *By canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.*
>
> — Colossians 2:14

The work of Jesus is what deals with our sin, not your good works. It's the work of Jesus on the cross.

We can come to know the gospel, and the gospel can change our lives when we walk in repentance.

> *Repent and believe in the gospel.*
>
> — Mark 1:15

First John 1 says:

> *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*
>
> *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
>
> — 1 John 1:8-9

Romans 10:9 says:

> *If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*
>
> — Romans 10:9

If you want to share the gospel, you've got to know this stuff. Then we can point people to the fact that they can recover and pursue God's will for their lives. It's on the screen: recover and pursue.

Philippians 2 says:

> *For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*
>
> — Philippians 2:13

Ephesians 2:10 says:

> *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.*
>
> — Ephesians 2:10

We've got to know the gospel if we're going to share the gospel. I think some of us tonight have to study the three circles. We've got to study the gospel. We've got to study this stuff because maybe you've been trying to share the gospel and you don't even know it.

It's something we should think about every day because it's changed every day of our lives. We've got to know the gospel.

Secondly, you've got to know your Bible.

I don't know if you know this, but we live in a world where people will twist Scripture like Satan did, and we've got to know Scripture like Jesus does. Does that make sense? We live in a world where people will weaponize, manipulate, and twist Scripture. If you don't know the Bible, you'll go, "Oh man, wait, hold on."

We have to know this if we're going to be on the front lines of sharing the gospel. If you want to know how to share the gospel, you've got to expect that after you've shared the gospel, people might ask more questions.

Does that scare anybody else in here? You're like, "I'm just going to share the gospel," and they're like, "Tell me about..." and you're like, "Oh man."

I'm going to give you a little cheat sheet. I just want to put tools in your toolbox. I can't explain everything in one night on this, but if you want to know your Bible, you've got to know how it's made up. You don't read certain parts of Scripture like other parts of Scripture.

You've got to know things like the law in the Old Testament. It talks about creation, early history, and the laws that were given to Moses. Then there's the history: the conquest of the Promised Land, the time of the judges and kings, and the exile. There's poetry and wisdom literature: Psalms, Proverbs, and philosophical writings. You can't read that like history. Then there were prophets, major and minor, giving words of warning to God's people.

Here's the deal with the Old Testament: everything about it is pointing to Jesus. The prophets in the Old Testament are just shadows of the goodness of Jesus that is to come. The Psalms and Proverbs declare the glory and worthiness of the Jesus who is to come.

Then when you get to the New Testament, everything about the New Testament revolves around Jesus, what He did, and what comes from Jesus walking on the face of this earth.

The Gospels are firsthand accounts of the life of Jesus. The book of Acts is church history. It's the spread of Christianity. The 21 letters in the New Testament were written to people and early churches to give instruction on how you should live and how we should do things.

The book of Revelation is prophecy. It's this symbolic, prophetic account about the fight between good and evil and the end times. Spoiler alert: Jesus wins the fight.

We should be excited about all of this, but we've got to know our Bible. Sometimes we don't know the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament, the law and the prophets, and all these things that are there.

We've got to be students of God's Word because if we're sharing the gospel, people might ask us questions, and I hope they do.

Now hear me out on this. Can I share some older-brother-in-Christ stuff with you real quick? Is that okay? This is just me and you talking. It's not in the notes.

You need to share the gospel even if you feel like you're not ready yet. What do I mean? One, people need it. And there's never going to be a perfect time when you're like, "I have graduated with 10 seminary degrees. Now I'm equipped to share the gospel."

When you share the gospel and people ask you questions, one, you can say, "I don't know. Can I get back to you on that?" That's acceptable.

Secondly, it'll identify the areas of your faith that you need to grow in the most. When somebody goes, "Okay, man, I love this Jesus thing you're talking about, but I really struggle. Were Adam and Eve real?" you go, "Oh, snap. I don't know."

The answer is yes, by the way. But you grow in these things. You go, "Man, I didn't know that Jesus prayed the Psalms while He was on the cross. I didn't realize there was a connection there."

You grow in your love for God's Word and your understanding of God's Word so that when you share the gospel and the hope of Jesus, it's a fuller and more mature faith that you can show somebody.

You never graduate from sharing the gospel, but you're never too underqualified to share the gospel either. Some of you have been believing a lie that you're not ready yet.

But here's the deal: if you've accepted Jesus as the Lord and Savior of your life and He's changed your eternity, you're ready right now because He's given you a testimony, and you've got to share it. People need

the hope you have, the joy you have, and the new life you have. Don't wait on it. Just share it with them now.

You've got to know the gospel, you've got to know your Bible, and then you've got to know people.

What do I mean? As the band comes back up here and we're going to sing, worship, and have a time of response, you've got to know the people you're talking to.

Have you ever done that? You've given a speech and didn't realize who you were talking to, and it was not received well at all. I've done that. It's horrifying.

When you share the gospel with people, it's important that you understand. Ask them questions. Don't just be like a robot: "Did you know that Jesus came to die for you?" And they're like, "What?"

Go, "Hey, tell me your name." Ask them questions and listen, guys. Listen to what they say.

"Hey, are you a spiritual person?" is a great way to get a conversation started.

"Hey, do you go to church anywhere?"

"Hey, do you know about who Jesus is?"

Just hear what they say.

If it's the cultural Christian, like so many of us deal with here in Texas in the Bible Belt, one of the best ways you can appeal to them is this: They go, "Yeah, I'm good. I go to church twice a year." They've got this jacked-up country music theology, like, "I just do a little bit better than I do bad."

What do you appeal to them with? You appeal to them with this: If somebody says, "I'm a believer," and they say, "I live however I want to, but I go to church, and that offsets the bad," you go, "Hey, what I read is that we've all messed up, and we're all in need of a perfect Savior. That means you've got to repent of your sin and trust in Jesus as your Lord and Savior."

But you've got to know who you're talking to.

Man, I pray that you have a conversation with an atheist. Let me tell you this: there are a lot of atheists walking out there who aren't angry and looking for a fight. They're sad, lonely, and looking for hope.

Guess what? Even if you don't know the Scriptures yet, even if you got saved yesterday and you're a baby believer, do you know what you've got? You've got your testimony. No one can deny that you were blind and now you see, that you were dead and now you are alive.

You can share that hope with the unbeliever, the lost atheist who doesn't think God exists. Maybe you will even say to them, "Hey, I didn't think that either, but the Holy Spirit of the living God came into my life and changed everything, and I'll never be the same. That hope you're looking for, I have it."

It doesn't mean everything's perfect. It doesn't mean all my problems went away like that. But do you know what it means? It means I have strength for today and hope for tomorrow because that's the God I've surrendered to. That's the Jesus I've submitted my life to.

Then there are other religions. We live in Houston, Texas. Y'all know where you live, right? There are people all over the place who go to different places of worship. You know this, right? I'm going to pop your little worldview bubble if you don't know that.

There are Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and Jews. There are people of all different faith backgrounds who don't know that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father but by Him.

They might meet you at, "I know that I'm not a good person."

You can say, "Man, that is true. That is bad news. But let me tell you about the good news: you don't have to try to earn it. We're not all at the bottom of the mountain trying to make our way to the top. The God at the top of the mountain came down in one way through the form of Jesus, and He said, 'Here it is. All you've got to do is let go of all this other stuff you keep bear-hugging and follow Me.'"

Meet them where they are, and take a risk. It'll feel like it.

Have you ever done it? Have you ever shared the gospel? You're like, "Oh my..." Your voice gets choked up. You forget your name. You're like, "Hi, how are you? I don't know what day it is." It gets a little nerve-racking, and that's okay. That's okay.

But what if we all left here today and had a gospel conversation? What if we took this how-to and didn't just put it here, but used it in our lives?

What if you took all the Scripture, all the points, the three circles, and everything we put on a screen, and you said, "Man, that's some really good information, but I'm going to put it into application"?

A lot of the time, that's where it ends for us. We walk out those doors, everything stays in a notebook or in a note on our phone, and we just live life the same.

This whole how-to thing is good stuff, but a how-to can't replace a changed heart. Do you see what I'm saying? A list of instructions won't change you like your heart being changed and saved by the goodness of God through Jesus will change you.

I've got to ask you tonight, here's what I want us to do. I want you to put your stuff down. Take a big, deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Slow down real quick.

Close your eyes. You can bow your head if you want to, but close your eyes just so you're not distracted. If you're like me and when you close your eyes you start thinking about a hundred other things, just stare at the floor. That's fine.

I want you, in this time of thinking and meditating on this, to ask: Has Jesus changed your life or not?

Some people in this room say it's important, but He hasn't changed your life, and so there's really no proof. There's a separation between what you say and what's really true.

Our team's going to be at the back of the room. We've got a prayer team. We've got staff. Y'all go ahead and go back there right now.

Listen, here's the deal. I don't want you to think I'm sitting up here asking you to share the gospel if you've never received the gospel. If some of this stuff is the first time you've ever heard it, here's your application: surrender to the gospel.

Say, "Jesus, I am in need of You as Savior of my life. I'm asking You to forgive me of my sin, come into my life, and make me new. Give me that life."

If that's you, go ahead and walk to the back of the room right now. Our team is there, and they want to talk to you. You can't share something you've never received. If that's you and you want to surrender to the gospel, you can go to the back of the room.

Secondly, here's what I want us to do. I want us to stand where we are. Stand right where you are. Still not looking around, still not distracting anybody, and still not saying anything. You just got up on your feet.

With your eyes closed, I want you to think about this. You're about to walk out the door in a minute. You're going to walk straight out the door, and you've got a choice to make.

You can take all this information on how to share the gospel and just leave it, or you can walk out of here and share the gospel.

If you've never surrendered, that's your call. Walk to the back of the room and surrender your life to Jesus.

But if you have, here's our challenge: Walk out of here tonight, and before you come back next week, have one - do you hear me? - one conversation with someone about the good news of Jesus Christ that can save from the power of sin and give you eternity and freedom, walking with the God who created you.

Take what you've learned today. Take what you've heard today. Take the Scripture, the truth of God's Word, and put it into practice. Share the gospel with one person this week.

Right where you are, I'm going to ask that you hold your hands out in a posture of receiving. I'm going to pray this as we close, as we continue in a time of prayer, and as we continue in a time of worship.

God, I pray boldly tonight that You would see Your people here. God, that You would break the hearts of Your people. God, if there is anything in us as Your people, as followers of Jesus, that is not pleasing to You, God, I pray that You would crush that in us.

God, that You would renew our hearts, that You would remind us of the joy of our salvation, the hope that comes from knowing You. God, I pray that You would convict us so that we would walk in Your Spirit out of this room and share the hope of eternity with one person.

God, I pray that we would be eager to do it. God, I pray that we would share the gospel tonight, tomorrow morning, that we would leave and go to work, to school, and back home and share the hope of Jesus with someone.

God, I pray that we would come back in next Tuesday night excited to share what You have done.

God, I pray that You would give us this burden, that You would remind us of Your hope. God, that we would not

walk in the guilt of sin, but that we would walk in the freedom of the gospel.

God, like we pray each and every week, I pray that You would receive the glory that You're due. God, I pray that people would forget our names and our faces, but as a result of what happens in this room, many people would come to know You and walk in newness of life, in the freedom of the gospel.

Lord, it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.