

reproducing church resources

message transcript



Blank for double sided printing

adult message transcript

Get in the Game

The Big Idea: This series explores how God has designed each of us to be on the mission of a lifetime. With sports analogies as the backdrop, we will explore the broad scope of the mission and the unique part we each have been invited to play in “the Game”.



Contents	page
The Draft	5
The Skills	13
The Game Plan	19
The Dynasty	29

Teaching Team: Tim Sutherland, Dave Ferguson, and Jon Ferguson

The BIG IDEA™ Copyright © 2005 by Community Christian Church and the NewThing Network. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of Community Christian Church.



Community Christian Church
1635 Emerson Lane
Naperville, IL 60540
630.388.5000
www.communitychristian.org



NewThing Network
1635 Emerson Lane
Naperville, IL 60540
630.388.5205
www.newthing.org

How to use this document

Community Christian Church has collaboration in its DNA. Our messages / talks / sermons are developed and refined over eight weeks by a team of six to eight teaching and lead pastors in our NewThing Network (www.newthing.org). We do a lot of research, and wrestle together over what makes it in to our talks. Each teaching pastor also spends time to personalize the message for themselves. We hope you will take the time to do the same – to wrestle with the main theme of the message and make these messages your own.

These are four questions that we almost always ask regarding any talk we craft as a team:

Question 1: **"What?"** - This is simply asking, "What is it that you are talking about?" This is an important question because it is very easy to talk about more than one thing. We have followed Haddon Robinson's teaching of always sticking to one BIG IDEA. The BIG IDEA is how we answer the "What?" question.

Question 2: **"So what?"** - The second question is asking, "So what makes this topic such a big deal that people ought to pay attention to you?" What are you going to say in the next thirty minutes that warrants the attention of hundreds, or thousands, of listeners?

Question 3: **"Now what?"** - This question is the application question. This question will generally be answered with something you want people to do, think or feel differently after hearing this talk.

Question 4: **"Where is Jesus in it?"** - We want our teaching to always be Christo-centric and by asking, "Where is Jesus in this talk?" we never leave out the obvious.

We have formatted this transcript as a resource for teaching pastors to take notes to the right of the text during message preparation. When our teaching pastors have finalized their transcripts, and added personal stories of their own, they usually format the document they use during message delivery in 18pt type 1.5 row spaced, set top, bottom, left, and right margins at 0.5 inches, and include page numbers on the bottom. They use highlighters, and mark up their final document with underlines, etc.

Example:

"We would line up in the gym, our sneakers nudging a stretch of red tape that marked the boundaries of the elementary school basketball court. Across from us, team captains took turns calling out names: the chosen ones, the first picks. The ones who were picked first swaggered over and faced us. They whispered friends' names in the captain's ear.

[contents](#)

The Draft

The BIG IDEA:

God picks each of us to be part of what He is up to in the world - to be part of His team.



Message

I found something on-line that I thought really relates to what we're talking about today:

"We would line up in the gym, our sneakers nudging a stretch of red tape that marked the boundaries of the elementary school basketball court. Across from us, team captains took turns calling out names: the chosen ones, the first picks. The ones who were picked first swaggered over and faced us. They whispered friends' names in the captain's ear. The line thinned until the last kids shuffled off to one team or the other. Outwardly, it was simple gym-class bureaucracy: before we could play, we had to pick teams. It went much deeper, of course. Class hierarchy was being established. In the gym class food chain, I was plankton. Technically, I wasn't even picked last: I wasn't picked at all. When the rest of the class had been chosen, I was assigned to whichever team was unlucky enough to have last pick".

Can you relate? It doesn't have to be a sports thing: maybe it was for a sorority, or the prom, or going to the dance but never being asked to dance.

On the screen is the story that is usually called "Jesus calls the first disciples." Let's read this out loud together on three, ok? 1-2-3 go. I found out something recently about this story that I didn't know. The very first followers, you know "the disciples", they knew all about what it's like to be the one nobody picked. In Jesus' day, the most important people in town were the religious leaders, who in Jesus' culture the "Rabbis", the religious leaders. Everybody looked up to the rabbis, and every mom and dad wanted their son to become a rabbi.

And here's how it worked: at the age of six, every Jewish boy would go to the local synagogue to enter training in learning the Torah (the first five books of the Bible). From the age of six, they'd start memorizing. By the age of ten, if you weren't one of

the gifted ones, you were told “go home and learn the family business”. The ones who didn’t get sent home would go on and memorize the rest of the Old Testament, 39 books in all, by the age of 13. And again, at 13, if you weren’t one of the best, you were told “go home and learn the family business.” By 14 or 15, the few remaining would go through a kind of interview process to become a disciple of one of the rabbis. And at the end of this interview process you’d either hear “go home and learn the family business” or the words that only the best and the brightest got to hear: “Come, follow Me.”

So, Jesus approaches the first disciples, and they’re fishing for a living, see what that’s telling us? They’d been told “you don’t have what it takes, go home and learn the family business”. It tells us that they were among the ones not picked.

Now, Jesus was not part of the religious establishment, but he was considered a rabbi. So when Jesus says to the first disciples “Come, follow Me.” He was saying “I pick you.” See, I was never taught that. I was always taught that Jesus walked up to these guys out of the blue and laid this heavy-duty challenge on them and they were courageous enough to drop everything and follow Him. All the emphasis was always on *them* deciding to follow *Him*. What nobody ever told me what this had to mean to these guys. All their lives, they were the ones who didn’t get picked, and now Jesus is saying “I want you on my team. I pick you!” Can you imagine what that meant to them? When I learned that, this whole story changed for me. Now them deciding to drop everything and follow Him was not about what incredibly good and courageous people they were: this was their response to the awesome-ness of being picked.

And being picked by a rabbi was a huge thing because in those days, when a rabbi picked you to follow Him, He was not just saying “come learn from me”, he was saying “I believe you have what it takes to become like me, to learn from me and develop into the kind of person that I am. I believe you have what it takes to be like me and do what I do.” And these guys had heard of Jesus. Everybody was talking about Him. He was amazing. Even His enemies were His enemies because people were so drawn to Him. And this amazing guy comes to these regular guys who were used to not getting picked and says “come, follow me?” No wonder they said “yes”. For maybe the first time in their lives, someone had confidence in them to become more than anyone had ever imagined.

Randy Byrd story.

Back to our story. Another thing I don't think I ever really understood about Jesus picking the first disciples is what it is they were being picked for. I thought when Jesus said "Come follow me", these guys were being picked to change jobs: career change from being in the fishing business to being in the religion business. I always thought the first disciples were being picked to be the first pastors or priests, like they were going to be the first "men of the cloth", the first ones to run church services and take up offerings and schedule pot luck dinners.

But look at what Jesus says He is picking these guys for: when they are "drafted" to be on his team, he says "I will make you fishers of men." He comes to these guys and he says to them, "You've spent your lives trying to catch fish, but now I want your lives to be about something else: people." Think about the offer of being fishers of men versus fishers of fish: I don't know how you feel about fish. But me, I don't have any emotional attachment to fish. We have an aquarium in our house with a few fish in it, and in spite of how we neglect those fish, they just keep on living. I've come into the room before and found a fish laying on the floor, and just picked it up, threw it back in, and it lived. And I realize that some people love to fish, but all in all, having your life change from being about catching, cleaning, and selling stinky, smelly, slimy fish every day compared to being about people That had to be huge for those guys! What an incredible shift for these guys.

So what's this have to do with us? Their story is our story. See I think we think in our culture of self-determination and emphasis on personal choice, that we miss something super-valuable about what it means to be a Christ-follower. Look at what Jesus says: "You did not choose me. I chose you." John 15:16. And when Jesus chooses you, it's not a blanket thing. Jesus is saying to you personally "I choose you."

I read something in a book recently along these lines that really struck me deeply: "I have been told that I need to believe in Jesus. Which is a good thing. But what I am learning is that Jesus believes in me. I have been told that I need to have faith in God. Which is a good thing. But what I am learning is that God has faith in me." This series, Get in the Game, is all about you and your contribution to what God is doing in this world. And it doesn't start with you deciding to do something or do more or

whatever. It starts for us where it started for the first disciples: Jesus coming to you and saying, "I pick you."

And remember, when He picks you to be on his team, to be one of His followers, He's saying He not only picks you, but He has confidence in you. He not only asks you to believe in Him, He asks you to believe that He believes in you. He not only asks you to have faith in Him, He asks you to have faith that He has faith in you.

And please understand what He is picking you for. He is not picking you to become a better or more religious person, and He's not picking you just so you can do a few good deeds and become a more charitably oriented person.

When Jesus picks you to be on his team, He's calling you to be a part of something that is about the most important thing in the world. He calls us to invest our lives in the lives of others and in helping people find their way back to God. In this series if you're not already serving in some way, we're going to encourage you to take that next step and get involved. It could be in all sorts of ways: helping in Kids' City or Student Community, setting up and tearing down chairs, holding babies in the nursery, ushering, playing on stage. But you've got to understand what it's about and not about: it's not about just doing some good deed or helping out a little, it's about getting in the game, about all of us doing all we can to do the most important thing we can with our lives.

If you're already in the game, if you're already serving, contributing, involved in what God is doing in the world, you might think this series isn't for you; that services aren't going to be that challenging or interesting to you for the next few weeks. Well, I think this is just as much for the people who are already into the game as for the ones who are more or less on the sidelines, because anybody who knows sports knows the very best players are always looking to take their game to the next level. The great ones, the Michael Jordan's, the Wayne Gretsky's, the Tom Brady's, the Tiger Woods', they always want to take their game to the next level and it's not just for the money or the press or the championships. With the very best ones, it's for the love of the game.

If you feel like you're already in the game, I hope this series will fuel the fire of your love of the game. And I hope this series increases your awareness of the possibilities, and gratitude that

you get to be in the game. And I hope this series challenges you to think about what it means for you to take your game to the next level. Not about doing more for the sake of doing more, but for the love of the game, and never forget the love of this game is for the love of God and the love of people.

I love what the Bible says this: “He’s using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what He is building. He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now he’s using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone!” (Eph. 2:19-22) -Set up chairs, play in the band, serve the poor, teach a class, invite a friend, it looks different for each of us, what matters is not the particular function, we’ll talk more about that next week. What matters is that we are given this opportunity to have our lives be about loving people and loving God.

And it’s not just about what goes on here. It’s about our whole lives. If you follow Jesus you no longer have a secular job. If you follow Jesus and you are doing what you do in His name then it is no longer secular work; it is Sacred. You are there; God is there. The difference is our awareness. It’s not about becoming more religious, it’s about becoming more aware that all of life is connected to God. It’s all sacred, and He calls us to follow Him in everything we do. Every moment of every day is pregnant with possibility of making a difference for God.

So there you have it. You’ve been picked. Selected, drafted to join a team that is all about doing whatever you can out of love for people and love for God. In sports there’s a term for the top draft picks, the ones that a franchise looks to be it’s future. They’re called “blue chippers”. Same thing in the stock market: The stocks with the greatest value are called... right, “blue chip” stocks.

Look what God says to us: “It is clear to us, friends, that God not only loves you very much but also has put his hand on you for something special.” (1 Thessalonians. 1:4 on screen)

So picking us, that’s God’s part. Here’s our part. In sports, you can be picked by a team, but in order to play you’ve got to sign with that team. You’ve got to say, “Yea, I am going to be on your team.” And in pro sports when a blue chip athlete is selected, the player puts on a team jersey with his name on it, or a hat for that team, and he fields questions from the media. Don’t worry; we’re not going to ask you to do that today. But we are going to

ask you to consider doing something. I've got these chips, blue chips here, and I want to consider taking one of these chips as an indication of your desire to step up and respond to God's selecting of you. (No, this won't work at the boats, so don't get any ideas)

The band is going to lead us in a song titled "*I Will Offer Up My Life*" and that's what God's asking us to do. There's no question about whether or not you're picked – that's a done deal. The question is will you say "yes." While the song is playing we want to give you one of these blue chips as a way for you to accept your selection by God. It's going to be real simple, if you want to say yes to God's selection of you, just raise your hand. And I will give you one, and you can take it with you from this place as a reminder that every day, you're in the game.

Now I know for some this will be the first time you've ever committed yourself to following Christ – to say yes to His selecting you. If that's you, or if you have never made your decision to follow Jesus public, there's a public declaration of that decision called baptism, and you can let us know that you would like to make your decision to follow Him in that way by checking the box on the inside panel of your program, tearing off the perforation, and dropping it in the offering bag. For others, maybe you have before, but for whatever reason you've been more on the sideline, than in the game. And so by taking a chip, you're rededicating yourself and this time it means you're going to give yourself and your skills to the cause of helping people find their way back to Him.

And let's be real clear about this. This is not a "get on the bandwagon" kind of thing. Don't ask for a chip unless you're for real about it, and please know that it's ok to not ask for one. But also, don't think this is a promise by you to be Super-Christian, either: maybe for you today this chip means committing to taking the next step wherever you are in your faith journey? This has always been a place where we respect the pace that God is working in each person's life. So don't let this be about whether or not someone else notices or not, ok?

I can't think of a better time than while we celebrate the Lord's Supper for you to say yes to God's selection. He chose you. Will you choose Him? He loved you so much that he sent His Son to earth to live, die, and come back to life on our behalf. Are you ready to say yes to his selection of you? Here we go. If you

want to acknowledge his choice – say yes, just raise your hand while we sing this song.

Blank for double sided printing

[contents](#)

The Skills

The BIG IDEA: God not only drafts us to be on His team, but He also has in mind for us particular positions to play based on the abilities, gifts, and resources He gives each of us.



Message

Ok, let's start off this way today. Think about something with me: What is the first thing you ever realized that you were good at? As far back as you can remember, what did you discover you were good at? Now turn to somebody near you and tell them and have them tell you. Go!

Hold on to that. I want to tell you a story about some people who discovered that what they were good at was something that had far more significance than they ever would have dreamed of! How many have seen the old Charlton Heston movie, "The 10 Commandments"? And of course the most famous scene is the parting of the Red Sea, right? Well this story is about those people right after that.

Quick background: The people who God saved through the whole Moses-Red Sea thing were slaves. And not only were they slaves, but their parents were slaves and their parents' parents were slaves. These people had been enslaved for 400 years in Egypt.

And after God frees them, God tells them He wants them to build something called the Tabernacle. Now the Tabernacle was this movable building, a really big, intricately designed tent, about half the size of a football field, dedicated to the worship of God. But this was not your standard building-with-a-steeple kind of thing. The book of Exodus is 40 chapters long and most of chapters 25-40 are all about all that went into the building and furnishing of the Tabernacle.

Several things in this story really stand out to me. The first thing is *how* God tells them to do this thing for Him. Speaking through Moses, God says "Tell the Israelites to bring Me an offering. You are to receive the offering for Me from each man whose heart prompts him to give. Everyone who is willing is to bring to the LORD an offering..." (Ex. 25:1/35:5) Now if you've been a slave all your life and your parents were slaves, and your parents'

parents were slaves, this had to be pretty weird to have someone say to you “if you are willing”, “if your heart prompts you”. Not words that slaves hear, right? For maybe the first time in their lives, they had a choice. God gives these people a choice.

And right smack dab in the middle of the building of the Tabernacle is the whole Golden Calf debacle. Moses comes down from the mountain with the 10 Commandments and finds all the people worshipping this Golden Calf, kind of pagan orgy kind of thing, which of course was pretty much the worst thing they could do. And yeah, God was strict in his discipline. But after that, He calls ‘em right back to working on the Tabernacle. So these people were not disqualified by doing the worst possible thing they could do. God still wanted them to contribute, to use their skills. All He wanted to know was – are you willing?

Now the next thing that strikes me about this story is what God asks them to give. There’s this whole list of stuff: “gold, silver and bronze; blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ram skins dyed red and hides of sea cows; acacia wood; olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; and onyx stones and other gems.” Now all of that stuff, that’s all pretty pricy, expensive stuff. See, as they left Egypt, they’d had taken with them as much as they could carry. But think about this with me: these people are homeless. They’re out in the dessert, and who knows how long they’re going to be out there. And God’s asking them for the most precious stuff they’ve got? They’re not poor, because they did have this stuff, but if you’re homeless and on your own for the first time ever, I’m saying if that’s me, I’m thinking “I need my stuff.” Are we tracking?

Next thing about this story that I think is interesting. God asks them to use whatever skills they’ve got. As slaves these people learned all sorts of different skills, from construction to sewing to woodworking to metalworking; they had skills from their previous lives as slaves. And God called each of them to use their skills. He calls the *men*, He calls the *women*, He calls them *all* to use their skills and build this tabernacle.

And when the Tabernacle was completed, something really amazing happened: it says that the presence of God showed-up in the form of a cloud and that this cloud was something than anybody and everybody could see. So the Tabernacle wasn’t

just a cool piece of architecture. It was a place where the presence of God could be experienced like nowhere else. And I bet for the average former slave who had helped build the Tabernacle it was awe-inspiring; not just that God was clearly there, but also that they had a part in that happening!

Now, before we go on, I've got to tell you: I believe God brought you here today to give you a choice. No matter who you are (old, young, male, female, church-goer, church-avoider); no matter what your past –God wants you to do something with huge significance! So let me ask you a couple of questions: First, ARE YOU WILLING? We can all spend our lives just doing for ourselves and those closest to us. Or we can get in the game of what God is up to in the world. He asked them, and He's asking us. Second: WILL YOU GIVE YOUR BEST? If you want it, He wants your best. If you're willing and if you're up for giving your best, it's time to use your skills.

Let's go back to that first question I asked you: the first thing you ever realized you were good at. I'm convinced that as a person draws closer to God, they'll hear God say more and more clearly, "You got skills. And I want you to use your skills to make a difference for Me!"

Maybe our reaction is "what skills do I have that God could use?" Remember the scene in Napoleon Dynamite where he's telling his friend Pedro, "Pedro, chicks dig guys with skills." And Pedro says "what skills do I have?" Napoleon says: "Computer hacking skills, bow-hunting skills, num chuck skills." God is saying to all of us "you got skills!" Skills don't have to be flashy or impressive.

This is Mary, and she's got skills. Baby skills. For the last 15 years Mary has worked in the nursery at CCC and touched literally hundreds of lives. One family in our church, have an infant who won't let anybody other than Mom and Dad hold her except, you guessed it: Mary. And every week Mary is there to hold their baby so they can continue to find their way back to God. Another couple who are friends of mine, when they showed up at CCC their little guy had born preemie and almost didn't make it...it was Mary that earned their trust as she cared for Cole during church. Karen Brown, who has now moved to Boston to start a new church there as a part of that team. Guess where her difference-making started? In the nursery as an apprentice leader with Mary. And I'm glad to see Mary every time I see her because she cared for both of my boys when they were babies. Baby-skills!

Same thing's true financially. I have a friend who lives in another area and when Hurricane Katrina hit, they encouraged kindergartners to bring a penny to school every day in September. Every day, his son would ask for a penny or he'd dig around in the car for a penny (there's always at least one penny somewhere in every car, right?) to help the hurricane victims. Turns out, the whole school district (k-8th grade) was collecting pennies and when September was over, \$11,294.54 had been collected in pennies. City officials were so impressed, they added \$8,000 of their own. The mayor, a lifelong resident, said, "This is one of the best things I've ever seen this community do." And it all started with pennies.

That's all the kids had to give, but each of us, I know money is a sensitive subject, but never forget: God asks for our best. Not just something to ease our conscience or just put something in when it's giving back to God time. With all due respect, please don't do that. Think about the Israelites: these homeless, former slaves gave their best to the God who had set them free. So I'll just say it as simply as I can say it: part of skills is giving generously in response to the God who has set you free.

And I know, whether it's time or talents or finances, there's all sorts of things to hold us back. Maybe you've been burned before by some church or organization. Or maybe you're thinking, "I've really got a past, and don't you need to be a "good person" to do God stuff? Nope, just a willingness to give your best. Or maybe bottom line for you is that it just doesn't sound like something that would be very fulfilling or rewarding, that it won't be worth it.

Check out these words from the Bible: "Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits." (1 Corinthians 12:7)

So, maybe you're thinking, "Ok, so... what's the benefit?" The Bible often calls our skills "spiritual gifts", and when it comes to using your skills, your gifts, I think God would say "Your skills are a gift to you." Look at these words from the Bible: "You are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus". That word "workmanship" could also be translated "craftsmanship". Think about stuff that is just finely crafted: maybe an expensive watch or piece of furniture or an exotic car. When something is made with expert craftsmanship, it's not just nice, it's like a work of art. So when it says you are God's workmanship, it's saying "you're

one of God's masterpieces", or as one person I know put it, "you're a piece of work". Your life is not an accident: what you're good at and what you can do are part of God's crafting of you, and I really believe that getting in the game or taking your game to the next level, I really believe that it's not just about what you do for others. It benefits you.

The Israelites the building the Tabernacle: When that cloud of the Lord's presence showed up and enveloped what they had built, you know they had to be going "Wow, I had a part in *that*? I had something to do with *that*?" That was not just their gift to God, it was God's gift to them to be involved in something so awesome.

I know of one guy who was very successful in real-estate, but was always just a Sunday-only kind of guy when it came to church, but at one point he was challenged to use his real estate expertise to lead in the various building projects of his church, and for twenty years he led as that church expanded and expanded to touch the lives of more and more people. And then he got terminal cancer, just like that, and the pastor who had challenged him to get in the game came to him just two days before he died to thank him for all he had done for God and for people over the years. And the guy said to him, "No, thank you. Thank you for letting me do this with my life." Don't you want that? To be able to come to the end of your life and go, "Wow, thank you for letting me get in the game"?

And the other thing God wants you to understand about taking your skills and getting in the game comes from the rest of that verse I mentioned a minute ago, "You are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared in advance for you to do." Did you ever know somebody who had the reputation for being a little too full of themselves when it came to their own personal attractiveness to members of the opposite sex? Did you ever hear somebody say "He sure thinks he's God's gift to women" or "She thinks she's God's gift to men." And that's obviously not a compliment. But has anybody told you that you have the skills you have, you can do the things you can do for God both as part of your church and in your individual life, and you can do those things because your skills are God's gift to the world?

"Good works" doesn't mean just good deeds, like helping a stranger with a flat tire or a little old lady cross the street. "Good works" means specific things that reflect the goodness of God,

and they're things that God has always had in mind with your name on them from long before you were ever born.

My boys, they're 14 and 11, and they're very different people. One's good at some things, the other is good at other things. And from the time they were little, in addition to saying "Good job, man you're good at that", I've tried to say as often as I could to my boys, "You're good at that, and God can use you being good at that to touch people's lives and change the world." I want my boys to grow up understanding that their skills are God's gift to them, and also God's gift to the world.

Here's how our kids in kids city are responding to this series. They're calling it U Got Game. Check this out. (Roll video)

And here's the kicker to bring all of this together. Remember how I said the Tabernacle the Israelites built was a place to experience the presence of God? See if you can see the parallel in this: "And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit." Ephesians 2:21 The Tabernacle was a physical place to experience God, and when it comes to us, it's not some building: it's us. We're meant to be a community of people where people can experience God living in us and among us. That's what "church" is meant to be: not a building or an organization, but a people who become a special dwelling-place for people to experience God.

You got skills. I've got skills. We've all got skills, and God calls us to get in the game together. He wants us to get in the game if we are willing, if our heart prompts us to, and wants us to give our very best. You can say for you, but I will say for me: I want my life to be spent experiencing what God made me for and I want to be part of what God's up to in the world.

You've got skills! Get in the game.

[contents](#)

The Game Plan

The BIG IDEA:

The goal of the team is to change the world, to help people everywhere find their way back to God. That's the game plan.



Message

Some of my favorite movies are sports movies: Hoosiers, Miracle, Remember the Titans. And what I love is that there is always a scene where at ...

- ...a strategic point in the season...
- ...during a critical timeout...
- ...when the championship is on the line...

The coach will pull the team together and say, "alright guys, here is the game plan!"

- ...remind them of who they are / they can do it!
- ...it will take teamwork...trust / faith in him and each other
- ...and lays out the game plan...

It's the part of Jesus' life that most people are least familiar with; it's the period of time between the resurrection and the time when He physically left the earth. (*"After His suffering He showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God."* - Acts 1:3)

There was about 40 days he spent with his team and now he is preparing to leave. So Jesus calls a timeout; he pulls his team into the huddle...

- ...remind them of who they are / they can do it!
- ...it will take teamwork...trust / faith in Him and each other
- ...and lays out the game plan...

And here is what he said, it basically boils down to one sentence: *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* (Acts 1:8).

That's not many words, but if you think of the first disciples as His team, this is Jesus laying out His game plan. Jerusalem was where they were, Judea was the surrounding area, kind of like

the county or greater metropolitan area that Jerusalem was in, Samaria was farther away and a different culture, and the ends of the earth means basically “all over the world.”

And you'd think these guys would hear that and go tearing out of the locker room to get in the game. I mean these were the disciples, the 12 Apostles. They had seen Jesus walk on water, feed the five thousand, turn water into wine. They sat under His teaching for three years. Good grief - they'd just spent 40 days with Him after He'd risen from the DEAD. These are the guys who have all the churches and schools and kids named after them. So you'd think these guys would go right out and have at it, wouldn't you? Being His witnesses, representing Him starting with where they were, then spreading out to the whole wide world. That's Acts 1:8! The game plan!

In Acts 8:1 we see a tendency in that first group of Christ followers when it came to the game plan that we need to know about. The early church had the game plan, but they were slow to move on it. The Christ-followers, the early church was being threatened and in some cases their lives were in danger and it took that to get them moving!

Think of it as being kind of the opposite of dogs. Dogs have no problem moving around, in fact, if you don't want a dog to move around, you have to teach it to. Right? Stay! I have to have the most hyper dog in the whole world! Come over to my house and the dog is like constant motion – when you show up Cody will be the first one to the door and the first one to jump on you and the first one to run back to the kitchen to tell us and then run back and jump on you again. Here is what my dog is not thinking: “Oh, someone is at the door - I'll just lay here and wait for Dave to go to the door.” No way, He is always moving. You have to teach a dog to stay! Dogs don't have to be taught to go...they naturally go, they have to be taught to stay!

The first Christ-followers and the first church: they were the opposite of dogs -staying is what they did naturally. Going had to be taught. But going is integral to the Jesus game plan. But staying is what they did best: Keep doing what we're doing where we're doing it. *Stay* within our comfort zones, *stay* with what we know, *stay* where we feel most at ease.

It's what churches naturally do. Individuals, too. Think about where you are sitting. I bet you anything you sat in the same

section, and probably the same row the last time you were here. We naturally stay.

Pretty human thing, very natural thing, but you've got to remember something about the game plan Jesus gave His first followers: it was a *super*-natural thing. People and churches (since churches ARE people!) tend to naturally stay, and that gets in the way of Christ's supernatural game plan for helping people find their way back to God. And so in Acts 8:1, it takes a little trouble coming their way (actually a LOT of trouble, persecution was a very big thing), and the church starts to follow the game plan. They spread out to Judea and Samaria, and the game is on!

And the reason we need to know this is odds are for us as a church and as individuals, we'll find the same tendency in ourselves. The tendency to stay where we are and keep doing what we're doing instead of going ahead with the game plan that we've been given.

And I think Jesus knew that, in fact I know that He knew that, and that's one of the reasons why Jesus *didn't* just say "this is the game plan that you'll be my witnesses all over the place, starting with inside your comfort zone and then moving out of it" and leave it at that. Notice that phrase "And you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you." A supernatural game plan was going to take a supernatural power, and this power is experienced in God's game plan by God's people being Spirit-led.

SPIRIT-LED (*"The Holy Spirit will come upon you..."*)

Back when my daughter Amy, she's 14 now, was a preschooler, it seemed she was going through a real rebellious streak...she wouldn't obey. Simple things like...

- We would tell her to turn off the TV, wash her hands and come to the table...and she would ignore us and just sit there watching TV and not come to the table!
- We would tell her to talk softly, because her little brother was napping cause she'd wake him up...and she'd keep talking just as loud as ever!

Sue and I were growing increasingly frustrated...

- "Why doesn't she obey?"

- “Why does she keep ignoring us?”
- “Why isn’t she listening?”

So I sat down with her determined to have a Father-child heart to heart talk. I began talking...calmly...about how she needed to “obey the first time.” And this strained look comes over her face, she leans in and she says, “Dad, talk so I can hear you” (2x)

Then it hits me! My little girl can’t hear me. Literally, she can’t hear me. She’s not being willfully rebellious...it’s just that she can’t hear!

- She wasn’t deliberately disobeying and talking loud to wake her brother...she can’t hear!
- She’s not ignoring us...she’s not hearing us!

So we took Amy to Dr. Nelson; and Dr. Nelson looked at Amy’s ears. She did a tympanograph; it measures the vibrations within the ear cavity. The report came back and it was a flat line ...no vibrations. It’s like a flat line on an EKG where the heart just quit beating. A flat line meant that the ear was receiving no sound vibrations; the ear was full of fluid. Fortunately, we were told that it could be remedied with medication (and it was). But this was a little girl who had only about 5-10% hearing!

This got me to thinking...

- What if a tympanograph of our spiritual listening came back from Heaven flatline?
- What would it mean if we Christ-followers, children of God discovered that we were living our lives only hearing about 5-10% of what the Father has to say to us?
- What if as Christ followers, leaders and whole churches we get to Heaven and God says, “I was speaking...but you weren’t hearing!”

See, when Jesus said, “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;* he was laying out the first value that will guide his movement. And that is we will be **Spirit-Led**.

I believe **the most important experience** in the life of Christ-follower; **the most critical experience** in the life of Christ-follower; you could make a case for the **only experience of a Christ-follower**; and it’s what Jesus called us to - to be **Spirit-Led!**

Over and over again God's word talks about this first value: I'd like for you to read these verses with me out loud; on the count of 3. 1, 2, 3...

- *"My sheep **listen to my voice**; I know them, and they follow me."* (John 10:27) (**God speaks**)
- *"Since we live by the Spirit, let us **keep in step with the Spirit**."* (Galatians 5:25) (**We step**)

God speaks, we step (5x)

Right now some of you are sitting on the sidelines and God is saying, "I want you in the game."

1. **God's prompting** – As I talk right now...some of you can sense inside you something saying, "I need to serve, I need to make a difference"...that's God!
2. **God's Word** – Bible tells us that *"Jesus came to serve and not to be served"*; *"Each person is given something to do that shows who God is"* *1 Corinthians 12:7* ...that's God!
3. **God's church / small group** – people have told you, "you'd be great!" or "you should sooo try that" ...that's God!
4. **God created circumstances** – situations ordained by God that are unique to you...that's God!

So the first thing about the game plan is the game plan is something we're going to tend to naturally resist, but because it's a supernatural plan, it's going to take a supernatural power to go after God's game plan.

RISK ("*...and you will be my witnesses...*")

There's something that God will enable us and empower us to do that He will never make us do for Him. And that something is RISK. Take risks. History-makers are almost always risk-takers. And risk taking is always about being willing to fail. Columbus, Ben Franklin, The Wright Bros, they all took risks...and they all failed. Time and again their plans got fouled up, obstacles got in their way, but they pressed on for a greater cause than themselves & have since gone down in history as helping to change and shape the world. When Jesus said witnesses, yeah, it was a huge honor to be called to represent, to present God to the world, but witnesses also means "martyrs", the ones who are willing to lay their whole lives on the line, even to the point of losing them. And this is the part of Christ-following that is let's say, *not so popular*.

The problem with Christianity in our day is that following Christ has been dumbed-down to 'attending church, being in a small group & serving for an hour on the weekend' when following Christ entails every single area & every single hour of our lives. 3 out of 168 hrs. in a week isn't the game plan: it's compartmentalizing faith, usually so we can move on to other things that are more important to us. When Christ asked the disciples to take the message of love to the entire world, He wasn't asking for a remedial commitment, He was asking them to RISK it all.

Now, before you think I'm totally out there in talking about willingness to take risks for God, let's understand that each of us has taken some pretty crazy risks before in our lives, & maybe we just didn't know it at the time.

- Some of you are parents like me and I have a daughter who is 15. Which means I am preparing to drive her down to the DMV to obtain a license that will give her permission to drive a 3000lb at vehicle 65mph (and no more!) down I-355 to visit their friends in Bolingbrook on a Friday night. When we do that, parents we are taking a huge risk!
- If you are preparing for college or in college right now you are investing \$30-50,000 or more on an education that you hope will enable you to make a nice living, but there are no guarantees of a good paying job in your field once you get that diploma.
- If you are engaged or already married, you are in the middle of what one marriage expert calls "the biggest chance the largest number of people are willing to take". You're risking finances, your future, your family all on someone you fell in love with because she winked at you and he was on the varsity team 13 years ago!

see, we take HUGE RISKS all the time & maybe we're just not aware of them, but they are huge.

Jesus is coming to the disciples and now to you and to me & reminding you this is about being Spirit-led, but calling us to be risk-takers for Him. Sometimes when we think about risk-taking and we think of the disciples or The Wright Bros or someone 'famous' we may say, "I'm not like them, I could never do that." And you know what, maybe you're right. We don't all have the gifts of a Ben Franklin or Einstein, but we all do have gifts. "You got skills!"

Remember a few weeks ago when Rosa Parks died? WOW. What a woman. Her story blows me away. Born in 1913, grew up with the Ku Klux Klan riding through the fields at night, listening to lynchings & in fear of her house being burned down. She grew up with the laws of segregation that wouldn't allow her to drink out of the same water fountain as white people, sitting in different areas of restaurants & even in separate aisles of, yea, church.

Yet, on December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks took a risk. A little 42 year old lady living in Montgomery, AL, decided that she was going to do something she'd never done before and nobody else dared do before. When the bus driver told her to move to the back so that white people would have room in the 'neutral zone' of the bus, she refused. He said he would get police involved. She sat. The police came onboard and warned her, she stayed in her seat. And by refusing to stand Rosa Parks stood for an entire generation of people that'd been battered and abused and segregated from society. I love that woman. I wonder how many women we have today in their 40's sitting in church that are just like Rosa. Kind women. Hard-working women. Not sure what God has asked them to do. Take a risk! Act on God's call. Remember it's the person who risked torture and death for you who's asking you to step outside your comfort zone. The person who laid out His entire life for you, He wants to know, can I have your commitment to love me & to love others with all that you have?

And when Jesus laid out the game plan he was talking to us as a team! When he said, *"the Holy Spirit will come upon **you**"*; the *"you"* is a plural. Like some people say "yous guys" (city accent). The *"you"* is plural you – it will require a team effort; all of us must be willing to risk where He calls us to risk.

ON-THE-MOVE (*"in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and (will ultimately impact) the ends of the earth."*)

And if all of us as a team of Christ Followers will live Spirit-led, risk-taking lives, the point is not that we will be doing the Christ-following thing right. The point is we will get to change the world. It will start *"in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and (will ultimately impact) the ends of the earth."* He is saying that this is the game plan to change the world into the kind of world that God dreamed it could be! But this is sooo important – it's not just going to require the top 20%; this isn't just for church-goers and those

that really like religious stuff. This is meant for us all, living this game plan, following this game plan.

And I believe the reason that God's game plan is so often unrealized is not because we don't know the game plan; it's because we still don't have a whole team following the game plan! Let's face it, it's easier to be self-led and to play-it-safe...right? This game plan will require a 100% team effort! This is a game plan that requires every one of us on this team be spirit-led and risk-taking together!

So you have a decision to make today. Will you be a Christ Follower? And a Christ Follower is not a Christ stand-stiller! God's risk-taking Spirit will move you to a place where your gifts and passions meet a great need in God's world. Take the trading card that we gave you when you came in. If you are not yet in the game I want you to pick a position and give it a try. It is time to get out of the stands, to get off the bench and get in the game! In a moment we are going to do a tune called "Lonely Nation" and it says over and over, "I'm tired of feeling low; of feeling hollow...I want more". And what we all want and need is to be serving on God's team implanting His game plan. And you begin to do that by picking out a position you on God's team and then turn it in.

Will you hang out in your own personal Jerusalem, where it is comfortable and familiar? Or will you let the Spirit lead you? Will you take a risk and move into unknown territory - Judea's, Samaria's, and ends of the earth? Something that seems like just a few words written on that back of that card might be to you your next step in being Spirit-led, risk-taking, game plan following disciple of Christ.

Steve Kroft interviewed Tom Brady, 3-time Super Bowl Champ of the New England Patriots on **60 Minutes** last week...

KROFT: This whole experience -- this whole upward trajectory -- what have you learned about yourself? What kind of an effect does it have on you?

BRADY: Well, first I put incredible amounts of pressure on me. When you feel like you're ultimately responsible for everyone and everything - there's a lot of pressure. Second, I ask, "Why do I have three Super Bowl rings, and still think there's something greater out there for me?" I mean, maybe a lot of people would say, "Hey man, this is what is." I reached my goal, my dream, my

life. Me, I think: God, it's got to be more than this. I mean this can't be what it's all cracked up to be. I mean I've done it. I'm 27. And what else is there for me?

Know what Brady needs? To get in the game! Execute God's game plan!

Blank for double sided printing

[contents](#)

The Dynasty

The BIG IDEA: The game that we've been drafted for, the mission we are called to use our skills in is a forever thing. It goes on and on, the ultimate dynasty.



Message

“If I had it to do all over again...” Fifty people over the age of 95 were asked that question: “If you had your life to do over again, what would you do differently?” It was an open-ended question, but three answers emerged and dominated the results of the study. The three answers were:

1. If I had it do over again, I would reflect more on what I am doing.
2. If I had it to do over again, I would risk more. And . . .
3. If I had it to do over again, I would do more things that would live on after I am gone.

Pretty good answers, huh? I especially like that last one: do more things that would live on after I'm gone. I mean, if you're 95 or older, the “after I'm gone” part is staring you right in the face, so that had to be a pretty gut-level honest answer.

It reminds me of a story in the Bible that has always intrigued me. It's a story about this woman. One day Jesus is at the house of this guy – the Bible says he was known as “Simon the Leper.” Now having dinner with a leper might sound kind of unappetizing since leprosy makes things like a finger, toes, or a nose fall off a person, but Jesus wasn't put off by stuff like that. And while they're having dinner, this woman comes in and she has this bottle, but it's not just any bottle. It's a special alabaster bottle and its full of perfume, but it's not just any perfume. It's pure nard. Now nard doesn't sound that special does it? I hear “nard” I think of “lard”, but “nard” as I understand it was a perfume made from these little flowers that grew up in the mountains, and you had to pick and squeeze hundreds of these little wild flowers to get just one ounce of pure nard. And it says it was worth more than a year's wages.

With a quick *Google* search I discovered the most expensive perfume in the world today. Here it is. Anybody seen this stuff before? Would you believe this perfume costs almost \$90k. That's more than my year's wage. It comes in a bottle made with

platinum, 24 carat gold, rubies, and diamonds. The bottle comes in a box that is made by Rolls Royce. It's called Parfum VI (Roman numerals, of course). Only 173 bottles of it are being made. (So you better hurry, they're going fast!)

Back to our story. Notice what this woman does with her expensive perfume. She **breaks** the bottle. Now there's a reason for this: alabaster bottles didn't have twist off tops like two liter bottles of Pepsi. The perfume would be put inside the bottle and sealed. So you had to break it to use it. And then she puts it on Jesus head. In those days, people didn't take too many baths or showers. One way to deal with that was to put some perfume on their heads. (Some of you are thinking, I know some people that could use some Nard).

But notice she doesn't just dab a little behind his ears, she pours out the whole thing over his head - every last bit of it. And look how the other people at dinner react to what she did. They get all upset and judgmental and say "this was wrong - that perfume should've been sold and the money given to the poor."

And then the most intriguing thing of all about this story happens. Here's what Jesus says of this nameless woman who poured this perfume on his head, "**Leave her alone, she's done a beautiful thing for me . . . And wherever my story is told all over the world, what she did for me will be told, too.**" And today is evidence that what Jesus said is true. Here we are some 2,000 years later, halfway around the world, and her story is being told here today. She does this one thing, this one thing that couldn't have taken her more than a few minutes to do, and what she did is something that lives on long after she is gone.

As we wrap up this series, there's one thing I hope we get. When God calls us to get in the game, He's not just saying "here's some good things to do or some religious activities for you to take part in." He's calling us to do something that will live on long after we're gone. -- Now, if you have no interest in doing anything with your life that will live on after you're gone, that's your business, but I think somewhere deep within all of us is a desire to do things with our lives that will live on after we're gone. And this woman's story is like a map for how to follow Christ in a way that will live on long after we're gone.

EXTRAVAGANT

What this woman did was **extravagant**. -- Now I'm calling it extravagant, but remember what everybody else except Jesus called it. They called it a **waste**. And if you think about what waste is, it's when you **do** more or **use** more than is needed.

For instance, let's do a little exercise here. (Pick three people in the front row)

- If you have a task that only takes one hour to do it, and you spend 4 hours doing it, how much time did you waste?
- If you're cooking something and the recipe calls for a cup of something, but you use 5 cups, how much did you waste?
Ok, here's one more.
- If something costs one dollar, but you spend \$4, 355, 788.89 on it, how much did you waste? (Say the big number so fast that nobody will be able to say it back to you. It's funny. It works)

Yeah, the correct answer is a lot. Anytime a lot more is used than seems necessary, we'd say what? Yea, it's a waste!

But there are times when waste is good. Or what some people would consider waste. Sometimes, waste is a beautiful thing. And when waste is beautiful and good, it's called extravagance.

Ever have an extravagant meal? -- Good timing to ask that question, huh? Just when I thought my mom had peaked in culinary excellence, we sat down for our Turkey feast this week. She took her cornbread dressing to a whole new level. -- Every have somebody give you an extravagant gift? I saved up over the past year and bought my wife a diamond ring for our 15th anniversary. Was it necessary? Not really. Sure, it was a little over the top, and though some might say it is wasteful or whatever, generally extravagant means something was over the top in a good way. And see the people around the table, they say that what this woman did was over the top in a bad way, but Jesus says "No, this is over the top in a good way."

Why do you think this woman did what she did? Like we said, it would've been fine to put just a few drops on Jesus head, but no, she breaks the bottle and pours the whole thing on him. But why? Why be so extravagant? We don't know. But I've got a guess.

Jesus touched a lot of people's lives and set a lot of people free from a lot of bad stuff: sicknesses and guilt and evil spirits and all

sorts of awful things. And Jesus loved people extravagantly, so I'm saying she had to be one of those people who'd been loved extravagantly by Him, and so she is extravagant in return. I don't know if she was planning this for a while or if she just happened to be passing by, but this extravagance no doubt came from her heart.

Real heart felt extravagance is pretty rare. We live in a calculated culture. We rarely go all out for something unless it's clear on the front-end what's in it for us. We applaud people who do go all out, but for many of us, it's just too risky.

George Sweeting, former chancellor of Moody Bible Institute, once said,

"Most of us would resist our impulses simply assuming that they are bad. Yet, I say to you, that you should never resist a generous impulse. Why? Because, an impulse that goes so counter to our basic natures of selfishness and ownership is nothing less than a reflection of God Himself."

Think about that: never resist a generous impulse. I like that. Generosity and extravagance are often the same thing, and when it comes to this woman, there's no way would what she did would live on after she died if she had resisted her generous impulse to be extravagant with Jesus.

RECKLESS

Here's the second thing about why this woman's action was something that lived on after she is gone. The Bible says some at the table were offended by her generosity, because it seemed like a waste of money. They said the perfume should have been sold and the money given to the poor. You know what I wonder? I wonder if that was just the politically correct objection to her lavish gift? I wonder if what really offended them was not so much that the poor were getting the short end of the stick, -- but that the woman was being so extravagant with Jesus and that just seemed **reckless** to them?

You know sometimes extravagant gifts or actions are applauded. Like when Ted Turner gave away a billion dollars to the UN. Everyone thought that was great, but it made since, He could give that much and still have plenty for himself. It wasn't reckless, but this lady was **recklessly** generous. Often times to make a mark that will live on after we die, it's going to be about

doing something that to other people seems reckless. Are you doing anything for Jesus that might seem a little reckless?

I heard about a pastor who had a man in his church who had a strange request. He said the man had the gift of giving financially. This man would freely admit his strategy was trying to **earn** as much as he could, **live** on as little as he could, so that he could **give** as much as he could. It was his thing, and he was great at it. He was giving hundreds of thousands of dollars to helping people find their way back to God and living on like \$50k a year. This guy asked the pastor out to lunch one day, looked him straight in the eye and said, "I get so excited to be able to give what I give. I love watching lives change and knowing my dollars have a small part in making that happen. But here's the thing. My accountant thinks I'm crazy. My business partners think I'm crazy. My lawyer thinks I'm crazy. What I need from you is to just sit down with me every once and a while and tell me I'm not crazy." (So if anybody needs a pastor to look you in the eye and tell you you're not crazy, I am available.)

Just about anybody would say what this woman did was crazy, it was reckless, it wasn't wise to be that extravagant. But think about it: Who makes their mark in this world without being a little reckless, a little crazy? Famous people of the Bible:

- Abraham believes God for a child when he's in his 90's and his wife is in her late 70's. That's crazy.
- Moses. Wanders in and out of the desert and takes on the Egyptian empire. That's nuts.
- David. A boy goes out to do battle against a 9 foot tall, seasoned warrior. And all's he got is a sling and five smooth stones. That's so whacked.

But these stories live on long after these people are gone. And you know why? Because they were what most people would call reckless.

We have people that show up here week after week while it's still dark outside to set up chairs and help make this place come to life on weekends. The musicians on stage here practice for hours every week, then show up here on Sunday when most of us are rolling out of bed to practice even more. Are they nuts? Some of you get neck deep in the lives of hurting people, encouraging them, loving them, serving them. Is that wise? Some of you are changing your family budgets to give to the

greater vision of hpftwbG (helping people find their way back to God). Isn't that reckless?

Check out these words from the apostle Paul ***“The message that points to Christ on the Cross seems like sheer silliness to those hell-bent on destruction, but for those on the way of salvation it makes perfect sense. This is the way God works, and most powerfully as it turns out. It's written, ‘I'll turn conventional wisdom on its head.’”***

1 Corinthians 1:18-20

Can I have your permission to say something that nobody really wants to hear? I think for a lot of us, we're not extravagant, we're not recklessly generous with God because we don't really get how extravagant He is with us. Deep down, we're just not convinced. Sure, we'd say he has been generous, but the reality of it, the power of it, the enormity of it, just hasn't sunk in. And the truth is, we have a gratitude problem. I'm saying the more we get just how generous and extravagant and reckless He is with us, the more extravagant and reckless we will be with Him. Am I wrong about that?

Let me tell you – when you get in the game and break the bottle it's going to feel foolish – getting' in the game in an all out sort of way is supposed to feel foolish. If it feels risky and crazy, it's supposed to feel risky and crazy. Whoever did anything that lived on after they died by playing it safe. If you're **going to** do it, do it all the way. And if you're in the game, break the bottle. You're not crazy. You're just doing something that will live on long after you're gone.

UNIQUE

And one other thing about why the woman who broke the bottle, why what she did is living on. It was not only extravagant and seemingly reckless, it was also totally unique. See what Jesus says about what she did? Jesus says of the woman who anointed Him, ***“She did what she could” v. 8 (NIV)***. One translation reads, ***“She did what she could when she could” v.8 (MSG)***. This was **her** special moment. We now know that it was the chance of a lifetime. She didn't even know it, but this was her opportunity to do something that would send ripple effects down through the ages. She saw her opportunity to take it and she did.

Someone has said that you can never step in the same river twice. Opportunities are like that, you will never have the very same opportunity that you have today. And Jesus says “***she is the only one who anointed my body for burial.***” The same perfume that was put on people to make them not smell so bad was also used to embalm corpses, to make them not smell so bad. This takes place not long before Jesus is crucified and buried. And of course she didn’t know that was what she was doing, but that’s part of the beauty of it. She wasn’t out to secure her place in history, she was just being for real: real extravagant, real crazy, and taking her shot when she had the chance to take it.

Each of us is a unique one of a kind creation of God. There is no one else on this planet exactly like you, not even close. No one has exactly your gift mix or emotional makeup. No one else lives exactly where you live and will have exactly the opportunities you have. You can never step in the same river twice.

See, getting in the game isn’t about filling holes and spots in org charts. God says He has things, particular good things, good works meant just for you, -- that He’s prepared in advance for you to do. And it needs to be said that without your unique contribution to who we are as a team of his followers, without ***you*** getting in the game and getting in at just the right time, ***we*** can never be all that we could be.

The White Sox. How many White Sox fans? Funny, when I asked that question in April hardly anybody raised their hand. But what can I say, I’m a Cub fan. You know I decided Cub fans don’t hate the White Sox, we just hate ourselves. Whether you’re a Sox fan or not, you had to enjoy watching them take out the Astros in the World Series. They’re a great team with every single player playing his unique part.

This series isn’t so much about whether or not your on the team. The truth of the matter is - it’s not what we do that gets us on the team, it’s what’s already be done that gets us on the team. It’s what Jesus did for us when he came to earth, died on a cross, and came back three days later. That was the most extravagant, positively reckless, and utterly unique thing anyone has ever done. And He did it in the name of love.

Lord’s Supper?

This series is about getting in the game. And God gives every one of us a chance to get in the game. And it's really not a game at all because the stakes are high, the risks are sometimes great, and the challenges can seem insurmountable. But the payoff is greater than anything this life has to offer. It's the chance to get in a game that means the difference in people's eternities. Ephesians 1:11 says, ***"It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for."***

I mentioned that study earlier . . . the one about the 95 year olds. They said they would reflect more and risk more and do more things that would live on long after they're gone. Let me ask you this: If you continue with the trajectory that your life is currently on right now, will you when it's all said and done be able to reflect back on your life and say,

- "Yea, I risked all that I could have and wished I did."
- And, "Yea, I did things that I knew would live on long after I'm gone"?

It's so easy to think, "Well someday I'll do this . . . or someday I'll do that . . ." Let someday be today. Get in the game. And when you're in the game, break the bottle. Pour yourself out. Pour yourself out for the One who poured Himself out for you.