

alright that you sit for a season. And then there are those that I think are in here going, “Whatever, Chandler. I’ve been trying to join this church for two years; I can’t get into that class.” Yeah, but come on, membership has to mean something. It really does. I know we could just let you walk down the aisle and shake my hand and be in, but I think we want it to mean more than that. We want you to understand what you’re getting into when you join a covenant community. But do you know the only two things that you can’t do here at the Village if you’re not a member? You can’t teach or lead a small group and you can’t be on the worship team. You can serve in every other capacity while you wait to get into the class. It could be decades! We’re trying to fix that, I promise you. We’re trying to make it better. But for some of us, we don’t give back and we don’t serve because you think we exist for you. That’s just the truth. And although you probably wouldn’t overtly say that, that’s absolutely how you function. It’s not what the Bible teaches, it’s just how you function.

Alright, so I know you’re sitting here like, “Alright, I’m guilty. Tell me what to do. Just be quiet, I’m hungry.” Alright, I’m not trying to make you feel guilty, I’m trying to convict you. It’s the exact same thing. It’s slightly different...slightly. Do you know that after every service at the Village, all six of them, in the South Portable, there’s a group of staff and key lay leaders at Servant Central who have the sole job of helping you find a place to connect and wash feet, a place to serve the body, to take you by the hand, find out where you’re gifted, find out where your passions are and to plug you in...after every service. After this one. I was just over there. They actually have donuts. That’s nice. If you’re going, “Man, I don’t know. I don’t know, Chandler. I’m not sure,” well, on the way out, there’s this table in the foyer with balloons on it. And at that table, there are these huge sheets of everything in every area in which one can give, from A/V to editing to you name it...parking. I know, after my description, some of you are gung-ho about that. And there are a thousand different needs here. We are a Baby Huey. Four years ago, running 168; this weekend, we’ll well eclipse 4,000. There are a lot of needs, a lot of feet.

So hear me. The more Christ-like and selfless a church is, the more powerful a tool that church becomes in the hands of our great God and king for the purposes of redemption and restoration. So in view of God’s mercy, let us offer up our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. Let us not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we might know the will of God, that we might know our place in the story and that we might serve and be served as He grows us into the fullness of His purposes for us.

Let’s pray, “Father, I thank You for these men and women, and I thank You for a chance to open up the Scriptures and be pushed and challenged. Help us. Stir us. I pray that for some, they might find home here. I pray for others that You would help them find home. It’s for Your beautiful name I pray. Amen.”

He lowered Himself and became the servant of all, becoming obedient even to death on the cross. Jesus is modeling for you and for me how life should be lived, how this should be played out, what it means to follow Jesus and belong to a body. Some people here model this so well. Phillip Bennett, he's part of our logistics team, he works a 50-60 hour week. 50-60 hour week is the new 40. We'll take this week. This week on Wednesday night, we had our membership class. About 280 men and women in that class and around 100 bitter ones who didn't get in, but we're working on that. In order to make that happen, we had to tear down all 726 chairs, brought in tables, set the tables, put the chairs around them, and that's what they did on Monday and Tuesday. The class was on Wednesday night. On Thursday and Friday, that same group of men who work full time jobs came up here, tore down every one of those tables, put up every one of those chairs and set up the 726. You're sitting in here today because the logistics team lead by Phillip Bennett washed your feet. Phillip Bleecker, Michael Bleecker's brother, he leads Kid's Village across the way for our 1st through 5th graders. He works 50-60 hours a week, and on Saturday night, comes up here and leads our children in worship. He goes home, he goes to bed and he wakes up on Sunday morning and comes back up here and he leads our kids in worship. He goes home on Sunday afternoon, takes a nap, gets a bite to eat, comes back up here on Sunday night and leads our kids in worship. And in so doing, he washes your feet. And honestly, I've got this entire list. I'll hit these two for sure. You've got Shanah Brown who coordinates 200 volunteers that get you into this place, like the bulletin you got handed, the seat someone helped you find, the usher who you think is rude because he asked you to move in so that other people could get seats. We cram you in here, and that same team picks up all your Starbucks cups and your half-eaten muffins because you're adults and that's our job to be your mama here at the Village after you go. I'm kidding, but not at all; you should grow up and take your trash out. And they will get this place ready for the next 700 people who come in here to try to hear. And could I even mention this topic without mentioning Jim Andrews and the parking team? It's the most brutal job here at the Village. On a weekly basis, and I'll be as honest as I can, on a weekly basis, they're flipped off, cussed out, almost had a couple of fights. One of our guys almost got run down, which I'm trying to get my head around. I mean, "Let me into church!!!" I'm trying to get my head around that. The only thing that I can think is that you've got so much going on in your world and so much overwhelming you and so much weight on you right now that it blows up on a guy who is in 30°F weather, freezing to get you in here and he gets to be the recipient of your wrath. It is a thankless, horrible job. And week in and week out, they wash your feet by getting you in here and getting you out of here. And then there are all these kind of really beautiful moments that are in between. Like, I know it got really cold, when we were having these ice days where there were men and women who brought hot coffee and crafts for our parking team. That was a cool deal. And there's 100 other people that I'm not mentioning who serve this place so well.

In fact, you want to hear something? On Tuesday, Sarah Duran who runs our Connecting Ministry, she brought me this sheet of paper, and you know that the national average...anyone ever heard of the 80/20 rule, where 20% of the people do 80% of the work? Well, she brought me this sheet, and you know that 50% of our covenant members are actively serving here at the Village. So, I get that and I'm like, "That's amazing! I'm not even going to have to preach angry this weekend." But then she brought me this other sheet, you're probably picking up on that, and of our regular attenders, which is more than 2,000 of you, and this isn't first or second or third time guests, for those of you who week in and week out come to the Village, who use the Village as kind of your base, home, of the over 2,000 of you, fewer than 9% serve in any way. Which brings that 50% average down to 19%. So, we didn't beat the 80/20 rule; we actually lost to it...19.81% So, I think maybe there's some legitimate reasons why. One of the things we've prayed for here at the Village is that we would be a community where it's okay to heal, and one of the things the Lord has brought us a lot of is what we call de-churched people, people who got wounded really bad in a church setting, who have come here to try to heal. And maybe it's

what He says next. Verse 4, *“For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ,...”* Now, this is a very common illustration that the apostle Paul uses in his writings. This is the idea that your hand and your foot do not serve the same function. Your ears and your eyes do not serve the same function. Both are required, both are needed for health, but they have different jobs. Your fingers and your toes, different jobs. Your knee and your hip, different jobs. If the knee tries to be the hip, things go wrong. If the ears try to be the eyes, things go wrong. Just like a body has many parts with many functions, so we in Christ are one body. But look at the next line because the next line is heavy. *“...so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”* So according to this text, it's so important for us to have a healthy view of ourselves, a healthy view of who we are, that Christ, God, the trinitarian God is pinnacle, He is supreme, He is infinitely valuable and we are not. The reason why it's so unbelievably important for us to grasp that and get that is because you and I have been gifted by God and placed by God in this inseparable, inter-woven body called the church, and you need me and I need you and we need we, and we can never fully be “we” if you're not walking in “you.” The more Christ-like and more selfless that the church is, the more powerful a tool it becomes in the hands of God to work towards redemption and restoration.

And let me show you a thing that has to be taught today. It has to be taught better, and it has to be modeled better by men who have been given certain giftings. Look at verse 6. *“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us...”* Alright, so here's what we know about grace. Grace is the unmerited favor of God and is dispensed by God as He chooses. So then, according to this text, the gifts that have been differently handed out to the members of the body were handed out by the grace of God and by no doing of the human involved. And so, God gave some hospitality, some teaching, some a greater gift of teaching than another. All the gifts are in variance and in flux by the will of God and by the grace of God so that no man or woman can boast...ever. My understanding of this text is that although I am the lead pastor of the Village church, although I'm here all weekend teaching, I do not get a parking space up front with my name on it. Why? Well, here's why, because according to this Scripture and many others, I didn't do anything to get this. This is God saying, “I'm going to accomplish My will. Here's how I'm going to do it in you.” So, no parking spot for me up front. In fact, we park in the back because it's also our understanding philosophically that the Scriptures call us, as your pastors, slaves. I promise, you can thin out seminary with this one. So, why would you exalt a guy like me? I can't be the selling point. The selling point is the gospel. The more clever and high you place a man, the lower you bring the glory of Christ. Men shouldn't get praise. Encouragement? Sure. Praise? Naw.

Let's keep reading, because there's this part that involves you. You're going to love this. *“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them...”* Those gifts, maybe you should use them the Scriptures say. “Remember when I wired you and placed you in that community for service? Maybe you should do that.” That's what He says here. “Those gifts I gave you, you ought to use those...gifts I gave you...by My grace.” *“...if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”* Okay, so in this text, we begin to understand the paradox of an infinitely powerful God in the flesh, Jesus who continually humbles Himself and washes feet and serves. There's this scene in the gospel where Jesus gathers His disciples and He says, “I'm going to leave, and when I leave, I'm going to empower you. I'm going to give you a lot of power and I'm going to give you a lot of authority and I'm going to extend to you grace and mercy, but here's the thing. I'm not giving you those things so that you might lord it over others, but so that you might be the slave of all.” Philippians 2 says that although Jesus was God in the flesh, He did not consider equality with God something to be grasped so

is good and acceptable and perfect.” Now, in a church that is as young as the Village, there is always this desire to find and capture and hunt down the will of God. It's kind of this mythological creature that has to be captured. It's like finding an Oompa-Loompa at the mall or something. We've got to find the will of God. Well according to the Scriptures, the will of God is not something that is found as much as it is something that is lived in because of a renewed mind. A renewed mind and the filters by which we can view and see the world around us begins to lead us into the will of God for our lives. So, that's one of the benefits of a renewed mind, we begin to see the good, pleasing and perfect will of God.

The second benefit isn't going to sound like a benefit; it's going to sound very difficult, it's going to sound very hard and it fly in the face of the very air that we breathe. What's the second result of a renewed mind? Look at verse 3. *“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.”* Now, this is hard text. Paul just said, the Holy Spirit just said to you and me, “In view of God's mercy to us in calling us, saving us extending to us grace and mercy, in view of that, let's use our hands and feet and mind and ears and eyes and mouth to be instruments of His righteousness. Let's not be conformed to the pattern of the world, but let's be transformed by the renewing of our minds because then we'll walk in the will of God.” And then He immediately attacks what I believe is one of the major errors of Evangelicalism right now. He attacks the idea that this is all about us. He throws out this whole beautiful, redemptive, “God's going to use you” command and then goes, “But don't forget, this isn't about you.”

This is going to sound funny, but years ago in Houston, the dad of a friend of mine owned a car dealership that provided the cars for the excellent film, “Robocop 3,” and they were looking for extras. So my friend Gentry and I, because his dad provided the cars, got to be extras. So, they give you all these commands, “Walk by...don't look...do this...don't do that.” And so, we do that. And the movie comes out, and we're like, “Where are we? Where are we?” Man, I think they cut me out because I never saw me, but Gentry's in the film. He's in the film for like two seconds, and he's so far in the background that he's blurry. And so, the best part of that is after that came out, we got the VHS tape and we would pause it and be like, “Right there! Right there! Here's where I am! Right there!” Now listen, in the eternal scope of what's occurring here, in this sovereign God who is working towards the redemption and the restoration of all things, you are not the star. You're Gentry. But let me tell you why this is hard. Because everything, from how we preach to how we teach to how we wire church creates this kind of air that says it is about you. So the majority of men and women come into church with this attitude of, “Serve me. Teach my kids about Jesus. Train my teenager how to love God,” despite the fact that in a biblical, overt command that's your job...yours. We might supplement it, but the job is yours. “Serve me. Make me comfortable. Provide for me. Make me a thousand different things to play with. Give me a comfortable seat. Give me this. Do this for me.” And so, Paul here goes, “Hey, don't forget that this isn't about you. Don't forget that you ain't Tom Cruise in this one. Don't forget, in the end, I have redeemed but I have redeemed for a purpose, My purposes. Quit thinking so highly of yourselves.” That's hard for us, huh? Because we're trained in this culture to handle it, do it and we got it. I mean, this is why nobody gets help for their marriage until it's completely disintegrating. It's why nobody ever gets help for their money until they're about to file bankruptcy. This is why we can be spiritually in a lurch but not confess it to anybody, because we should be able to do it, right? We should be able to handle it. And the Scriptures are going, “Um, you might be a little bit too confident in yourself. You might be placing yourself in a position that was never yours to hold.”

Now, why is it so important for us to see ourselves correctly, not as the uppermost, not as the point, not as the purpose but as a part of the greater story? Why is it so important for us to see that? Look at

go. According to Romans 1, also part of this book, the pattern of the world is three fold. Here's what it is. Everybody born of man and woman chases created things rather than the creator. Everybody in this room has at one time or another said, "I prefer God's stuff to God. I would rather have created things rather than the creator." Everyone in here is guilty. That's number one. The second pattern of conformity of the world is that everyone in this room has at one time or another, if not daily, believed that their way is better than God's. Despite the fact that God is the infinite creator of the universe and you made C- in Algebra II, we continue to believe that our way of seeing and our way of doing trumps God's way of seeing and God's way of doing. And so everyone in this room is guilty. Now, there has to be, at this point, a lot of us in here that are like, "I don't know. I think I'm pretty good. You must not have seen the Sunday school pens I wore this morning. I haven't missed since '73, pastor." Alright, well Romans 1:28 will doom us all. Romans 1:28 says that another part of the pattern of this world is a failure to acknowledge God. Here's what that means. When we got up this morning and we ate breakfast or ate lunch or we just had a random cup of coffee (which is what most of us had for breakfast), if in that moment that tasted good and right and you felt the caffeine kick in like turning on some kind of machine and there was a failure on your part to be grateful towards God for the creation of coffee and the gift for you to purchase it and swallow it, you've failed to acknowledge Him and are sinful. Uh oh. Or a couple of days ago, we had phenomenal weather, very un-Texas like. And if you walked out and enjoyed that day and there was never anything in you that said, "Praise the creator of this day," you're guilty. If your physical body is working this morning, like you can breathe through both nostrils without medication, you can move your back and there's not in you a gratitude for the gift of physical health today, according to the Scriptures, you're guilty. Why is this so? Because according to the Scriptures, all things were given and created by God for God. To fail to acknowledge His part in any of it makes you a blasphemer and a sinner. You take what was gifted by Him, for Him and you make it your own as if you created it and it was for you, and this, according to the Scriptures, is blasphemy, it's sinful. So, back to our Romans 12 text. The text says, "Don't walk like that. Pursue the creator over created things. Submit to the truth of God although it will not always be easy and have a heart that's filled with gratitude.

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind..." Now, this is a very interesting text because it says that the way to follow Jesus is not a new list of behaviors but rather a new mind, a new heart and a new being. He doesn't say, "Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but start doing this, this and this and stop doing this, this and this." He says, "No, be transformed, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind." Now, He does not, in this text, unpack for us how to renew our mind. I think you can preach for weeks and weeks and weeks on it. I think it goes back to a very simple lesson that all of us got told by our parents whether they were church folk or not. It's the kind of "garbage in, garbage out" mentality. Whatever we pump into our being will become activated and actionable outside of our being. I'll give you an example. I don't believe that anyone ever, ever, ever, ever falls into accidentally an adulterous affair. They don't kiss their spouse goodbye, like, "Baby, I love you. I'm going to run to the store. I've got to get some shoes. I'll be right back," gets in the car and somewhere along the way has an affair. It has never, ever, ever happened that way. This is how it happens every time. There is a thought in the mind that is meditated upon, the meditation becomes fantasy and the fantasy, when given opportunity, becomes action. The mind led the body. So, the Scriptures are going to say the life of your mind is unbelievably important. What you feed it, what you pump into it, what you meditate upon, what you fantasize about...the Scriptures put it this way. The life of the mind can't save you, but it can destroy you. So, let's renew our minds.

He will tell us though, after he tells us to renew our minds, of what is purchased and what is created when the mind is renewed. So, let's look at that. *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what*

any time, all I have to do is say a word and I'll kill everybody.” So, the Scriptures say that not long after that, men work up spit in their mouth and they spit on the face of Jesus. Now, there's a level here that's even hard to fathom. According to Colossians 1, the entire universe is held together by the word of Jesus, that He sustains it, controls it, is sovereign over it. Which means the ability to work up spit and the muscles required to fling it out of your mouth are controlled and held together by the very one who's being spit upon. So they spit on Him, and this man who has an infinite amount of power and authority over nature, over even life does nothing. The Scriptures say in another part of the arrest, that they grabbed the beard out of His face and rip it out of His face, and yet with an amazing amount of restraint, this unbelievably powerful man does nothing. They blindfold Him and punch Him and say, “Prophecy, who hit you?” Well, He knew, and He does nothing. They beat the flesh off His back...nothing. Religious men mock Him, make fun of Him. They strip Him completely naked and nail Him to fixed beams, and yet the only thing He screams out is, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” This man who walked in an infinite amount of power never uses this power to harm those who harmed him or to become wealthy or to get a nice house...somewhat of a paradox. In the restraint that Jesus shows in the crucifixion, He purchases for you and me, mercy. He becomes the wrath-absorbing propitiation for sins looked over in the past and makes way for you and me, the path to salvation. We don't own it within ourselves. We can't be good enough; we can't be right enough. We'll get to that in a moment. So, Jesus makes the way. He extends this unbelievable amount of mercy, not only to the men guilty of this horrific act against Him, but to you and to me.

It's the same kind of mercy that's mentioned in Romans 12, so let's look at it. *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God,...”* What mercies? The mercies that you and I are without hope without a savior. He came and absorbed the wrath of God towards mankind and towards sin in the act of the cross. You had no ability to right yourself. He did it. That's the mercies. So listen, *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,...”* Now, when the Holy Spirit, through the apostle Paul, wrote the book of Romans, He didn't write it in chapters and verses. That comes hundreds and hundreds of years later. So, Paul is not in his study going, “12:1 Therefore brothers...” That's not how it worked. It was one continual message, and we've got to get back to reading it like that. Paul wrote in Romans 6, six chapters before twelve, very similar language. He says in Romans 6, “No longer, since God has extended mercy to you, present the members of your body as instruments of unrighteousness.” So earlier in the book of Romans, he says, “Don't use your hands any longer to sin. Don't use your feet any longer to sin. Don't use your eyes, don't use your ears. These instruments of perception, these instruments of intake, these instruments of taste and touch and thought and seeing and hearing, these instruments that He's given you, no longer use them as instruments of unrighteousness.” That was Him telling us not to do with them. Now He's telling us what to do with them, to use our hands, use our feet, use our ears, our eyes, our minds, all the sensory perception that God has given us, let's lay it on His altar and use it for His glory, for His name, for His renown.

Now, let's look at what comes next. *“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.”* Verse 2 is a very, very, very preached and very quoted text. Verse 2, *“Do not be conformed to this world,...”* Normally when this text is preached, we want to define what this looks like. Like normally when you hear this verse, it will trail or be the prelude to some behavior that needs to be modified. We'll hear, “Don't be conformed to the pattern of the world. You know what the world does? The world does this, so we shouldn't do that.” Although there might be some legitimacy to that, that's attacking this text at an unbelievably surface level rather than the core level where it needs to be addressed. Let's chat for just a second about what the pattern of the world is that we're all being affected by and we have at the core of our being. It's settling until the Holy Spirit removes it. Here we

says, "I know who You are, Jesus the Holy One of God. Have You come to destroy us?" Alright, that's not dualistic. That's not good vs. evil. That's not evil going, "Let's fight to the death." That's evil going, "Uh oh! It's about to go bad." Or how about this one? He seem to have absolute authority over all disease. He walks up to a man who's never walked before and says, "Hey, walk." He walks up to a guy who's never seen anything with his eyes, born blind, and He says, "You can see." And he can see. Even more unbelievable and harder to get our minds around is this is a man who had authority over death, and we've never seen anything like that, ever. Like, He walks up to this little girl who died earlier in the day, and He leans next to her bed, He kicks everybody out of the room except for His disciples and He says, "Talitha (little girl), get up." And she sucks in this gasp of air and gets up. In another scene very similar to this one, a friend of Jesus, his name was Lazarus, he had been dead for days. In fact, when He said, "Roll away the stone so I can get him out", they were like, "It's going to smell if You do that." That's really in the Scriptures, "...it's going to smell." And Jesus says, "Um, move the stone." And He says, "Lazarus, come here." Now, I don't know what kind of success rate you've had in commanding dead people. They tend to be unbelievably unresponsive. But Jesus seems to walk in this strange authority over even death where he tells a man that had been dead for days to get up and he does.

So this is a man who operates in a kind of authority and power that is foreign to all of us. And yet here's the paradox. He never, at any moment, in recorded history uses His power or influence for anything that would terminate only on Him. Like, you have this Jesus that operates in an unbelievable amount of authority, whether you're talking biblically or outside the biblical realm. Jesus lived a life that was wrought with miracles and miraculous works. Whether your want to study the history outside of the Scriptures or within them, He was a very powerful man. And yet, He lived in this unbelievably humble and meek way. Like, He's born in a manger. He's the only guy I know of in history who, when His mom goes, "Were you born in a barn?," can literally go, "You know I was. Yes, as a matter of fact, I was born in a barn." You move on from there and He spends a majority of his adult life homeless. For those of you who know the New Testament, remember He says, "*...the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.*" The Scriptures say that He walks into this room filled with His disciples, and He takes off His robe and takes out this bowl of water. And we have no modern day cultural equivalent to this, but He bends down and He starts picking up the dirty feet of His disciples who had walked through dirt and mud and gunk and who knows what in sandals. And He begins to wash the dirt off their feet. Now, catch this one. He works His way around the room until He gets to a man named Judas Iscariot, who would soon betray Him unto death. And He picks up his filthy feet and He picks up the rag and He washes the feet of Judas. Jesus' family settled in Nazareth. It would be the modern day equivalent of Arkansas. And I know some of your now are like, "Wait a minute. I'm from Arkansas." But for the record, you're here, which means at one moment you were like, "I've got to get out of here." And you moved to Dallas. I'm kidding, there's...great...things in Arkansas...I've heard. So, I mean it would be like "The Son of God from Little Rock? Seriously?" In what I believe is the most captivating stories in Scripture, Jesus, who's overwhelmed to the point of death according to the Scriptures, in agony, weeping, sobbing, bleeding, says, "I don't want to die like this." He gets up off His knees as the soldiers approach, they grab Jesus to arrest Him and Peter pulls his sword and whacks off the ear of one of the high priest's guards. I don't know how you do that. I don't know how you just get a guy's ear. You think he would have got like the guy's arm too or the head. But he just got the ear, sliced it off, ear falls on the ground. And Jesus puts His hand on Peter's arm and says, "What are you doing? He who lives by the sword will die by it." And "psssh," puts the guy's ear back on. It's really how it reads. "Do you not know that at any moment I could have at My disposal twelve legions of angels?" Now, follow me on this. Any time an angel shows up anywhere in Scripture, men and women fall on the ground sobbing like dead people. What would twelve legions of angels look like? Here's what Jesus says. Jesus says, "Peter, they're not taking My life; I'm giving it. At any moment, at

Feb 11, 2007• "Family Traits, 2.0; Foot-Washing"

Matt Chandler

Romans chapter 12, that's where we're going to be. In the early 1980's, for the third time in Christian history, a group of scholars set out to find or discover what they deemed or called "the historical Jesus." And although there was a lot of this that started out pure in motive, what it ended up becoming was something very different from that. It began to be this quest on behalf of religious scholars to find a Jesus other than the one laid out in the four gospels. Now, there are two problems with this. One of them would be a scholarly issue, and the other one would be a practicality issue. Let me try to explain those. The scholarly issue is this. Any real painting of the life of Jesus outside of the gospels is almost completely conjecture. And what I mean by that is there are very few historical documents or any kind of historical evidence to support a Jesus different than the one we see in the Scriptures. So, the results that we see in this kind of study...I'm guessing that a majority of us don't read a lot of theological journals, instead we see it on the National Geographic Channel, the Discovery Channel. If you've got those channels, you'll see these kind of shows, "Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus" or "The Real Jesus of Nazareth" or "Uncovering the Historic Jesus." And when I say conjecture, I honestly mean complete conjecture. It's almost completely built off of, "Well, we know it can't be like this, so this is who he is." Now, I'm not talking to you as a pastor; I'm talking to you just as a guy who understands and respects history and even scholarship, and there is literally no objective external evidence for a Jesus other than the one we see in the gospels. Now, people have trouble with the gospels in a modern world because of the miracles and because of who Jesus claims to be in the gospels. I'll prove my point. In one of these studies, they decided to figure out the more historical Jesus by doing this. They took the book of Luke, and they said, "We're going to read the statements of Jesus, and after each statement, we will vote on whether or not he actually said it, he might have said it or did not say it." And they voted. I am not lying to you. They voted by putting marbles into a jar. Now, I don't have a PhD, I'm no expert on scholarship, but if marbles are involved, that's more like a game, isn't it? That's just more like a game. And that's problem number one.

The second problem is that you would have to be unbelievably creative to come up with a more radical, complex, outright confusing Jesus as the one we find in the gospels. He is a paradox of what we know about human nature. Here's my example. He seems to walk in an unbelievable amount of power. The Scriptures tell us that one day He wants a fig, so He walks up to fig tree and there are no figs on it. He curses the tree and it begins to wilt and by the next day was completely dead. If I get angry or frustrated at something, I kick it or catch it on fire. Jesus simply curses it, and it begins to shrivel. In another scene that we get out of the New Testament, Jesus is on a boat with some very seasoned sailors, they find themselves in the middle of a storm, the boat thrown about, tossed about, they wake up Jesus and say, "We're going to die." Jesus basically stands up and silences with His mouth the wind and the rain and the waves, and then He goes back to the boat and takes a nap. The sailors are on the other side of the boat, horrified, saying, "Who is this man that the wind and the rain obeys Him?" In another moment in Scripture, Jesus takes this kid's Snack Pack basically, and He blesses it and starts handing it out to thousands and thousands of people. And they just eat their fill and there's still more. Like, there just kept being those slices of turkey. I mean, they just kept being there. And they gathered up a whole slew of extras when it was over. On top of that, despite Hollywood's and even the church's at times best intentions of making this kind of dualistic battle between good and evil, where who knows who will win. It doesn't seem to be that way in the Scriptures. Like Jesus never has an argument with anything demonic. There's never an argument. Jesus says, "You go...You do...You get out..." And they never go, "Not tonight!" There's never this moment where you see this kind of dualistic battle of good and evil. In fact, one of my favorite stories is that Jesus walks into the temple and a demonic