

Good morning, everybody. It's good to see you all here. Thanks for braving the rain or sprinkles, I guess. Maybe when you came in to join us. Yesterday was Valentine's Day.

Everybody have a good day yesterday with your sweetie. Yeah, some of you, you better be raising your hands right now because they're sitting next to you. And so yesterday, we had a little bit of an unconventional Valentine's Day. My wife and I joined some friends, and we went up to Indy for Nate Bragazzi show. And it was everything that we hoped that it would be.

It was fantastic. My cheeks are still hurting from laughing so hard last night and going up there, there was a. There was a group of eight of us that went. And we wanted to try to grab dinner after the show. And I thought, you know, probably Valentine's Day, it's going to be really hard for a group of eight people to just show up at a restaurant.

So I hopped on open table to see if I could find a place to make some reservations, having no idea what I would find. But nothing could prepare me for what I did find on that app. Here's a little screenshot of it. Here's a little. Here's.

Here's a little screenshot of there, maybe. Okay, well, we'll just go with this. So restaurants made for romance, and right underneath that, White Castle, Avon. Now, to be fair, I've never been to the White Castle in Avon, but I have been to a White Castle, and this one must be really spectacular to be made for romance. We ended up not going there, much to the chagrin of one of the guys that was on the trip.

Not so much his wife, but I was reminded this week, seeing that, that I think the last time I had White Castles was back in 2005, 2006. I was a middle school minister at the time. And, you know, when you're working with middle schoolers, you're just kind of doing anything that you can to grab their attention and make some kind of connection between, like, their life and the gospel. And we were doing this series called 18 inches. And the idea behind it is that there's 18 inches between our head and our heart.

And while physically that's not a really long distance, spiritually, man, that can feel like miles apart. Miles apart between knowing what is right and then doing what is right. And so to illustrate for middle schoolers the distance of 18 inches, I grabbed a few of them and I said, let's go to White Castle and shoot a video. And so we ordered, like, a crave Case. And we set out White Castle sandwiches in front of us.

We measured them out 18 inches, and we had a little competition to see who could eat their White Castle hamburgers the fastest. But to make it a little bit more difficult, we had to put our hands behind them,

our back, and just go to town. We got a video, and we made it. And I actually looked for that video. I couldn't find it, unfortunately.

Well, maybe fortunately, I couldn't find it. But the idea behind this is, I think it speaks to what we're talking about today that there is quite a distance between knowing what to do and actually doing it. There is a distance between believing that something is true and then living like it is true. Like we can know what is healthy and wise and continue to walk in a path that is unhealthy and unwise. We can know what is hurting us and do absolutely nothing about it.

We can go to a doctor's appointment and hear them say, hey, we've been working on lowering your cholesterol, and that's looking good. And your heart rate and your. Your health, you know, your weight. Everything's looking good. Great job.

Keep it up. And we leave and we celebrate with some ice cream from Dairy Queen. Right? Like we can know what we ought to do. But sometimes when that rubber hits the road, there is a gap between knowing and doing, between information and transformation.

And I think that's because transformation isn't just about having the right information. If life transformation were only about having the right information, all of us would be exactly the people that we want to be. We have a world of information at our fingertips, telling us how we can be the best version of ourselves. But information does not lead to transformation. Everything that we've been talking about in this series over the last few weeks is kind of leading up to this thought.

For the last few weeks, we've been looking at the different steps of recovery, and we've been trying to gain an insight into our hurts and our habits and our hangups. And the first four steps of recovery help us to find some clarity about ourselves. The first four steps are about revealing some things in us that maybe others see, but we don't, or coming to conclusions on some things that we need to. And so step one is admit. We need to admit that we are powerless over our addictions, our brokenness, our sinful patterns, and that our own power, man, if we are just leaving it up to ourselves, our lives are absolutely unmanageable.

We cannot do it on our own. Step two is that we can't but God can. And so we believe. We come to believe that God is the one whose power can fully restore us. We believe it in our.

In our heads that he can. Step three then leads to trust. We decide to trust God with our lives and our wills and accept his grace through Jesus. Then step four is inventory. We take a seeking and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

And these first four steps can be really good at helping us understand who we are, helping us understand why we keep going back to maybe some patterns and behaviors that we go back to. It helps us answer the questions of why do I keep doing this? Why do I keep running to this well looking for living water, knowing that it's only going to leave me dry and thirsty? Why do I react the way that I do? Why do I turn to these coping mechanisms that I have in my life?

These four steps are really good at helping us understand that. But information doesn't lead to transformation. And so last week we looked at step five, confession. We confess to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our sins. And we're building upon this action today with step six.

And step six comes down to this word, repent.

We become entirely ready to turn away from our patterns of sin and turn to God. Would you say this with me this morning? Repent. We become entirely ready to turn away from our patterns of sin and turn to God. And we've said throughout this series that the 12 steps of recovery, if you step back and look at them, they're actually like 12 steps to discipleship.

Each one of these steps helps us follow Jesus more closely. Closely. Whether we have ever struggled with an addiction, a chemical addiction or not, maybe we've have a sinful pattern in our life, or we have one ongoing in our life right now. We are all one of those people who have gone our own way. We have done our own thing.

And Jesus we know is the answer for the hope and the healing that we desire. And so these steps help us turn to Jesus, who is the living water. And there comes a point in our lives where we are all faced with the decision, are we going to keep going our own way? Like, are we just going to keep walking in the direction that we were walking, doing our own thing, living how we wanted to live? Are we going to keep walking our own way?

Or is there going to come a time where we realize our way is not working and we need to turn and walk back in the way of God? We need to turn and walk back towards him, who he created and designed us to Be. That is what the word repentance comes down to. Repentance is a change of heart and mind that results in a change of direction. And like confession, repentance is not just a one time thing that we, that we do and then we never have to do it again.

Yes, there is a moment in your life maybe where you confess Jesus as Lord and Savior, where you said, I want to turn from the direction I'm going and I want to follow you. But that moment is just that. It is a moment that then gets repeated a thousand other times throughout the daily course of our lives. Because we want course correct to say,

Jesus, I want to continue following in your way. We don't just turn once, we turn over and over and over again.

We die to ourselves, take up our cross and we follow Him. Because here's what's happens. We may come to this place where we admit that we are powerless to change our lives, where we believe that God has the power to change us. We want to trust in Him. We take this inventory and evaluate our patterns and where the origin of them is.

And we can come to this point where we say, yep, Jesus, I need you. And then we turn and we continue to walk our own way. We continue to do our own thing. 18 inches between our head and our heart. Jesus loves us just as we are, but.

But he loves us too much to leave us there. There. There's a sanctification that begins to happen inside of us when, when we choose to say we want to follow Jesus. He wants to transform our lives. We are, we receive the Holy Spirit in us.

And, and one of the things that Jesus says that the Holy Spirit does is he convicts us of our sin. That conviction is meant to turn us back to the Lord. And we may feel that conviction and we say, God, I need you. I need to change.

We keep walking in the same old direction, doing the same old things.

What I've seen play out in my life, what I've seen in the lives of others, is that we can agree with Jesus and still walk away from Him.

We can agree with Jesus. We can agree with what the word of God says about us and what we need to do. We can agree with all of that and still walk away and do our own thing. And it's not that we walk away because we think that Jesus is wrong. We walk away because we know he's right and we're afraid of what it's going to cost us.

We see this in our text today. Maggie, read for us. Jesus feeds the 5,000. He takes this meager offering of five loaves of bread and two fish in John chapter 6. He multiplies it so that everyone that's in the crowd is able to eat and have their fill.

And there's plenty of leftovers afterwards. So many theological and symbolical things in this passage, but what I want us to notice is that when the crowd sat there that day and they had lunch afterwards, they looked and they started talking to themselves and saying, I think that this guy is the Messiah. I think that this is the one who is to come. I think this is the chosen one of God. And so the next day they chase Jesus down.

I mean, like quite literally, they find Jesus, they chase him down and they're like, jesus, where did you go? How? When did you get here?

And, and they're coming to him again. And, and what Jesus says to them, I think reveals something about their intentions.

Verse 26, Jesus answered, Very truly, I tell you, you were looking for me not because you saw the signs I performed, but because you ate the loaves, had your fill. Jesus, like you have all of the information about me now. You know who I am.

But instead of finding him the next day, to take that information and to, and to allow it to transform them to where they, they worship Jesus, they bowed down to him. They, they, they wanted to follow him. Instead, that information just stayed up here. And it didn't lead to heart transformation in them. And they came to Jesus looking for another meal.

They came to Jesus hungry for bread.

Jesus knows what they need, and he offers them something better than they can even imagine. Verse 35.

Then Jesus declared, I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. So Jesus doesn't offer them another meal. Jesus offers them himself. Jesus offers him himself because he knows that he alone can satisfy that deep hunger that is inside of every single one of them and every single one of us. A spirit, spiritual hunger that can only be satisfied through a right relationship with God made available through Jesus.

And this whole idea of Jesus being the one who fills us and satisfies us, like the religious leaders in the crowd that day, they knew exactly what he was saying and it made them very uncomfortable. They, they started questioning him and, and even being a little bit critical of some of the things that he was saying. And then Jesus says something that doesn't just make the religious leaders uncomfortable. It makes me uncomfortable. It made everyone else who heard him that day feel uncomfortable.

Verse 53, Jesus said to them, very truly, I tell you Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

Can we just say that this is kind of a weird passage. This is kind of a weird thing for Jesus to say. And to the crowd that day, this wouldn't have just been weird. This would have been absolutely scandalous. In Jewish law, being around blood would have made someone ceremoniously unclean.

And so before they could worship, they had to go through a. A

purification ritual. But drinking blood was strictly prohibited in Jewish law. And, and now you have Jesus saying what he just said, and, and, and people have been calling Him a rabbi. But Jesus is not endorsing cannibalism here.

What Jesus is doing is providing a vivid metaphor to describe what it means to follow Him. He's saying, don't just admire me. Don't just seek what you can get from me. Depend on me. Stake your life in me.

When you go out today and you have your lunch, you're not just gonna put the meal on the table and look at it and say, man, that was a good meal. I feel so satisfied. No, you're going to eat it. When you eat the meal, it becomes a part of you. And so Jesus is challenging them, and he's challenging us to consume and to be consumed by him, to follow him, to give every bit of ourselves over to him and to be filled with him in our lives.

And the crowd was beginning to understand who Jesus was. And now he's inviting them to let that change their hearts, change their direction, to reorient their lives around Him. But again we see the 18 inches between our head and our heart. We read this in verse 60.

On hearing it, many of his disciples, not the twelve, but the crowd that had been following him, that had gathered around him, the multitude, they said, this is hard teaching. Who can accept it. And later on in verse 66, we read this. From this time on, many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. And I don't think it's because they heard Jesus say what he said and be like, oh, he's endorsing cannibalism.

I'm out. No, I think it's because they knew what he meant. They knew the cost of following him and they didn't want to. They came seeking something. They wanted a change in their life.

But when Jesus offered Him Himself as the way to find it, they said no, and they turned back and they went their own way. Their minds had changed about Jesus. They had seen who he was clearly, but their direction didn't they believed that he was the Messiah. They just didn't want to reorient their lives around him. They wanted to keep going their own way.

They wanted to keep doing their own thing.

Like, you can agree with Jesus and still turn your back and walk away. You can deeply desire what he has to offer and still resist where he wants to lead. You can have right information and still not experience transformation. And as people walked away, Jesus looked at his disciples, the twelve, and he said, so are you guys going to leave too?

And I love how Peter responds. Verse 68. Simon Peter answered him, lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.

There's two words here, believe and know. And we look at these things and we might think that they're synonyms, but they're not. Like, to know something is to like, have a conceptual understanding, understanding of it. To believe something is to understand it and then let it change you. To believe something to the point that it causes action in your life.

It's not just intellectual agreement. It is entrusting yourself to what you say that you believe, to rely on it. And in John's Gospel, every time we see him use that word, believe, or Jesus invites someone to believe, what he's inviting them to is to better align and further align themselves with him. And the crowds believed just enough about Jesus to be impressed by him. But Peter oriented his life around him.

The crowd wanted bread, but Peter is saying, where else will we go? You are the bread of life. The crowd could see that day to follow Jesus. All that they could see was what it was going to cost them. And what Peter saw was everything that was gained by laying his life down to follow him.

So let me ask you this morning, is there a place that you need to turn in your life?

Is there a place that you need to repent?

Maybe you've changed your mind, but you haven't changed your direction yet. Is there a place in an area in your life where you need to say, I'm done walking this way and I want to walk towards Jesus. I know this isn't healthy.

And maybe you're allowing fear to get in the way, like we see in our text today, and it's causing you to keep going back to those wells that are only dry.

Like, repentance isn't just about remorse. We see remorse oftentimes in repentance, but it's not just about that. It is about reorientation, reorienting our life and our direction and our ways with the life and direction and ways of Jesus until you turn to him and you follow him and we will just keep ending up in the same old broken patterns.

Something beautiful happens when we turn to Jesus and when we commit to this lifestyle of repentance and following him, that man, when we, when we start walking towards him, but we're drawn back over this way, we can still turn and follow again. We can still turn and follow again. God never reaches a point where he says, no, just go your own

way, do your own thing. No. God continues to invite us back.

And as we turn from our old way of living and we turn to Jesus, he begins to reshape and transform form us, our hearts to begin to align with his heart. We start to care about the things and the people that Jesus cares about. And when you taste the goodness of the living water, you can't help but share it with others so that they can experience it too. Throughout this series we have been talking about Jesus being our living water, the only one who can truly satisfy our soul. And as we were working on this series, I thought, wouldn't it be cool as we were talking about Jesus being the living water, if we could reach out to one of our mission partners and just see if any of them were working on a well project in a place that they were trying to serve so that we could help maybe provide water for life that would give them the opportunity to share with the people in that community about the living water in Jesus.

And so we reached out to a handful and we found a project that was already going that we feel like we'll be able to help finish up. And so would you turn your attention to the screens and check out this video.

Hi Sherwood Oaks family. I have some exciting news to share with you about one of our tier one mission partnerships. Missions of Hope International, finally known as mohit, is bringing HOPE where it's most needed, serving children and families in some of the most vulnerable city slums and rural communities in Kenya, Africa. Through Christian education, daily meals and essential childcare, MOHI is transforming lives and pointing children and families to Christ. Sherwood Oaks has been honored to partner with Mohi in this life changing mission since 2012.

Today, more than 1300 Kenyan teachers, social workers and staff faithfully serve 23,000 children across 38 communities. One of the most challenging areas Mohi serves is Turkana land, a remote desert region in northwest Kenya. MOHI operates schools in four Turkana communities. But in the desert, one critical need that touches every part of life is water. Clean water is scarce, precious and often out of reach.

To bring our current sermon series to life in a tangible way. Our church leadership has committed to partner with Missions of Hope to help fund a clean water project for a Turkana village. The vision is bold and beautiful. A solar powered community well that will provide fresh clean water for a school, a medical clinic and the entire village. This single well will restore health, create opportunity and open the door for the gospel to be lived and shared every day.

The total cost of the project is \$175,000. Thanks to the generosity of other churches and individuals, \$114,000 has already been given. That

means we are trusting God and the Sherwood Oaks family to raise the final \$61,000 with the goal of completing the project by Easter Sunday April 5th. We invite you to prayerfully consider how you can be a part of this miracle. Your generosity can bring clean life giving water to children and families in Kenya.

And with every drop, the living gospel of Jesus, love and grace will be proclaimed.

I love that and \$61,000 church. I think that we can do that over the next six weeks to provide water for this town and this community, to support their school and their clinic and the community. And you break that down and if everybody who just attends the Bloomington campus gave \$40, man, we'd be able to reach it like that. Break that down even over six weeks and whatever 40 divided by six is, if you just take that and you give that each week, we would be able to reach this goal. And we just want to invite you to join us as we try to complete this well for Mohi.

You can fill one of our offering envelopes. Just write Mohi on that, write a check, drop it in the bag or one of the boxes out there. Or you can go online and to our give page and on the Dropbox you'll find Mohi well project. And you just choose that and everything given will go towards helping us make this a reality. We have a chance to partner with a phenomenal ministry to provide clean water so that they have an inroad to introduce people to Jesus the living water repentance.

I'll close with this isn't just a one time action. It is a daily discipline of reorienting our lives to his to Jesus way of life. And as we do, we find ourselves loving how he loves and doing what he did. We want to be more consumed by him and we want to consume him more in our lives because we know that he is where true life is found. So maybe today your first step towards him is to turn.

And you have been walking down this direction. You say, I'm tired of going my way, doing my own thing. I want to turn back and I want to follow him. In Acts, chapter two, we find and people hearing Peter say, who? Where else would we go?

Peter is preaching the first gospel message. And people are cut to the heart and they ask him, what must we do to be saved? And Peter says, repent, Repent, Believe, be baptized. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And if you are ready to make that step, man, we want to help you, so come and find us.

Find someone with a lanyard love to walk through that with you. We're going to come to a time of communion, and this is a time where maybe we can kind of course correct a little bit, reorient our lives around him in some way. So as you eat the bread and drink the cup and let this be a time where you say, jesus, I want to be more consumed by

you. I want to follow you more. Repentance is not just about remorse, it's about reorientation.

And so as you take the bread and the juice, represents Jesus who gave himself for you, man, just simply pray, Jesus, I give myself back to you. God, thank you for the way that you love us and the way that you draw us to yourself.

God, your word says in Romans 2 that it is your kindness that leads us to repentance.

And so, Father, this morning, would you in your kindness point out an area in our life that we've been walking. And maybe we know what is true and we know what is right. And yet we are just choosing to go our own way and do our own thing. Because whether we think that we know better or the fear of what it might cost, God, I pray that we will prioritize holiness with you over anything else. You, God, you truly are where the joy is.

You are where true life is found.

And it's in following. And so, God, I just pray that right now, in this moment, we will be able to lay anything down that's keeping us from you, that you will meet us in that place and help us find true life once again. In Jesus name, amen.