

O Lord, our God and our ever-blessed
Father in heaven, you're the giver of every good and perfect
gift which come down from you without variation or shadow of
change. We thank you for the capacity
to bring tithes and offerings into the storehouse of the Lord
this morning. We pray for the deacons and our elders as we
steward them. We will do so wisely and for
your glory and the good of your people as far as the sun shines. As we turn to your
word now,
Father, this morning, we pray that you will pour out upon us
a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the true knowledge of God,
that the eyes of our heart would be enlightened. especially those,
O Lord, who are still in the darkness of sin and misery, that
you would do for them what you've done for us. Save them, O God. Open their eyes
that they might
see Jesus. May they hear his voice coming
down into their hearts this day, piercing through all of the intellectual
defenses they maybe have erected against Christ. May they hear
his voice saying, follow me. We pray for those of us who know
you, Lord. Maybe some here have drifted back from their first
love, like the church in Ephesus. Come this morning, dear Jesus,
and draw our hearts close to you, one and all, that we might
sense the touch of the Master's hand upon our souls. And we offer
these prayers in Jesus' name. Amen. Please take your seats.
And if you would, turn with me and your copy of the Word of
God to John's Gospel and chapter one. I've always struggled preaching
this text in the past, but this week, the Lord's given great
help, and I thank you for your prayers. I'm convinced we go
forward on our knees, or we don't go forward at all, and I'm grateful
for your prayers. I'm grateful especially for those
of you who've been praying for my voice. I lost my voice on Friday. It came back
again on Saturday,
and I lost it early this morning. I could hardly speak, but many
of you have been praying for me, and the Lord has heard, and
my voice has strengthened through the morning, which is a wonderful
thing, so I thank you for your prayers this morning. Let's turn
to the Word of God this morning, John chapter one, verse 29, and
we'll read down to the end of the chapter. This is the Word
of God. The next day, he saw Jesus coming
toward him, that's John the Baptist, and said, behold, the Lamb of
God who takes away the sin of the world. Sorry, I'm reading
the wrong next day, verse 35. The next day again, John was
standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he
walked by and said, behold, the Lamb of God. The two disciples
heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned
and saw them following and said to them, what are you seeking?
And they said to him, rabbi, which means teacher, where are
you staying? He said to them, "'Come, and
you will see.' So they came and saw where he was staying, and
they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, and he first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "'We have found the Messiah,' which means Christ.' He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "'You are Simon, the son of John. You shall be called Cephas, which means Peter. The next day, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, follow me. Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, we have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophet's root, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Nathanael said to him, can anything good come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him, "'Come and see.' Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit.' Nathanael said to him, "'How do you know me?' Jesus answered him, "'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, "'I saw you.' Nathanael answered him, "'Rabbi, you are the Son of God. "'You are the King of Israel. Jesus answered him, because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these. And he said to him, truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. Amen, the grass withers and the flower falls off, but the word of God endures forever. May he add its blessing to its preaching this morning in your midst. Well, variety, they say, is the spice of life. And that's certainly true when you look at the book of nature, when you look at creation. There's a wondrous variety, boys and girls, in creation. If you look at the blue heavens above us, you'll see that the color changes. It's dark at the top and a kind of it gradually shades down to the meridian or to the horizon in a lighter shade of blue. And that's a sign that our God, our creator, loves variety. When you read the poetry of the Western canon, you get this sense that the poet sees a creation charged with the grandeur of God. Like Hopkins' famous poem, we see a world in a grain of sand, a world. Pick up a grain of sand and look at it under the microscope, and there's a world of complexity, a world of beauty in it, much like the snowflakes that are all different, the scientists tell us. Or think of Hopkins' other poem. Glory be to God for dappled things, for skies of couple color as a brinded coy, for rose moles all in stipple upon trout that swim. Fresh, far cool, chestnut falls, finches' wings, landscape plotted and pieced, fold, fallow and ply, and all trades their gear and tackle and trim, all things counter, original, spare, strange, whatever is fickle, freckled, Who knows how, with swift, slow, sweet, sour, a dazzle, dim, he fathers forth whose beauty is past change. Praise him, praise him. And you could go through the Western canon and just see all these poems that speak of the beautiful complexity, intricacy, and beauty of creation. Variety

is the spice of life in nature. But variety is also the spice of life in grace. It shouldn't surprise us that the God who has woven such beauty in the complexity and diversity of creation would also weave a beautiful abundance of different means by which he draws sinners to himself. Sometimes he'll use a friend to draw us near to him. And sometimes he'll use a foe. Sometimes he'll use the whisperings of pleasure, pointing us to the solid joys and lasting pleasures that none but Zion's children know. And then sometimes he'll use pain as his megaphone. as C.S. Lewis famously observes. Sometimes he'll awake us with a thunderous moment of conversion, like a young lad back in the 18th century who was climbing up into a Scottish church. The doors were locked, and he climbed in through a window. As he's coming in through the window, the pastor's reading the Bible, and he reads that verse in John 10, I am the door, but he who's a thief and a robber climbs up another way. And those were the words the young lad heard coming through the window, and the Lord used those to convict him and to convert him in a moment. And then sometimes, like in my own situation, God will gradually kind of soothe us to awake by the gentle strokings of his providence or the prick of conscience And over a period of years, he'll bring us from death to life. And of course, there was a moment in that time when I came from death to life, I just don't know when it was. I just gradually was awoken from my spiritual slumbers through my life. And this morning in our text, we see exactly this kind of variety. When it comes to finding Jesus, the Lord has wondrous ways of bringing us home to God. I have three points this morning. The first is that no one finds Jesus on their own. We often need help to be drawn to him. Secondly, no one finds Jesus without you. We must resolve as Christians never to be a dead end to truth, to be out sharing the gospel like the many examples in this text. And lastly, no one finds Jesus without Jesus. We need the Savior to come and gather us in his bosom and carry us in his arms and bring us home to God. Those are our three points this morning. First of all, no one finds Jesus on their own. Now of course, Sometimes people will use that expression, I find the Lord, a bit like find Waldo in the cartoons. But we never really find him, of course, because he's not the one who is lost. When it comes to salvation, Jesus is always the one who finds the lost sheep. And the reason he must find us is because we are lost. And we often don't want to find him. It reminds me of the young Irish boy who wrote back to his mother. He was working at the Bush Mills distillery, and he wrote the sad news. He said, Uncle Robert drowned this week in the vat of whiskey. His workmates tried to save him, but he fought them off bravely. And it's like that with salvation.

We fight back against the Lord. Paul says in Romans 3, there is none righteous, no, not one. There is none who understands. There is none who seeks after God. None who seeks after God. We have all turned aside. We have together become worthless, unprofitable. There's none who does good, no, not one. left to ourselves, none of us would ever find the Lord. We need to be brought to him.

And sometimes the Lord does that directly, like with Philip, when Jesus goes and says to Philip, follow me, and Philip follows him. And then sometimes, often, Christ uses other people to gather his flock home to God. That's the first point this morning. no one finds Jesus on their own. And then leading from that then, secondly, no one finds Jesus without you, without human intermediaries to share the gospel with them. I think it's interesting to note that of the five men saved in this passage, four of them come to faith through the witness of other men in the passage. And that is, I think, interesting. It all begins with John the Baptist preaching. He's been preaching about Jesus from verse 29 down through verse 34. The climactic point of his sermon is behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And then in the next day, John is standing with his two disciples and he looks at Jesus as he walked by. Christ, as if walking by them, reminds us of the hymn, Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior. And he's passing by, and John points out Jesus. Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples see Jesus as he walked by. They hear John, and they follow Jesus. And it's a wonderful thing, because John is losing disciples, and Christ is gaining them. It's always a reminder to us when we gain disciples, we're never gaining disciples to follow us. The church and our evangelistic efforts must always be about Jesus. It's not follow me, it's not follow the elders, it's follow Jesus. Then there's also the word of personal testimony, as the friends share about Christ. In John 1, 41, we're told that Andrew first found his own brother, Simon, and said to him, we have found the Messiah, which means Christos, or Christ, which is the idea from the Old Testament that the Meshiach would come, and Meshiach is the Hebrew word for anointed. And if you know your Old Testament, you know that in the Old Testament, there were three anointed offices, the prophet, the priest, and the king. And each of these three offices began their ministry with the anointing of oil, symbolizing the Holy Spirit. And the interesting thing is, though, in the Old Testament, no one man ever held all three offices. There were men who were prophets and kings, like David, But there were men who were priests and prophets, like Moses and Aaron, I suppose, but there was no one who was a prophet and a priest and a king. And there was this sense in the Old Testament, though, that there would be coming a day when the Anointed One, the Meshiach, who'd be prophet and

priest and king, would come. and would lead God's people and be a sacrifice for their sins, a word of truth for their darkness, and a king to subdue them to himself and to restrain and conquer all his and their enemies. And then in John 1.45, Philip finds Nathanael and said to him, we have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, So in each of these occasions, you notice that the disciples are sharing biblical truth about Jesus. And I wanna put it to you this

morning, that is an essential part of evangelism, right? It's the word of God that has power. He speaks, it is done. He commands, it holds fast. And a rookie mistake I make all the time when I share my faith is I defend the Bible. It's almost as if the atheist will say to you or the secular agnostic will say, no, no, you can't share the Bible with me until you prove to me it's got authority. That makes about as much sense as a robber coming up to you with a knife and you pull your gun. And he says, no, no, you can't shoot me until you prove to me that that 9mm pistol has power and that the plus P135 grain ammunition will do me damage. Well, the guy's got a knife to you, he's going to stab you. He doesn't turn around and run away, he's going to stab you with the knife. You're not going to give him a lecture on the power of firearms, you're going to pull the trigger. And if he doesn't start believing, he'll start bleeding, right? And likewise, my brothers and sisters, in this book, you have the creative power of God's word. Don't defend it, let it out of

the cage, as Spurgeon said, and you'll find it does a jolly good job of defending itself. The people with whom you meet know an awful lot about the God they claim not to believe in. Remember one time I was sharing my faith in Starbucks, of all places, in the line, waiting for my coffee. And there was a secular agnostic guy who took a perverse delight in speaking about profane, debauched things. And as I was sharing the gospel with him, we were going back and forth, and I said to him, you know, it's appointed once for man to die, and after that, the judgment. And Jesus says that you will give an account to God for every careless word you speak. When I said that to him, he got really uncomfortable and looked at his feet. And I said to him, sir, if you don't mind me saying this, you talk about debauched subjects with great boldness, but when I speak to you about the judgment of Almighty God, I notice you become extremely uncomfortable. Do you know why that's the case? And he went, no. And I said, because you know it's true. And he started and turned and walked out, didn't wait for his coffee. But it was an illustration to me that they know it's true. And so you don't wanna be a jerk about it, but in a winsome kind of way, let the Bible out of its cage. And it'll do a very good job by itself of producing faith in the hearts that God has chosen

to believe. And if all else fails, give them a personal invitation. Come and you will see. Jesus says, come and you will see, or the disciples say. If you're here this morning, maybe you're a teenager here and you've come to faith, and your parents don't share your faith, you gotta be very careful. It's very easy, we all kind of go through a cage stage when we're first converted, and we can be a little bit obnoxious for Jesus. And that's never a very good strategy. Driving your parents away from you is a poor strategy for drawing them toward Jesus. The best thing, as I told the children this morning in the Sunday school, is to demonstrate before your parents a changed life. And then talk to them, mom and dad, I've met Christ. And I met him here at First Presbyterian Church. In this place, I realized there was a spiritual presence here that loved me and knew me. and loved me despite knowing me, and he has drawn me to himself, and he's changed my heart, and he's changed my life. He's forgiven me my sins, and I probably couldn't do a great job, Mom and Dad, of explaining to you why I believe in Jesus, but why don't you come to church? Come to the place where Jesus has promised to be, with his people, in his word, and see if you don't meet him yourself. There's a wonderful book, There's a wonderful book written by Greg Kuchel. It's called Tactics, a Game Plan for Sharing Your Christian Conviction. And in that book, he speaks about questions. So often as Christians, we feel the burden to have all the answers, right? And nobody does. I haven't got all the answers. And I'm paid to have all the answers, but I haven't got all the answers, right? And so what about you? Maybe you hardly have much time to read or other things, and you might think, I'm scared of sharing my faith. And Kukul, in a wonderful way, says, why don't you put the unbeliever on the defense by asking him questions? And he unpacks what he calls the Columbo tactic. Remember Columbo, the detective? Just one more thing. And he always has that question. And he has these two great questions that are wonderful to use in personal evangelism. What do you mean by that? And how do you come to that conclusion? It's wonderful. What do you mean by that? And how do you come to that conclusion? So someone's saying, speaking about, someone says, oh, everybody's got faith. And there's an opening. What do you mean by faith, sir? Well, it's just jumping into the darkness, hoping something is true. Well, how did you come to that conclusion? Well, how do we know what God's like? If God is there, we can't see him. And then you can say, but sir, God is there and he's not silent. He has spoken. And faith isn't a person in the light jumping into the darkness. It's quite the reverse. It's a person in the darkness jumping into the light of who God is and of what God has said.

And then you're off to the races. So I commend Kukul to you and his book, But it's a wonderful thing. One of my friends, Jack Campbell, he ministers to the international students at Clemson. He has this wonderful phrase, never be a dead end to truth. God has entrusted truth to each

one of you in this congregation. Never be a dead end to it. Pass it on. If God meets you in your devotions, pass it on to your wife or your husband or your children. Share with them what God has done in your life. If you're at work and you're talking to an unbeliever, be praying. You're concerned, aren't you? Wouldn't it be a terrible thing for you to stand in judgment with your friends and colleagues at work and your colleagues to say, you never told me there was a savior. I never knew there was hell. Oh my brother, my sister, pray for them. And pray for opportunities to give your faith away Never be a dead end to truth. So no one finds Jesus on their own, first point. No one finds Jesus without you, second point. Third point, no one finds Jesus without Jesus. You remember, even John the Baptist could say, I myself did not know him. I didn't know the spiritual significance of my young cousin. until the Lord opened my eyes to his glory and to his majesty. We need the Lord to unlock our hearts. And it's important when we meet Jesus to know that we have met the real Jesus. There's a wonderful story where Rob Raymond, the systematic theologian back in the 70s, was driving through a hippie kind of parade, the flower par guys. And one of them is smoking marijuana, he staggers up to Rob Rayburn's door, the window of his car, and says, hey man, do you know Jesus? And Rob Andrews says, or, my brain just crashed. Rob Raymond says, which Jesus? Because there's lots of different

Christs out there. but there's only one real Jesus.

And the real Jesus who confronts us in this text is a wonderful Jesus, as big as day, bigger than all the world. He comes to these erstwhile disciples as the confronter of men's motives. When he meets Andrew and maybe

John, his brother, he says to them, what are you seeking? What do you want me to do for

you? You see, scholars will tell us

that back in those days, there were many people who wanted a political savior to rescue them from the Romans. But Christ isn't that kind of savior at all, at least not first and foremost.

He's a spiritual savior to save you from your sins. What are you seeking? He's a confronter of men's motives. We've got to want what Christ is wanting to give us. And secondly, he's a teacher of men's minds. Andrew and perhaps John say to him, Rabbi, Rabbi, which means teacher. We want you to teach us. Reminds me of Reagan's famous

comment about the liberals. He said, it's not that the liberals are wrong. They just know so many things that just ain't so.

And likewise, in our unbelief, that's our problem. We know so many things that just ain't so. Maybe you're here this morning as an unbeliever, and you think God is whatever I want him to be. When I like to think of God, you say, and then you'll start speaking, and you'll be describing the contents of your own wish fulfillment. But the great question is, Not what do you think of God? Not what do I think of God? What does God think of himself and how can you know? And Jesus says, I have come to explain the Father to you. I and my Father are one. Before Abraham was, I am. Maybe you think life began as a cosmic accident, a big explosion in space. Maybe you think there's no, therefore no real meaning or purpose to life. and that you have no real identity beyond the one you create for yourself. And Jesus says, no, I am the I am. I am the existing one. The one who was and who is and who is to come. The one from whom all men derive their existence. And if all of life comes from me, Christ says, then surely all of life has to be about me. Maybe you say there's no ultimate truth. Truth is whatever I want, you might think. Jesus says, no, no, I am the truth, speaking to a world besotted with lies. I am the light of this world, a world lost in the darkness. I am the way, Jesus says, a world that's wandering and lost. I am the life, Jesus says, he's offering life to a world that is dead in trespasses and in sins. And Christ comes to us in this text as the confronter of men's motives and a teacher of men's minds. We have to let Jesus set us straight in our thinking or we'll never be set straight in our living. He comes also as the transformer of men's identity. Andrew brings his brother Peter to Jesus in verse 42. And Jesus looked at him and said, you are Simon, the son of John. You should be called Cephas, which means Peter. That's an important thing, to change a man's name. Right in the Old Testament, to name something. To name someone is an act of lordship. It's defining their identity, their significance. So in Genesis 1, God speaks to the light and calls it day. And he speaks to the night, the darkness, and calls it night. He speaks to the gathering of the waters and calls it sea and so forth. God names them. And then when he makes man, Adam, what's Adam do? He names the creatures. And when Eve is brought forth, though she bears equality with Adam in her image bearing, yet Adam names her woman before the fall, and Eve after the fall, an act of faith. One of my friends back in Greensboro called their daughter Eve and people rebuked them. That's a terrible thing to do. Eve was responsible for all of the world's sin. No she wasn't, it was Adam actually, but nonetheless. And they blamed her. I said, no, no, actually it was tremendous faith. Perhaps the greatest act of faith the

world has ever seen. Because God had just told Adam that all your children will die. To dust you are created and to dust you shall return. And Adam heard the gospel. that one day one of his children would come and undo all that he had done, and he calls his wife Eve, the mother of life, all the living. What he's saying there is that death won't have the last word over all of our children, because one who will come will be the resurrection and the life. But Adam naming his wife is an act of headship and authority. Then when Yahweh meets Abram, of course, he changes his name to Abraham. And when he meets Jacob the twister, when Jacob becomes, ceases to be Jacob the twister and becomes Jacob the truster, and he's clinging to God in an act of helpless weakness, and God says, now your name shall be called Israel, for you have striven with God and have overcome. To change a man's name is to change a man's identity. And Christ comes now as the second Adam, the son of God, and he changes Peter's name from Cephas to, from Simon to Peter, which means rock. And Christ comes to transform our identity too. He must change us on the inside or we'll never be changed at all. So he comes as the confronter of men's motives, the teacher of men's minds, the transformer of men's identity. Thirdly, the searcher of men's hearts. He knows us better than we know ourselves. When Nathaniel is brought to Jesus by Philip, and of course he's a bit cynical, and he comes and says, can anything good come out of Nazareth? And Philip said to him, come and see. See, Philip doesn't get involved in the weeds of argument. Just come and meet him for yourself. And Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, and said of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit. Nathanael said to him, How do you know me? Jesus answered him, Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you. And Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, You are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel. It's an amazing thing. Before you saw me, Jesus said, I saw you. And Nathanael suddenly realizes the glory in Christ. And I kind of wonder, It was at least that, but I wonder, behold an Israelite in whom there is no deceit. I kind of wonder, and this is just entirely conjectural, but the Jews would often go to sit under a tree to meditate and to pray. And I wonder, I wonder, was, Perhaps Nathaniel was thinking about Jacob the twister, or maybe Psalm 32 verse one and two. Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no sin, and in whose spirit there's no deceit. I wonder, was Nathaniel thinking about that and wondering, maybe even worrying in himself, Lord, am I a man in whom there's deceit? Who knows? Whatever it was, he comes to Jesus and he finds a savior who searched him out all the way

to the bottom and who saw him and who knew him ever before, Nathanael met and saw Jesus. And you know, he hasn't changed. Jesus knows you each one this morning. Young people, you might fool your mom some of the time and your dad all of the time, but you don't follow, you don't fool Jesus any of the time. He knows you all the way down

to the bottom. His word is living and active.

It's sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirits and of joints and of marrow. And if you're here this morning and you're not yet a Christian, I've got to warn you, God is in this place. And when God is in a place, he reveals the secrets of our heart, and it can be very uncomfortable. Don't pull back from God. He's

only exposing your sins that he might forgive you your sins by drawing you to Jesus, the Savior of our sins. But he knows you, each one. There's a wonderful story Jeff

Thomas told about this town up in Wales. had a hydroelectric dam that was designed by this genius old engineer. But as the town moved on with the times, and eventually, the old man was too old. So they fired him. And they went on about their business. And then a few years later, the hydroelectric dam broke. And they got all the young engineers to come and try. But the young engineers couldn't fix it. So eventually, they wrote off. They sent a rider up into the mountains to where the old engineer lived. And he came down. And he walked into the engine room where all the inners were, and he walked across and looked around, got a hammer, and smashed the engine on the side. And it started back up to life again. And he went back to his old cabin. And then he sent them a bill, \$10,001. He itemized it. The tap of a hammer, \$1. Knowing where to tap, \$10,000. And Jesus knows you each one.

He knows you by name. He formed you in your mother's womb. He wove you together there. Your frame was not hidden from him when you were made in secret and skillfully wrought in the depths of your mother's belly. His eyes saw your unformed substance, and in his book were written all of the days that were ordained for you before there was one of them. And he's brought you here today, and maybe you feel his word coming into your heart, slicing through all of the defenses, all of the facades you and I erect. And he's saying to you, I know

you. Do you know me? What a strange thing for a creature not to know its creator. "'Oh, come to me,' Jesus says, "'all you who are weary and heavy laden, "'and I will give you life. "'Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, "'for I am meek and lowly of heart, "'and you will find rest for your souls.'" Jesus, well, he's the confronter of men's motives, the teacher of men's minds, the transformer of men's identity, the searcher of men's hearts, and lastly and briefly, he's the ladder to God's presence. Jesus says to Nathanael at the climax of this opening passage of John, because I said

to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these. And he said to him, truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. Now there's no doubt Christ here is alluding to an Old Testament account back in Genesis 18. Jacob's on the run, and one night he sleeps in Bethel, head on a stone, and God gives him a vision. And you know that vision, you can find it this afternoon when you read maybe for your devotions, Genesis 28, 12, and 13. And Jacob dreamed And behold, notice there was a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to the heavens. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above the ladder and said, I am the Lord, the God of Abraham, your father, and the God of Isaac. So there's a ladder on earth, top in heaven, and God standing above the ladder. Now listen to the difference. And the angels are ascending and descending on the ladder, right? And the difference, notice what Christ does. You will see heaven opened. And the angels of God ascending and descending, not on the ladder, but on the Son of Man. You see his point? He takes the ladder out of the picture because the fulfillment has come. The ladder is not a thing, it is a person. It's Jesus. He is the ladder with his feet on the earth, his head in the heavens. And if you want to come to God, you must come through Jesus. There is no other way. Muhammad can't do it. He's not the ladder. Buddha can't do it. He's not the ladder. The Hindu gods can't do it. They're not the ladder. Confucius can't do it. He'll just leave you confused. Jesus is the ladder. And if you want to come to God and you come to Jesus, you've come to just the right place. Children, listen to me. Easier to climb to heaven with a rope of sand. and sorry, easier to climb to the moon with a rope of sand than to climb to heaven without the Lord Jesus. It can't be done. But if you come to Jesus, he'll take you to the Father. He'll take you up from earth through himself to the heavens because he is the ladder to God's presence. And this is the real Jesus. Isn't he wonderful? Isn't he beautiful? He confronts our motives. He teaches our minds. He transforms our identity. He searches our hearts and our minds, and he brings us home to the Father. Wherever you are this morning here at First Presbyterian Church, Jesus says, you want to know God? come to me. I'm the Father's Son, and I've come to bring you into the Father's presence." And so earnest is he to do that, that he will die in your place to remove the only impediment stopping you and me from coming home to God, which are our sins. Isn't he lovely? Come and see and taste and see that Jesus is good. Amen, let's pray together. Father in heaven, we thank you for Jesus. He's such a wonderful savior. Forgive me for the times, oh

God. I'm often slow to share the gospel. Pray this week, oh Lord, you'd open up opportunities for me to share the gospel, for my brothers and sisters to share the gospel, that we might be faithful and not be dead ends to truth. In Christ's name, amen. Before we go to our last hymn, actually, it just occurred to me, I took Dr. Daniel Dickard out for lunch a week or two ago. He's the new pastor at Shandon Baptist, and we're having lunch. And when we got up, there were two ladies behind us with these two unruly dogs. And one of the ladies had to go into the restroom. And she asked Dr. Dickard, would you hold one of the dogs, because my friend can't handle both of them. So he holds both dogs. And I'm thinking, please don't jump up in my suit. But Dr. Dickard was a faithful evangelist. He thought, how can I share the gospel? And he said, Have you met Dr. Stewart? He's the new pastor at First Press, and he preaches the gospel. You should go and hear him. And it was a wonderful opportunity. I wasn't more concerned about my soul. He was more concerned about their souls. And every opportunity, it really impressed me, every opportunity he got, he was sharing the gospel with people. And it's a great illustration. Never be a dead end to truth. It's amazing the way God opens up a door for those hungry to share Jesus with lost souls. Amen.