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Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

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Jesus' Inscrutability

John 16:12-14

Prayer: *Father God, we just again thank you for the gift that you've given us of your body and your blood. We just again, we come before you on this communion Sunday recognizing what an extraordinary privilege we have that we can meet and participate in a communion service all because of your body and your blood. And Father, we thank you. We pray as we open up your word this morning, as we look deeper into it, as we try to understand and grapple with some more of what it is you've given to us in the cross, that you would give us the presence of your Holy Spirit and that we may be enabled to make this a permanent part of our lives. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, as I said, this is again the first Sunday of the month. This is the Sunday that we remember Jesus and his cross. And on the night that he died or the night before he died, he met with his disciples and there for the last time he celebrated a Passover supper with them. *Matthew 26:26* says this: *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread and after blessing it broke it and gave it*

to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Jesus took bread and he took wine and he offered them up as symbols of his flesh and his blood and then he asked his disciples to eat the bread and drink the cup in order to symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood. He then asked them to repeat the remembrance of this sacrifice on a regular basis and this is what we call the Lord's table. And we celebrate it each month by meditating on what it is the Lord Jesus Christ did, by examining ourselves, allowing God's Holy Spirit to convict us of sin, by confessing our sins and then by participating in the elements. *John 6:53* says: *So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."*

Now we've been following the life of Jesus and we've made it up to the 16th chapter, and Jesus has spent the last three chapters preparing his disciples for his departure. It's not going well. Jesus started out by telling them that he was going to be preparing a place for them. *John 14* says, Jesus says: *"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's*

house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?" Well their response to Jesus's words is that they have no idea what he's talking about. The conversation ends with Philip asking Jesus to simply show them God the Father and that would be enough. And I've mentioned this many times before, Jesus probably, you know, doing one of those kind of face plants where he's just unbelieving in what he's hearing, he says, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Well, this inability of the disciples to see or to hear Jesus goes on for the next three chapters. And we are in chapter 16 and Jesus tells the disciples some good news about their upcoming ability to hear. This is what he says in *John 16:12-14*. He says: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you." What Jesus is offering the disciples is the Holy Spirit. And we've seen last time that the Holy Spirit's role is going to be increasingly important in Jesus's absence because in his absence, the disciples lack the ability to understand at all

what Jesus is saying. They have to have the power of the Holy Spirit in order to accomplish that. And so without that power, the disciples are simply wandering around in a fog. And Jesus is quite clear when he says in *John 10:27*, he says: "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*" So the disciples did hear the voice of the shepherd, but they didn't hear it very well at all. They constantly misunderstood what it was they were hearing. But at least they heard it. The vast majority of Jesus's followers did not. And if you take a few steps back and you look at Jesus's interaction with his followers, you will see time and time again Jesus opening his mouth and uttering things that are absolutely incomprehensible. Nobody could understand them.

Let me give you some examples. The big one is Jesus's parable of the sower and the seeds. This is *Matthew 13*. It says this: *That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up since they had*

no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear."

Okay. Now I want you to do something. I want you to put yourself in the position of a follower of Jesus. Okay? I mean we've heard this story countless times. We know basically what it's all about. Jesus is describing four different ways, four different kinds of soil, he's describing the gospel by describing these four different types of soil. You know the pathway is that -- the hard ground that people outside of the farming communities, the path that they all tread on and the gospel has no chance there, it's as hard as a rock and the enemy immediately snatches away the seed. Rocky soil produces an immediate appearance of growth and then that new plant hits a rocky ledge and it dies. We know that thorny soil again produce an appearance of growth but that the cares of this world grow up around it and they choke it off and eventually it dies and that only the good soil produces a crop, some a hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty. And we know that these are the people who hear and understand the gospel, who accept it and follow Jesus and then reproduce themselves by sharing that gospel. I mean we all know that story because we've all heard it. We've been taught it in

Sunday school we've seen it on flannelgraphs. We know what it's all about. But I want you to put yourself in the position of somebody who's a follower of Jesus, who's just a follower of Jesus. Maybe he's curious, maybe he's gotten a free meal out of this, maybe he wants to just see who this Jesus fellow is. It doesn't matter because if you're a follower, you're not yet a believer. So you've gone to hear him preach and just wonder what it is you can expect from this. Well, our text tells us that at this point in Jesus' ministry his popularity is so extensive that he has created a logistical nightmare for the disciples. The crowds are just too huge to handle and the only way they can handle the crowds is to have Jesus stand in a boat as the crowd gathers on the shore. Verse 2 says: *And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach.* So here you are now, you're in this crowd and you're waiting to hear this Jesus speak. You've waited, you're standing there in the hot sun and this has been an amazing time and you're set for an incredible talk of some sort, and Jesus stands up in the boat and he delivers a lecture on gardening, and that's all it is. It's a lecture on gardening. And then he ends with these cryptic words, *"He who has ears, let him hear."* And then he leaves. You know, maybe he shared some other parables beforehand, we don't know. The bottom line is everything that he spoke he spoke in one of these stories that didn't have an explanation. He spoke in parables. As

verse 3 said: *He told them many things in parables.* And I contend that we are so used to hearing the story explained since we were children that we completely miss the context in which it was delivered. In fact, if you're one of those curious followers, then what Jesus said that day was absolutely mystifying. I mean what in the world does rocky, thorny and good soil have to do with the Messiah and his message? I mean, understand the curious, they only heard the raw story. There was no explanation, there was no discussion of what those terms meant, there was no discussion whatsoever of the spiritual value of what he was saying. Just a stark five-minute parable having to do with soils and seeds. And we know what took place afterwards because we see it in the reaction of the disciples. It says in verse 10: *The disciples came to him and said, "Why do you speak to them in parables?"* What are you doing? There's this huge crowd waiting to hear you. Nobody has a clue what you're talking about. You know, they -- my guess is they were profoundly embarrassed by what had taken place. I mean, you have this huge crowd, and they're all waiting for what the disciples expected to be an impassioned plea perhaps about what the gospel is and who the Messiah is and what they needed to do. Not so. Again, all they get is this five-minute lecture and then Jesus turns on his heels and he leaves. And their response to Jesus is bewilderment.

So Jesus goes on to explain all the nuances of the story and its deep spiritual meaning but he only explains it to the disciples. He says in *Matthew 13*: *He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven but to them it has not been given."* The crowd got only a lecture on gardening, that was it. And this is not the first time this has happened. The scripture that I read at the beginning of every communion service comes from a dialogue that Jesus had with the crowd, and it was a dialogue that left the crowd confused, alarmed, and frankly disgusted by what he had said. Now this is a crowd that had come in the first place not really to hear Jesus preach, they had come to get more of the loaves and the fishes. They were actually looking for a free meal. So this really was an unbelieving crowd and his response to their unbelief was to grow more and more cryptic and more and more alarming in what he said. Listen to what he says in *John 6:53*: *So Jesus said to them -- picture this, you're sitting there, you're just a follower or maybe you're looking for a meal, you want to hear what this guy has to say, he says: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. Once again we hear*

these words with two thousand years of church history and teaching and we understand what Jesus is talking about and what he's talking about is taking himself into ourselves, making him such a vital part of who we are that he literally becomes part of us. We get that. But that's not at all what the original hearers of Jesus got. And what they got, frankly, was appalling. I mean Jesus said this to a people who had very strict dietary laws governing exactly what you could and could not eat and whether or not it could have blood in it and it could absolutely never have blood in it. These dietary laws did not include cannibalism at all. Eating human flesh and drinking human blood was so far beyond the pale that there were many who were following him who said I'm on to this guy, I want to join up with him. Many of them said they've had enough. They said we can't deal with this. In verse 60 it says: *When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all." After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.*

See, I contend we have a problem with the real Jesus. We believe in a very different Jesus than the scripture actually portrays. You know, we see him as this perfect gentleman going from town to

town just hoping against hope he can convince some people that he's real and that the gospel is real. Not so at all. Jesus's reputation was as someone who knew exactly, exactly what he wanted to say and he didn't much care if you got it or not. In fact he was not concerned what you thought of him at all. Mark's gospel speaks of a time when his enemies tried to entrap him and they approach him and they reveal in their approach another aspect of Jesus's personality. This is *Mark 12:13*. It says: *And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion."* They're just repeating what everybody else knew about him. And when you think about it, you have to ask yourself why in the world would Jesus as God himself care about any human's opinion? I mean, are we humans ever going to give Jesus some insight, some perspective, some information that would enlighten and inform him? No, that's never going to happen. You see, everything that Jesus did or said was focused on his spiritual agenda, whether it was debating with the Pharisees, bewildering the crowds that followed him or even addressing the disciples in their frustration at his garden lecture.

We go back to that and once again the disciples plead with him, *"Why do you speak in parables?"* Jesus' response to their question

explains why he was so cryptic, and it flies in the face of much of our popular understanding of what Jesus was trying to accomplish. This is verse 11. It says: *And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. Indeed, in their case the prophesy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: 'You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.'* For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes have been closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them." See, from the notion we have of gentle Jesus just trying to get people to stop and listen to him is the reality of Jesus saying I'm going to speak and you're not going to understand. He says, *"You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive."* So Jesus clearly acknowledges the curse that blinds eyes and ears from seeing or hearing the truth. But it never stopped him from speaking it in spite of the fact that only a tiny, tiny fraction of his hearers got even a tiny fraction of what he was saying, and that was primarily his disciples. To them Jesus said this in verse

16: *"But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."*

This brings us back to our scripture this morning. Again where we're at now in chapter 16, Jesus is preparing his disciples for his departure and he promises them that he's going to send them the Spirit that will give them the ability to make what he had said previously so incomprehensible, to make it understandable. This is what he says in *John 16:12*. He said: *"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you."* What Jesus is saying is that when the Holy Spirit comes, he's going to declare what Jesus has been saying in a way that they will finally begin to understand. What we have to understand ourselves is how great the privilege we have been given. We get to understand. What the disciples saw as a fog and as a mist, we get to get. And just as he promised the disciples, Jesus has given us as well the Spirit that declares to us the things that belong to Jesus. I want us to just take a minute and consider the privilege that we have

been given. Consider that as the elders begin to distribute the bread.

Consider also this warning that God gives about communion itself. This is from 1 Corinthians, the 11th chapter. It says: *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.* I repeat this every month. I tell our folks that communion is an extremely serious undertaking and to enter into it in an unworthy manner as to court disaster. And I beg you, if you're not absolutely confident that you are a child of the King, if you haven't by faith trusted Christ as your Savior or if you first need to be reconciled to your brother or sister before you bring your sacrifice to the altar, then just pass the elements on. I said no one's going to look at you strangely. In fact, they may think you wise. But I also want to point out that you can make the mistake on the other end of thinking that unless you are spotlessly perfect you are unworthy to receive communion, and that, too, is a mistake. You see, being a child of the King does not mean that we don't sin and that we never fail. What it means is

that we recognize that salvation is a gift, and it's a gift that no one has ever, ever been able to earn. As Dane Ortlund puts it: "In the kingdom of God, the one thing that qualifies you is knowing that you don't qualify, and the one thing that disqualifies you is thinking that you do." It also means that when we do fail, we are aware that we have sinned and the reason why we are aware of it is because God's Holy Spirit is now within us, convicting us, and so we grieve, we grieve as children who know that we have a Father who longs to forgive us and cleanse us. God says in *1 John 1:9*: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* So being a child of the King does not mean that you are sinless, that you are spotless, it means that we understand that when we do sin, we have an advocate with the Father, someone who speaks on our behalf. *1 John 2:1* says: *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father -- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.* And so because we have Jesus's righteousness, that alien righteousness that now belongs to us, now we are free to eat from his table. And so if you love your Lord, don't deny yourself the privilege that Jesus purchased for you with his blood. He lived the life that we were supposed to live and then he died the death we all deserve to die in our place so that we could be made worthy of heaven. We have that privilege. And so I want us to just take a few moments to think on the fact

that we have this privilege. Ask yourself, do I realize the gift that King Jesus has given to me?

1 Corinthians, the 11th chapter, the 23rd verse says: *For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."* So take, and eat.

Would the elders begin distributing the cup. Our text this morning, once again, it's picking up on the disciples' inability to understand their Lord. And Jesus said to them in *John 16:16*, he says: *"A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me."* Some of his disciples said to one another, *"What is this that he says to us, 'A little while, you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'; and, 'because I am going to the Father'?"* So they were saying, *"What does he mean by 'a little while'?* We do not know what he is taking about." Isn't this beginning to sound a little familiar? Remember, this is the same Jesus who told his followers that if he -- they believed in him, out of their hearts would flow living water. He's the same Jesus who said, before Abraham was, I am. That he was the good Shepherd, that his sheep hear him and follow him. But even that simple statement left them utterly confused.

In *John 10:6* it says: *This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. See, Jesus knew and he understood the shortcomings and the inabilities of his sheep. I mean he sympathized with them. He knew he was telling them supernatural things, he was telling them eternal things, things that were literally from another kingdom, a kingdom they were about to inherit, but one that they could simply just not understand at this point.*

We pick up on the text in the next verse, this is verse 19. It says: *Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me'? Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you."* What a promise Jesus is making to them. And the astounding thing is Jesus is making to it and only Jesus knows the extent of the horror and the sorrow that is coming. And it's not coming for them as yet, it's coming for him. He is

soon to be arrested, tried, tortured and executed all to rescue these sheep, sheep that had no idea what was going to take place next. See, the disciples even with Jesus but without the Holy Spirit are still lost in spite of three full years of instruction, in spite of detailed instruction of precisely what was going to take place in the next three days. The disciples are the worst kind of lost. It's the kind of lost where you don't even know that you're lost. Jesus explains that he's been speaking to them in veiled terms, that his inscrutability was intentional. And consider the disciples' response. This is *John 16:25*. Jesus says: *"I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father."* His disciples said, *"Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God."* His disciples are thrilled beyond measure. No wonder we didn't understand you; it was all your fault. You had it wrong all along. You simply made yourself hard to understand. And now that you're beginning to speak

plainly, we can clearly understand and so we are going to totally believe in you. Fat chance. Jesus exercises considerable restraint in his response. This is his response: *Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me."* See, only Jesus knows that they are only hours away from completely abandoning the Savior that they now claim to understand and really believe in. Only Jesus knows that even the Father would be forced to abandon him as he takes on the sins of his sheep. And only Jesus knows that the disciples' capacity to see and hear the Savior even at its best is hopelessly inadequate. Up to the very last minute, the disciples demonstrated that they were in fact like sheep in the way they followed the Shepherd. They didn't get him, they didn't understand him, but they did follow him. They didn't understand why he needed to go to the cross. They didn't understand why he needed to die for them, that every son or daughter of Adam had fallen short of the glory of God. They didn't understand that that shortcoming rendered all of us unfit to stand before a God of perfect holiness and that that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever would believe in him would not perish but have everlasting life. You see, Jesus was willing to pay the price of his own blood offered as a perfect sacrifice so that if we place our faith in him, we might

have his perfect life substituted for our lives that had fallen short. Well, none of that at that time made any sense to the disciples. They just heard his voice and they followed him. But beyond that they barely had a clue. And that's why Jesus said in *John 16:12*: *"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you."*

Here's the amazing thing for us. The amazing thing for us is if you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, it's because you have been visited by that very same Spirit of truth and it is he who has declared Christ to you. In fact if Christ is your Savior, the Spirit of truth has literally taken up residence inside you. *1 Corinthians 6* says: *Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your Spirit, which are God's.* And then in *Romans 8:9*, it says: *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.* So this indwelling Spirit of Christ that now lives inside us,

it takes the truth of what is Christ's and it declares us unto us. He's the one who gives us sight and hearing. I mean, can I tell you that the cross is absolute foolishness to those who have not first been met by the Spirit of God? Can I tell you that the god of this world has blinded the eyes of unbelievers so they cannot see the glory of Christ? You see, if what I am saying is not utter foolishness to you, if what I'm saying you can actually hear and see with your spiritual eyes and ears, then understand the privilege that you've been given. Jesus spoke deep truths of the kingdom from the moment he began his public ministry, and he spoke that knowing it would be years before the Holy Spirit made his declarations known to his sheep. And that would not happen until Jesus ascended into heaven and sent his Holy Spirit, but it never, never stopped him from speaking the truth. And because he was speaking truth to people who were spiritually deaf and blind, it almost never went well. Consider Jesus's first public declaration. It ended with the congregation actively trying to throw him off a cliff. The more love he poured out on us, the more unbridled hatred he received in return, and it never slowed him down. See, Jesus elected to love the crown of his creation which was us, even though that crown, that is us, was in complete and utter rebellion against him. So much so that from the moment Jesus declared who he was, we declared through the religious leaders of the day that we were going to find a way to kill him. Eventually we were

successful. And I say "we," because it wasn't the Jews and it wasn't the Romans who executed Christ, it was every one of us who have fallen short of the glory of God. See, we are the ones who shouted back to Pilate when he insisted that he was innocent of Jesus's blood. We are the ones who shouted, "*May his blood be on us and on our children.*" We are those children. Jesus was no victim of Pilate or of Rome or the Jews. Jesus voluntarily orchestrated his own sacrifice and no Jew and no Roman could have ever touched him had he not first enabled them. And he enabled them in order to pay the price of your sin and mine. We cannot receive such a privileged gift without in some way wanting to pass it on. And so as we anticipate taking the cup, we would do well to ask ourselves how committed to that task have I been? The gospel is the greatest news you will ever hear. I don't care who you are, you heard it because somebody else shared it with you, it may have been your parents, it may have been a stranger, a friend, I don't -- doesn't matter. You only heard it because somebody shared it. So take some time this morning and ask yourself have I been willing to pass it on.

1 Corinthians, 11:25 says: In the same manner he also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." So take, and drink.

This is the part that we call heads, heart and feet, where we speak about practically understanding what it means to remember Christ, and we've been talking about the inscrutable things that Jesus said and among those inscrutable statements was this one he made in *John 4:14*, you remember to the woman at the well. He said, "*Whoever drinks of this water that I shall give him will never thirst but the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.*" Now he tells this, he says this to the woman at the well and she's thinking, wow, magic water. This is incredible. How does this work? Do I drink it? I'm just never ever thirsty again? How does this work? Do I drink it and it starts reproducing itself? It's magic water. If I drink this, I'm never going to have to come to this godforsaken well and put up with all of these other people. That's what she's thinking. It's magic water. Well then Jesus reveals himself to her and he reveals that he knows every single thing about her. And what's the first thing that she does? *John 4:39* says: *And many of the Samaritans in that city believed in him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did."* What she did as soon as she knew who he was, as soon as she understood what he had told her, she went into town telling everybody she could find, this man told me everything about me.

I just want to address one of the great fears I think all of us have, and it's great fear that stops us from sharing the gospel with people. It's a fear of ignorance. See, unless I really have my act together, I don't really, I don't want to do that, I don't want to get stuck, I don't want to have to be asked questions I can't give good answers to. I want you to think of this woman because this woman is really one of the first examples of what we have of what a witness is. And a witness is what? Somebody who witnesses something. She just witnessed to what Christ had done for her. So every single one of us in these pews, you can be a witness to what Christ has done to you. You don't need a Ph.D. for that. You can say, "I was lost and now I'm found. Jesus is my answer." You can witness to what God has done for you.

And so my request this morning is that we not give in to the fear of saying, "I need to know more before I can do this." I mean I know for myself every single person I see, the first thing that comes into my mind is how can I get the gospel to this person? This person is lost. You know, the vast majority of the time that -- you know, if you're in Shop Rite you're not going to be sitting there giving the gospel, it doesn't happen, but you're praying and you're thinking and you're always on your toes waiting for the Holy Spirit to give you the opportunity. How can I give this person the gospel? And if fear is what's keeping you back, if

the fear of saying, well, I don't have it all down, just be a witness.

I was talking to a woman last night and she was saying that she was in a situation where somebody asked her something and she knew she did not have the answers. She said, "God, I don't know what to do next." And she said, "And next thing I know, the thought popped into my head." It didn't just pop into her head. The Holy Spirit stuck it in her head. This is what God wants you to do. He wants to see that he is the strength and the power and the wisdom behind these things and what he wants you to do is overcome the fear of sharing the gospel. So my prayer is that you would be like this woman. Just go into town and just tell everybody what Christ has done for you. It's really that simple. Let's pray.

Father, I want to pray this morning for each and every person sitting here. Lord, we are all witnesses to the incredible privilege that we have received. We get you. Your Holy Spirit has given us the ability to get you. And the disciples who lived with you for three years couldn't get you, and we do. And we thank you for that. And Lord, we pray that each and every person in this room, when they have that opportunity when they're around somebody who does not know the gospel, would ask you please give me this opportunity and just trust that you will give them the ability to

be a witness and let God do the rest. I pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen.