

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. That we come into this place and we bring our brokenness, and our shame, and our sin, and our secrets. And we're reminded that on the cross, Jesus declared, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And when He breathed His last, He said, "It is finished." The work is done, you are forgiven, forever set free in the name of Jesus. Thank You, God, that when we're at our worst, You're at Your best. And that no matter where we've been or what we've done or what we've brought into this place with us today, in Jesus' name, there is no condemnation. And Your grace forgives, and frees, and saves, and transforms, and changes us from the inside out. Thank You, Jesus, for the work of the cross in my life, in Jesus' name. Why don't you go ahead and grab a seat wherever you are today. And whatever campus you're at, we're glad you're here and it's Easter week. And we're preparing our hearts and our minds and our lives to turn our attention to Jesus and who He is and what He did on the cross, and in the tomb, and with the resurrection. And today is Palm Sunday. It's the Sunday before Easter, where Jesus rode into the city of Jerusalem on a donkey. And the person cried out in worship, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." And they took off their coats and they cut down palm branches and they prepared the way for Jesus to come. And it reminds us that God responds to the worship of His people. That God comes where He is wanted. He comes to those who seek Him, and when we cry out to the Lord, He is moved by that, and He responds.

And even as we're worshiping today, it's a Palm Sunday in our own life right here and right now. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, Jesus, may my worship allow You to ride into my life. Because You've come to lay down Your life so that I might live. And as we get ready for Easter this week, what I want to do for a few moments is, I want to read Isaiah 53 over your life, over our church, and honestly just kind of want to declare it to creation. You see, Isaiah 53 is a prophetic passage about Jesus, hundreds of years before Jesus came. In fact, it's called a "servant song." Four times in the book of Isaiah, Isaiah writes what is called a servant song. It's a song about Jesus, the servant. It's prophetic, it's profound, it's beautiful. And it declares the servant nature of Jesus, and who He was going to be, and what He was going to do. In fact, Isaiah is known as the Messianic Prophet because him, more than any of the other prophets, clearly declares who Jesus is, and what He was going to do, and what He was going to be like. And so maybe whatever campus you're at, just settle in for the next few moments. You don't need to take notes on this; you don't need to write anything down. Maybe even close your eyes and let me read to you a servant song about Jesus.

"See, my servant will act wisely. He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. Just as there were many who were appalled at him, his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man. And his form marred beyond human likeness. So will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand. Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar

with suffering, like one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgement he was taken away, and who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

That's Jesus, the suffering servant, for you. For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many. And that's what Jesus did for you. But it's also what Jesus did for them. You see, I think sometimes it's so hard for us to acknowledge and be aware of what Jesus did for them. Because we have such a hard time believing that Jesus actually did this for us. And sometimes, we as the people of God have to stop and remind ourselves of who Jesus is, and what He did, and what the Bible declares, and the work that was done, so we can remind ourselves, He did that for me and He did it for them. And sometimes in making it about what He did for them, I actually get what He did for me. You see, our vision as a church is to be a movement of hope for the city and beyond. And if we're honest, it's really easy to forget about our vision and think about ourselves. A movement of a bunch of unique individuals from different places of life with different gifts, and talents, and abilities, and times, and giftings, but who take all of that stuff and submit it and surrender it to a common vision for an exponential return.

A movement of hope, the confident expectation of the goodness of God, a hope in Jesus, His personhood and the finished work, hope in the coming kingdom, that God's kingdom will come and His will, will be done in our life as it is in heaven for the city, for them, and beyond because we don't exist for ourselves, we exist for them. And we've been talking in this season about being a disciple of Jesus, following Him, actually obeying what He commanded in response to the work that He did. And we've been using this verse, this famous verse, where Jesus, the resurrected Jesus, talking to His disciples, talking to you and I, says, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations." Therefore, go. Go; there's a responsibility, there's a

commission, there's a duty, there's a calling on your life to respond to what God has done in your life, what He wants to do through your life and what He has empowered your life to be.

"Therefore, go and make disciples." Help other people choose Jesus as their teacher. Help other people choose Jesus as the one they want to be a student of, a learner from. To become like, and follow, and take the narrow road, and walk after Him, and choose to say Jesus is Lord and I will follow. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." In other words, immersing them in the name, which is the reality of the Trinity. The name of God brings with it the reality of God. That's why, when we say, "in the name of Jesus," it's not just something we say, it brings with it all the reality of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done. So it says, "Immerse them in the reality of the love of the Father. Immerse them in the reality of the grace of the Son. Immerse them in the reality of the power of the Spirit." Not just in water, but in the reality of the love, the grace, and the power of the Trinity itself. "And then, and only then, "teach them to obey." See, we don't teach people to obey who haven't yet first decided to be disciples of Jesus; that's called religion. That's called conforming. That's called rules and regulations. You can only teach people to obey who have first decided that Jesus is Lord and I will follow. We teach people to obey, we don't force them to conform. But I can't teach you to obey until you have first decided to follow. That's why there's an order that matters. I have to decide Jesus is the one I want to follow and become like. Then I have to be immersed in the reality of the Trinity itself. Then I can learn to obey and follow God.

And... "everything I've commanded you, and surely I am with you always to the very end of the age." That He is with us and we're reminded when He's present when we go on mission. And so, this week as we go into Easter and we have to turn our attention and our heart to Jesus and who He is and what He has done, one of the greatest ways we do that is by just being obedient to what He has said, which is, be on mission. The mission is urgent and the vision is clear that people need Jesus. And sometimes, we can make Easter all about us. All about our family, and our meal, and our family picture, and what we're wearing, and so-and-so's home from college, so we got to do this, and we've got all this stuff going on, and what service time will we go to that's good for our family, all those things. And there's nothing wrong with all those things. We just can't lose sight of what Jesus has actually commanded and commissioned us to do, which is to be a movement of hope for the city and beyond; live like the kingdom is at hand, because we are the messengers.

We are the sent ones to go and declare the servant song of who Jesus is and what He has done, because they don't know. And the reason we forget is because we don't go and tell them what we already knew, but somehow forgot. Maybe one of the reasons Jesus asks us to get involved with His mission is so that we don't forget the mission He came on for me. People who live on mission don't forget the work of the cross. They don't lose sight of the resurrection. And one of the greatest ways we do that is simply by praying. Praying. I mean, in Jeremiah, God tells us, "Seek the peace and the prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." He says seek the

peace and the prosperity of your life, of the city. Why? Because the city can't have peace or prosperity without Jesus. Because Jesus is the Prince of Peace, who came to bring us peace once and for all. And the city can't prosper without Jesus, because He is life and abundant life, life to the full. And we're supposed to passionately pursue a city with peace and prosperity, through the name of Jesus, to which He brought you. Just so you're clear, you didn't choose to live here on your own. You're like, "Oh, no, I lived in California. I got here as fast as I could." Yeah, you were in exile, but the Lord brought you to The Promised Land, I guess. The Lord has brought you here. He's put you in this city, in this neighborhood, in this time, in this place in history. Why? Because there is a peace and a prosperity for the city He wants to release through your life.

And how? How do you do that? By praying to the Lord for it, that it would prosper. We have to take our commands from the Lord seriously and just obey what He has asked us to do, which is to pray for the city to come to know Jesus. And so as we get ready for Easter this week, what I want us to do for the next few moments is I just want to lead you through some things that we're going to pray for, for our city, because next week, we are celebrating Easter. Like, we're having Easter, I'm not having Easter. The couple worship guys and gals, they're not having Easter. We are having Easter. Why? Because we're the body of Christ and together we declare the message, and together we serve the city. And together we release the kingdom. And so sometimes we just got to stop and pray.

And say, God, we want to see You move. You tell us, therefore, whatever we ask for in prayer, believe that we have received it, it shall be ours. You literally tell us, ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be open to you. You literally tell us that if we speak to a mountain and say, "Throw yourself into the sea," and believe in our heart, it will be done for us. You literally tell us, we have not because we ask not. You have literally told us that, "If My people will humble themselves and seek My face, and pray, and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven, forgive their sins, and heal their land." You have literally told us prayer is the cornerstone of revival. I want revival, guys. I think you can see it in my life over these past few months, this past probably two years, I want to see the course of revival stirred up. I'm hungry and thirsty for the things of God. I want us to believe that God hears, and responds, and moves to our faith.

I want us to just start calling down things from heaven together, not just having "good church" and consuming and entertaining, but like, being like, God actually hears me. I mean, what is the point of prayer? Prayer does two things: Prayer is intimacy and authority. It's intimacy and relationship with God, and then it's authority. And He is waiting for a people to take the authority that He has given to them, to call things forth, to speak things out, to bring things into being. He's like, "Are there a people out there, a people who are hungry for Me, and who will just do what I asked them to do?" Like, just pray for the gospel to come in power. I don't want to just have a good Easter. I want to have like, a first-Easter kind of Easter, like the power of the cross, the resurrection life, in Jesus' name. And so, sometimes we just got to stir up our

faith a little bit. And that's what today is. I'm just trying to stir up your faith, trying to activate your faith, trying to get you to think by faith, not what you can see, but what you believe.

It takes faith to pray and yet prayer builds faith. So which is it? Do I have to have faith to pray or do I pray to build my faith? [Yes.] That's the right answer. So with the measure of faith you have today, let's pray and believe that, as I'm praying, I'm looking to the author and perfecter of my faith and He's actually building it. And so in a moment, I'm going to lead you through five different things and I want to invite you, at whatever campus you're at, to pray how you feel comfortable. If you want to stand up, I want to, in a minute, I want to invite you to stand up. If you want to kneel, kneel. If you like to sit, stay sitting. If you want to spread out into the aisles, spread out into the aisles. Jesus says, "Where two or three are gathered in My name, whatever you ask for, it will be done for you." So if you want to get in little groups of two and three, if that makes you feel more comfortable or you want the power of that exponential praying together, that's what we're going to do. And we're going to practice. We're going to stretch our faith. We're going to activate it. And so I'm telling you what you're doing. I'm giving you a minute to realize that. Some of you are like, okay. You're going to be okay, because God wants to hear from you. What do you want to see God do this week? We need your prayers. God is going to move and do something next week, this whole week, and in the days to come, because of the prayers you pray. So speak it out by faith, declare it, let it go. Let it fly to the measure of faith you have. And if you want to sit, sit. You want to kneel, kneel. You want to spread out, spread out. You want to get in groups of two and three, get in groups of two and three. Listen, we've been talking about, if we want to do what Jesus did, we have to do what Jesus did. Do you know what Jesus did before he went to the cross? He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. So if we want to have the kind of message of the cross that is the power of salvation and resurrection life, then maybe, just maybe, we as a people need to do what Jesus did before the cross happened, which was pray, pray.

And He didn't go pray by Himself; He brought two or three disciples with Him, with the measure of faith they had to ask God to move. Okay. So, whatever campus you're at, however you want to do it. If you want to stand up, you can stand up. You want to spread out into the aisle, spread out the aisles. You want to kneel, kneel. You want to stay seated, stay seated. But here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to load you up and then I'm going to let you go. I'm not praying, you're praying. And then I will bring it-- each one, we're going to do a-- five different things. So you want to know, like some of you need to know exactly how long we're going to do this and how much is just, you're talking to God, man. You're talking to God for the peace and the prosperity of your soul. And here's the good news. If you don't know what to pray, the Holy Spirit will give you the words that you need. So the Bible says, so by faith, we're stirring it up. Okay. So whatever campus you're at, Gainesville, Denton, Lewisville, Flower Mound, Online, let's pray like we believe God hears us in Jesus' name. First thing we're going to pray for is, just simply this, just pray that Jesus would be glorified that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow in heaven, and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God. The Father prays that Jesus would be glorified,

magnified, lifted up, that we would worship Him. Come on, church, for two or three minutes. Can we just pray that Jesus would be glorified?

Jesus, we want to see You lifted up. When You are lifted up, You draw all men unto Yourself. We declare with the angels, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who is and was and, and will be to come. You are worthy, oh Lord, for You have created all things and for Your pleasure, they are and were created. And so, we just want You to be lifted up. We want Your name to be declared. We want You to have our attention, and our focus, and our heart, and our mind, that You would be the center of everything we do in Jesus' name. Come on church, that's what we want to see, Jesus be glorified. Second one is this. I want to invite you to pray for you, that you would be a hope carrier. First-person prayer, I pray that I would be a hope carrier because Jesus says to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." In other words, Jesus says there's so much opportunity. So ask that people would go be on mission. Here's what you're praying. You're asking the Lord to send you on the mission. You're asking the Lord to give you courage and you boldness to talk to that person, invite that person, bring that person, go out of your way to be a hope carrier, a disciple of Jesus living on mission to change their world. Come on church, church, raise your voice. And if you've got nothing else to pray, just pray the verse, pray that you would be a hope carrier in Jesus' name. Jesus, I want to be a hope carrier. I want to be sent into the harvest field. I want to have eyes to see and ears to hear what you're doing around me. God, I pray that we would have courage and boldness to step outside of ourselves because Your Word tells us, how can they believe if they haven't heard? How can they hear if no one preaches to them? How can they preach if they are not sent? How beautiful are those who bring the good news? Your feet are the beautiful feet that bring good news in Jesus' name. And so may we be like salt, light, and leaven, using our influence and our platform and our relationships, because we are in this city for a time and a place and a reason, in Jesus' name.

Third thing we want to pray for is just that I would be anointed to serve. Not me, you. That next week, you would be anointed to serve. You say, what does that mean? I'm not on, I'm not preaching, I'm not singing, and I'm not on a team. I know, but you're the body of Christ, right? Each person, are you a part of each person? Okay. So this says you are given something to do that shows who God is. "Everyone gets in on it. Everyone has a part to play." And when everyone plays their part, everyone benefits, "and you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you'll be my witnesses." In other words, we're the body of Christ and we've been empowered to be a servant. To serve people the way Jesus has served us. And you have a gift, you have talents, you have abilities. So next week there is an anointing that God wants to put on your life to serve. You say, but I'm not on a team. I'm not singing the songs that-- I know, but you can be anointed to be kind to someone. You can be anointed to strike up a conversation with someone on the other side of the atrium. You can be anointed to pray by faith while the service is happening. You can be anointed to literally ask God, to say, "God I've surrendered my life, whatever You want to do through me next week, I'm open and available."

And we need the power of the Spirit, not the works of the flesh. So can you for the next few moments just pray for yourself to be anointed to serve in Jesus' name. Come on church, you're doing great, let's keep going. Oh come on, what kind of Easter will we have if we all believe that we're anointed to serve? You want to see the kingdom come, you want to see God's will be done, just step outside of ourselves. Lord, help us to realize that we are the body of Christ; anointed to serve. That I'm not here as a consumer, I'm not here to be entertained, I'm here as the body of Christ destroying the works of the devil, and you have filled me with Your Spirit from the innermost to the outermost. May it overflow that I may show people who God is by the way I live my life and walk and talk and engage this next week, in Jesus' name.

Fourth thing we want to pray for is just that people would be cut to the heart. That when the people heard the gospel, "they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other Apostles brothers what shall we do?" Listen, I've done this long enough to know there is no words man can say to bring people to a saving faith of Jesus. It is literally a work of the Spirit, cutting people's hearts where they are broken and humble before the Lord. So let's cry out for the lost, lonely, and broken to be broken before Jesus, that they might be healed. So come on church, whatever campus you're at, raise your voice, this is for the people to be cut to the heart in Jesus' name. Holy Spirit, come and do what only You can do. May the message of the cross come in power, not with words. May we resolve to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. May there be godly sorrow, may there be repentance, may there be brokenness and humility. I pray for every dark thing, every secret sin, everything that's kept in the background. May it be exposed and brought into the light, that Your light may break and heal and set free and deliver. May the lost, lonely, and broken people be found, and restored, and healed, and saved, because they acknowledge they need a savior and there's only one King and his name is Jesus. Cut us to the heart, Holy Spirit. Cut us to the heart.

Last thing, is that we would meet with God. "Surely God is in this place and I was not aware of it." Pray that we would meet with the resurrected Jesus next week. Come on church, throw everything you got into this last prayer. Jesus, what we want more than anything else is You. All we want is You. Would You come into this place, would You come into every campus, would You come into every room, and may we see and experience, may we taste and see, may we have eyes to see, and ears to hear, and a heart to receive. Your presence is the greatest change agent on the face of the earth, so come, Lord. Come, Lord Jesus, have Your way, resurrected Christ, come into the room, and reveal Yourself to us. Holy Spirit, fill this place with a presence, and a fragrance, and a thickness, where we have a hard time even breathing, and thinking, and standing. Break us open with emotion when Your love comes and touches our heart. God we want to meet with You, so we call forth the revival embers, we call forth a fresh wind of the Spirit, we call forth the very life of God, the resurrection power of the grave to come and bring dead things to life; every dead thing in us, not just in the lost people, but in me, Lord, bring my dead things to life. Because I have had an encounter with You and have become aware that You are here. May no one leave next week saying that was a "good" Easter service. May they

leave next week and, "surely God was in that place, and now He's in my life, and I just wasn't aware of it."

Last verse for you, that was your last prayer, don't worry. "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly." Here's what I believe, I believe that because we were willing to take our service today and pray, some things were shaken up. Some things in your life, some things in the spiritual realm, some things in the city, there are people right now, they've already-- their heart just got shook up, somewhere in the city, their heart just got shook up. They're going to meet Jesus next week because you prayed. We've now taken our attention off of ourselves – "What am I going to wear?" and, "Where are we going to go for dinner?" and, "Billy's home from college," and then all of a sudden to, "Oh my gosh there is a kingdom to release and a city to serve." So now Jesus just became a little more real to me because I was willing to do that. Now I've got this feeling of the Holy Spirit in this moment, and I can go out and be bold this week as a hope carrier in Jesus' name. Because I'm a part of something that matters, in a place that matters, with people that matter, because we have a God who is life itself. So Jesus, thank You that today we just activated our faith a little bit; we tried to step outside of ourselves. Jesus, thank You for today, that this is great church. That's not this, like, what we just did, this was great church. And I know every person that's sitting here and like, "No, no that's not my...", no this is great church. We met with God, we declared His Word, we ministered to each other, and we called for revival, and prophesied to the city. This is great church in Jesus' name. God, thank You that we get to be a part of this. Thank You for the cross. Thank You for the resurrection. Thank You for hope. Thank You for a vision. Thank You for a movement of hope. Thank You for every person that activated their faith in an uncomfortable way.

It takes faith to pray, but prayer builds our faith. So I'm just believing that we're all leaving with a little bit more faith than we had, than we came in. God, You are moving. You are in control. We refuse our unbelief. We let go of our doubts. We say, Jesus, You are worthy of it all. So would You come and use this body for Your mission, to declare Your kingdom, the message of the cross, the power of salvation, even though it's foolish to this world, it is the wisdom of God and we receive it by faith. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen!