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Key Facets of the Apostolic Gospel

Amen. Good morning. You can turn in your Bibles to the book of Jude. It's at the very end, right before the book of Revelation. And if you'd like the teaching notes, those are available on our website, [Forerunnerchurch.com](http://Forerunnerchurch.com). You can go there and download those. A couple of the friendship group leaders have been telling me that they take the teaching notes from Sunday and then they use it as a platform for discussion and prayer and study throughout the week together in their friendship group. I thought that was a sweet idea. Feel free to do that if you'd like to. I'm gonna read this, and this morning we're going to look at the apostolic gospel. Now, two weeks ago we looked at the Gospel of grace, and we looked at what it means to, as we approach God through faith, what it means to be justified by Him, to receive the righteousness of God, the gospel of Grace.

This morning, we're going to be looking at the apostolic Gospel, just a few key facets of it. Jude 3, excuse me, Jude 1, verses 3-4. There's only one chapter. I'm going to read this and then we'll pray.

"Beloved, while I was very diligent to write you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write you," listen to what he's saying right here, "Exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. Certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men who turn the grace of God into lewdness or licentiousness and deny the only Lord God, our Lord Jesus Christ."

Father, we come before You. Lord, as Your people, as the ones that You love, that You enjoy. Lord, we celebrate who You are. We honor who You are, Jesus. Lord, I ask for that spirit of wisdom and revelation that gives witness and knowledge of the Son of God. I ask that that Spirit would come and rest upon us this morning in an increased way. I ask You, Lord, that You would take us into the things of Your heart, that You would take us into the beauty and the mystery of who You are, that we would be provoked, that we would be changed, that we would be struck in a fresh way by the power of Your Word. I ask, Lord, that You would help us, that You would help me this morning, to speak well of You and to honor You in every word that is shared this morning. In Jesus' name we pray, amen. Amen.

Well, I hope you came to church this morning wanting to be messed with a little bit. Um, if you didn't, that's okay. One guy said, you know, the church isn't meant to be the happiest place in town, but the holiest place. I don't know if there's any truth to that or not because I think we can be happy and holy, but that's what one guy said. This morning I want to talk about the apostolic gospel. Now, many of you know that one of the things we're contending for and believing for here as a people, one of the promises that's been given to us is that the Lord would release a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit that would release the anointed gospel in an unusual way.

Now, we know that the Gospel is always anointed in every generation and throughout history, and that when the gospel is presented, when the truth and the witness of Christ in His death and

resurrection is presented, it has an effect upon the human heart. The human heart, at the hearing of the gospel is either hardened or warmed and tenderized, but there's not a neutral response to the gospel. We know that throughout church history, there are also unusual times in historic eras where the Holy Spirit has given a great grace upon the preaching and proclamation of the Word that has resulted in many thousands of souls being converted in a short amount of time, being swept into the Kingdom. That promise of preaching, that promise of the witness of God being increased in our midst is very real to us. It's very real to this people, and it's something that we're believing for. It's something that we're contending for, and we're asking that the Lord would release power upon the preaching of the Word.

When you look at the book of Acts and see the words, the actual words that the apostles preached, we know that the power wasn't just in the assembly of the words. They didn't just say the right thing. They didn't just say it in the right way in order to get the results of revival where three thousand, you know, after Acts chapter 2 are saved and swept into the Kingdom after Peter's sermon, for example.

In other words, you can say the same words, but get a very different result. The same thing is true with healing and praying for healing and the breakthrough of God upon people that are sick. You can say the exact same word one day and nothing happen, and the next day, you could say the exact same word, and someone get dramatically healed from some sickness or affliction.

In other words, we know that the power isn't just in the structuring of the words as we preach and share and believe the Gospel, but it's in the power and the unction of the Holy Spirit. Jude, who is the brother of Jesus, most of you probably know that, but Jude is the brother of Jesus, the brother of James, and he writes this letter. And he begins to charge the body, and he's urging us, and he was urging those in that day, about mid-century A.D. He's urging the church to contend in terms of the faith that was delivered to them, to earnestly contend. In other words, to not just assume that the gospel witness that's going forth is effective enough, that it's pure enough. He's going, "You have to pay attention to the gospel message that you both believe, and you declare in order to stay within the boundaries that God has established concerning that witness.

And what the issue is is that the gospel message of our salvation and our sanctification, our ultimate glorification in God, that gospel witness is always under attack within the people of God. The enemy is constantly trying to deceive, manipulate, mix in lies into the truth of God's Word to get people off of track and to get them out of believing the truth and living out the truth of the gospel of Christ.

And so, I summarize those two propensities to err from the gospel as religion and licentiousness. And what religion is, is religion mixes in the lie that your works actually earn you your justification and your acceptance in God. And so, we're, the believer is journeying on the path of salvation, you know, the gospel, the truth of my acceptance in Him by faith, and I'm pursuing holiness and righteousness and obedience to Him because of love, and I'm journeying down this path, and the enemy tries to sow a lie into my spirit. Well, you actually have to work to get God to accept you. You actually have to do something to get Him to delight in the relationship with you and my heart begins to err, begins to stray off the path this way into the spirit of religion.

The religious spirit puts your acceptance in Christ far away in the future. Whereas the gospel says that you're accepted by faith, not because of your own works, but because of the faith in Christ's works. That's what actually justifies us in God and makes us righteous in Him. That's the gospel message. And then, on this side is what's called the lie of licentiousness. That's specifically what Jude is addressing here. He's saying that there's ungodly men that have come in, and they're trying to get you to turn the grace of God into lewdness or licentiousness. And what licentiousness does is it lies to the individual, and it says, "Well, because God's grace is so abundant, then that gives you license to live however you want. And you have license to express your sexuality in however you want or your money and resources and however you want, or your power and influence however you want. You have license because of the grace of God to do what you want." And he's warning the churches against that, and we need to be warned against that.

And often there's this assumed within the body of Christ, there's this assumed commitment to the true and pure faith that comes through the preaching of the gospel, but that's not always the case. And we, as Christians, need to be ever diligent to seek the Word of God, to search out the Word of God and seek our own hearts, and to, as we disciple others, to discern where the heart is becoming wayward, where the heart is slipping into religion, where the heart is slipping into licentiousness and constantly correct, course-correct and bring us back so that we walk in the true gospel of grace and that we enjoy and experience the benefits of our relationship with God in the deepest way. That was probably the longest run-on sentence of all time.

Okay, Romans 1:16, Paul says that the Gospel is the power of God to salvation. I love that verse. The Gospel is the power of God. This is our core power that we possess as believers, is the Gospel of truth through the Holy Spirit. And so, if you were the enemy, you would actually go and try and attack that very core reality. It's the supply line for everything that we are. Our prayer and our fasting and our evangelistic witness and our discipling of the nations doesn't mean anything if we're getting the Gospel wrong. If we're operating in a wrong spirit, the fruit of our lives even prophecy, healing, signs and wonders and miracles, doesn't mean that we're believing and walking in a true gospel reality in a relationship and fellowship with Christ.

One of the most terrifying verses to me is Matthew 7 where Jesus says, "Many in that day, they'll come before Me and say, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in Your name? Did we not heal the sick in Your name? Did we not cast out demons?" Did you know the name of Christ is so powerful that even if you don't have relationship with Him and you speak the Words of God in the name of God, you can prophecy accurate things? You can heal the sick. You can cast out devils in the name of the Lord because His name is so powerful. It doesn't mean that you are held in Him and redeemed in Him. That just gives witness to the power of His name.

And so, as believers, we must always, you know, plumb line our heart and seek to live in a true, Gospel reality. Now, here's the thing. I'm gonna fast forward to the end. Where this is going, the Lord released a Gospel witness in Acts chapter 1 verse 8. He says to His disciples, just prior to the resurrection. He says, "You will be My," what? "My witnesses." He says, "I'm gonna fill you with power. I'm gonna endue you with power from on high to be My witnesses. You're gonna be My witnesses to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the very ends of the earth." There's this

spreading of this Gospel witness to the very ends of the earth. Right? And we know that the Gospel witness is not, is not just in the way that we always think of it in terms of, you know, get people saved and plant churches, but the Gospel witness is actually eschatological in its application and outcome. In other words, Matthew 24:14 says, "This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preaching in all the world and then the end will come." In other words, Jesus linked together the great commission, the apostolic witness, the apostolic Gospel going forth the ends of the earth, He connected it together with the timing of His coming and the end of the age.

What does that mean? That means that the nearer that we get to the day of the Lord and the glorious appearing of our Savior, the nearer that we approach to Him, the more and more the church is going to give powerful witness and credence to the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the person, the redemptive work of the cross, His salvation, and coming judgement. So, the church is going to preach that Gospel in a deeper way, in a more powerful way, in a more anointed way.

In other words, there's not another message that the church is just kind of waiting around for as we approach the day of the Lord that we need to be given to preach a different and new message, but He says, rather that, in Revelation 14, there's an angel entrusted with the everlasting Gospel to declare across the nations of the earth. And so, as we get nearer the day of the Lord, the church, as she comes into maturity and purity, is going to be more filled with zeal and boldness and clarity concerning the Gospel of Christ. And Jude says, he tells us, he goes, "I want you to contend earnestly for that faith that was once delivered." What the apostles walked in, their understanding and the way they lived the Gospel, the way they understood it and proclaimed it, we ought, in a similar manner, in a like-fashion, also live and proclaim the Gospel of Christ in that same way. It's very important.

Okay, turn to page 2 in your notes if you're looking at them. He says this, he says, "I found it necessary to write you, exhorting you," looking at verse 3 of Jude, "to contend earnestly for the faith." Notice that Jude is exhorting Christians of this need to contend earnestly. If any of you hear something this morning, know that there is a need to earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered. It's not automatic. It ought not just be assumed. It's not just a box that we're to check off. Okay, Gospel witness, alright, I got that. Yeah, I know how to preach the Gospel, I know how to share my testimony. Okay, check that off the box. Jude goes, "No, you don't understand the activity of the evil one against the Christian, against the believer, trying to get them wayward in their heart and off track of the Gospel." If the enemy can get us believing lies about who we are in God and about what He's done, I mean, that's half the battle won right there. And so he goes, "I want you to earnestly contend for this."

Now, that phrase in the Greek means kind of two ideas that they bring together. They translate it contend earnestly. It means this. It means to be focused on the contest, to be focused on the contest. To earnestly contend means to be focused on the contest. There is a contest that is waging war within you and outside of you right now, and that contest is the Spirit of God urging us back into alignment with His will, and the enemy attempting to get us off track with His will and His ways. There's a contest that's going on. He says, "I want you to engage with it. I don't want you to throw the car into neutral. I don't want you to get the lay-z boy recliner of your faith and just kind of sit back and, "Well, the cross is done, Hallelujah. Bless God. Calvary has

happened, and we're just sitting here, just waiting for our redemption." He says, "No, I want you to engage with your faith. I want you to contend for a pure Gospel witness that would come out of your mouth, flow out of your heart so that the nations would hear and tremble and put their trust in the living God, our God, Jesus Christ."

It was necessary for Christians in that way to diligently safe guard the apostolic Gospel and the same is true of us today. Now, like I said, before the coming of the Lord, there's going to be an unusual release of the Spirit in terms of a Gospel witness. I'm sure that many of you in this room, you have an assignment from the Lord in regards to the Gospel, to preach it, proclaim it, teach it, evangelize it, disciple others in it. We're all, together, as believers, and trusted with the message of the Gospel. It's the core reality of our faith. It's the core message of our faith. It's who we are in Him. Hallelujah.

There are seven essential ingredients that must be present as we both believe and give witness to the apostolic Gospel, and we're going to try to cover some of them.

Ingredient number one. Ingredient number one. We must exalt, we must exalt the glorious character of God in our Gospel witness and in our life. As the Gospel is worked through us, what is central and supreme must be the Person of God Himself. If you were to go to the very center of everything, everything that exists both in the spiritual and the natural, you were to go to the very center, what would you find there? You would find a throne just like John saw in Revelation 4. At the very center of all that is and all that exists and all that will be, at the very center is a throne that depicts the rulership and the authority over everything that is. And upon that throne, John tells us that there is One that is seated there. And the Gospel message, the Gospel proclamation centralizes entirely around the Person and the character of God. It's what makes the Gospel so good. It's what makes our lives so rich and powerful and endued with joy and thanksgiving. Is that our lives aren't about us. Our lives are about Him. And when the Gospel message goes forth, there's an invitation to find Christ not just as the Savior of our sins and the redeemer of our lives and the healer of our bodies, there's an invitation to discover Him as Lord. And when God is Lord, when God becomes Lord in the Christian life, it means that He becomes central and we become secondary.

Why is this important? Because there's a Gospel that's prevalent today that seeks to put man's needs and desires central and God on the peripheral. God, in that frame of thinking, exists to make my life work. God exists for me. God exists to enrich my life and give me all the things that I want and help me to live out my dreams that I've thought about since I was nine years old. God is a means to an end in a false gospel, but a very prevalent, so-called gospel even today. God becomes a means to an end. He doesn't become the end. And Jesus said, when He called His disciples, He didn't say, "Hey, let me follow you." He said, "Come, and follow Me. Stop what you're doing. Stop what you're about. Give up your life. Give up your business. Give up your land. Give up all that you are, and come and follow Me, because I am central to all that is."

And matter of fact, Paul tells us in Colossians 1 in verse 17, he's telling us of the Person of Christ, and he says, "He is before all things and in Him all things consist. He's the head of the body, the Firstborn of all creation," and listen to this, at the very end of verse 18, he says, "That

in all things He may have the preeminence. He may be the preeminent One, to be the preeminent One means that He's the chief, that He's the fountain, that He's the author and the source, and all that exists flows from Him and comes to Him. And he says earlier, at the end of verse 16, he says that all things were made for Him. All that is is for God. You were made for God. Your children were made for God. Your dog, the tree growing in your back yard, Satan, demons, the angels, everything that is was made for Him. It all will bring Him glory at the end. And we must be careful in our expression of faith that we don't put us at the center, but we keep God at the center.

I like to think of this in terms of the prayer room right here down the road. Many of you frequently or whatever go to our prayer room that's right down here, 24/7. I was sitting in there probably, I think it was three years ago in January, and I'm sitting there, and I'm just kind of complaining in my heart. I'm like, "Lord, this isn't the worship team that I wanted to be going right now." I mean, I knew the schedule anyway. I was just complaining anyway. Sorry worship teams. You know, I'm just complaining. I'm sure you complain about me. I complain about you. And so, I'm sitting there, and I'm like, "Ah, man," but how often do we do that? This isn't the speaker I want. This isn't the worship I want. These aren't the people I want around me. This isn't the room I want. This isn't the da da da da. I'm just complaining in my heart before the Lord. And He goes, "Isaac," and He kind of interrupts me, and I go, "Yes, Lord." He goes, "Isaac, when did you think this prayer room was built for you?" "Ah. I don't know, Lord." He goes, "It was built for Me. The reason that it goes 24/7, the reason that there's worship and prayer and incense and all the things that go into keeping this flame, this fire on the altar, it doesn't have primarily to do with you, Isaac. It has everything to do with Me. I am worthy of day and night prayer and intercession."

Day and night prayer and intercession isn't so we get all the promises we want and we get all the revelation we want. And our kids prophesy in the way we want them to. God, He has not established day and night prayer primarily for us. He has established it because of who He is. And when we go to the prayer room, the first reason we go is because He's worthy of praise and adoration. And whether He sends the promise in our day or not and whether we see the healing or not or whether we see the whatever whatever, the bigness or the blessing upon our family or our ministry or whatever it is, it doesn't negate the fact that He's preeminent. That it's all about Him, that everything that is exists for Him. And if He did no good thing, He would still be worthy of worship. But He does good things. He does.

Many sinners in America, they only see a weak Jesus with compromising love. Because they put God as a means to an end, not as the end. They see Him as a means to an end. It's something that we add into our life to get what we want. It's the Pinterest wall of our heart. You know, guys, you may not be as familiar with Pinterest, but there's this thing out there called Pinterest, and there's nothing wrong with Pinterest. You know, you take all this stuff you like and you pin it to a board. And the problem is is that not with Pinterest, but the problem is the way we relate to Jesus. We've got all this stuff pinned to the board of our heart. It's all of our likes and desires and wants and desires, and we add Jesus in. He goes, "I want to be here alone. I want everything else to go." Remember when the Philistines, they capture the ark of the Covenant. They take the ark of the Covenant out and battle, and they weren't supposed to do that. And the Philistines, they

capture the ark of the Covenant and they bring it in and set it up next to their god. They come in the next morning and their god has fallen, this idol has fallen on his face before the ark of the Covenant. Is that not the picture of what ought happen in our own hearts when the Gospel takes root, when the presence of God and the holiness and righteousness of God enters into us, all those other idols begin to tremble and teeter and totter. They fall down before the Lord. But so many times we do just what the Philistines do. We go, "That's weird." We just put the idol back up. "That shouldn't have fallen." Instead of taking the idol out, instead of the appropriate response to a holy and living God, dwelling on the inside, we go, "No, no, no, no. This doesn't make sense because in the Philistine temple, there are many gods, and this is okay." And the Lord goes, "I don't want many gods in your life." He goes, "You invite me in. You don't know what you're asking Me to do to you." He goes, "You're inviting in My holiness and My righteousness and My presence to fill you," and He goes, "I'm gonna mess up every other idol you try and bring in this temple." He goes, "I'm just gonna do it." We're giving Him permission to take up residence. We're signing the title deed over to Him in the apostolic Gospel. We're going, "My life is done. Now You begin Your life."

Paul says it like this. He says, "It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." That's not just a motivational speech to get us through our long road trips with whiney children. It's not just the motivational thing that we put on our sneakers as we go play basketball. "It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. I'm gonna dunk this on you!" You know, that's not what he's talking about. He's talking about, when I surrender my life to God and He became preeminent, I died. When Christ went into the grave, I went into the grave with Him. That's what happened when you got baptized. You go into the grave, and it's a symbol. You come out of the water, you come out of the grave. It's no longer you. You don't live for you. Christ is now preeminent in your life. And I urge us. I urge us to examine our own lives in light of this. Is Christ preeminent in our own souls?

This is why we do solemn assemblies. This is what we do at the communion table. We examine ourselves in light of His preeminent. He's central or am I like the Philistines trying to prop up idols next to the holy presence of God and confused why they're falling?

Ingredient number two, we must use the Holy Law of God. After we present God's character and we establish Him as supreme, we must understand that He has laws by which we are enabled to approach Him and have fellowship and relationship with Him. The good news in the New Testament, which is the good news of the Gospel is that He's made provision for you to fulfil all of those laws even though there's no possible way that you could. But the law serves as a mirror. It shows us our own depravity. It teaches us humility because the law, when you read the Word of God and you go, "Oh, I'm not in alignment with this," it shows us where we're in disagreement with God, a holy God and a just God. And what we have to do, characteristic number one, we exalt the person of God, and what the law does is it diminishes our own view of our own self-righteousness. We often wrongly imagine that we're more righteous than we are. We don't understand the vileness and the depravity of our own soul because when you talk about that stuff, people don't want to come to the conference. But it's really real. You have to look at your own depravity and your own murderous, lying, lustful, greed, sinful darkness on the inside because

that's when you actually need a savior. You actually need Him when you're, when you're low, when you're face down dead in the muck and the mire. That's when you need Him to come and save you and be the Christ that He is so that you can make Him the Lord that He is.

We must use the Holy Law of God. The cross is in vain if no law is broken. How often do people come into the faith by so-called praying the sinner's prayer, but they have not realized what Holy Laws they have broken. I love the story of Billy Graham, and he's on the late night show with Johnny Carson way back in the day. And he's on the late night show with Johnny Carson, and Johnny Carson says to Billy Graham, who is the famous preacher evangelist. I'm sure you know who Billy Graham is. He says, "Brother, I have to confess. I don't know the ten commandments. I don't know them all. And Billy Graham, without missing a beat says, "Well, brother, I want to assure you that you've broken all of them." I mean, just like that. Are our words seasoned with salt? Are we willing to say when a brother or sister comes to us and says, "I'm under conviction. The Lord is convicting my soul of this." Do we talk them out of the conviction of the Holy Spirit, or do we allow the law of God and the word of God to rest upon them and produce repentance?

Don't talk people out of their conviction. They might be in the process of being converted and becoming a child of God and being born again. He gave, Jesus gave no room in the conversation with Nicodemus. He says, "Nicodemus, unless you're born again, you will not see the Kingdom of God." He gives no room because Nicodemus, he needs to be under conviction that comes through the law of God that is holy and just and true.

One guy said, "Thank God we're not under the Old Testament anymore because there were 613 laws." And I said, "Praise God. Now we're under the New Covenant and the New Testament where there's only 1200." Do you know there's more commands, dos and don'ts, in the New Testament when you combine it with the old? And what has passed away in the old are the civil and ceremonial law, but the moral law remains and God uses the law of God, of who He is and what He's like, His holiness, and righteousness, and justice to provoke us and expose our depravity before Him so that we cry out to Him, so that we long for Him.

We actually need a savior. We don't just need a buddy or a friend or someone to put their hand around our shoulder. We need to be saved from the wrath of God that is our just due. We need to be saved from His wrath and eternal punishment, and the fire of eternal torment. We need to be saved from that. I want to be saved from that. It is very real.

Ingredient number three, repentance is necessary. I said at the earlier service, I said, "You know, if you want to really shrink your small group or your ministry, just start talking about repentance. Repentance is a change of mind regarding God in His ways. You've heard it before. It's the 180-degree shift of the heart. We come under conviction because we have broken the laws of the Lord. We lied, we've cheated, we've stolen, we've committed adultery in our heart. And repentance says, "I don't want this. I'm actually willing to turn towards God. I want Him." I think that most Christians struggle with repentance and most people. Because they don't think that God can actually satisfy their soul. They don't want to repent because they don't believe that if they do that God can meet that desire, that that sin, that that idol was fulfilling in them. They don't want to turn from sexual immorality because they don't believe that God has a way and a method and

a power to touch their hearts and satisfy the sexual desires of their hearts. Those desires, by the way, are hard-wired in. They're not going away. The desires are not going away. It's the way that we express those desires. We must turn from expressing those desires in elicited ways that offend God and turn to Him and go, "I submit myself to You. I come to You. I know because You are good and You're a Father that You will meet the deepest longings of my heart.

We must confront the sin in our own lives and the sin of those around us with the absolute necessity to seek and obey all of God's commands. He says it over and over. John 15 He says, "If you love Me, you'll obey My commands. Come to Me. Come to Me." What's available in the new covenant is so beyond. It's a privilege beyond the old covenant. It's not just looking at the 613 laws and going, "Well, I hope I can check all of these off. If not, it's going to be really costly. I'm going to have to kill a lot of animals." In the new covenant, He goes, "I'm gonna put power in you to actually want to obey Me." It's one of the marks of the new birth. It's one of the marks of being redeemed and being a son, being a vessel of the presence of God and the power of God is that you actually want what is right and what is good.

The New Testament requires repentance before salvation. Otherwise, you don't leave saved. It requires repentance. John the Baptist, he preached a message of repentance. Jesus preached a message of repentance in Luke 13 verse 5, Jesus says, "I tell you that unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." Repentance is crucial. It's critical. It has to be in our Gospel communication and our Gospel witness. It has to be evident in our own lives, repentance.

The Apostles preached repentance when they went out. You never, you never see them giving witness to the resurrection and the person of God without a call to repentance. Yet, when you look at the American Gospel, the so-called American, cultural Gospel, you won't hear preaching or witnessing on repentance, but we've got to get this back into our language. We've got to get this back into our lives. We've got to get this back into our own lives first, a repentant heart. I say no to sin. I say yes to God. And I'm gonna keep warring and fighting until I get breakthrough over that idol. I'm gonna break every agreement. I'm gonna do what's necessary. I'll gouge out my eye. I'll cut off my hand. I'll do whatever is necessary to wage war on sin, to say yes to God because I know that He will satisfy me with good things. In Your presence is fullness of joy. At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. This is who our God is. But we've got to believe that otherwise we won't repent. And we've got to repent or else we won't be saved because we'll still be worshipping idols.

Listen to this, sorrow is not enough. You can be sorrowful over your sin. You can be grieved over the idols that are present within your life and yet still have your back towards God and not be surrendered to Him. Sorrow is not enough. Sorrow leads us to repentance. Sorrow is the conviction of our soul that says something is off, something is wrong, and we're sorrowful over that thing, but it's not just enough to be sorrowful. It's not just enough to confess. We must repent. We must turn from that thing and begin pursuing the pleasures of God.

The rich young ruler that comes to Jesus, he would have been received by Him if he had repented of his covetous heart. When the rich young ruler comes to Jesus, Jesus begins talking with him and kind of getting a sense of where this rich young ruler's heart is at. He says the same

words to the rich young ruler that He says to His disciples. He says, "Come and follow Me." Possibly, some believe that it was an invitation to actually be one of His disciples, but the rich young ruler, he had another god in his heart. But the rich young ruler was zealous. He was smart. He was educated. He had a lot of good ideas. He would have really helped the ministry. But here's the terrifying thing. Jesus was not afraid to loose a zealous follower if they didn't follow through with repentance. If the rich young ruler had come to many people my age, you know, a pastor or a teacher and they show up at a Sunday morning and they're a rich young ruler, and they show up and they go, "Hey, I really want to help out this ministry." How many people would say, "Have you repented of all your sins? Have you given your life fully, are you fully surrendered to Him? Would you lay all that aside so we can run after Christ together?" No, people wouldn't say that. "Amen, brother. Now you're on the board. Amen brother, now you're an elder. Amen, brother, let's get you in," because we see the outward, but God cares about the inward. He wants repentance at the deepest heart level.

The church is often filled with people that are trying to get Jesus and hold on to the spirit of the world. There are many churches, there are many hearts and people and I'm saddened by this reality, and it produces a Godly sorrow in me where I have to go, "Lord, am I holding into the spirit of the world in any way in my life? Is there anything that's got a foothold? Is there any idol trying to emerge, trying to take it's place in my temple?" We can't have both. We can't live with a divided heart. It's impossible.

Ingredient number four, we must insist upon faith. Faith is an attitude of dependence upon God for providing our only possible means of salvation. The reason that our faith is often weak is because our dependence upon God is often weak. We minimize His generosity and we maximize our righteousness. Our faith is weak because our dependence is weak. We don't need Him. So many people say, "Why do we see signs and wonders and miracles and power in other countries and countries that are impoverished among the poor?" it's because the dependence upon God is higher. They don't have the comforts and the luxuries that we have, so what do we do? We have to rend our heart. We have to go, "God, show me my wickedness. Show me my dependence upon You. Show me where I'm wayward. I want strong faith," and strong faith comes through strong dependence upon God.

Some proud and religious refuse to humble themselves and admit they are rebels against God. They minimize the holiness of God and they think He's not really that Holy, and I'm really not that evil. And so, what they do is they change the playing field where they can relate to God just on this level. You're really not that holy. You're really not an all-consuming God of justice. You're really just kind of this heavenly hippy that we're gonna high five and throw back chardonnay together in the age to come. They don't realize He's a holy and just God. He didn't change from the Old Testament to the New Testament. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever, and people go, "Well, I don't see judgement in the New Testament," and you go, "Well, that makes sense if you throw out the whole book of Revelation and a ton of the letters." Listen to Jude 15, he says to execute judgement upon all, to convict the ungodly of their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way so that all of the harsh things which sinners have spoken against Him, to bring conviction against just the harsh things. Not just what they've done,

not just that the wicked have done wickedly, and the drunkards have done drunkardly, and the lustful have been lustful, He goes, "When I come and I'm revealed with all of My angels and I come to execute judgement upon the earth, even the harsh things that the ungodly have spoken against Me will be taken into account." And we go, "Well, maybe God's angry," or maybe we're just disconnected from how Holy He is. Maybe we've just exalted our own righteousness to a point where we're a little bit tipsy, not seeing with clarity who this God is that we serve and that we love.

Ingredient number five, the manifestation of conviction, John 16:8 says that when He, the Holy Spirit has come, He will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgement. The manifestation of conviction is good. We need more conviction in our lives, not less conviction. We need to stop talking each other out of conviction. Conviction that leads to Godly sorrow leads to repentance, leads to faith in God, leads to worshipping Him and esteeming Him in the way that He is and longs to be worshipped.

Jesus promised the manifestation of the Spirit would bring conviction. It's necessary to bear the fruits of repentance. When the conviction comes upon the individual and their soul is distraught and they feel caught in this place, don't talk them out of that place. Allow the Holy Spirit and conviction to bring forth faith towards God to actually cry out for a savior. You don't need a savior if your heart is not convicted about your sin. God grants repentance to those that seek Him and faith is granted to all who believe. There are three stages of salvation. Number one, there's the careless sinner, they have no manifest concern for salvation. Their conscience is hardened and dull. Number two, there's the awakened sinner. Those that are under a spirit of conviction, but they don't possess a saving knowledge of Christ. They know something is wrong. Their conscience, it plagues them, it assaults them, it keeps them awake at night, and they toss and they turn, but they don't have a saving knowledge of Christ. They have no solution. This is where many people who have a sincere concern for spiritual things, but they have not entered into the realities of repentance. They have absolutely, or they do not have an absolutely unwavering assurance of their salvation nor do they truly hunger and thirst for God and His righteousness. Maybe you've been confused interacting with a believer that displays no hunger for righteousness, no thirst for the things of God and no assurance of their salvation. It could be that they are an awakened sinner, not yet a born-again believer.

Too often, awakened sinners are treated like born-again believers, yet they never seem to get victory to touch God or to experience true joy in the Holy Spirit.

The last stage is the born-again saint. Those that are supernaturally born of the Spirit. They possess the very life of God in them. It is imparted, imputed to them by the righteousness of God. The Holy Spirit comes and takes residence within them and they are born of the Spirit of God. They have an inheritance in God and a life in God and there's a new sense of confidence. There's a new awakening to the things of God and a hunger for the Spirit and a hunger for the Word, and I long to do what is right and even in the immaturity of not doing it well all the time, there's still this desire on the inside, "I want to please God."

Ingredient number six, that leads us to, we must insist upon the witness of the Spirit. Anyone who doubts their salvation may seek God for repentance and the witness of the Spirit that they are sons of God. We must never be guilty of giving someone premature assurance that God is living in them. Don't just assume that God is living in them and don't just assume that God is living in you without that assurance of the Spirit, that witness of the Spirit on the inside. You will know a tree by its fruits.

A person has not been saved until he has the witness of the Spirit in him, that he is born of God. Paul encouraged the saints in 2nd Corinthians 13:5, write that down, 2nd Corinthians 13:5. He encouraged the saints to test themselves. He said, "Examine yourself to see if you're within the faith." He's not talking to unbelievers. He's not talking to the guy that wants nothing to do with God. He's talking to believers, sincere believers. He goes, "Examine yourself. See if you're within the faith."

2nd Peter 1 verses 10 and 11 gives us insight and hope for this assurance. He says, "Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure. Make sure that your call and that you are called of God," an elect of God, brought into His Kingdom as a son. Make sure that it's sure. "For if you do these things, you will never stumble. So, for an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ."

This morning, do you have assurance of your salvation in God? Do you know that you can live with the assurance that God has forgiven you and washed you and that you will never perish. You will not come under the wrath of God, but that you will be raised at the last day and live forever with Him in glory and power?

Ingredient number seven, we'll invite the worship team, Brenton, if you would come up with the team. Ingredient number seven, we must insist upon a broken and contrite heart. Humility is key. Humility is key. Humility doesn't exaggerate. Humility doesn't exaggerate how better we are, and humility doesn't exaggerate how worse we are. Some people imagine that humility is hanging their head and just saying, "Ah, gee whiz, I wish that God could redeem me, but I'm so messed up. My life is so broken. I've done so many sins that there's no way that He could save me and redeem me." It's an absolute lie. It's not just a lie, but it's a lie that's rooted in arrogance and pride. To imagine pridefully and arrogantly that the King of all the ages could not petty for your sin and redeem you from a life of destruction is pride. And He says, "I want you to come to Me with a broken and contrite heart. Come to Me," Isaiah 55, "All you who are weary, come to Me." Matthew 11, "Come to Me, and I will give you rest. I'll give you rest for your souls." He says, "If you come to Me, I will meet you."

All salvation must result in the person walking humbly and contritely before God and man. A broken believer is one who is pliable and tender and submitted before the Lord.

In summary, this is what I would say, that there's coming a day where the Lord is going to release great power on the preaching of the Apostolic Gospel. Many of you will give witness to this. We don't have to wait til that day to begin to plumb line our heart, our understanding, our minds, our disciples, our children, our families, those that we're leading to walk in the ways of the Lord, to walk in a true Apostolic Gospel, to bear fruits worthy of repentance before Him. I

meant to say this at the beginning, but my heart in sharing this message isn't that we would become heavy handed towards one another and angry and cranky toward one another. Don't let anyone do that to you, but that we would be humble toward one another. Humility in the agreement with truth is where we find out boldness in God to come before Him humbly going, "Search my heart, o God, search me. See if there's any wicked way in me. Let me walk in alignment and agreement with Your heart. I want to earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered for all." Amen. Let's stand.