

Humble & Hungry: Wreck the Roof

Aaron Brockett | Mark 2:1-12

What's up Traders Point? How are we today? It's good to see you. If this happens to be your first time to be with us, I want to welcome you. I'm glad that you could be here. I want to welcome anybody who may be tuning in online as well.

If you have a Bible, would you go ahead and grab it and get to Mark 2? If you don't have a Bible on you, as you leave today, stop by Connection Central. We'd love to give you one as our gift to you. I'll throw some of these verses up on the screen that we are going to study together this morning.

If you haven't already picked up on it, we're starting a new series today called *Humble and Hungry*. Really this is a phrase we've used here in the past to describe or to capture the disposition we desire to have before God and before others. It's this desire to say, "You know God we didn't do anything to earn or to work for the grace that You've given to us. This is a free gift. God, we are humbled by that."

Yet at the same time we're hungry because it is very, very clear in Scripture that every time God did something significant in someone's life, it was never for them, but He always said, "Move out." He always said, "Go." He always said, "You need to take risks and to be courageous." In fact, in the Great Commission itself, Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all nations."

Oftentimes we can be humble without being hungry and we just sort of settle or, in the name of faithfulness, we just kind of protect what is ours. Or sometimes we can become hungry without being humble, and that leads to spiritual pride. And we stand up and we say, "God, this is what we want to do for You. Now will You please bless our vision?" But it doesn't work that way. What we want to do is we want to come before God and say, "Thank You for the grace that You've given to us. Now we want to be ready, so that if You say, 'Go,' we're ready to go. And we are ready to represent You well to a world that desperately needs to know the real Jesus." As we've discovered, you can't really go if you don't know Jesus very well.

If you are new around here, last weekend we just finished up a series in the Gospel of John. We started it last August. I think we were in it something like 30 weeks. We took a couple of breaks for Christmas and for a marriage series. But we finished it up last week. When we started the Gospel of John last summer, we knew there were a handful of reasons why we wanted to do that. As we were down the homestretch in that series, it became very clear to us that the reason why God had our entire church in John's gospel for that long is that He wanted us to get to know Jesus better.

I have just had a number of you come up to me throughout the series and even afterward saying, "You know, during that whole thing I felt like I got to know Jesus better. I thought I knew Him pretty well but I needed to know Him better than I thought I did. I needed to know Him better than I used to know Him." We are in a really exciting, pivotal time in the life of our church. I think God's been readying us by saying, "You need to know the heart of Jesus well so that you can go and represent Him to others."

Two weeks ago we studied Jesus' high priestly prayer from John 17. This was Jesus' dying desire for us. Jesus said in that prayer, "God, may they stay in Me. May they be united with one another," why? "So that the world might know."

Last week Jake led us through John 21, one of my favorite passages because I can relate to Peter so much. I don't know about you. He restores him on a beach and He asks him three times, "Do you love Me?" And Peter says to Him three times, "Yes, Lord I love You." And what Jesus says next should inform what we do as a church. Jesus didn't say, "Well good, I just wanted to know that. Good, I just wanted you to know you are forgiven. Good, I just wanted you to go and feel better about yourself, Peter, have a clear conscience. I've forgiven you." That's not what He says. He says, "Peter, go and feed My sheep." That should always be the motivation for believers who've been the recipients of the grace of God.

Now I know that all of us, we live in the world and we are like, "Man it just feels like people are moving away from God at a faster rate and it feels like things in the world are getting really, really dark," but yet Jesus gives us this promise. He said, "It's not your responsibility to change people. That's Mine." Jesus said, "I'm drawing and will continue to draw all men and women unto Myself and I'll change them and I'll do that until I return once again. Your responsibility as a church is to be faithful in proclaiming with clarity and passion the gospel message and to remove as many unnecessary barriers as possible that keep people from experiencing the real Jesus."

Now with that said, let me just say this. The gospel, itself, is a bit of a barrier. The gospel, itself, as the Bible describes it is "a stumbling block". It's foolishness to those who are perishing. The reason why is because you and me, together, we don't like our pride to be confronted, do we? We don't like to be told that we are a sinner. We don't like to be told that we are in need of something. That is a natural barrier. That is the only barrier that should exist. The Holy Spirit of God actually uses that to convict us of sin.

But Jesus says to the entire church. He says, "God help you if you put up any unnecessary barriers." What are some unnecessary barriers? Well, collectively, as a church for us to say, "You need to get your act together before you can come in here. Then maybe we'll talk." A barrier for a church that we may put up is, "You need to look like us, you need to talk like us, you need to act like us, you need to believe like us before you will ever be welcomed and received here."

A barrier as a church is to say, "You know what? I think we've done enough. I think enough people have come; enough people's lives have been changed. I think we're good to just kind of slip it into neutral and just continue to ride this out."

Jake said it so well last week. He said, "We are saved from something, for something. We were not given salvation so we could ride the lazy river to heaven." But God has left us here so we might be about the work of identifying and removing barriers so that others might come to know Him.

That's what *Humble and Hungry* is all about. We want to identify the cultural and geographic and maybe even the religious barriers that exist from the people you know, love, are related to, and work with. Barriers that are keeping them from the real Jesus.

Now I want to walk through a passage of Scripture with you from Mark 2 that illustrates this in a real, tangible way. So Mark 2, let's go through this together starting off in verse 1. Follow along with me in your Bible or you can read it on the screens. "And when He returned to Capernaum," so this is talking about Jesus. Jesus returns to Capernaum "after some days, it was reported that He was at home. And

many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And He was preaching the Word to them.”

So I want you to know this. Capernaum is this little podunk town in Israel. Jesus was born in Bethlehem then His family relocated to Nazareth. That’s where He grew up. Then for the first 30 years of Jesus’ life, Jesus worked construction. He was a carpenter. He built things. And then when He turned 30 Jesus hit the road to try to clear up some information about God. Primarily, He was like, “Listen up. God does not hate you. God hates what sin has done to you and to your relationships.” And that is a really important thing to understand. In fact, God loves you and wants to free you from what sin has done in your life and to offer you hope of eternal life. God has promised to make things right, the things that have gone horribly wrong in this world, and He wants you to put your trust in Him.

God sent Jesus to show us all that stuff. As Jesus is traveling around declaring this message, He knew that people were like, “We kind of need to know that You have the authority to actually say these things.” And so, occasionally, Jesus would perform a miracle. Occasionally Jesus would heal somebody. If you study through the gospels, Jesus always kind of shied away from it. He didn’t really want to draw too much attention to that. The reason why is because, as human beings, we would get fixed on the miracle itself and miss the real message He was trying to give. So Jesus always did that kind of off to the side.

He had already healed some people. He’d already brought some people back to life so there is this buzz going on around who Jesus is. Then you have this little small town of Capernaum. No action ever happened there. They didn’t have professional sports teams. No concert tours ever came to Capernaum. When Jesus shows up everybody’s like, “We have to go to see Jesus.” So He is at this house and He begins to preach and all these crowds fill up the house, flowing out the doors. It says, “There was not enough room for anybody to even look in the window or stand in the doorway.”

Look what it says in verse 3. “And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic carried by four men.” So here is this paralyzed man and he is on some sort of a makeshift cot and he is being carried by four guys to the house that Jesus is in. Now we don’t know a whole lot about these five guys. I wish we did.

One of the defining characteristics of Mark’s gospel is that Mark is very brief and straight to the point in his descriptions. Mark doesn’t use a lot of superlatives or adjectives to try to describe what’s going on. In fact, Mark is kind of like those guys... Do you remember that television show *Dragnet*? Any of you under the age of 30 are like, “Nope.” Alright, the show *Dragnet*, it was like, “Just the facts ma’am, just the facts.” This is Mark. Mark is just spilling out the facts here so he doesn’t take the time to tell us who these five guys are. I really wish he did because these are some good friends.

They came carrying this paralyzed man to the house that Jesus was in. I just bet they had some kind of a history. I wonder if these five guys grew up together. I wonder if their families went on camping trips. I wonder if they did backyard barbeques. I wonder if these five guys were the starting five of their high school basketball team. I don’t know, maybe after the game one Friday night things got a little crazy and one of them crashed his camel into a tree and that’s how he got paralyzed. We just don’t know.

Here is the thing. Can we all just agree that being paralyzed is not a good thing? In the First Century it would have been a death sentence. Because if you can’t walk, you can’t work, and if you can’t work, you can’t eat. This guy was in a desperate situation and they were like, “We have to get our friend to Jesus.” So they carry him to the house that Jesus is in but as soon as they see the house you know that in the pit

of their stomachs they would have just gotten sick because the crowds are already overflowing. They were too late. There was this barrier that was keeping their friend from Jesus.

So look what it says in verse 4. "And when they could not get near Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay." Now let's just stop and think about this for a minute. There is so much to love about this and Mark just kind of spills it out there so matter-of-factly. I know even some of you are kind of like me; you grew up in church, maybe you went to a bible college, maybe you were in bible studies. You've read this passage. You are familiar with it. In fact even as I started to read it you were like, "Oh I've heard this text 1,000 times, so you just read it as if it is no big deal."

Look at it as if you were reading it for the very first time. "They couldn't get near Him because of the crowd, so they removed the roof above Him." That's crazy! Can we just agree that is insane? How many of you have ever shown up at a restaurant, it's packed, you walk up to the desk and put in your name. It's going to be like an hour-and-a-half wait and you are like, "Okay, we'll just go through the roof." That's insane!

There's a whole bunch of descriptions we can give to this. This is certainly innovative, it's bold, it's courageous, it's crazy, it's expensive, because you know that's somebody's house and that somebody afterward is going to say, "You guys need to pay for the repairs." That's exactly what I would want my friends to do if I was that paralyzed man, to get me to Jesus, and I think you would too.

So there are a number of ways these guys could have responded. They've already demonstrated love and compassion. They could have said to their friend, "Man, I'm really sorry. We've done all we can. We can't get you to Jesus. The crowds have already showed up. We're too late." They could have said, "We get an "A" for effort. We're really sorry. Let's just wait outside. Maybe when Jesus is done with everybody else, maybe He'll notice you and maybe He'll come over." But these friends don't do this. These guys acted with great urgency and innovation. They had a resolve that said, "We are going to get our friend to Jesus. We don't care if we have to wreck the roof. Now wait a second, that's a good idea."

Here's the thing. Mark just captures this in one verse. You know that there would have been a conversation that turned into an argument about this. Because you know, out of these four guys, there was probably only one of them, it was his idea, the visionary one, the crazy one, the one with the wild look in his eye, the one that probably crashed the camel that paralyzed his friend. He is the one that says, "We have to get up on the roof. We have to get our friend to Jesus."

And then you know, out of the dynamics of the four, there was probably one who was reasonable and rational and said, "No, we can't do that. That's somebody's house. I know who lives here. He's a rather large man. He will come after us. He's not very gracious." Then you would add the two guys in the middle who were probably like, "Whoever wins the argument. We'll do whatever you say." And while the rational one is giving his responsible speech on why they shouldn't wreck the roof, the visionary one is probably already up on the roof. And he is like, "Bill, shut up. Grab a corner, lift with your legs, and get him up here."

So they somehow get up to the top of the house and they are kind of like measuring it off. Okay, I think Jesus is right underneath us by the muffled sound. Then they just start busting their way through the roof. How, we don't know. Maybe they started stomping, maybe they took their staffs and started poking holes in the roof, or they had some kind of a shovel or something.

Here's the thing I want you to think about. It probably took a few minutes to wreck the roof of that house. And Jesus is underneath and He is preaching a sermon. Just imagine the crowds that are in this house and all of the sudden they are like, "What in the world is going on?" and the ceiling tiles start to come down around them. They bust this hole out in the roof and then they start to lower their friend down and he's just like, "Hey guys, I'm sorry. My friends are really passionate about this. They thought that I should see Jesus."

Here's the thing. I've had a number of things interrupt me mid-sermon. When you do this as many times as I've done it, as long as I've done it, you just know that is par for the course. At some time something is going to interrupt you in the middle of a sermon. In my first year here we had the heat go out in the building in the middle of January and it was freezing in this building. When I preached you could see my breath. That was really rough. I've had the electricity just go out in the middle of a sermon. The eerie thing was I was preaching on the subject of hell, which was really, really, creepy. I prayed the lights back on and that was really cool too.

I've had fire alarms go off multiple times in the middle of a sermon. I had a light blow up behind me several months ago and it caught on fire. The worst, and most of the time you don't realize this, but there are a few occasions when I just have to go to the bathroom really bad in the middle of a sermon. It's really, really awful and you never know if you should say, "You talk about this last point and I'll be right back, I'll shut the mike off." It's just a very, very odd thing. But I've never, never had anybody come through the roof in the middle of a sermon. And please, do not get any ideas. Because I know some of you are thinking, "We're going to do that."

Jesus is sitting there preaching and the ceiling starts to cave in around Him. At this point you'd have to think that the sermon is over. How is Jesus going to respond to this? How Jesus responds tells you a lot about His heart. Look at what it says in verse 5. "And when Jesus saw their faith," did you notice it's plural? It didn't say, "When Jesus saw his faith." "When Jesus saw their faith," when Jesus saw the compassion of his friends, when Jesus saw the sacrifice of this guy's friends, when Jesus saw the boldness of this guy's friends, it says, "When He saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'"

Now at that moment, the air in the room had to have left the building. Here is the reason why. They weren't asking Jesus to forgive his sins. They actually wanted Jesus to do what? Well, heal his legs. So I imagine that when Jesus said that there was probably an awkward silence in the house.

The guys on the roof were like, "Okay, we're still up on the roof. What did He say? Well, He said He forgives his sins," and I would imagine they kind of looked at each other awkwardly and were like, "Okay, that's nice. Jesus we'll remember that at his funeral one day. We'll remember to say that, that You forgave his sins. Isn't that what the whole forgiveness of sins thing is about? So that you can go to heaven when you die? We'll thank you for that but, Jesus, we don't know if you noticed. It's his legs; like they don't work." Here it is. "Jesus, could you fix his bigger problem?" That's what they were thinking. "Jesus, we want You to do what we would like for You to do."

So there are like these two emotions in the room. The first is disappointment. They're disappointed because Jesus came through, but not exactly in the way they were thinking. The second emotion that was going on in the room was anger. Look at what it says in verse 6. "Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 'Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who

can forgive sins but God alone?’ And immediately Jesus, perceiving in His Spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, ‘Why do you question these things in your hearts?’”

Now here’s just a little bit of advice, and I’ll just give you this for free this morning. If you are ever in a room with Jesus, don’t ever, ever think to yourself. He can hear you. So be very cautious about that. So you have the scribes and they are thinking this stuff to themselves and Jesus can perceive it. Instead of having compassion, and love, and concern, and even enthusiasm over what had just happened these guys are upset. In a sense, figuratively speaking, they are trying to patch the roof back up. Figuratively speaking, they are saying, “Let’s put the barrier back up. Jesus, what gives You any right to do that? You’re going against the rules,” and they are upset about it.

Oftentimes, when we become so religious, we forget our experience of grace and our continued need for it. And we can do that intentionally or unintentionally. It can often be described this way. You just kind of pull the ladder up behind you. “Well, I’m in. This is good enough. Let’s just circle up the wagons. We don’t have any urgency to get others to Jesus.”

Jesus’ response is brilliant. Look at what He says in verse 9. He says, “‘Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.’” That’s a simple question. Jesus is basically saying, “Guys, it’s a whole lot easier for me to say to him, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ because you can’t necessarily prove that.”

It would be like if you were to hurt me or to offend me in some way and we were to sit down and have coffee and I say, “I forgive you.” That’s a nice thing. But how do you know for sure if I’ve really forgiven you? It could just be words. And Jesus said, “Hey it’s easy for Me just to sit here and say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ but it would be a whole lot more difficult for me to actually heal him. Because if I say, ‘Rise, take your mat and go home,’ and he doesn’t do it, then I’m a fraud.”

So really Jesus’ primary concern was the condition of this guy’s soul. Why? Well because those legs can just become crippled again. Jesus could heal his legs and the guy could go out the next Friday night and get a little crazy and crash his camel into a tree and get paralyzed all over again. Even if he doesn’t, he is going to grow old eventually. That physical body is going to give out eventually. Jesus is like, “Yeah healing his legs is a great, great thing. But I’m more concerned about his eternal soul. But to show you I have the authority to forgive sins, I’ll heal his legs.” That’s what motivated Him.

So look what He says in verse 10. “‘But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’—He said to the paralytic—‘I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.’ And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, ‘We never saw anything like this!’”

You see as we look at this passage we see that Jesus ultimately satisfied the man’s four friends. He healed the paralytic man and He forgave him of his sins. He silenced the scribes, and He amazed the crowds. It looks like a great, great story, and yet there is something about it that just doesn’t settle well within my soul because I read through this passage and Mark is just so brief. I wish Mark would offer us some more explanations, but as I read through this and as I just kind of read the final verse there in verse 12, the crowds were walking out saying, “We never saw anything like this.”

It almost made me think they missed it. It almost made me think that Jesus is still standing in the house, emptied at this point, brand new sunroof, the sun blaring down in His eyes. He's still got ceiling tile in His hair, the crowds have all gone, they've all dispersed, and I just wonder if Jesus was standing there going, "You know what? You guys just missed it. You guys just missed what I really want to do in the lives of people."

As a church, we don't want to miss it either. We want to remove the barriers that exist between people coming to know the real Jesus and we want to understand what it is that He has truly come to give and to provide for them. You see there are three perspectives, or attitudes, that are represented within this passage. You have the paralytic man who is in need of Jesus. And he was open and willing to let his friends get him there. You have the friends who are innovative, and bold, and courageous. And then you have the religious elite who had forgotten about their experience of grace and they are skeptical and angry about it.

Here is what I want you to do, just in the few moments here together this morning. Out of those three perspectives, which represents your attitude the most? I have to be honest with you. As I sat down and looked at this last week, I had to admit that my attitude kind of represents all three at various times in my life, sometimes within the same day. Sometimes I realize I'm just like the paralytic. I need a Savior. I continue to need a Savior. At other times I am like the guy's friends. I want to be bold, I want to be courageous, and I want to remove the barriers so that my friends, and family, and people I know can come to know Jesus. You know sometimes I'm like the religious elite and I just forget about my experience of grace. I get too apathetic. I just kind of want to ride the lazy river to heaven because God has given me grace.

You see, all of us have been the paralytic at some point in our lives and we need a Savior. I just want to speak to those of you—maybe today is your very first day to come to this church, or maybe to any church. Maybe the reason why you came today is because somebody who you work with or who you are related to, they've been inviting you here for months, and months, and months and you've been politely turning them down. You are just kind of sick of them inviting you. They are kind of wearing you down. So you are like, "Okay, fine then, I'll get you off my back and I'll come," and you came today.

But if you would just be really honest, there is this discomfort, or maybe there are like these barriers, or maybe you have questions, or you're skeptical about what you see. You are sitting there and you are like, "I don't know if I want to come back to all this." I just want you to know... First of all, thank you for coming. I know that's not an easy thing to do, and I know that there's probably a lot of really legitimate barriers that you may have to address and walk through. I just simply want you to know this. Whether you come back or you don't, you're loved here, you're welcome here, and anytime you come back we're just walking through the Scriptures to get to know Jesus better and that's all I want for you.

Here is what I want to do next. For the next few moments, I want to address our church family. So if you're new around here or if you don't consider this to be your church home, then what I'm going to say next does not apply to you specifically, in this sense. I am not asking anything of you. I do think that a lot of what I am going to say is going to be good for you, it's going to be helpful to you, and you're going to find it really interesting. I'm going to be asking some things of our church family. I'm not asking anything of you. But I'm inviting you to do this. Grab a chair, pull it up to our family table, we're going to have a family talk. You get a chance to listen in and see what is important and valuable to us as a church.

So let me give you three questions. Here is the first one: As a church family, who is our paralytic man, so to speak? Who is our paralytic man? Who is the person who you have a heart for, a burden for? Now listen to me. Not in some judgmental, condescending way like you wish that you could convince them or win an argument. I'm talking about, who does your heart break for? Who have you cried over? Who are you willing to wreck the roof for so that they might have an encounter with the real Jesus?

Last week I sat down and I just started typing up on my computer. I wanted to do this for me. I was like who do I have a heart for? Who do I desire to wreck the roof for to get them to Jesus? And I just started typing. I have a heart for my neighbors, Matt and Roger, who live right next door to us. They say to me all the time, "Wow, it looks like your church is really growing," but to my knowledge they have never set foot in this place even though we have invited them multiple times. I wonder if somewhere in the back of their minds, they wonder if they'll really be welcomed if they come in.

I have a heart for skeptical men who see all of this Jesus stuff and really, if they were honest, they see church in general as a bit too effeminate for them and they are suspicious that at some point they'll be required to sit around in a circle holding hands with complete strangers, crying and singing *Kumbaya*.

I have a heart for vulnerable women who have been beaten, abandoned, and abused to the point that they feel like they are damaged goods. And they wonder if they can ever trust another male figure in their life.

I have a heart for confused young adults who are trying to figure out their identity in a world that is screaming to them to think, feel, look, and act a certain way.

I have a heart for the middle class family who lives on Indy's north side, who earns slightly more than the national average, which has provided them with more disposable income for more square footage, nicer cars, clothes, and gadgets, as well as more frequent vacations to more exotic places, but has still left them feeling empty, isolated, and alone. While they are financially secure, they are facing a spiritual deficit.

I have a heart for the economically challenged and socially estranged in our city who wonder if they really belong and if anyone really cares about the very real and the very painful issues that they don't have any solutions for.

I have a heart for the person recovering from you-fill-in-the-blank addiction, who feels they are constantly walking that fine line, wondering when they might fall back into a destructive pattern of behavior. They feel self-conscious, wondering if everybody is looking over their shoulder, wondering if they are going to fall.

I have a heart for those recovering from sexual sin in all of its forms, that this would be a place where they would find grace, and truth, in equal measure in an environment where the primary message sent is not one of condemnation, but also is not one of affirmation. Rather it is one that says, "Have you or are you struggling with that? Yeah, me too, and we both need Jesus."

I have a heart for the African American, the Asian, the Latino, who walks into this place and is ever tempted to think, "I'm not sure I belong in the *white* church." Let me say you are absolutely welcome here and heaven will be a place where all nations are represented because Jesus didn't just die for—news flash—white Americans but for people of every color, language, tribe, and nation [applause].

You have to let me finish, I'm building momentum, alright? The only way this white church will ever begin to resemble what heaven will look like is for you and me, everyone in this room, to realize the only color that really matters is red, the red blood of Jesus that transcends the color of any skin and anything else that might separate us. It makes us brothers and sisters in Christ and now we're family and you definitely belong.

I have a heart for the teenage girl who's been cutting herself. I have a heart for the teenage boy who's really confused about what true masculinity is.

I have a heart for the single adult who is sick and tired of everyone trying to set them up on a date.

I have a heart for the senior adult, the widow, or the widower, who wonder if this church has become too young for them or if they really have anything to offer, who feel lonely and forgotten and rather insignificant. I pray that they might realize that their wisdom, and their counsel, and their word of encouragement, and their investment into the lives of younger leaders is something that is craved and we need their discipleship much more than they might realize.

I have a heart for the plumber, the accountant, the schoolteacher, the bus driver, the babysitter, the stay at home mom, the stay at home dad, the doctor, the nurse, the law student, the government worker, the police officer, the firemen and women, the barista, the bank teller and cashier at (you insert the specialty store of your choice).

I have a heart for students in School 43 in the inner city, who we have adopted in partnership with City Mosaic, as we serve those teachers and help by tutoring those students.

I have a heart for those we are partnering with in Nicaragua, Kenya, and Haiti, and in other places around the world. I have a heart for the least, the lost, the lonely, and the desperate.

I have a heart for those who feel self-sufficient, successful, superior, and who are totally blind to the fact that they don't have it all together.

I have a heart for people who say, "I would never go to that church. It's too big. It's too loud, it's too far away, it's too (you fill in the blank)."

Jesus is still pursuing men and women who are far from Him and He has given us this promise. "I will draw all men and women unto Myself." Our responsibility as a church is to simply wreck the roof and to get those people to Him.

There are silly, unnecessary barriers that exist between people who Jesus died for. I look back at my own life and there were several people who were willing to wreck the roof so that I might come to know the real Jesus. I was blind to the fact that I was in need of a Savior and they did whatever they could to remove those barriers.

So who is our paralytic man? It's who you live next door to. For some of you, it's who you are married to. For some of you, it's who you share a cubicle with. For some of you, it's who you order your coffee from. And Jesus has said, "Remove the silly, unnecessary barriers so that they might come to know Me."

So here is the second question: What does it look like for our church, in this season, to wreck the roof? Now about eight years ago our church re-located to this campus. You saw that in the video. Many of you have been around here for decades and you know that our previous location was about 10 miles down the road on Indianapolis Road. We were sort of tucked back into a neighborhood. And God did a lot of faithful ministry through that campus for many, many years.

But the men and women of this church had a vision to move up to this location (this is prior to my time here). When we moved up to this location it made us a regional church. It allowed our reach to go beyond just this section of town. So, because of our location, because of what God is doing here, we have people who drive as far as an hour away to come to this particular campus.

Every time I hear that, I'm always humbled and I'm always thankful for it. Yet at the same time I know that becomes a barrier for some people because discipleship works best when you can worship where you live, when you can serve where you live, where you can worship in a place where you can actually invite your neighbors and they don't say, "How far of a drive is that? An hour?" And that becomes a barrier for them.

We really feel this conviction that we need to go to the locations where our people are already driving from. So this fall we are going to be launching our very first multisite location as many of you have probably already heard. We've been talking, and thinking, and praying about this for a very long time.

Now here is the thing. Many of you in this room probably know what multisite is. Maybe you were a part of a church that did it really, really well. To some of you, maybe this is a brand new concept and you are like, "Why would that work and why would we ever do that?" And to some of you it may be a totally foreign concept. Let me just explain it briefly. Multisite is not its own autonomous church plant. Multisite means that we are going to be one church in multiple locations; same DNA, same philosophy of ministry, same kind of environment, just in a different location.

So we will hire a lean staff. We'll hire a campus pastor to oversee ministry on the ground. We'll have children's ministries. We'll have live worship. Then we will stream the teaching via video from this campus to the others.

Now I've had a couple of you say, "Do you really think that video teaching will work? Do you really think that people will actually drive to a building just to watch you on video?" First of all, thank you. Thank you for the compliment. Secondly, it's a legitimate question.

I just want to draw to your attention that a significant percentage of you in this room right now, when I'm here preaching live in this room, you watch the screens. It's a very weird thing. Now, by the way, I can see you. You always seem to be surprised when I tell you I can see you. That's why I wear glasses, because I'm near-sighted. I can see all the way back to the very back wall. I can kind of see where you are looking. I think it will work.

The second thing is we have hundreds of people who tune in via live streaming on their computers from all over the world. We have gotten emails from people in other countries that say, "You're kind of like our video church. We get together in houses and we watch the screens."

We've been to dozens and dozens of multisites that do video teaching well. You might just need to trust me on this one. It really does work.

As we've been looking around Indianapolis and we've been looking in our database, here's the thing. We want to go where our people already live. We think that, very clearly, God has shown us that there are three opportunities for us to go. We have about 1,200 people who live on the north side. We have about the same amount people who live downtown or inside the loop of 465. We have a little over 1,000 people who live on the Westside; so that's south Brownsburg, Avon, and North Plainfield.

Over the last year, year-and-a-half, we've been praying for all three of these locations, asking God, "Where do you want us to go?" I think this is really important for you to know and to understand. God has actually kept several doors shut. We've walked up and we've knocked and we said, "God, where do you want us to go?" We thought maybe He was moving us in a direction and He ended up shutting a door. He either said, "No," or He is saying, "Not yet."

So, as I told you as church last November on Vision Night, we do not want to be the kind of church that says, "God, here's our grand vision. Now bless it." We want to be the kind of church that says, "God, we want to be receptive enough that whenever You say, 'Go,' we are willing, and bold enough, and courageous enough to do it."

So over the last several months we really feel like God has finally opened up a door for us to go multisite on the north side and we're going to be, sometime this fall, launching a portable church at Creekside Middle School. Creekside Middle School, if you are familiar with that area, is west of Meridian, east of Michigan. It's close to a whole bunch of houses. We already have a verbal agreement that sometime this fall we can begin doing portable church setup and teardown.

Here's the thing. The Carmel school district will only allow a church to rent out their schools for a period of one year. I actually think that's a good thing. It kind of lights a fire underneath us to say, "We need to be finding a permanent location after that year is up." We're already actively searching that out. We're already having meetings with people looking for what opportunities God might provide. What does that mean? Well, it might mean we buy land and build. I really don't want to do that. That takes too long and it's really expensive. What I'd really love to do is find an existing building and get into it—maybe about 30,000 square feet—and renovate it. It would look like us and it would feel like us. That would become our north side Traders Point location.

Now a natural question that some of you might have in addition to the video thing, and I've already had several of you come up to me, is "What about other churches? What about other churches over in that area? Will we be impinging on their territory?" I want to be very clear that we are not launching multisite to attract people from other churches, but we are launching multisite because we already have people there. And it's very difficult for them to serve, and invite their friends, and to be involved. In fact, if we started attracting disgruntled members from other churches, we would send them back. We'll stamp across their forehead *return to sender*.

So here's the thing. We want to be really, really sensitive about this so we've reached out to a lot of the churches on the north side that we have a relationship with. We said, "Hey we're going to be telling our church about this and before we do that, because we know word will spread quickly, we just wanted to reach out to you and, in a spirit of partnership, just let you know where we feel God had led us and that we are actually not trying to steal any of your people. In fact, is there anything we can do to serve you? Because we are on your team and we want you to do well because it's going to take all kinds of churches to change our city for Christ."

You know what I've heard back from all of them? Nobody has said, "We're upset." Nobody has been defensive. In fact it has been just the opposite. They have expressed their excitement and their enthusiasm and their support for what we are doing. In fact one guy, he was like, "Come on. Do it! Let's do this together." In fact one church leader emailed me back and he was like, "We were wondering when you guys were going to do this. You are one of the healthiest churches in Indianapolis and health needs to be reproduced, so come on." That is a very, very nice thing.

So here's the thing. I want to be really, really clear about this. We are going multisite because we believe this is a really smart tactic to reach people faster and more effectively for Jesus Christ, period. We are not going multisite because we think it's a cool fad. We're not going multisite because we think we are God's gift. We are going multisite really because God has done a tremendous thing in the life of this church and there are people who live all over and this particular campus, while it is a great thing, it is also a barrier. It really is, in the sense that this campus will reach a saturation point at some point in the future.

My estimation is that just in three services we could probably run about 6,500 to 7,000 and start to get a bit uncomfortable. At that point people start complaining. I'm already getting emails from people saying, "We tried to come to the eleven, we couldn't find a parking spot, so we ate pancakes at Cracker Barrel." And every time I get those emails I just cringe. What that means is that this site is a barrier. The barrier is no parking spots. This campus will eventually reach its saturation point.

Not only that but I know that not everybody wants to come to this campus. It's a little intimidating. People have said to me all the time when they find out who I am, "We'll never go there." Once again I am like, "Thank you very much." What do you say in response to that? I am always asking them why and they say, "Well, it's too big," or "I just feel intimidated," or "I'm lost," or "I don't know where to go." You know what multisite does? Multisite is a smaller room, same quality of ministry, same environment, same spirit, but not as intimidating. This campus, while it's a great thing, can also be a barrier.

You see, church planting, statistically, has proven to be the fastest, most effective way to reach the unchurched for Christ. Here is the thing about church planting. I planted a church for five years, so I know. It's really, really difficult. About 70 to 80 percent of church plants fail, primarily because of finances.

Multisite is a very similar effort but multisite has a 90 percent success rate, primarily because you have a strong body of people who are supporting it. Hear me really clearly in this. Multisite is not our mission, it's a tool in the toolbox to help us to accomplish our mission: to remove the barriers to get our friends, and family, and people in our city to Jesus.

You see here are the equations we see in Mark 2. These four friends, they had limited resources. So they said, "We'll carry him to Jesus." They had a willingness to fail. Going through the roof, this might work or this might be a major backfire, right? They had an increasing passion. They said, "We're going to wreck the roof to get our friend to Jesus. And the result was that the man got healed and his sins were forgiven.

So lastly, here is the third question: What will this require of us? Let me give you three things. Would everybody just pull out your cell phone real quick if you would? Just pull out your cell phone, hold it up so I know you have it. And I know you have it. We never leave home without this thing. We're addicted to it. Pull out your cell phone.

If you would, just set a daily alarm for 1:07 p.m. every afternoon. Our leadership, our staff, and many of our Life Group leaders have been doing this for the past couple of weeks. And at 1:07 p.m. every day that alarm will go off. Let that be a reminder to pray for the 1.7 million disconnected people in our city. I just wonder if our entire church prayed at the same time every day for the same thing what God might do. Let me just give you a little tip. It'll scare you the first couple of times it goes off. It did me. And the people I was with said, "What is that?" and I had a chance to share the vision with them.

Here is the second thing: The word, *go*. Over the course of the next several months I am going to be asking hundreds of you to be praying about and contemplating going to this first location and being part of the group that would get this thing started. Now the no-brainer would be do you live in that general vicinity? I know one guy does, right down here. So I expect you to be signed up. But we want several hundred people. Actually, I'd like to see about 500 people say, "You know what? That's going to be our Traders Point location. We're going to go, and we're going to serve, and we're going to give, and we're going to take the same DNA and environment that is here and we're going to supplant it over there.

So over the course of the next several months, while we are hiring a campus pastor and preparing for a launch sometime this fall, I also want some of you to relax. Some of you have come up to me and said, "I live right across the street from that site. Are you going to kick me out of here to go there?" No. We're not going to police that. But there are others of you who say, "You know what? It's time for me to get in the game. It's time for me to serve." And I really believe that what that will do is it will free up some seats here for others to come who maybe haven't been able to come and it'll get a good work started up there.

Here is the third thing: It is the word, *give*. This is going to require our church family to pray about and determine what we will sacrificially give over a two-year period of time. Now once again, some of you have been in this church for 30 or 40 years and you know what God has done in this place and that men and women have served, and been faithful, and have sacrificially given over the years. What I want you to see is that is a spiritual thing and it is an investment into the lives of people.

You see, this was prior to my time, but it was a pretty huge vision for the church to move from the location where they were up to this location. Like major, that was wreck the roof kind of stuff. It was a church of about 1,600 to 1,700 people who came and relocated up here and said, "God, we have a grand vision for this and we're going to invest in the lives of people." You know what? It worked.

Did you know that since we moved into this campus eight years ago we've baptized over 3,000 people? Did you know that we've grown from a church of about 1,600 to 5,500 who are showing up here on a weekly basis? Did you know we've given millions of dollars away to local and global missions, and that lives have been put back together, and marriages have been restored because men and women in our past said, "You know what? Salvation isn't just something for us to hold on to. But God, everything we have is Yours."

What we've done in the past is something called a capital campaign where you give your tithes to the unified budget and you give to this separate fund over here. We're not going to do a capital campaign for this. We're just going to do something called the one fund. Basically what that means is that we sit down and we say, "You know what, God? Here's what You are doing in my life." And I know many of you are already tithers. Maybe some of you are not. Maybe some of you have never even thought about, "What I should intentionally give back to the Lord?" The reason why you haven't is that our checkbooks are usually the last thing to get baptized.

Most of us, when we get baptized, we hold that bad boy up out of the water like this. Take me under again, I'll hold this up. It's usually the last thing. Giving always lags behind discipleship. I get that. It's totally understandable. It's the number one idol in all of our hearts, including mine. Every time God takes me to a new level spiritually, it's always through my checkbook, always, because that's the closest idol.

So that is what our leaders are doing right now, what our staff is doing. And I'll give you this information in a couple of weeks. By April 30, all of our leadership is turning in their commitments and they are saying, "Here is what we are going to tithe to the unified budget over two years. Here's what we'll give to our multisite efforts that we are calling *Humble and Hungry*." But it's not two separate checks. It's just one fund. We are saying, "Here is what we will give over the next two years to see this happen."

Now as for our multisite effort, we put a price tag of \$8.5 million dollars to it. Here's what that pays for. It allows us to do setup and teardown at a temporary location for a year, to hire staff for that location and a campus pastor, and to hopefully purchase a permanent facility at some point that we can move into. And it gives us some seed money to then go to location number two and hopefully three, because this isn't just going to end with one location. We want to springboard it into another. So I want you to be thinking about that and praying about it.

Now I just want to leave you with this. I just want you to know, and I've said this publically out loud before, that it's such an honor for me to be here and to serve with you in this church. My prayer is that God would allow me to serve for the rest of my days in this church family. And I don't have an ounce of pride within me. In fact, my prayer continually is, "God, please help me to stay faithful, and to not mess this up, and to have a heart for the people who are far from You because there are so many barriers that exist and that stand in the way. Your church is the hope of this world. This is the healthiest church that I've ever seen and I don't know why You allowed me to come here."

Lindsay and I were driving home from dinner Friday night, we were having dinner with some friends, and I drove her through the north side because I wanted her to see Creekside Middle School and kind of show her what we were thinking about. It was just the two of us and we were driving along and I was kind of showing her, and we were praying together, and thinking about this. She looked at me and she said, "Can you believe we get to do this?" She was like, "It wasn't all that long ago that we were struggling church planters and we didn't know what was going to happen." And she said, "This is crazy. This is insane. Why does God allow us to be a part of something like this?" My heart beats for that and I hope yours does too.

You see we want to be humble. We are not God's gift to Indianapolis. God has given us a gift that we give to others. And we want to be hungry because just like our lives have changed other's lives need to be changed as well but there is something that is keeping them from Jesus and we want to remove those barriers so that they might have that encounter.

Let me pray.

Father we come to You right now and we're humbled by what You've done for us and what You continue to do for us. God, I just ask that over the course of the next several weeks that Your Spirit will be in this, that You would be working on our hearts, that You would be taking us to new depths and levels spiritually. God we don't know why You are doing what You are doing in our church but we want to stay faithful to Your name. We want to create an atmosphere that is warm, and loving, and enthusiastic, and gracious but an atmosphere that gives the gospel with great clarity so that people might come to know You. God, we are riding on the shoulders of faithful men and women who, through the decades, served and have given sacrificially so that we could have the chance to have an encounter with You, and now it's our turn. So move and work through us and do tremendous things in the life of our city so that Your name may be made famous. It is in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.