



For the past three months you've been hearing about the mystery of God moving me to the unknown. I've shared with you Jeremiah 33:3 where the Lord says, *"Call to me and I will tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."*

Initially, this great and unsearchable thing was to no longer lead the South Campus. That was definitely unsearchable but not so great, in my opinion. Now it appears that the great and unsearchable thing the Lord has shown me is this: it's time for me to be a Senior Pastor. I am nearing the end of an interview process and we're praying to discern the Lord's will.

Today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of this earth. I have been your pastor for six years and you have given me grace, support and love along the way. You have shaped me. Without you, I wouldn't be the man I am today. I wouldn't be the preacher I am today. I wouldn't be the leader I am today. God has been so good to me. And I want to say "thank you."

Who wouldn't want to spend an hour every Sunday morning setting up with Ron Morris and the amazing guys on the set up team? Who wouldn't want to plan and labor beside the staff and elders? Who wouldn't want to spend evenings together with you, eating dinner, praying together and studying God's Word together?

I'm a blessed and lucky man.

As I move on to ... somewhere, you will be blessing another church because I will be sharing what you've taught me. So I might be moving into the mysterious adventure of following God, and there are a lot of unknowns, but I've got God leading me and you supporting me. With those, I can accomplish anything.

For my last sermon we're going to be looking at one of my favorite topics: God's love for people. Framing this Biblical truth are verses like, *"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are!"* (1 John 3:1). *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16). This love that God gives us is unconditional. There's absolutely nothing any of you do, **ever**, that will cause God to love you more.

That's so crazy because nobody loves you like that. It would be impossible to love like that because all of the love we give is tainted by the sin in our hearts. A friend was telling me about a conversation he had with his daughter. He told her. "I love 95% of you but 5% of you is driving me crazy right now!" That's why a verse like Romans 5:8 is so foundational in our understanding of God's love. *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

Let's put those three statements together:

- I am greatly loved by God
- God loves me so much he gave his best
- I can never out-sin God's love

### **God's Love is for Everyone**

This is truly amazing! It has the power to completely transform you. And it has the power to truly transform any person. Right? Who is God's love for? **All** people, everywhere. God wants every one of your neighbors to know that he loves them. God wants every person in the city you live in to know that he loves them. God wants every person on this planet, all 7 billion of them, to know that he loves them.

Turn to Matthew 9 and let's look at a specific example of Jesus' love for people. In these verses today we're going to see three things:

- Jesus Went
- Jesus Accurately Saw
- Jesus Has a Plan

### **Jesus Went**

**Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness (v. 35).**

Went = Proclaiming the Good News. He's traveling through towns and villages. He wasn't sitting in a room just studying the scripture and praying. His continuing action:

- Teaching in their synagogues. This was not a comfortable action. Many accepted his message but many did not, similar to today. Some will accept/embrace the teachings of Jesus

but others will not. Their acceptance or rejection should not determine whether we go and tell them.

- Proclaiming the kingdom; telling them there is more than this earth with good food and fun vacations and fulfilling relationships, yes. But there's a Spiritual Kingdom that will blow your mind and explode your heart!
- Healing disease and sickness.

Up to this point, the ministry of Jesus has been described but we've not been given clear insight into Jesus' motivation. His actions have been two-dimensional—words of wisdom and acts of power—but what's his motive? In his words of wisdom he told them to give to the needy without seeking attention from others, love your enemies, don't worry about your clothes; look at how God clothes the flowers.

In his acts of power he's done powerful miracles: water to wine at the wedding, healing a leper, calming the winds and waves on the Sea of Galilee, raising a girl from the dead.

Is he going to build on his popularity and get rich? Is he going to build a walled compound and rule over his disciples like a dictator? Is the pressure of a larger ministry going to overwhelm him, stress him out and cause him to crash and burn? Is he doing all of this to catch the attention of a pretty girl from his hometown?

When we consider all we know about Jesus these options seem ludicrous, don't they? But if we put ourselves into the shoes of the people around Jesus during his early ministry years, these would have been legitimate questions because these are the kinds of things sinful people do when they have great power.

It would have been a shrewd question to ask: Is Jesus just a man like everyone else or someone different? The next verse answers this question by telling us what was in Jesus' heart. His words of wisdom and acts of power flowed from a compassionate heart.

### **Jesus Accurately Saw**

**When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (v. 36).**

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them. We can imagine Jesus standing on an elevated place. He sees a crowd of people coming toward him. We can assume that this crowd is like any other that's been pursuing Jesus—they seek physical healing for themselves or for someone they love.

One thing is clear: few, if any, have found the peace that passes all understanding. They are burdened and weighted down. Their religious leaders have loaded them with legalistic Sabbaths, food restrictions, fasts and offerings. They are tired and grumpy and bored.

When Jesus saw people like this, coming at him with selfish intention to get more from him, his heart was filled with compassion, not frustration or resentment. Jesus accurately saw them. Jesus sees every one of your neighbors and he's filled with compassion for them. Jesus sees every single person in your city and he's filled with compassion for them. Jesus sees every person on this earth and he's filled with compassion for them.

Think of how Jesus accurately saw a person like Michael Phelps. In the months and even years leading up to this year's Rio Olympics, much of the news about Michael Phelps was bad. In September of 2014, he was arrested for driving while under the influence in his hometown of Baltimore. His second DUI. It seemed that Phelps' best days, both in and out of the pool, were behind him.

As Phelps told ESPN following his announced retirement in 2012, he struggled to "figure out who he was outside the pool." In his words, "I was a train wreck. I was like a time bomb, waiting to go off. I had no self-esteem, no self-worth. There were times where I didn't want to be here. It was not good. I felt lost." Does that sound like someone harassed and helpless? Yes! You might ask, how could a guy with 20+ Olympic medals have no self-esteem? How could he struggle with his purpose in life? Because unless a person knows the living God of the universe, they are **lost**. It doesn't matter how good they look on the outside.

Like a lot of people struggling with similar feelings, Phelps self-medicated. In the immediate aftermath of his second DUI arrest, he cut himself off from family and other loved ones and "thought the world would just be better off without me . . . I figured that was the best thing to do — just end my life." Jesus always accurately sees you and accurately sees every person in this world and his heart is filled with compassion by the brokenness.

Thank God that a friend of Michael's accurately saw him like Jesus saw him. Former all-pro linebacker Ray Lewis, a Christian, saw the hopelessness and despair in his young friend and convinced Phelps to enter rehab and gave him a book to read while he was there: *The Purpose-Driven Life* by Rick Warren. The book changed Phelps' life. Within a few days, Phelps called Lewis and told him "Man this book is crazy . . . The thing that's going on . . . oh my gosh . . . my brain, I can't thank you . . . enough, man. You saved my life." As Phelps told ESPN, Rick Warren's book "turned me into believing there is a power greater than myself and there is a purpose for me on this planet."

It doesn't matter what a person projects on the outside. The root issue is always the same. People are harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus accurately sees all of the people in the world and his heart is filled with compassion because he

loves them. It literally breaks his heart to see them in distress, wandering aimlessly.

The analogy of a sheep is used here to describe people. Sheep will follow their nose to the next blade of grass with no idea where they're going or what kind of trouble they're going to stumble into. This way of living leads people from one sexual relationship to another ... one drink to ten ... from sexual desire to perversion ... from anger to abuse ... from selfishness to theft. The progression is a mess! Jesus accurately sees it and it breaks his heart. Jesus sees you, your neighbors, the people in this city and the people in this world and his heart is broken.

Of course, Jesus doesn't just stop there. After he accurately sees the distress of humanity, Jesus has a plan.

### **Jesus Has a Plan**

**Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (verses 37-38).**

Send more workers to help them! The Harvest is plentiful; there are a lot of people who need help. And since it's harvest time that means the crops are ready for immediate attention. But the workers are few. In order for Jesus' plan to work, he needs more workers. So Jesus says, Ask God to send more people to the harvest. Moved with compassion, Jesus is implying that the disciples—even fully engaged—will never be enough to minister to these people. They need more help.

Let me tell you some Good News! The Father in heaven will meet this deficiency by sending more workers, if we'll ask him. Jesus isn't setting us up to ask God for something so that God can tell us "no." God wants to answer this request.

Every one of you who is a follower of Jesus Christ is involved in Jesus' plan. Everyone raise your hand and say, "I'm involved." Doesn't that make you feel good? Jesus, the King of the universe, has a plan and he's bringing **you** into it. That's amazing!

- Jesus went; we should go.
- Jesus accurately saw them; we should accurately see them.
- Jesus has a plan; let's be part of the solution.

### **Go to your neighbors**

Know their names and ask them about their lives. Walk your neighborhoods and pray. Meet their needs whenever you can:

friendship to someone lonely, a meal to someone sick, a tool to someone. Ask the Lord to send someone to let them know that Jesus loves them. Maybe that will be you.

### **Go to your cities**

This is the desire of our elders and church. That's why we do Street Church. That's why we serve at 2nd Harvest. That's why we're getting our own building, so we can invite the community to join us for worship.

### **Go to the world**

CPC currently has 36 mission partners around the world. We are actively part of being a part of Jesus' plan. When you give financially a portion of that money is going to this work. You should be praying for the Lord to send more workers to the far places of the earth. You should be praying that our missionaries are effective in letting people know, Jesus loves them.

Recently, we've felt the need to expand our mission efforts beyond our mission partners and get involved with groups of people that are unreached. They are called Unreached People Groups. Jesus accurately see them, just like he sees us. And he loves them.

I want to show you a video that describes these people and the need they represent (*video shown*).

CPC has committed to reach three unengaged, unreached people groups over the next three years:

1. China's Tibetan Jone - Joenee
2. India's Samanthan - Suhmaanathan
3. Niger's Hassaniya (Moor) – Hahsaneeah

Pray for these groups in your community group, men's group, women's group, student ministries, your dinner table, etc. Form strategic partnerships where possible to send money or go on mission trips to accomplish the goal.

When Jesus looks at our neighborhoods, at our cities and at our world today, he sees people that are harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. We are like Jesus when we see this too. Let's commit ourselves to spreading the love of Jesus, without boundaries and without restraint.

*This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.*

© 2016 *Central Peninsula Church South, Redwood City, CA*  
*Catalog No. 1422-11S*

---

This message from Scripture was preached on Sunday, August 21, 2016 at Central Peninsula Church South  
1005 Shell Blvd. | Foster City, CA 94404 | 650 349.1132 | [www.cpcweb.org](http://www.cpcweb.org). Additional copies available on request.