

The Spokes

Keep the Rubber Side Down series

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Amen. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for another day of life and the opportunity to come back together as a church family, as we now continue our study as we journey through our series on keep the rubber side down, be with us in Jesus name. Amen.

As a child, I loved watching cartoons. I was kidding. I still love watching cartoons. As a child, the choices were quite a bit more limited, but the I don't want to say the standard, but Looney Tunes. Classic. And anybody have a particular Looney Tunes character that your favorite? Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd. I always particularly just loved Wiley the Coyote and the Roadrunner. You know, what's one thing that is also true about those two? Is there are three things that there was a plethora of cliffs that, well, coyote could easily fall down, a huge mallet, and an endless supply of TNT explosives. And you know time after time the journey always trying to catch the roadrunner.

Oftentimes, though, when we think about evangelism, we always think that we have to have these huge tools. We think we always have to have huge mallets equivalent and also a lot of TNT. A big bang for your buck. Was it possible that God maybe wants to be more stealthy, more subtle? Do we always have to have these big things? And I want to argue that God uses us with all of our talents, whether small or great. And I think even something as small as having a small conversation, asking questions and being present is far more stronger way to evangelize and having the big mallet and the big TNT explosions. When you think about it, when people come to the church, why do they come to church? Oftentimes, maybe they'll see something on TV, maybe they'll find something on YouTube, or maybe they'll have a conversation with a family member, a friend or a complete stranger. You never know.

Now, today, I'd like to go to the Book of Acts Acts chapter two, something we've talked about in the past, but it's a good reminder. Acts chapter two, and I'd like to read this to go in depth now, Peter is with the other 11 disciples, and they're

meeting with other Jews from other nations and as they're talking, what do everybody say? What were they calling the disciples in chapter two? They were all saying they were drunk, but it had too much wine and in verse 14, Peter takes on the mantle of leadership. Jesus said, You're going to help lead this church. And here in verse 14, it says, Then Peter stood up from the 11, raised his voice and addressed the crowd.

Fellow Jews and all of you in Jerusalem. Let me explain to you. Listen carefully to what I have to say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only what time? Nine in the morning. It's pretty early, right? It's nine in the morning. No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel in the last days. God says, I will pour out my spirit on how many people, all people, your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. And even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days and they will what? prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and the signs on the earth. Blood and fire billows of smoke, The sun will be turned to darkness in the moon, to blood. And before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be what? will be saved. Now, then he's going to hit directly you fellow Israelites, listen to this. Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you, by miracles, wonders and signs which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know. So he's calling about you have seen you have witnessed what he has done. The man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan. Jesus death is not just something that randomly happened and foreknowledge, and you, with the help of the wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death because it was impossible for death to keep a hold on him. And even David, he quotes David. He says, I saw the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand. I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices. My body will also rest in hope because you have not been in me to the realm of the dead. You will not let your holy one see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life. You will fill me with your joy in your presence. And again he appeals to them. Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently, confidently, that the Patriarch David, died and was buried. And his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on the throne. Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned into the realm of

the dead, nor does body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we're all witnesses of it, exalted to the right hand of God. He received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, and it's poured out what we now see in here. For David do not ascended to heaven And yet he said, The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. Therefore, that all of Israel be assured of this. God has made this Jesus whom you have crucified, both Lord and Messiah.

And what was the people's response when the people heard this? They were what? Cut to the heart and said that Peter and the other Apostles Brothers, what should we do? What should we do about this? And Peter responded with Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call. With many other words, He warned them and plead with them. Save yourselves from this corrupt generation. Those who accept this message were baptized and about 3000 were added to their number that day.

How many people were added? [3000] Can you imagine having a series and a dozen people get baptized that day? And I've been a part of a series where over a thousand people were baptized, but it wasn't all at once. It was all over the country. And it was amazing to see how so many people gave their life to Christ and how they had chosen to want to live a different life, a path to wholeness, to find love, to move forward with courage and to be a witness for the Lord.

And it's here that these individuals, these Israelites here, what Peter is trying to say and it says when it cut their heart, what is it saying there? That it moved them, It convicted them to want to make a change in their life and many thousands changed their life that day. So when Peter, he's preaching here at what's known as Pentecost because the Holy Spirit had descended and impacted all of them, there are spots is what do we do, be baptized.

John Stott writes, "Being a Christian involves a personal vital identification with Christ, and this union with him is dramatically set forth in our baptism. Our baptism initiates us into this life of Christ and into union with Him." So one of the things that's important is that if we want to be a faithful witness to God, we

should probably know God man, but be aligned with God's principle and have a desire to be with God and to follow God.

Now, last week I talked a little bit about a wheel. Our series, for those of you who are joining us for today, we're going through a series called Keep the Rubber Side down. And what that means is making sure that the tire is always on the ground, because if the tire comes off, what happens? You're going to fall and potentially hurt yourself. Right now, we talked last week about the hub, where it's the center. We want to be rooted in Christ. They're also connected. And these spokes, in order for the hub to be able to help impact the rim and the tire, you have to have these spokes in our own walk with Christ. We need to be connected with the hub. The hub is the thing that stays centered and holds everything in place. But with the power of the help of the spokes and the spokes connect the hub to the rim and thus the tire, making it a complete wheel. If you're not connected to God, how effective can you be? Zero. If anything, you're probably going to do more harm to yourself and others when it comes to sharing the Lord. So it's important that we are daily in communion with God. Without these spokes, what would happen to the rim? It would just fall. You wouldn't even it wouldn't work, right? You wouldn't be able to connect it to the bike, to the fork, and it would be worthless.

Much like our relationship with God, if we're not connected to God, how can we serve God faithfully for anything? We're going to probably to do more damage than good. And so the Holy Spirit helps compel us to move forward, to share Jesus with others. Okay. So as it says, they were cut to the heart, they were compelled, they changed their lives and they had this great desire.

So my question to you, are you compelled to share Jesus with others today? Do you think about this as we move forward? Holy Spirit compels us to move forward to be an ambassador, a change agent, as some will say, to open the world to the gospel and the gospel is not just to be preached to a few people, but to everyone.

Now Liz Ryan wrote an article in Forbes magazine and she argues that companies should not be obsessed with having happy employees. It seems kind of interesting, she argues, that employers should be focused on helping employees connect to a greater mission. She goes on to give a an example of a mission

driven person. Let's imagine a person who's completely immersed in his or her work.

For instance, we'll just say the greatest violin maker at this time, which I have no idea who that is. I know Stradivarius was a great violin maker back in the day, but the common equivalent, I don't know who that is, but let's just say we'll name him Franco. Sounds Italian, right? And Franco has a studio where he has 15, let's say 15 to 20 apprentices and journeyman. And together they're all helping to make build the greatest, most exquisite, the most extravagant violins in the world. Is Franco happy? Is he? He's alternately ecstatic. He's frustrated, he's transported, he's confused. He's exhausted and lost in the zone. Yet he and his work are inextricably linked from one another. No one would say about Franco or his employees, They're happy. Instead people in Franco's town would say, These guys live and breathe violins and people around the world rejoice. Now, let me ask you this. How much do you desire to follow God that you literally live your life through the lens of Christ, the decisions that you make? Talked about this before, the decisions that you make. Are they rooted in the things that you desire or the things that are good that God desires not only for us, but also to have a better life if we're rooted in Christ and the decisions that we make and the desire to share God. People are going to notice. Now, that is also coupled with the fact that we're all called to minister together. The Apprentice, the journeyman, the Master. Please do not think that I am the master. I'm just the part a cog and help in this process of working together, following Christ. And there are going to be times where there's going to be supreme joy and there's going to be hard times. There's going to be difficult times. But we're all aligned to the same message of sharing Jesus to the world to make a difference in your neighbor's life, your daughter's life, your coworkers life, the post off post office workers life. I don't remember... OH James Davidson Hunter says he recommends to have a faithful presence within structures of our world.

And what does it mean to have a faithful presence while being open to God's lineage at all times? Do you know when God is going to give you an opportunity to serve and share the Word? How many of you went out and planned to say, I'm going to share Jesus with others today? And it was successful? Oftentimes those moments when you have an opportunity to share come at the most honest random is times, man. You never know when that's going to happen. And

that's why it's also important that as we start our day, let's ask God. God give me the wisdom and the courage and the love to know how to share you with others, but also help me to see and have an open mind to know when to be ready to share. So that's going to inform how we look at life. Am I going to go about happy and joyful or I'm going to go about angry, frustrated? Happy and joyful because is there anybody attracted to angry people? They may be attracted to you, but is that the right spirit that you want to be conveying, especially with God, is not the right one, right now?

When you again look at this wheel. The spokes also don't just represent the connection that we need to have with God as the hub to us, as the wheel. But also the spokes are interlaced combined. Each spoke has a purpose to be able to help strengthen the wheel and each of us are a spoke.

Have you ever ridden your bike and you broke a spoke? I did this a couple of years ago. This I think it was this particular wheel can't remember which spoke it was but I broke the spoke accidentally and that's so what happened was the spoke broken the piece that one piece was outside and it was snapping and hitting my frame and I could hear it and number one, it was really annoying because I broke it. I knew was going to be expensive. But number two, all of a sudden, the rest of the spokes had to carry the burden and the rest of the weight itself, which caused it to go out of alignment. And ultimately, I fortunately enough, didn't have to ride [far]. Only had to ride maybe a couple of miles. It wasn't like I was 50 miles away from my house. Thank you, Lord. I was a couple of miles away from my car and I was able to get back and it was I was able to make it back to where I wouldn't do any greater damage. But if I kept riding on this wheel, I would have done more damage. When it comes to us as a church, it's important that we help, love and lift up one another. When there's a spark that's broken, we need to be able to minister, connect and help that person do those challenges, do those trials, and together as one, we can be one big wholesome.

So it's important to also ask as we move through life, who can you partner up with to pray and then share Jesus with others that God is all called us to share Jesus with others. But I don't think God also wanted us in the world. He called us to partner up. When you look at the disciples, when Jesus sent the disciples out, did He send them out by themselves or did He have them match up and go out

and share the gospel and the early church? Did the disciples all where they all by themselves? No. They were all together, praying, sharing, exhorting Jesus. Now, there were times where they, you know, Peter, He was by himself. It's not like you don't share Jesus. There are going to be times when God calls you to share Jesus by while you're by yourself. But ultimately there's strength when you're with somebody else. So who can you partner up to share Jesus with others?

And the question we also have to ask too, is, are there any distractions in my life that maybe prevent me from fulfilling my call to be a disciple for Jesus? What is it in your life that could potentially help want you to break the spokes so that you're not as connected to the hub? Or even is there anything in your life that's causing conflict with somebody else that's preventing you from being able to share as a team the good news with others? Ultimately. Okay, this is going to work, John. I'm not going to make you get up this time. Let's see if this works. But ultimately, we want to be one big wheel spinning together and working together as one connected to the hub. That which gives us hope, strength, courage and wisdom to share Jesus with the world.

And the last thing this week's challenge last week, I told you to go out at least twice this last week. Pray for your neighbors this week. I want you to continue to do that. Go out and if you can't walk, drive. If you can't go anywhere, pray wherever you're seated and continue to pray for your neighbors. But this week, this week, I want you to get brave. I want you to at least introduce yourself to one person in your neighborhood that you don't know. Or if you don't, if you know all of your neighbors, who is the person that you know the least and at least say, hello, how are you? Okay. We got to start with baby steps. That's fine. Just with a little, and then later on Hey, what's your name? Now they may say I don't want you to know my name. Okay? That's okay. Continue to love. We're going to go introduce yourself this week to a new neighbor. This week? Next week, Bill's going to close out our series, and I'm not going to give you a preview. You got to come back to find it next week.

Let's pray. Father in heaven. Lord, thank you for your goodness. Help us to continue to be the faithful spokes as a church to go out and share the good news, but also help us to stay connected to you, to lead and guide us in all that you have called us to do. Help us, Lord, to be one, to work together, to share you

with others, and above all, give us some [inaudible] In Jesus name. Everybody said Amen.

Grace and peace, everybody.