Welcome to Mission Hills, all of our campuses, including church online. So glad you are with us for the wrap up of our “Mission Killers” series. Can’t believe we are seven weeks in, concluding the seven letters to the churches that we see in Revelation 2-3, but just because the “Mission Killers” series is over does not mean we are done talking about being on mission with Jesus. This is actually part one of our whole fall theme which is Life on Mission. “Mission Killers” was the first part of that. The next part is going to be the Global Experience. We are going to kick it off next week, which is going to be awesome. I’m super excited about it. We have all kinds of things packed into the next few weeks where we are helping people take their mission with Jesus to the next level.

On all of our campuses, we are going to hear from some of our global outreach partners about what God is doing in their part of the world through them, and as Mission Hills is supporting them and what’s happening, we’ll get powerful teaching from God’s Word about being on mission with Jesus. I’m going to do a few of those. We actually, in a couple of weeks, we get to hear from Scott Ridout. Scott is the, he’s the president of our -- I have to get this right. We are not a denomination. I have been told that very, very strongly. We are not a denomination. We are a movement of churches, that’s what we are. Scott is the president of our movement of churches, a very powerful man of God. I can’t wait to have him speaking into our lives. We are going to get to hear about international missions opportunities that you can be part of over the next 12 months.

And at the Littleton campus, or if you are in South Denver and can make it to the Littleton campus, we actually got a little replica of a Colombian village with a guided audio tour to hear a little bit about what life looks like there, and what mission looks like there. If you are able to make it over, you can find out more information on the Mission Hills website or the Mission Hills app. We are going to pack all kinds of great stuff in, so you want to make sure you don’t miss any of that, but before we do that, we do have one more letter, so why don’t you grab your Bible and make your way to Revelation 3 where Jesus begins verse 14 the way he begins all of the other letters. He says to the angel of the church of Laodicea write. Jesus says that with every single letter. If you are just joining us, let me catch you up, get you on the same page.

Jesus writes to each church, but he addresses the letter to the angel of each church because the angel is a personification of the message of the Church. The Greek word angel means messenger, so he writes to angel to remind the Church that they have -- really, they are God’s message to the world. They have the message of the Gospel, and they are on a mission to share that Gospel. Then he is says these are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s Creation. In every one of these letters, Jesus tells the church something about himself which allows them to overcome the particular mission killer they are facing, the particular thing looking to take them off mission with them.

Here what he says is that he’s the Amen and he’s the ruler of God’s Creation. He also says he’s the faithful and true witness, yeah, but that’s explaining what it means to be the Amen which needed explaining because it’s a weird thing to say, it’s a weird thing to call yourself. I’m the Amen. Can you imagine that? Especially the way we use the word amen. Typically, in Mission Hills we use amen as a synonym for, I’m done, right? Because we are praying. We pray, pray, pray, pray, in the name of Jesus. Amen. Like over and out, right? It’s not the way everybody uses the word “amen,” though. I was preaching at a church several years ago. It was the first time I encountered this. Let’s call it ethnically diverse. I was preaching, and I was like ten minutes in. I made what I thought was a powerful point.

There was a woman in front, and as I made this point, I was like God has a purpose for our lives, and she was like, Amen. I was like. I’m not done. I’m just getting started. But what she meant was, she meant, truly, she meant like, that’s truth right there. She recognized it, she was affirming it was a reliable statement. That’s really how the ancient Hebrews used the word amen. It was something they said at the end of a statement. What they were saying was, that’s true. That’s accurate. That’s reliable. Jesus says he’s the Amen. What he’s saying is he’s the reliable one. He’s the reliable, faithful, true witness. In other words, he calls it like he sees it. It’s really important. He calls it like he sees it.

He doesn’t adjust what he says to be popular. He doesn’t pull back on things because people might not like what he has to say. He always calls it like it is, but he’s always the one to see it like it is because he’s the ruler of God’s Creation. I threw up there that he is beginning of God’s Creation, because some translations have beginning instead of ruler. The reason is because the Greek word can go either way. I don’t usually mention the Greek word, but here the Greek word is arche. I mention that because we can connect it to English words and see why it could go either way. Arche can mean something that rules over something, so we talk about archangels. Someone that rules over all of the other angels. We can also use arche to talk about the foundation or beginning of something like architect, right? Same Greek word. It’s somebody who originates, who has the plan. They are the foundational, idea person for the thing that came to be, so what Jesus is saying is, he either rules over
Creation or he's the foundation under Creation, but it doesn't matter how it translates because the idea is the same.

He's in the best position to see how things are. He either sees how things are because he's looking over them, or he sees how things are because he's the foundation underneath them, right? The point is, he doesn't just call it like it is. He sees it like it is. Does that make sense? His ability to understand is better than anybody else's because he has the right perspective. He has the right perception, and what immediately this tells us is that the church at Laodicea had a perspective problem, okay? They had a perspective problem. They weren't seeing things right. They had a perception problem that came from the perspective problem. The way they were seeing things, specifically the way they were seeing themselves wasn't accurate. They had a false view. They were looking at themselves today like through a bunch of Instagram filters.

Have you ever looked at yourself through Instagram filters? I look at myself through Instagram filter, and I'm a pretty good looking guy. You take those filter off, I'm like, oh, no! Let's not post that, right? They were looking at themselves through these filters changing the perspective of what was really happening. It was changing the perception of what was really true, but Jesus says, I call it like it is, and I see it like it is. Here's what he says to them. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. You have been with us throughout the series, you are going, there's that word again. It shows up in every one of these letters. He says, I know your "deeds."

What we are seeing over and over again, Jesus uses that word to talk about the work of the Church, the deeds of the Church in shining the light of the Gospel to the world because that's what the Church is. We exist to hold the light of the Gospel up for the world to see. He says, I know your deeds. He says, I have been watching the work that you have been doing to share the Gospel with the lost. Unfortunately, he says, I'm not exactly blown away. It's a little meh. He says, you are neither cold nor hot when it comes to that work. What you need to understand, those words would have immediately grabbed their attention because of where the city of Laodicea was located. See, just about six miles north of Laodicea there was a city called Hierapolis famous for their hot springs.

They had a reputation for their hot water. People came from all over to sit in their hot springs, their hot baths. You know the value, right? It's rejuvenating. If you have ever sat in a hot tub after a hard day, or just when you are getting old, right? Hot tubs, they are restorative. They are medicinal. People come from all over. The city of Hierapolis had a reputation for their hot water and just a few miles to the east of Laodicea there was a city called Colossae they were famous for their cold mountain springs. Their water had a reputation of being cold and refreshing. People loved to stop there and drink as they were traveling through the area, so what happened, is Laodicea had a city with a reputation for hot water and a nearby city with a reputation for cold water. Two cities with a reputation for their water but Jesus said to the church of Laodicea, your reputation? Your water? No reputation at all, which is tragic, if you think about it.

If anyone should have a reputation for their water, it’s followers of Jesus, right? Yeah. Amen. Thank you. Appreciate that. That’s a true statement. If anyone should have a reputation for their water, it’s the followers of Jesus because we have living water, right? I mean that's what Jesus himself called it. One day you can read about it in John 4. Jesus was traveling through a region called Samaria, which is Jewish people didn’t like. The Samaritan people had a reputation that wasn’t so good. They were considered to be half bloods. They had some Jewish blood, but some gentile blood. They were considered to be impure. Their religion was corrupted from the Jewish perspective. They had a bad reputation, but Jesus didn’t care about people’s reputation. He didn’t mind going through there. He went through there. He stopped at a well. He sent his disciples off to get supplies. While he was there, a woman came to get water. John tells us it was about noon when she came, which is an unusual time to get water.

It is not when you went. It’s the hottest part of the day. Women would go out in the morning. It was a community affair. It was gossip time. You get water; share the latest news, right? The woman was coming at noon because she had a reputation, and it wasn’t a good one. She had a reputation for being a little fast, a little loose with her relationships, so she had to come at noon to get the water. When she came to get water, Jesus stood up and said, hey, can you get me a drink? She said why would you ask me water. Why would you ask me for a drink? You are a Jewish person. You have a reputation with us. I’m a Samaritan woman. I’ve got a reputation with your people. Honestly, if you knew my reputation, you really wouldn’t be asking me. What are you asking me for water for? He said, if only you knew. If you knew who was asking for water, you would have asked me, and I would given you living water, he said. She went, what are you talking about? You don’t have a bucket. Where are you going to get this water? I don’t see a bucket. The well is really deep. How are you going to get down there and get that water? Are you greater? Do you have a better reputation than our father Jacob who gave us this well?

Jesus said, listen, you drink the water out of this well, you are going to get thirsty again, but anyone that drinks the water I give them, the water I give them will well up in them and become a spring of water that will well up to eternal life. He said I have living water. That’s the water you and I have, do you understand that? If you are a follower of Jesus, you have not only drunk from the living water, but you have become a dispensary of the living water. You are supposed to give that water. You are supposed to have a reputation for the living water. Jesus says to the church, you have neighbors that have a reputation for their hot water. You have neighbors that have a reputation for their cold water, but you don’t have a reputation for your living water.

You have no reputation at all. If anyone should have a reputation for their water, it should be the followers of Jesus. He says, I wish you were one or the other. I wish you were cold or hot.
I wish your living water had a reputation. Then he says, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I’m about to spit you out of my mouth. Because your water has no reputation, I’m about to spit it out. Now I grew up in church. I remember, I was probably a teenager at this point. I was in a church. I heard a pastor preach on this verse. What he said was this. He said Jesus wants you to be either hot or cold. He wants you to be one or the other. He wants you; ideally, he wants you to be hot for him, right? He wants you to be on fire for him, but honestly, if you are not going to be completely, 100% on fire for Jesus, Jesus would rather you be completely cold, completely indifferent, completely have nothing to do with him. If you are not going to be 100% on fire, he doesn’t want anything to do with you.

I remember going -- well, that stinks because I knew right then I wasn’t on fire for Jesus 100% of the time. That’s not true today. I wish I was 100% on fire 100% of the time, but I’m not. How many of you, 100% on fire for Jesus 100% of the time? Come on? Nobody? Sorry. Word of God says it’s better if you don’t even bother showing up. No, it doesn’t. That’s not what Jesus is saying. Jesus is saying he wants you to have a reputation for him. Have a reputation like those cities, cold or hot, the thing is, if you believe that what this says is you have to be 100% or Jesus doesn’t want anything to do with you, how incredibly discouraging is that? More importantly, it misses the point of the metaphor. Cold and hot, they are both good. They are both good. Come on, let me preach. Coffee.

If you don’t go back to doing what you did at first, he says, I’m going to come and take your lamp stand away. We know from the way he interprets it that the lamp stand, that’s the Church is itself. The Church is the lamp stand. It stands up. It holds the light of the Gospel up high for all of the world to see. That’s the purpose of the Church. Jesus says to the church of Ephesus, if you don’t go back to having a reputation for your living water, I’m not going to knock the stand down. You are not going to be a church anymore. Here at the end of the book, he bookends it really nice. He says, if you don’t get a reputation for your living water, I’m going to spit you out. You are not going to be a church anymore. Oh, you can keep having your meetings. You can sing your songs, meet together and pat yourselves on the back, but you are not going to be a Church. A Church dispenses living water to the world and the Church is famous for their living water.

Listen to me, Jesus wants his Church to have a reputation for living water. That’s what he wants us to be famous for. He wants us to have a reputation for living water. Why didn’t they in what was wrong? Verse 17, he explains it. The problem is you say I am rich. I have acquired wealth, and I do not need a thing. That was the core of the problem. They were wealthy. Now, there is nothing inherently wrong with wealth. Wealth is a gift from God. Wealth does not have to take you off mission with Jesus. Wealth can propel you forward in being on mission with Jesus. Wealth can be used to point people toward God. Wealth can be used to advance His Kingdom. Wealth can be used to share the Gospel throughout the world.

There is nothing inherently wrong with it, but the problem wealth can often do what it seems to have done to the church at Laodicea. It’s caused them to focus on a couple of other things. You say I’m rich. I have acquired wealth. Literally in the Greek it’s like, I have richified myself. It’s very self-centered, I have done this. It is all about me. I have richy-riched myself, right? I have bought low, and I have sold high. I have made good investments. I diversified my portfolio. I have worked hard. I earned this. I did this. It’s not a gift from God. I did this. You understand what they are fixated on is success. They have been successful. They have a reputation for being successful. They are pretty happy with that reputation. He also says, you don’t need anything. You’re secure. You feel like your wealth means you have it made. It doesn’t matter what happens next because you are so successful, and you are so secure. You don’t need anything. You don’t even need me anymore.

That’s what you are famous for. That’s the reputation you have. It’s not for your living water. It’s for your success and your security, and the interesting thing is, both of those things are reputations the world will applaud, right? The world looks at you and goes, you got that promotion? You climbed the corporate ladder? You fill up your 401K, you got the house. You got the car. You have done it. Well done. That’s a great reputation to have. We kind of go, it kind of is, isn’t it? The world says, man, look where your success has led you. You are secure. You are set up. You can deal. It doesn’t really matter if the market goes up or down. You are diversified. You’ve got it. You are going to be able to handle whatever comes your way. You’ve got security. That’s a reputation to be satisfied with.

Here’s the problem -- when we are satisfied with the reputation the world applauds, we stop hungering for God’s applause. Do you hear me, Church? When we hear the world applauding the reputation that we have built, we begin to go, yeah, this is what counts. This is what matters. The more satisfied we are with the reputation the world applauds, the less we hunger -- the less we long for, the less we are driven for the desire to see God applaud us and say, yes, that’s a reputation I can get behind. So he says to the church, but you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked, which is a pretty depressing string of adjectives, right? He says, yeah, the world is applauding you. Yeah, you have that particular reputation, but the reality is, I’m not impressed. I’m not impressed.
And then he does a really interesting thing. See, Laodicea didn’t have a reputation for their water. The church at Laodicea didn’t have a reputation for their living water, but they did have a reputation for three things. Laodicea was famous the world over for three things. They were famous for their gold. They were famous for their wealth. Had a reputation for that. They were also famous for their textiles, their fabrics and the clothes they made from them. They were famous for that. They had a reputation for that. And then third, they were famous for an eye salve, this kind of goop -- I don’t know how they made it. Nobody really knows, but apparently, it was pretty successful at curing a bunch of eye diseases. So people bought it from all over the world. They had a reputation for that eye salve.

What Jesus does next is he basically, he takes each of those things that they had a reputation for. He said oh, you have a reputation for your gold. He sets it up on the fence post. Oh, you have a reputation for your fabrics, your textiles, and he sets it up on a fence post. He said, oh you have a reputation for your eye salve. Oh, that’s great. He sets it up on the fence post. Then he steps back, and he pulls out a shotgun. He says, I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in fire so that you can become rich. He says, you have a reputation for your gold, but the problem is, your gold is filled with impurities, and over time those impurities are going to come out until you eventually realize that what you thought was pure gold is actually pretty worthless. You have a reputation for your gold -- Pfft.

Oh, let’s talk about your textiles, let’s talk about your fabric. Got a reputation for those? I counsel you to buy from me white clothes to wear so you can cover your shameful nakedness. Oh, you have a reputation built on that? Here’s the problem. Your clothes, they don’t cover the goods as well as you think you do. You are still naked as far as I can tell. I can still see your sin. I can still see your shame. I can still see your insecurity. I can still see your desperate longing for meaning an significance. I can see it all. None of that is covered. Buy from me clothe that is washed in the blood that I shed on the cross, and I’ll truly cover over all of that stuff so it’s no longer part of who you are, that it’s truly gone. Do you have a reputation for your textiles? Pfft.

Oh, yeah, yeah. You have the reputation for that eye salve that helps people see so well? He says buy from me salve to put on your eyes so you can see. Yeah, you have a reputation for that medicine? The reality is, it doesn’t allow you to see the truth all that well at all. You don’t see what’s really happening. You don’t see how things really are. You have a reputation for that eye salve. Pfft. What happened to your reputation, guys?

Understand what he’s doing, he’s taking systemic aim; he’s destroying everything that their reputation was based on. That’s a painful thing. Why does he do that? Because, and this is so important, listen to me. The base of my current reputation is often the barrier to the one Jesus wants me to have. Do you hear me, Church? The basis of our current reputation, the basis of how the world knows us, what we are famous for right here, right now, that often is the barrier to the reputation Jesus wants us to have with the world, and so he has to destroy it first, so he can begin building in us something better.

I want us to wrestle with something difficult. It’s not a fun question, I’ll just tell you right now. You are going to be so glad you came today. I want you to ask yourselves this question, what -- what is the basis of my current reputation? What are you known for? What are you famous for so to speak? How do people know you? How do they perceive you? What is your reputation, and what’s it built on? Listen, some of you -- some of the reputation that immediately comes to mind is not one that you are happy with. It’s one you desperately wish you didn’t have, and what makes it worse, you didn’t earn that reputation. It was put upon you. Something happened to you, or somebody gave you this reputation at some point, and it’s become your reputation, but you desperately wish it wasn’t true of you. Maybe -- maybe you are a widow. Maybe you are a widower, you have lost somebody. Maybe you are a parent whose lost a child. Maybe you are sick. Maybe you -- don’t have much money. Maybe you are poor.

Maybe it’s a reputation somebody handed to you when you were little. I wish this weren’t true, but I know of a number of people listening to this right now, there is almost no chance that somebody who is hearing this is not immediately remembering of something a cruel parent said to you when you were really little. Someone looked at you and said, you are stupid. You are no good. You are worthless. You are never going to be anyone. You are never going to be someone. They gave you that. Somewhere along the line, whether it happened to us, or somebody said it to us, we don’t want it, but we find ourselves embracing it. We find ourselves going, yeah, I guess that is who I am. That’s my reputation. That’s what it’s based on. You need to hear the Word of God today. That is not who you are.

That reputation that was given to you, placed upon you, that is not who you are. You need to say, that’s not who I am. Why don’t you look at the person next to you and say, that’s not who I am. Go ahead. That’s not who I am. Jesus says, that’s got to go. I have to blow that away. For some of you, the reputation is something you earned. You are still not happy about it, because you wish you hadn’t, but the reality is, you have to own it. Who you are, and your reputation is because of something you did. You are deeply ashamed. You so wish you could take it back and never do it, but you can’t. Maybe you cheated on your husband or wife. Maybe you divorced your husband or wife. Maybe you have defined yourself on the basis of something God says that’s not my plan. That’s not my purpose, but yeah, that’s who I am. That’s the basis of it.

Maybe you are addicted to alcohol -- or opioids or something else like that and you go, that’s who I am. That’s the basis of the reputation I have. Jesus says, yeah, but that’s not the reputation I have for you. Don’t let the basis of the current reputation be the barrier to the one I want to build in you. You need to say, that’s not who I am. Go ahead, turn to somebody and say that’s not who I am. That’s not who I am. For some of you, honestly, the reputation is a good one. Maybe it’s something you are proud of. Maybe it’s something the world applauds because it’s applaudable. It’s impressive. Maybe you have a reputation because you are a great student, and you are getting a great reputation for your academic ability, your intelligence, and your hard work.
Maybe you have a reputation because you are great at sports. You are the team captain, or you are moving up the ranks. Maybe you are a professional athlete. You have a reputation for your athletic ability. Maybe you have a reputation for your success in business. Maybe you have a reputation for the extra letters that come after your name, right? Like MBA or PhD. You have a reputation for your wealth, for success, for things you have done. Maybe you have 4,000 Instagram followers. Maybe you have a blog that people subscribe to. They want to hear what you have to say. Maybe when you tweet something out, there are a whole bunch of retweets that happen immediately because you are respected. You have a reputation. But you need to hear the Word of God today too. Sometimes the basis of our current reputation is the barrier to the one Jesus wants to build for us.

So even if it's a good reputation, but it's not a Jesus reputation, you need to understand, that's not going to carry into eternity. It's not going to last for forever, so you need to allow it to be removed. You need to say, that's not who I am. You know it's coming. Go ahead, turn to somebody next to you and say, that's not who I am -- because it's not. Every reputation that's not Jesus, won't carry you through to eternity, Jesus says, we have to get rid of that. We have to blow that away so we can start building a reputation that will carry through to eternity.

I realize that some of you are going, this is not what I came to church for. This is a little too personal, right? This is getting a little bit uncomfortable. I feel a little rebuked, maybe. I feel a little -- uncomfortable. I got great news for you. This is what Jesus says. Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline to be earnest and repent, so if you are feeling a little rebuked, disciplined? No, no, no. What you are feeling is love -- you are feeling that God loves you. He loves you enough to deal with those reputations that you are satisfied that he's not. He says, know that I do it because I love you. To be earnest, be sincere and turn away from those things. He says, here I am. I stand at the door, and I knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and I will eat with that person and they with me.

Now some of you are here today because somebody shared that verse with you at some point in your lives. At some point somebody shared the Gospel. They said God loves you so much He sent His own Son to die for you. He paid for all of your sin. Three days later, he rose from the dead. He's offering you forgiveness and new life. Somebody said to you, that's not a generic truth. That's not a world truth. That's a you truth. That's a true truth, and it applies to you as an individual. God loves you so much that He did this for you. He's standing at the door, and He's knocking. He wants to come in, and He wants to eat with you. That's a sign of intimacy. It's a sign of acceptance. He wants to come in. He wants to have a personal relationship with you. Some of you are here today because you understood that was a personal invitation to a relationship with Jesus, and you said yes, and you opened the door.

Some of you are here today, and you know you don't have that relationship. Maybe you have a religion. Maybe you have a reputation for being a good person and doing these things or that thing, but you know you don't really have that relationship, and I want you to hear that God has sent His Son knocking on your door today. Right now Jesus is knocking, and he wants to come in. He wants to give you that relationship. There is no reason for you to leave today without that personal relationship. I'm going to give you that opportunity today, but before we do that, I also want to point out something that I think is overlooked a lot. Jesus didn't write this to unbelievers. He didn't write this to people that didn't have a relationship with him. He wrote this to his church. He wrote this to a group of people that who had a relationship with him.

They had drunk from the living water. They were supposed to have a reputation for that living water, but they don't, and he says to the church, I'm at the door and knocking, and that's a weird thing to say. Jesus shouldn't be at the front porch, he should be on the stage. So what on Earth is he doing out on the front porch? You understand what's happened is that the church has pushed Jesus out of the church. Jesus is actually outside on the porch of his own church going, hey, guys? I would love to get in there. Hey, guys, I would be happy to -- hey, guys? Jesus is trying to get back into his own church because they have been so content with these other reputations, rather than what they were supposed to have, that they actually pushed Jesus out.

But Jesus says to the church there, it's not too late. I still want to come in. I still want to eat with you. I still want to have a relationship with you. It doesn't matter these other things that you have a reputation for. The only one that matters is our relationship. Understand what he's saying, whether as an individual or as a church, he's saying our relationship with him, our relationship with Jesus is where our reputation has to start. Our relationship with Jesus, that has to be the only basis of our reputation. Amen. He says to the one who is victorious, the one who stay on mission with me, the one who claims a reputation based on the relationship with me, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne just as I was victorious and I sat down with my Father on His throne.

I mean you want to talk about a reputation that carries through to eternity. You understand what he's saying is, you stand on mission with me, you have a reputation for your relationship with me, and when you get to Heaven, I have a place on your throne. I'm going to go, hey, there she is. There he is. You have such a reputation; I have a place right here. Set your buns down. I know he's not going to say “buns.” Don't send the e-mails. I don't need those. But he says, you're famous for your relationship with me on Earth. You are going to be famous for that here in Heaven. He understands it's not easy, right? He says, you are going to get that just as I was victorious, he stayed on mission with his Father and it was not easy. It was hard. The night before he went to the cross, he was in the garden praying so hard that blood came out of his pores we are told.

That's how intense it was. He said, Father, if it's possible, could you let this cup pass from me? I don't want to go through this. He knew the beating. He knew the agony of the Crucifixion. He didn't want to go through that, but I'm going to stay on mission with You. Not my will, but yours be done. He stayed on mission, and because of that, the Father raised him from the dead and sat him on the Throne of the Kingdom, and he
Whoever has ears, let them hear. How many of us have ears? Hear what the Spirit says to you, to all of the people who make up all of His Churches. Jesus wants us to have a reputation for being on mission with him, okay? That’s it. That’s what this letter is all about. It’s really what all seven of these letters are about. Jesus wants us to have a reputation for being on mission with him. Over the last couple of months, we have seen a lot of different practical things that play that out. As we have looked at each of these letters we have seen a lot of things that look like this and it looks like that, but as we came to the end here, I started praying, and I said, God, I really want some way to really boil this down, some way to encapsulate it, to capture the essence of this idea. I said Jesus, what does it look like for us to be on mission with you? What does it look like for us to have a reputation for being on mission with you? Thursday afternoon, he gave me the words I was looking for.

This is basically what he said. He said it’s three things. It’s love. It’s light, and it’s leverage. Jesus wants us to have a reputation for love, for light and for leverage. He wants us to have a reputation for love. He wants us to have a reputation for loving God, not the gifts God has given us, the giver of the gifts, to love God above all other things. He wants us to have a reputation for that. He also wants us to have a reputation for loving other followers of Jesus, other believers. Jesus said, the world is going to know that you are my followers because of the way you love one another. He says, I want you to be famous for loving other Christians. Stop disparaging them. Stop judging them. Stop being so cynical about what other churches are doing. Stop casting dispersions. Stop casting criticisms and judgments. Love one another first.

He wants us to be famous for loving the lost. It was the church of Ephesus, right, that started this whole journey? He said you used to love the lost, and now you don’t so much anymore. Go back to doing the things you did at first. He wants us to be famous for loving God, loving one another and for loving those that he loves for loving the lost. He also wants us to be famous for light. That’s what the Church is, right? We hold up the Gospel for all of the world to see. That’s why we exist. That’s why we are here. He says, I want you to have a reputation for lighting up dark places, for bringing hope where there is hopelessness, for bringing light where there is dark, for bringing joy where there is despair. Be famous for that. And he says, I want you to have the reputation for leverage.

For leveraging the opportunities, the gifts that I have given you, to point people to me. Be so good at your job that people go, why are you so good at your job and you say, because God gifted me to do this, and I want to honor Him with this work. Oh, you are a great student. What makes you such a great student? I want to honor Jesus who gave me the raw ability. I want to honor him and point you to him even as I’m doing this thing that God’s allowed me to do. The positions we have. The privileges we have, leverage those to point people to Jesus. He says, that’s what it means to be on mission with me.

That’s what it means to have a reputation for being on mission, to have a reputation for your love, your light and your leverage. Here’s your challenge. It’s a challenge for this particular week, but it’s also -- it’s the final exam, so to speak. For the whole series, here’s your challenge. I’ll give you three, and you have an option. You can do one, or you can go for the extra credit. You can do all three for the overachievers among you, go for it. Three challenges this week. Challenge number one, love someone in the name of Jesus in a tangible way this week. Pick somebody in a tangible way and tell them, I’m doing this because God loved me first, and it’s just spilling out on to you. Love someone in a tangible way this week. Now, option number two, or extra credit number one, depending on how you are thinking about it, light up a dark place in your sphere of influence this week. Light up a dark place. Go into it, and be light.

Option number three, extra credit number two, leverage something you are good at, or something you are gifted with, to point people to Jesus this week. Let’s ask God to lead us in that. Jesus, we thank you that our relationship with you is not based on the reputations that we build for ourselves in this world because we know we could never build a good enough reputation to impress you. We know in fact that many of the reputations that we have built are not things we want to be known for, and yet you still came. You still loved us. You still for gave us. You still knocked all of those things down and blew all of those things away and got rid of them so there wouldn’t be a barrier and you began to build a reputation that will in fact carry us into eternity, and we are so grateful for that.

Lord, we ask that you make us people who are famous for being on mission with me. Lord, would you awaken the church in America, let us be cold. Let us be hot. Let us have a reputation for living water. May the reputation we have drive back the darkness. Lord, I’m heart broken this morning as I think about what happened in that synagogue in Philadelphia yesterday, and I know that around the world, the reputation that America has is not one to be proud of. It seems that at every turn we see more and more of these kinds of things. Lord, would you make us the kind of people that are on mission with you with such passion that we begin to change that reputation, even the reputation of our city, of our nation? Lord, we pray for the victims of that tragedy. We pray for the families of those victims. We pray you bring people into their lives that are on mission with you, and they would bring hope and encouragement.

Now, if you are a follower of Jesus, wherever you are, would you begin praying for the people around you, the people watching online? Because I believe on all of our campuses right now, there are people who when I started talking about having a relationship with Jesus, a relationship with God through faith in Christ, they knew immediately, that’s them. They don’t have that relationship, and if that’s you, and if you are discouraged right now because you feel you have been trying so hard to build a reputation that God would take notice of, and yet you are still empty inside, and you know there is something missing, or maybe you feel like your reputation disqualifies you from a relationship with God, I want you to hear the truth -- your reputation is not what matters. It’s His that matters.
He’s the perfect, spotless Lamb of God, the pure Son of God. He came. He lived the perfect life. He died on the cross so that he could take your sins on himself to pay them off completely. He rose from the dead three days later, and now he sits on the throne of God saying, I have a place here for you of he offers you new life and forgiveness and you can have it right now. He’s knocking on the door. Will you open it? If you are ready to begin that relationship with God, if you are ready to put your trust in Jesus Christ, would you just slip your hand up right now? That’s awesome. If you are watching online, just click the button right below me. That’s fantastic. Wherever you are, if you are ready, just say this to Jesus, Jesus, I know I have done wrong. I have a bad reputation with you. I’m sorry for all of that.

Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Thank you for rising from the dead so I know you can give me forgiveness and new life. I believe that, and so right now, I put my trust in you. I receive new life. I receive forgiveness. I receive a new reputation as a child of God adopted into your family. Jesus, I’m yours for now and forever. Amen.

Can we welcome those on all of our campuses that came into God’s kingdom today? God bless you.