

## Steps (Week 12) – The Joy of Making Much of His Name

Jason Holleman – November 20, 2013

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This is the last week. How are y'all feeling? Are you feeling good? This is about the time I used to ask this question. How many of you were not here last week? Just raise your hands high. It's okay. It's all right. I'm Jason. I'm one of the pastors here. Snetzer has been the primary teacher through this Steps study. I taught last week. I'm teaching this week. Snetzer is in Kenya, and he will be in Kenya until this weekend with a couple of other folks in the Recovery ministry.

I think if you remember to pray for him, I would pray for him for a couple of reasons. The first is while he has been away his grandmother passed away, so that was not great, and I think yesterday his wife's mother came down with a stroke at their house. It has just been a very traumatic time for the Snetzer family, so just pray for them. In fact, let's pray for them now. Shall we? Let's do that. Let's pray.

We just lift up the Snetzers, Father, before you. We just place Michael and Sonia before you, and Sonia's mom, we just ask that you heal her. Empower by the name of Jesus Christ. We ask that you would even now begin to minister to Sonia's heart where there is certainly fear and just a disorientation of not having her husband there and having difficulty in her immediate family.

So, Lord, we just ask that your nearness would be felt and that you would bring peace to Snetz as he is literally around the world while such difficulty and tragedy and circumstances are about his family. May the name of Jesus be praised in all that is done in this, and we do ask that you would bring about great glory as a result of it. It's in the name of Christ that we pray, amen.

Tonight is a really fun talk. This is probably the step that is the most difficult to teach because it's really the step that says, "Okay, go. All right. Ready? Go." It's kind of like, in some ways, having your kids. You're raising your kids up and you're forming them and you're doing all you can do. You're teaching them. You're putting together all the pieces you think they need, perhaps shoring up the

areas you think they lack. Then at the end of the day, you're saying, "All right, we've given you what we think we need to give you, and now just go and walk the earth. Be an adult."

It's kind of a nerve-racking feeling in some ways, because in some ways you really are kind of just sending them and you're having them set sail and just go. Right? Jesus, when he does ministry, he grabs his disciples together, and he just does ministry before them. His ministry is marked pretty simply by a proclamation of the word, "The kingdom of God is coming," and then he heals a bunch of people, casts out demons, does all kinds of crazy, awesome miracles. It's amazing. Right? That was in Matthew 4. I'm referencing Matthew 4.

In Matthew, chapter 10, he takes the 72. About this time there are 72 disciples, and he says, "Hey, guys, you've seen me do ministry. Go and do ministry." So the disciples are like, "Seriously?" He's like, "Yeah, go. Do what I do. Go and do it." So they leave. We don't know what happens necessarily in Matthew, chapter 10. We do, however, know they come back in Luke, chapter 10. If we turn to Luke 10, we see the disciples come back, and what do they say?

The disciples are all freaked out, and they are completely excited about...what? The fact that the demons are subject to their name. They're like, "Man, we saw some awesome power things. We saw some really amazing things. Even the demons are subject to your name." What does Jesus say to them? He rebukes them. Jesus says to them, "Hey, don't rejoice over that. Rejoice that your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Behold, I saw Satan fall from heaven like a lightning to the earth. I know the demons are subject to my name, but don't rejoice in that."

We're going to go back here in a bit and talk about Matthew 5 and Ephesians 2, but if we fast-forward to Matthew, chapter 28, what does he say? "All authority has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them all that I have commanded." When you hear Jesus say that, what is he telling the disciples in Matthew 28?

He's telling them, "You've watched me do this. You've learned from me. You've seen the power in the name of Jesus. You know the kingdom of God is at hand." What does he say? "Go and make disciples." That's what we're telling you today. We've given you as much as we know to give you. We've given you the pieces that are most foundational, and we're saying, "Go and make disciples. All Jesus teaches us, go and make disciples."

I want to read Ephesians, chapter 2, beginning in verse 1. We're going to move then to Matthew, chapter 5, and then I'll give just a very few examples of ways you can just make disciples, and then we'll be done. We're just done. Really, it's the beginning. Right? When Jesus says, "Go and make disciples," there's this kind of moment where the disciples are going, "Okay, what are you doing? Where are you going?" Jesus just kind of looks at them and just says, "Oh, well..." and he begins to answer those questions.

I think implicit in his statement to them is, "It's better that I go away so the Spirit come." We definitely see that in Acts, beginning in chapter 2. That is our hope today. All the "gospel in" you've been given in this 13-week program, this 12-step program, is intended that all this gospel in produces one thing. It produces "gospel out." All the gospel-in work we have labored in, we've prayed for...

In fact, I'm ready for a new crop of folks to come in whom I can pray for. Some of you I'm kind of tired of praying for. I've been seeing your names, and then sadly I get to see if you show up or if you don't. The only thing I know to pray for is attendance reports, so it's kind of defeating in some regard. I continue to pray for those who are absent. I just pray a little differently. I think you get it.

Turn with me to Ephesians, chapter 2. What's beautiful about this passage is this applies to every single one of us. There are a couple of us in here who will be thinking, "This probably doesn't apply to me." In one way or another, you kind of think, "I'm probably the exception here." Here's great news. None of us are exceptions to this. This is for all of us.

**"And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked..."** Here's good news, everybody. All of us at one time were dead, no ability to do anything. By the way, just out of curiosity, how well do dead men and dead women reach out for help? Are they very effective at reaching out for help? That's probably my favorite thing about gospel tracts. You get these things, like "You're dead" or "You're burning" or something.

You look at it, and you're like, "Oh, man. That's something." Usually, what you see is like this hand reaching up from fire, like "You're in need." It's like this hand continuing to strain. Yet if you read the Scriptures, it really should be just a dead dude who is just lying there and is dead, ice cold, dead, like rigor in place. Then God comes and hovers over a dead man and says, "Walk." There's nothing you can do. We are dead men and dead women until God, by his choosing, breathes life.

**"And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world..."** The world is just absolutely pushing against us. **"...following the prince of the power of the air..."** That is Satan. **"...the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh..."** All of us are subject to our flesh.

**"...carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind."** I love this because if you look at a lot of pop literature right now, pop literature will say, "Man, if we could just get to where you were before *this* happened." In fact, I did this thing at a drug and alcohol treatment center just recently, and the entire weekend was to get to your inner child. I just kept thinking, "Man ..."

Literally, this clinical director gets up and talks about how all of us need to get to our inner child like we were when we were babies. I have no idea why they even invited me. I got up, and I said, "Hey, by the way, everybody wants to get to their inner child, but I just want you to know there was a place you were before then, and that was a dead sinner."

Everybody just looked at me like, "That's not in the program. I don't even see the outline for that. When you say *dead*, what do you mean *dead*? I want to get to what happened before my abuse." I'm like, "Well, hey, before your abuse, you were a sinner. You were dead." You can't really get worse than dead. I was looking for something...really dead? I don't know. The truth is we are all subject to those. Here's one of the most beautiful words of all of Scripture. There have been more sermons preached about this one conjunction: *but*.

Verse 4: **"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were..."** Here it is again if we weren't clear yet. **"...even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing..."**

As if there was any question, you're dead. **"This is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ**

**Jesus for good works, which God prepared..." This is so important. "...beforehand, that we should walk in them."**

*Workmanship* is probably my favorite word there. It's based upon the Greek word *poiema*. It's super important. It's where we get the Latin, which is where we get the English word *poem*. It is as if we are so uniquely wired, gifted, experientially rich, that God says you are unbelievably, spectacularly made and formed, ready for...what? Good work. That we should walk in them beforehand.

What propels us here? "**...because of the great love with which he loved us...**" Follow me for a second. All this gospel in, and the result is gospel out. Hear me. The Great Commission is brought about by the Great Commandment, that we are to love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind, and the second is like it, to love your neighbor as yourself.

There in Matthew 22, literally, Jesus, who is responding to a lawyer... Do you remember the story? He confounded the wisdom of the Sadducees, and so the Pharisees came up and what did the Pharisees say? "We'll figure out a way to test him. We'll figure something out." Who do they choose? Of course, a lawyer. Great.

A lawyer stood up and said, "Why don't you tell me what all this thing is about?" Jesus just drove home what all the Law and the Prophets were about. The Great Commission, that we are to go and make disciples, is driven out by the greatest commandment, that we are to love God. That's it. It was God's love that took dead men and women, of which none of us are exceptions, and he breathed life.

Here's what's really, really important here. In fact, let's first turn to Matthew, chapter 5. I love this. Actually, do you know what? I'll give this story first. Probably one of the most beautiful stories of a mangled life that was brought about like worship that I've seen in support was a woman who came in and began to engage probably a 16- or 17-year-old girl who was a newcomer probably about a year and a half ago.

If there's anything that's more beautiful than to take a person's life and just the good, the bad, and the ugly, all of which is redeemed, and just throw it out there for the entire world to see... I don't know about you, but if you drive 35 and you're driving here, there are billboards all the way up and down from where we are here in Flower Mound all the way down to Dallas, and it's just plastering different things for you to worship.

I'm telling you, there are certain billboards that when I drive by them and as I begin to look at them, I divert my eyes and I just begin to continue to drive forward, they are drawing me in to sinful worship. I know you're probably thinking what they are. I'm talking about like Ford F-250 Crew Cabs with 0 percent. As I'm driving, I'm just like, "Zero percent. I could buy one for my wife *and* me." It's just drawing me to idolatry.

Then there are other billboards, probably the ones you're thinking about. You've been on 35. You know, and the truth is... What is a billboard? A billboard is to say, "Hey, look at this. Hey, look over here. Hey, let me get your attention. Hey, come over here. Look at this." Then it usually brings about some kind of... Around here it really does... I can't find a billboard that leads you to worship. It always seems to just push you like the tide on the beach just draws you and pushes you and fights against everything that's righteous.

This woman comes in, this 16-year-old. She comes through those back doors, and she is just completely distraught. We have yet to even start, and she is just convulsingly distraught. I'm a dude, so I'm walking up and I'm like, "Hey, how are you?" and she's just overwhelmed with grief and just has this blanket or shawl thing just wrapped around her, and she refuses to look up into the eyes of any person that's here.

It's that moment. As a pastor I'm sitting there. I'm watching her, and I'm just like... So I just do this. I just kind of wait and pause a moment, and I'm looking for anyone, like, "I need a woman who loves Jesus right now. That's what I need, preferably Grandma, preferably really able to give a defense. I need that woman now."

This woman comes up. She has been a leader with us for years, and she... Man, I am going to cry about this. I should be able to get through this. This woman comes up, and she just walks right up to this woman, just grabs her by her arms, and she just says, "Hey, sweetie, I don't know what your deal is. I don't know why you're in here. I have no idea what you're in here for, but do you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to tell you very quickly about my life."

She just rapid-fire, like an advertisement on a billboard, walks through the most horrid aspects of her life like incense to God. She just says, "My parents were divorced when I was 8, and I immediately became under the abuse of a stepdad. It was brutal, and yet God was good. I didn't know it at the time, but he was good, which led me straight into disregard for my mom, which led

me straight into the arms of a boyfriend who used me and his friends. Yet at the time I didn't know it, but God was good."

She just began to walk back and forth, and I just watched this girl just... She wouldn't look at her. Finally, she said, "If that wasn't enough, my senior year in high school I allowed another boy to just take advantage of me. I allowed him to drive me to an abortion clinic where I had an abortion, and it completely ripped my soul out. Yet I don't know why it is, but I named that boy Caleb, and God is good."

That girl just fell to her knees. She just started convulsing and crying. She said, "I just left there. I just left the place on Main Street, and I don't know where to go. I don't know what to do." I'm sitting here, just like, what do you do? Here's this woman who just takes the most horrible facets of her life, and she just starts throwing them on billboards like incense to God and just says, "Everything I find shameful in my life I'm just going to throw it on a billboard so God be worshiped."

That's what she did. She literally said, "I remember the time that this, and I was just completely overwhelmed with shame. Guess what? Billboard. Worship God. He was there with me." It is as if this girl unknowingly just begins to drive aimlessly through the story of this woman's narrative, and it was beautiful. I just watched this woman pick this girl up and just say, "Hey, let's talk about it."

The beautiful thing is the girl is still here. I see her every Sunday just walk in, and I'll just look at her and say, "Hey, it's good to see you." She says, "Hey, God is good." If you take what you've been taught and you do nothing with it, we have lost. The kingdom has lost. I'm not just talking about what you've learned; I'm talking about the worst things you even can think of telling someone. I'm saying don't allow the shame of an inventory to just be shredded. Put it on a billboard. Tell the world you're no longer enslaved. Give somebody else hope, because the world is without hope.

I'm telling you it was so beautiful to just watch it happen in real time, to see this girl walk in and this leader be present and me just... At some point you're just like, "Wow, I have no role here. There's nothing..." Let me be honest. Really? Do you think a seminary class is going to prepare you for that? "Awkward, Very, Very Tense Situations 301. It's \$3,000. You need to take it. We're going to teach you what to do when *this* happens."

No. My gosh. You get the heck out of the way, and you let the Spirit of God just descend and heal and change and transform, and he did right there. It was awesome. She came in completely

overwhelmed and walked out at least at that moment looking into other people's eyes at least at that point with marginal hope. What do we do with what we've been given? I think Matthew 5 tells us. Matthew 5, beginning in verse 13, says:

**"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."**

I cannot be more simple. I can't be more straightforward. Gospel in, gospel out. Remember we're God's workmanship. I don't just want you to take the things you're good at. "Hey, I went to this deal. I went through this program. It was awesome. I'm going to go and teach people what I learned." Awesome. That's great. I think you're limited unless you share with those who are asking your most shameful and most difficult stories.

At the same drug and alcohol treatment center, they were incredibly hostile. I'll just say it that way. They were hostile, and it was a weird moment for me, because there at best of the 50 or so who were sitting around me... It was an interesting scenario because I was in the middle and I was surrounded by chairs, because of the way it was constructed.

So I was having to kind of walk around as I teach, but the whole time I kept thinking, "What are the people behind me thinking? Like as I turn around, are they just being like, 'Gosh, this guy is just being an idiot?'" because you're not able to stare in their face, and so you don't really know. I felt like I was in a lions' den, to be honest.

As I began to teach and give a defense of the gospel, what was quite interesting was I just got this really strong, overwhelming emotion to just say, "Hey, can I just tell all of you the thing I walked through that was the most shameful thing I've ever done and ever walked in my entire life? I don't know any of you. Half of you I don't even know your first name, but can I share that with you?"

I'm telling you, a room where they are in for drug and alcohol abuse, you saw that entire room just completely amazed. It's as if they've been talked to, they've been told what to do, they've been told



how they can do it, they've been told these things... I'm telling you, I have no idea why I did it. Even today I can't believe I said what I did.

For some reason by the prompting of God, I just said, "Hey, can I just start off there? Is that good? We're talking about shame. Can I just give you mine? Is that cool?" Everybody was like, "Oh, yeah. We love that. Oh, God, he's going to do it. He's doing it!" I did. I let them have it. I was like, "Hey, is anybody here a little weirded out by super-awkward situations? No? All right. There was this time..."

Do you know what it did? God began to open doors. In fact, I love this. Just as soon as I finished, there were folks who wanted to talk. Again, they were very, very secular, very, very hostile. The guy who brought me in who had to be there with me, because when you're on premises of a place like that you can't have your phone. You have to be very specific on how you walk around. The guys said, "Hey, listen." There were some folks who wanted to talk.

He said, "Man, I'm so sorry, but I have to take this van back to the van rental place. You're going to have to see yourself out." I said, "Well, do you mind if I just hang a bit?" He was like, "No. You know how to get out of here. Right?" I was like, "I think I do." He was like, "Yeah, why don't you just stay?" I was like, "I think I will." It was on a Friday, so I'm off here at the church, because we work the weekends. I was like, "This is awesome," so I just sat down and for the next three hours just began to give a defense for the gospel.

A dude sat down from Albany, New York, a Jew. He just came and sat down, and he was like, "Hey, listen. This, this, and this." I was like, "Yeah, man, but *gospel*." A guy came in. He was corn-fed, just a huge dude. His dad probably owned Wyoming, and apparently all the drugs in it. I just began to talk and give a defense for the gospel based in joy. I was like, "Oh, no. You don't understand because you don't understand joy."

A dude comes in who just got off the battlefield. He's completely strung out on painkillers because of an injury he suffered in the theater of war. He's just like, "Yeah, but why would God do this?" I was like, "Yeah, but you're asking a question you would've never asked a month ago. It seems to me God is revealing himself." Just time after time, after time.

What's my point? Just opening that place like a billboard and incense in the nostrils of God paved the way for people to go, "If he's willing to share that, let's see what his joy is about." I cannot

commend to you enough to just go and make disciples. Some of you in here are not going to even stay at the church. Some of you are not even members of the church. Some of you in here will go and be a part of other churches. Fine. Nobody cares that you stay *here*. Just go and be the church at a local church under faithful leadership, expositively preaching the Scriptures. Go. Make disciples. You don't have to stay here.

The gospel has to go forth, so maybe one of you will carry it. I don't know. Some of you are going to stay here. Stay here and pour out. Make disciples. "I don't have time on Wednesdays." Fine. Do it another night. "I don't really want to be a part of a Home Group." Fine. Find gospel community and go and give a defense for the gospel. Be salt and light. Do not waste what has been entrusted to you in this.

For some of you the effort in this has been so lacking. For some of you you just go, "Yeah, I really did exactly what you guys wanted for about 15 percent of the time." Stellar. Do you know what? Some of you should go back through Steps. Is it really going to hurt you, daily Scripture reading, confession with a brother or sister every week, regular worship and proclamation? Yeah, that sounds horrible.

Then some of you still... God is going to raise up an awesome, organic work within you. Even now you know what it is. In fact, God right now is putting in place creativity within some of you that you go, "This sounds like the craziest thing ever, but I really feel like God wants me to further the kingdom in this way." I'd say, "I'm positive God is doing that, because that's what he does. When he transforms hearts and lives of men and women, that's exactly what he does. He puts forth new work, new ministry, new mission, and he creates new believers through it by his own will. It's beautiful.

That's it. I literally have nothing more to say. There's no other place we can go except to just say to you don't waste it. Make disciples. Don't just take an inventory, something that is so painful for some, and put it under a basket. Don't do it. This sounds really weird. I know this sounds super weird, but I actually have placed my inventory...

I don't know that I have the trust yet in the Lord...full disclosure...for giving the inventory to my kids, when they're seniors, or whatever it is, but I am purposed to give my inventory to my children. Do you know why? I don't know when I'm going to do it...full disclosure. I have no idea. I think my wife thinks I'm crazy.

Because I know the plans and schemes of the Enemy and because I know I want to entrust to them truth, I want them to be aware of the carnage and the lies I just drank in. I want them to know, "Yeah, your dad struggled here. You'd better watch out," because if we believe the Scriptures like we do, that could be visited to the third and fourth generation. So you watch these areas of your life very, very closely." I don't want to waste it.

I want to pray for us, and then I want to just commission you to go. For those of you who have been faithful and just... This is a labor. We know it's a labor. It's tough. Imagine going through the program when it was about 50 weeks. Can you imagine? It was about 50 weeks when it began. I know. I want to cry too. As a teacher I'd be like, "Nuh-uh. No, thank you. That's a lot of work." It's good work, but apparently, I'm lazy. I want to commission you. I want to commend you to go and make disciples. Gospel in, and the gospel goes out. Let's pray together.

Father, thank you. We just praise the name of Jesus, and so I do. I just pray a blessing over these who are here. We ask all those who have walked through this process who are not here, Father, a blessing for them to go and make disciples, teaching them all you have commanded, baptizing those whom we teach and go after in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We ask, Father, that these here would feel encouraged, that the workmanship you have placed within them from the time they were dead men and dead women would just be illumined by your Spirit so they would go forth. May their lives be billboards of praise, incense in your nostrils, of what you've done in transforming lives. It's what you do. So we just ask that you would go forth through them, that you would empower them as they go. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.