

0 (0s):

Yes, a new hope. Our new series is starting Next week and I am so excited for it because it is for people who have big hard questions about life, about why is there suffering in this world and why doesn't God do something about it? And If, you know, someone in your life who is hurting, suffering, struggling with depression, big questions about God may be angry at God. This service is for them. So I want you to invite them back Next week for the start of our brand new series, A New Hope as we dive into this small book in the Old Testament called Habakkuk. You are going to really appreciate this series as we look at these deep questions in the answers God provides. Also, we are continuing our 21 Days of Prayer, as you heard in that video from Sam, just that reminder, we can pray for even the small things in our life and that's so important.

0 (49s):

So make sure you continue to pray this week. This is the last week of our 21 Days of Prayer. It ends January 28th, so make sure you take a recommitment to that. And even if you're like, Hey Matt, I'm already two weeks in and I haven't been fasting or anything, that's okay. Set aside just one day this week that Maybe you can fast for the day or fast for a meal that day and really recommit to praying and seeing God do some amazing things. Well, my name's Matt Wolf, I'm the lead pastor at Rice Church Denver. And as you might be able to tell, we had some major technical difficulties yesterday. So I am refiling this video, this message for you today. So I'm, I'm glad that you're listening to this, watching this right now. And if you're newish to our church, we would want to get to know you.

0 (1m 30s):

And actually we give \$5 to the Denver Rescue Mission for every single one of those new forms. They, they get filled out. So if you're listening to this right now and you've never done it, please take a minute to do that, [A rise.com/new](https://www.rise.com/new) and you'll help someone who's living right now on the streets. So don't be selfish, fill out that new form. And this message today is actually going to finish up our God size series. And in week one of this series, God sized, we were challenged with the idea that when God is too small, because so many of us have this small view of God And, we don't realize that he's a miracle worker. He created the world. He, he sent Jesus who could walk on water and overcome death and So, we need to ask God for bigger things to expand our view of God.

0 (2m 12s):

In week two, it was kind of the flip the reverse of that when God is too big, because some of us have this idea of God being big and out there and other And. we don't invite him into the little things in our life, but God wants to be involved in even the small things. And, and I think Sam touched on that pretty well in his video, but I just wanna encourage you with the big idea from that message. All the small things God caress, God sees. You're gonna remember that one in today. The, this third message in this series is When, God, Wants to Change the World. And this too is going to expand your view of God because some of us think, well, I can't change the world. There's too many things to do.

0 (2m 52s):

But that's why I'm trying to challenge you today because I want you to stop for just a moment, think hard.

1 (2m 59s):

And I want to list a few different things. And I want you to think, does this make me upset? Does this make me angry or am I sad because of the state of things here in our city and in our world? So, so think about this. Are you upset about the crime in Denver about the amount of theft? Are you upset by homelessness, by people living on the street? Are you upset at the racial or political conflict that seems to be everywhere in our country? Are you concerned about the border and how many immigrants are coming across into the United States? Or do you have some concern about the cost of living in our city that that is hard for a lot of people to find housing?

1 (3m 42s):

Maybe even you, if any of those things made you upset, I get it, but let's bring it a little bit closer to home. Do you know someone personally, maybe a family member, a friend, a coworker? Do you know someone personally who is dealing with financial struggles, struggling to get by? Do you know someone who's dealing with addiction? Do you know someone who's struggling with anxiety or depression or, or some other mental health issue, even suicidality? Do you know someone that that is struggling in any of those ways personally? See, I think every single one of us not only is worried about the problems of our world, but also the problems of people we love and care about.

1 (4m 24s):

And let me ask you one more question. If, you had a magic wand, would you wave it? If, you could fix one or more of those problems? I think the answer is yes. We all see the problems in our world around us, in our city, in our nation, in our country, and also the problems in the lives of people that we care about. And, we wish we could change it. We wish we could change the world. But let me tell you some good news. God wants to change the world and he has a plan to change the world. And that's what we're gonna talk about today because God wants to use us to change the world. So what we're gonna do today is we're gonna look at a passage of scripture from Matthew chapter nine, So, if you have a Bible, you can open up with me.

1 (5m 9s):

And, We're gonna be in Matthew chapter nine, starting in verse 35. And we're gonna go to the beginning of chapter 10, verse two and A, as we look at this passage, we're gonna say three things that God is asking us to do in his plan to change the world. So here's our first point before we get into this passage. The first point is that you need to work on your heart. Work on your heart. That's gonna be point number one. Work on your heart. And, we see this now in Matthew chapter nine, verse 35, read with me. It says, 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.

1 (5m 50s):

So here's Jesus, really, this is in his rockstar phase where he's going around the countryside of what we know as modern Israel. And he's teaching, he's preaching, he's healing sick sicknesses. He is telling people about the kingdom of God. This was like his central message and he's telling 'em about God's kingdom, God's power that is coming here onto this earth and and he's beginning to reign and it's expanding and growing. And he taught that message over and over again and crowds came to hear him teach and to be healed over and over again. And I just want you to imagine all these sick people coming up and reaching out their hands. If you were Jesus, trying to touch you. Some of you right now are, that's like your nightmare.

1 (6m 30s):

And you're already thinking, where did I put all my masks? I need gloves, I need a full body suit if all those sick people are gonna try to touch me. But, but Jesus did that. He handled all these sick people coming to him so he could heal them. He had also all these people coming to hear and preach that same message over and over and over again. You know, this kind of happens to rock stars because they, if they have one song that becomes a hit, they're gonna play that song at every concert for the rest of their lives, for decades even. And I'm sure they get sick of it. And a lot of people who become famous like that just try to avoid people. That's why they go out and live in their compounds. They put on the biggest sunglasses and hoodies when they go out to the store because they don't want everybody touching them trying to get their autograph selfies.

1 (7m 12s):

That's exactly where Jesus is. So you can imagine how annoyed Jesus must have been in this situation, but that's not how Jesus responds to all these people coming to him. Keep reading in verse 36, it says that when Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. He had compassion on them, he loved them, he cared about 'em. He had this empathy that went out. That word compassion in the Greek is, is an interesting word. It's explain qui. So may an interesting Greek word because it doesn't just mean in his head he, he thinks these thoughts for them.

1 (7m 52s):

It's really a word that comes from the gut. This is a gut reaction. This means his stomach is churning. He feels deep down in his heart and his soul, compassion for these people who are hurt and harassed and helpless. He's not annoyed by them. And and I know I am just the other day I was standing in line somewhere and and someone cut in line and I was annoyed, right? Thi this is what we do. We get annoyed by other people. We get harassed and angry at other people. But, but Jesus, when he saw them, he had compassion for them. So that's why I'm challenging you first to work on your heart because we need to have that heart of Jesus, that sling So, that compassion that goes out. I felt this the other day, Maybe, you saw on the news that just a couple weeks ago, 19 busloads of migrants were brought here to Denver and they were dropped off right over by us at the Home Depot on Quebec.

1 (8m 47s):

And I didn't know what was going on. So I drove over there to that shopping center and as I was driving in, I was pretty frustrated and annoyed as a man jumped out in front of me trying to wipe my windshield. And I'm like, what are you doing man? don't even care. There's all snow all over the street. Like my car's gonna look disgusting today and it's okay. And I was annoyed that he got in the way. Then I looked over at the Home Depot parking lot and I was thinking, man, there's a lot of people looking for work right now. And then as I was leaving the parking lot, I saw a young dad younger than I am with his wife who couldn't have been more than 19 or 20. And in her arm she was holding what must have been an 18 month old baby.

1 (9m 28s):

And they were freezing out there in the cold. And the dad was holding this cardboard sign that said, we just got off the bus from Venezuela. We have nothing. Please help. And my heart went out, my gut churned inside of myself to see this young family with nothing. And and, and I think that type of compassion is what Jesus displays over and over again with these crowds. It also says one time where he looked over Jerusalem that he wept. He had tears coming down his faces because he looked at that city and he wished he could gather them up in his arms like a hen gathers up her chicks. Jesus had true compassion for people who were hurting and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

1 (10m 10s):

They need a shepherd. They need leaders who can take care of them, who can provide for them, who can protect them, but they had nothing. And Jesus sees the real true state of people and has a heart of compassion. So if you're hearing this And, you don't have that heart. It's time to work on your heart because God wants us to have that heart. So I, I want to give you three simple ways. It's not exhaustive, but three simple ways that you can begin to develop the heart that Jesus has here. And the first one is to ask God for that heart. Ask God to give you the heart of Jesus. Ask God to give you the heart of Jesus and If you do that. It's just beginning to involve God, to change your heart. You have not because you asked not Jesus' brother James wrote So So, we just need to start praying.

1 (10m 52s):

God help me have this heart because this is the heart of Jesus. In one John three 17, man, this is a convicting passage, one John three 17 we read, but whoever has the world's goods, which is us If you have any money at all, and sees his brother in need, then closes his heart of compassion. That's that same word, spl somai against him. How does God's love remain in him? This passage is saying, if we don't have that heart of compassion that Jesus has, then God's love actually isn't in us. So. we need to pray that God's love would come into us and flow out of us through us So. we need to have that heart of compassion. That's the first thing. Pray for it.

1 (11m 32s):

The second thing I would encourage you to do would be to actually shut out the negative voices. We all have these voices and sometime they're in our head, but a lot of time they're external. Do you have friends, family

members, coworkers who are complaining and negative about all these people, about all the problems in our world, though, those voices can become very judgmental And. we need to learn to shut those out. And some of you are spending two, three hours every night watching the the primetime news and there's just negative voice after negative voice. And I don't even care what your political persuasion is. They're negative on both sides. They're trying to point fingers at the other side. They're the problem, they're the problem with our world and, and it gets us to dislike and hate those people who are hurting around us.

1 (12m 15s):

So, if you have that voice in your own head thinking, oh, those people need to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. They need to get a job. When I was their age, I was taking care of myself. I If, you have those voices that are judgmental. You need to start shutting out some of the negative voices. You know, I did this in 2020 and 2021. I found myself just really negative. And what I decided to do was to stop reading news at night. I was, I'm a big news reader, I'm a big reader just in general. And I just decided I can't read news anymore at night. I read just a little bit that comes into my inbox every morning. So I'm up to date on what's going on in the world. but I choose not to read any of the news because it was making me so negative, so judgmental, so angry at people. And that heart of compassion was hardened.

1 (12m 55s):

And as you begin to tune out those negative voices, your heart will be softened. And that leads to the third thing I'd encourage you to do. Talk to real people. Talk to the individuals because yes, there's the social issue, whether it's homelessness, migrants, people who are struggling financially, people that are hurting, maybe there's depression, anxiety, but they're just not an issue. There's real people. And when you talk to real people, you begin to have a compassion for them. It's one thing to think about the migrant issue, but it's another thing to really talk to a person and realize that for them, freezing themselves with their family in the city of Denver is better than living in Venezuela, where they came from.

1 (13m 39s):

And, and when you begin to think that way, you have a heart of compassion towards people. And I am not in any way saying that you should change your political persuasion and, and, and change how you think about these issues. That's not what I'm saying. but I am saying we should change how we think about people because God has a heart of compassion for people. Jesus wants us to have a heart of compassion. In fact, God's whole view of the world is one of love and not of judgment. This is what we learn in John three 16. You know that verse, I think you do. Tim Tebow's got it on his eyes, right? You remember that? Okay, John three 16, for God. So what loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

1 (14m 20s):

Most people stop there though verse step 17 gets even better. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Jesus did not come to condemn or to judge us, but to

love us. That's God's heart and that should be our heart as well. So I'm hoping to, to encourage you to expand your heart, to work on your heart. That's the first step. If we want to change the world, work on your heart. The second step is to ask for more workers. To ask for more workers. We need more people going out there to work, to serve, to love, to spread that compassion around. And this is exactly what Jesus said after he sees the crowds harass and helpless.

1 (15m 2s):

In verse 37 says that Jesus said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. There's not enough workers. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore to send out workers into his harvest field. There aren't enough workers. So Jesus said, just start asking for workers. This is a huge Prayer element. Jesus is saying, get God involved. God's the one who can change hearts and empower people, equip people, inspire people to go out to serve and love and to work. But we've gotta start asking for it. So that's the second thing. Start asking for workers. Ask for workers and notice what Jesus doesn't tell us to ask for.

1 (15m 45s):

He doesn't tell us to ask for some better programs. He doesn't ask us or tell us to ask for the government to step in and fix everything. We're not supposed to ask for a rich philanthropist, billionaire to give his money to help people in need. He doesn't tell us to ask for even more ministries in a church. Jesus tells us not to ask for more critics who are pointing out all the Christians that are hypocrites and not doing enough. We got enough of those already. What Jesus asks us to ask for is more workers. Some versions translate that as laborers or harvesters. We need people who are gonna get their hands dirty, get callouses on their hand, rub shoulder to shoulder with the people around them and get to work.

1 (16m 28s):

We need real workers. Now, as you can tell, I'm not a farmer, but for five years at the beginning of my ministry career, for five years I was a pastor in farming country in Nebraska. And I got to rub shoulders with a lot of farmers. And when I did that, I, I realized pretty quickly that harvest time was an i really important season for them. And what, what Jesus says here is the harvest is plentiful. What it literally says is the fields are white for the harvest or the fields are ripe for the harvest. Meaning like the wheat fields, they were ready to be picked. It was time to harvest and harvest time for farmers is a big deal.

1 (17m 12s):

I remember in Nebraska, if I wanted to spend time with any of my farmers who were on my board there, I I couldn't go out to get coffee with them during harvest season. I actually would go out with them on a combine, And we would go harvest together so I could talk with them. And, and as I would do that, I would ask 'em different questions. And, and what I learned was that harvest is is such an important season because it's very quick, it's very quick. In fact, what happens is that when, where we were, there's a lot of corn and soybeans, but, but when the crop is ready, you have to harvest it right then If, you wait too long, it might rain and the rain would make the crop then wet. And in order to harvest that, it's a lot heavier.

1 (17m 54s):

So it takes more equipment and then you have to put it in places where it can be dried. So the longer it has to dry, the more money you're spending and therefore losing on, on what you're trying to make. And, and also that they had to harvest as quick as possible because the winter might come, there might be an early frost who would kill all the crop and then you'd lose everything you've been working for all year. And this is literally the only way that you can have food. This is the only way you can have money for the year, is how much crop you can harvest in a select period of time. So this means you had to work really hard. This is why also there's a whole industry in our country called migrant workers. A whole bunch of workers go from one harvest crop to another during their time of harvest to add more workers So that they can get as much done as possible.

1 (18m 40s):

And that is such a big deal when it's time to harvest, you need to get to work and harvest. And what Jesus is telling us is that it is time for the harvest. Guys, I don't think you understand this and, and I don't think this was just first century Israel, I think it's happening today as well. I think it's time for the harvest. When I look around at our city, people think, oh, Christianity is dying. People stop going to church. I think it's all the fake Christians that are not going to church anymore. The people who are just pretending are going along with everybody else because that's just what you do as an American. But what we're actually seeing is, is like here at Arise in 2023, we saw over 160 people indicate to us in some way that they had made Jesus their Lord and Savior for the first time.

1 (19m 25s):

Whoa, that's incredible. We saw last year 55 people go public with their faith through baptism. That's double the amount we'd ever had in our highest year previous to that. This means God is working so far this year our youth group turbulence on our student ministry on Wednesday nights has seen record numbers. And just this past weekend we had a whole bunch of kids our most ever go to middle school, winter Camp And. we have even more in a couple weeks going to high school winter camp. I believe right now is the time for the harvest. And the time might be short, it might come to an end. So it's time to get to work. We need more workers. So that's why what we need to do is ask for more workers.

1 (20m 7s):

We're gonna ask for more workers is our second point. And what I'm gonna encourage you guys to do for just a second right now, I is to stop and pray and I'm gonna ask you take, take a moment, ask for more workers to go out. And it could be pastors, missionaries, evangelists, church planters, people to serve and nonprofits, people to go out. And then I also want you to think back at the beginning, I I asked you about those people on your mind who are are hurting, who are struggling, a ask God for send workers to them, to their neighborhoods, to their families, to their workplaces and and, and get workers out there for the harvest. So take a moment, I'm gonna ask you to just pause right now and literally pray and ask God to send out

more workers.

1 (20m 49s):

Okay? Hopefully you've done that. Now let's bring it back because that's the second thing Jesus challenges us to do is to ask for more workers. But the third thing is to get to work. To get to work. Look at what happens next. In this passage, when you get to chapter 10 verse one, it says that Jesus called his 12 disciples, his followers to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease in sickness. And then it goes on to say, these are the name of the 12 of apostles. Okay, why am I pointing that out? Well, don't know If, you know this, here's a little secret, but those chapter numbers actually didn't get added to our Bibles until 1205 AD meaning that for almost 1200 years these chapter numbers weren't even in there at all.

1 (21m 40s):

Meaning that when Matthew wrote this gospel account, he just continued from the end of chapter nine when Jesus says, ask for more workers to chapter 10. When Jesus is like, okay, now you guys are the workers, meaning probably Jesus had his disciples who were his followers sit down and, and maybe they prayed just like as you did a moment ago. And then he's like, okay, thanks for praying. Guess what? You guys are the answer to your Prayer. You are the workers to go out. He gives 'em authority, he delegates them and he sends them out to get to work. Corey 10 boom once said that, we never know how God will answer our prayers, but we can expect that he will get us involved in his plan for the answer.

1 (22m 22s):

That's how God works. We start asking for more workers. And, we realize we're the workers. When we ask for God to go out and help those people who are in need, we are the ones to go help the people in need because we are there. We're around And, we can be the hands and feet of Jesus. This is so important for us to grasp and understand. Notice in this passage in ch, in verse one and two of chapter 10, that Jesus had the 12 disciples. He was his top 12 guys and they're called disciples. The word disciple means follower, it means student, it means learner. They've been following him and learning for from Jesus for quite a while. And now he says, okay, you are no longer a disciple, a follower, now you are an apostle. This is the first time in the gospel that they're called apostles.

1 (23m 4s):

The word apostle means the one who is sent out, the one sent out, they are flipping. Now Jesus, like you were following now you're sent out, you were following. Now go out and help others follow and, and this is what we mean at a rice church by helping people follow Jesus. It's this process you follow and then you help others follow. And here is this ma massive shift. As they shift, as they realize, okay, Jesus has been doing the one working and now I'm the one who's supposed to work. It's time for me to get to work. And that's what's happening to you if you're listening to this right now. Maybe you're pretty new to faith. Maybe you're not even sure what you believe, but God is calling you to step up to help others follow Jesus.

1 (23m 44s):

That's why at the beginning Jesus said, come follow me and I'll send you out to fish for people. You're gonna start as a follower. You're gonna go and help others follow as well. We are the workers we've been asking for. And if, you are overwhelmed at that thought. You think I can't do it, don't have it in me. I got enough mess in my own life. Guess what that means? You don't have a big enough view of God. I'm serious. That doesn't mean you don't view yourself correctly, that you're thinking too lowly of yourself. No, you're thinking too lowly of God because God loves using lowly people. He loves using people who are uneducated, who are fishermen. Those were his disciples. These guys didn't know what they were doing and that's who, who God raises up to send out to do amazing things.

1 (24m 26s):

So God, if you're listening to this, God is calling you to be the worker. And he is big enough to use you with all your imperfections and flaws to go out and be the worker who our world needs to change the world. So be the worker. And I would just say this, so many people look around and they're like, oh, all these problems in our world, all these problems with people and people look for big solutions to these big problems. That's where all the philanthropy money is going anyways. But it's not gonna be big solutions to big problems. It's a whole bunch of small solutions. It's a whole bunch of small people like you and me who are willing to get to work and that's what changes the world. That's why Mother Theresa said, none of us, including me, can you believe she said that none of us, including me ever do great things.

1 (25m 13s):

But we can all do small things with great love and together we can do something wonderful. She's right. If we want to change the world, it's gonna take every single one of us stepping up in love to serve, to love, to get to work. So that's what I'm challenging you guys to do today, to get to work, expand your view of God. He can use you and through you, he will change the world. That's why you need to work on your heart. Ask for more workers and get to work. Now before we move on from this message, I do want to talk a little bit about what God is doing here at a Rise church because we believe we are called on a mission to change the world, especially here in Denver.

1 (25m 57s):

I know some of you are listening to this from around the, the country and and God will use you where you are. We want to equip you for that too. But God has especially called us here in Denver and and northeast Denver Aurora to change our world. There's lots of problems around us and sometimes it can seem intimidating because there's such great need. There are crowds who are harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. If you just drop a pin on a map where our church is located and make a a a circle with a five mile radius around us. We estimate that there are 350,000 unchurched men, women and children who are possibly gonna spend an eternity away from God in hell.

1 (26m 40s):

That that's a staggering, sobering statistic. We know here in the city of Denver that there are twice as many dogs as there are Christians and there are more marijuana dispensaries than there are gospel proclaiming churches. There's a lot of work to be done. Those 350,000 people, that means that there are 20 nations in our world that have less unchurched people than we do within walking distance. Five miles and So. we have work to do. These people are harassed and helpless. They need shepherd, they need someone to seek after them, to lead them to Jesus. And that's what we're called to do. So here are several things that I believe God is leading us to in 2024.

1 (27m 21s):

And I would just say this 2020 taught us something. It taught us to plan in pencil. So what I'm gonna tell you right now is what we are planning for, we're dreaming for, we're praying for, but we plan in pencil here, And. we allow God to change our situation. So here's several things we're looking forward to this year. The first one is our group's launch. We hired Kader in the fall, our connections director, which we're so excited about and she and I have been praying for 20 new group leaders to step up 'cause we need a lot more groups to reach people, get 'em connected, to have the relationships they need for life. So, we are asking people to step up to lead Maybe. you are listening to this right now. You could lead an online group, you could lead an in-person group. We, we need more leaders to get people connected in group.

1 (28m 2s):

That's what we need for real life change. We're also planning with this group launch to launch a group that's going to teach people to study the Bible, which is really cool. So if you're here And, you want to learn for yourself that you could pick a book of the Bible And, you could study it and understand it and know it for yourself so you can teach others like this is gonna be an incredible group for you. That's our group's launch. That's the first thing that's coming in the next couple weeks. The second thing would be our student ministry. Like I said, God's doing big things already this year in our student ministry, And. we want to take that to the next level. We believe that this student ministry turbulence on Wednesday nights for sixth to 12th grades is on the brink of something big. And. we want to have more people step up to serve.

1 (28m 43s):

We already have a bunch of volunteers coming in, but we want to invest resources to take our student ministry to the next level. So. we can reach the next generation right now for Jesus. The third thing is that we do anticipate in 2024 that our two service times will, will fill up based on our rate of growth. We anticipate that happening. So, we are planning in pencil to launch our third service time in August of 2024. That's just a few months away. And some of you're like, oh what? What's the big deal about that? Okay, well this is what it means is that we have two services and we're adding a third. Meaning we need volunteers, we need to add 50% more volunteers.

1 (29m 23s):

If we have people serving at two services and now we need three, we're gonna need 50% more volunteers. Meaning some of you need to step up right now to serve So that you're trained and ready to go when we launch our third service in August. And then we can reach even more people, help more people follow Jesus. The next thing is we are taking our bold outreach to another level locally. What that means is we're planning to have a meal pack again this year. We've done two of those in the past. And what we'll do is we basically use an entire Sunday morning service to pack meals to go to those who are hungry. The last two times we did this, we sent our meals overseas to those who are hungry in Haiti. But we're partnering with an organization this year that we can pack meals for those who are hungry locally.

1 (30m 5s):

This is gonna lead us to bold outreach, new relationships and helping people follow Jesus in our area. We're excited about that globally, we're looking for more bold outreach too because we have, we are planning and preparing to send even more global outreach partners, long-term missionaries than maybe we ever have before. We have one couple the chance who were serving in now North Africa for a couple years, but because of conflict had to come back to the United States. Well they are thinking and praying about where God might send them next, wanting to go back and become long-term missionaries again overseas. We also have another couple and an individual who are seriously considering taking trips, planning and praying and seeing where God is leading them to be.

1 (30m 45s):

Long-term missionaries as well. That's amazing. That's amazing that we're gonna send out more. And the last thing that I would say for 2024 is that we are getting beginning behind the scenes to think and pray what God has for us next. We anticipate that sometime in the next several years we will outgrow this building. So, we are beginning to think long term to pray. Well what does God have us for us next? We don't know what that is, but you can join us. And why am I telling you about all this stuff for 2024? Well, one that you would pray, we need you to join us and pray not only in these 21 days, but for the rest of the year, pray for God to do big things in in our church to help more people follow and follow Jesus. The next thing some of you need to step up and serve, whether it's to lead a community group or or serve in some other way on a Sunday morning or on Wednesday nights with our student ministry.

1 (31m 34s):

And the last thing is that you might give and give generously. Our church grew by quite a bit in attendance last year, but the giving hardly grew at all. And what I noticed back like last summer was that our giving was looking really good. You know, there's a lot of ways to measure giving, but the giving per person for our church was actually looking really good for a little while. And then it tanked. Not because people stopped giving, but because of how a lot of new people join our church online and in person and not give. So if that's you, I'd encourage you to start giving. Maybe even you're even new And, you're like don, don't know about that. Okay, it's time to get invested because God is doing big things here and if we wanna see the world change, we have got to get to work.

1 (32m 15s):

We have got to start giving. So we'd encourage everybody if you've never given before, just start giving by what we say in our generosity team is \$25 a week or a hundred dollars a month, start giving today and that creates that normal habit of giving And. You get used to generosity being a part of your life, but some of you need to take the next step and start tithing. The word tithe literally means a 10th And. we believe God asks us to do that, but, but really what I'm asking is just tie your giving to your income. Look at what your income is for the year and make a percentage gift of that and try to work your way up to 10% or even above that because we might have enough money right now to keep operating, but we're asking God for bigger things.

1 (32m 55s):

We want to change the world. We don't want the status quo. So we're gonna need you to step up and to give generously So that we together can help change northeast Denver and change the world for Christ. So our vision as a church is to seek the one And. We mean that to seek the one who's above us, to seek God with all our hearts, soul, mind, and strength, but also to seek the one in our life. Because some of you are already daunted at the thought of being a worker and giving and all this stuff. But just think about one person. Jesus tells us that there are people harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. And he tells us elsewhere that a good shepherd, even if he has a hundred sheep and just loses one sheep, he goes after that one.

1 (33m 40s):

He seeks the one over hill and valley until he finds it. And when he does, he picks it up on his shoulder and happily carries it all the way home. That's what a good shepherd does. And that's what Jesus did for us. He came down from heaven to find us to seek after the one. And when he found us, he went on the cross to die So that his blood might pay for our sin. And, we might have forgiveness. We might be given new life and eternal life with him in heaven. Jesus is willing as the good shepherd to lay down his life for his sheep to seek the one And. we too think that's our vision as a church to seek the one So. we ask everyone and challenge everyone to have at least one person on their heart that they are willing to go over hill and valley to pick that person up on their shoulders and carry them home.

1 (34m 24s):

So do you have that one in your life? This is what's gonna make this possible. If we want to change the world, we have to be a church that seeks the one. And I have a QR code behind me. Or you can go to rise Denver dot com slash seek the one and make sure you fill out that card. If, you want to join us in this? We have now I think about 315 people who have accepted this challenge. But our goal is to be a thousand strong. Who seek the one who are taking up this vision and saying, Hey, we will be the people. Why a thousand? Well a thousand is an army and it's gonna take a small army to go out and change the world here in Northeast Denver. So if you've never filled out that form before, let us know that you're a part of it. And I just send a little email every few weeks to encourage you and challenge you to continue to seek the one.

1 (35m 5s):

But because this is what it's gonna take to change the world, to seek the one. Okay, I'm wrapping up this message right now and and I want to tell you, God wants to change the world. There's lots of problems around us and and I'm gonna encourage you, I'm gonna challenge you to join us, to become a worker, to seek the one. And if you're willing to do that right now, I'm gonna say a Prayer for you. So don't know where you are. If you're on your commute, maybe pull over. But wherever you are, I want you to just close your eyes for a minute. That's why I want you to pull over first if you're driving. but I want you to just

2 (35m 37s):

Take a moment and I'm gonna pray for you and and receive this Prayer of blessing right now. Lord God, I pray for everyone who's listening to this message wherever they are, that they would be convicted to work on their heart, to ask for workers, and then to get to work. Lord God, you are calling us to seek the one because there are crowds of people harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Could we just go after one, empower us, use us to be the workers in this world, that we might change the world, one heart, one soul, one life at a time. And through that, change the world, Lord God, use us, help arise church, continue to grow all, all these plans that we have. Lord God, would you do even bigger things than we ask or imagine here in 2024?

2 (36m 20s):

And would you transform Northeast Denver Aurora, our world for good? Jesus name I pray. Amen.