

## MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Message Series: iGo Pt. 2  
What 2 Tell  
Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 11.26-27.11

Good morning Crossroads. They did a great job this morning, didn't they? Let's thank them. Dan, thank you. How are you all doing this morning? Are you all over the depression of the Ohio State / Michigan game yet. That was pretty. You always have to keep things in perspective though. You have to remember what we're dealing with here. Think about it this way. What did the Michigan graduate say to the OSU graduate? Welcome to McDonald's. May I help you this morning? That was bad. We love our Michigan graduates. We do. Especially when they deliver us pizza. Ok. That's enough. We'll get over that. Let's get on to more serious things this morning.

We're actually continuing in a series this morning we started last week called iGo and if you missed that let me give you a quick recap. The whole series, the thrust of the series is about evangelism. Now, last week I said when you hear that word what emotional reaction do you experience? Is there the emotional reaction of fear; thinking about stepping out of your comfort zone and telling someone about your relationship with Christ and maybe being rejected because of it? Is it the feeling of anxiety where you get into a conversation with someone and maybe they'll ask you a question that you can't answer? Or maybe, when it comes right down to it there's a sense of guilt because you know you should be telling others but you don't? We all have some kind of emotional reaction when we hear that word. I told you last week my goal in this series is to change that emotional reaction so that evangelism is not something you think you have to do but rather it's something that you are.

Now, remember I told you that evangelism, at least in the way we're couching this here is not a program. It's not a church ministry. It's not a campaign but rather, evangelism, even at its simplest meaning is telling another about Jesus. That's what it is. When we talk about evangelism we're not talking about a lot of fuzzy details. That's not exactly what's going on here. It's simply communicating to another about your relationship with Jesus; telling another about Jesus. Now, last week we learned why to tell. Today, we're going to take the next step in our journey. We're going to learn WHAT to tell. And I have to tell you - the what we tell might be the most intimidating facet of evangelism. In fact, this might be the very thing that paralyzes most of us. Why? Why is that? I have a feeling after talking to many people when it comes to the issue of evangelism, when we talk about sharing our faith the thing that paralyzes us is we start to get in our mind what if we don't get it right and we see the Gospel as a bunch of different pieces and we have to put these pieces, like a puzzle all together or we might not get the story right. And if we don't get the story right then the person that we're telling, well, they might not fully understand it or have a desire to receive Christ like we have.

Think about it this way. Let's play with the blocks this morning; these evangelistic tag blocks. They all have words on them that are associated with the Gospel. They're all important when we're going through telling others about Christ. I want you to imagine with me that you're just sitting across the table from someone, maybe having a cup of coffee in a restaurant and the conversation comes up about Christianity. And the door opens and you have the opportunity to walk through it and you think in your mind alright, how does this go? I need to put this together. I need to figure out what it is that I'm going to, well, I'm going to start with Jesus. That's where we should start. We should tell people about Jesus and we start moving our blocks around and we put Jesus first. We say, we need to make sure people know about Jesus and then we say well, we have to tell them to believe in Him and so we think, all right. That's next. And I

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think that if we tell them to believe well, then they're saved but then it comes to our mind – wait a minute. What about sin? We can't forget about sin. Sin's an important aspect of it. So we say, all right. We have to tell them about sin and we have to tell them to confess sin and all the while we're starting to think what have I left out. Well, maybe, oh, we have to tell them to ask because if they believe but they don't ask well then, we've got a problem there. So, we have to remember that block. So, we tell them about Jesus. We tell them to believe. We talk to them about their sin and then they ask. Then they're saved and then they're forgiven. But, wait a minute. We've also got repentance. We've got this block we've got to deal with. So we have to get that in the story somewhere. And then, what do we have here. Oh man. We can't forget about praying. So we say we have to pray because when you pray then that's how it all gets started. So we say maybe that goes here. No. Wait a minute. Maybe this goes here and then praying goes here and we think we have all the blocks just right. Well, then lordship. That comes in the process too. We have to make Jesus Lord and this doesn't seem to fit right here. Do you start to see the dilemma here?

And then you're on the trip home and you think I know I forget to tell them something and I forgot to tell them about the cross. How can I forget to tell them about the cross? It's the most important part of the story and then that's what happens. We get going and we start getting all of this anxiety about the message and we get so paralyzed about the message that do you know what happens? We don't tell the message. We simply say I don't know it well enough so I'm not going to say anything.

I want to challenge this concept with us this morning. I want to challenge the concept in our minds that we have to have the message absolutely right. I believe the message, by all means, I believe the message has to clear. I believe it needs to be right. I believe it needs to be accurate. But fear of the message shouldn't stop us from giving A message. I want you to take your bibles and I want to have you turn with me to the book of John and I want to show you from the words of Christ what He says about the process of salvation. I want to remind you, again, just as a platform for us to begin our conversation this morning that who it is that authors the whole process of salvation. This might help you in the next conversation that you have to bring this to mind about who really is leading and guiding that discussion across the table over that cup of coffee. Jesus is talking here and He's using a number of parallels here about himself and He's saying that He's the bread of life. He's the true eternal life and He says in verse 44. He reminds them no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. Look at that carefully. What is Jesus saying? Jesus is saying no one can come to Him. No one can start a relationship with Christ unless there is one who draws him. Who's the one? Notice the text. It's the Father. The Father is the author of salvation. So, put this in your mind. Put this in your thinking that if God is not drawing someone; if God is not a part of the process of drawing this person from darkness into light it really doesn't matter what order you have the blocks in. It doesn't really matter how sharp your apologetical arguments are. It doesn't matter how clear your theology is. It really doesn't matter because if the Father is not drawing the person you can talk until you're blue in the face. You can argue with them. You can beg them. You can plead with them. If God is not moving their heart then what you have to say or how well you have to say it really isn't going to move them forward.

But, IF God is drawing someone, and this is what I want you to listen to, you can't derail the process. You can't mess up the story because why? Because God, the Father is drawing the person's heart. You say, but

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wait a minute. Doesn't scripture say we should always be prepared. 1 Peter 3:15 says we should always to be give a reason for the hope that we have. But the core of evangelism is not a perfect presentation. The core of witnessing for the sake of Christ is not the perfect story. You say, well, all right. What is the core of evangelism? Let me give you two things this morning. Before we ever worry about getting the story right let me teach you what the core of evangelism is.

Number one. Are you ready for this? It's a willing heart. Before you ever worry about the details of the message you have to see your heart first. In fact, give me someone with a willing heart and a small amount of biblical knowledge over someone with a cold heart and lots of biblical knowledge any day of the week. See, it all starts with a willing heart. So you have to ask yourself this morning – do I have a willing heart? It's like saying this, am I willing to be used by God? Are you? Have you ever said that to Him? God, I might not have much to offer but use me. You'd be shocked at what God would do with a willing heart like that. The problem is many of us, we think we want a willing heart but before we ever get that heart moving emotion we start putting up hurdles before God. There's all these "yeah, but"...or "if"...or "maybe". There's these hurdles and these hurdles are so tall we think we can never get over them. So our heart kind of shies away from ever saying, "God, use me".

Let's talk about some of those hurdles. Let's see if we can get over some of those hurdles this morning. I think one of the first hurdles that many of us have to a willing have is that hurdle of doubt. Self-doubt, whether God really could use me in the process of telling the greatest message that has ever been given. There's just this self-doubt that creeps in. We shy away from ever stepping out. You know who was the greatest self-doubter of scripture? Let me introduce you to him. He's in the second book of the Old Testament. Exodus, chapter 3. Turn there. Exodus 3. It's a story that you probably know at least the pieces of. It's the story of Moses and the burning bush. But before Moses was ever that great champion that led the people through the parted sea, separated Pharaoh from the work force, this champion of leadership, before he was ever the man of God used of the day he was a self-doubter. But not just a small self-doubter. Look at chapter 3. I have verse 9 but I want you to back up. Let's start the story in verse 7 because this is where the Lord is talking to Moses and he says I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and I've heard their cry because of their taskmasters. In other words, because of their slavery. He says, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, the Ganaanites. No. That's not in there. And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. And I see Moses here saying, yes...we're going to get free. Yes. And God says, come, I will send you. What? Me? I was all in this God before you said that. You want to use me?

And will you notice, I'm just going to take you through a couple quick...look at verse 11. It says, but Moses said to God. Now, drop over to verse 13. Then Moses said to God. Over to chapter 4, verse 1. Then Moses answered. Drop down, chapter 4, verse 10. But Moses said to the Lord. Drop down. Verse 13. But he said. On and on and on. You can't even get through to the end of chapter 4 and you know what Moses is saying? He's putting up all these hurdles. He's saying you've got the wrong guy. You can't use

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me. Who am I supposed to say sent me? And God tells him. And then he comes up with another. How do I know they're going to believe that? And God answers that. He comes up with another hurdle. Yes, but I can't speak very well. I'm not very eloquent. And he comes up with another hurdle. And all these hurdles. Listen, we do the exact same thing. We hear. We hear the amazing story of grace and how grace can transfer someone from a dark, distant relationship with God to a relationship of light and love and freedom. And then we hear but God wants YOU to be the one to tell the story. God wants YOU to be the one to lead them out of darkness and you say what? Not me. I don't know if I can do this. Self-doubt starts to trickle into our life.

Listen to this passage. Proverbs 3. Trust in the Lord with all of your heart. Do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make straight your paths. Self-doubters of Crossroads, do you hear what the scriptures are saying? God's calling you to use you and the scriptures say don't trust in yourself. Trust in God. God will do great things through you. In fact, He's already prepared you. 2 Peter, 1:3. His divine power has granted to us ALL things that pertain to life and Godliness. He's already given you the power. Step out. Don't let self-doubt weaken a willing heart.

Another hurdle that many of us often have and I know this is one that stands tall and strong. It's the hurdle of knowledge. We say I just don't know enough about the bible to be able to tell someone else about this relationship with Christ. I just don't know enough. I'm still learning myself. And so we allow the hurdle of knowledge to paralyze us. Let me make this real simple for you. Let's just bypass the knowledge issue for a moment. If you, yourself have come to a relationship with Christ then believe it or not you have all the knowledge that is needed to be used by God. Remember what Acts 1:8 says? Jesus says you will be my witnesses. You just have to act like a witness. Just tell what you know. You don't have to worry about what you don't know. You just tell what you know. You get rolling in the story and you might be surprised at what will come out of your mouth. One of the things that I love about reading the Gospels is that the disciples are so human. We can relate with them. Right before Jesus is ready to leave they're worried about having the torch handed over to them and I think what goes on is some kind of dialogue with Jesus. Something like this – you know, you've been with us for all these years I'm not sure if I can remember exactly what you told us. And He says this to them. You don't have to look it up. Just listen. John 14. Jesus says these things I've spoken to you while I'm still with you but the helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I've said to you.

Now, if this was true for the disciples, guess what? It's true for us. As people who have the spirit of God indwelling us what do you think is going to happen if you step out there and you say, God, I have a willing heart, use me? You think He's just going to throw you out there and let you stumble, let you fall, not quite sure what to say? No. This is exactly why the Spirit was given to you. He's going to be infusing into your mind as if it's coming from some other place the ability to say what you know and maybe to say even more than you know. I love Romans 8. It says likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. Do you ever feel weak? Absolutely. Who's there to help us? The Spirit. He says for we do not know what to pray for as we ought but the Spirit, Himself intercedes for us with groaning too deep for words. Listen, if the

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Spirit of God is going to pray on our behalf don't you think He's going to help us talk on His behalf as well? Absolutely. Don't let the hurdle of knowledge stop you from telling the story.

And then the last hurdle might be the tallest of all because we all wrestle with this. Worthiness. We just don't think we're worthy. There's too much sin in our life; too many mistakes; too many bad decisions; too many crossroads where we're chosen the wrong road and our life just doesn't reflect. Really? Do you believe that? Have you ever wondered what made the disciples disciples? Was it their perfect lifestyle? No. Follow them around the Gospels and you find out just how imperfect they really are. Was it their ability? No. They really didn't have a lot of ability to bring to the table for God. They were, most of them, fishermen. God had to start from the ground up. Jesus started by training them from the ground up and moving forward. Was it this great sense of knowledge? No. You realize in the rabbinical tradition that most likely the disciples we passed over by the rabbis at an early age? See, they would take young boys and if they felt like they had this ability, this prowess about them they would send them on to the temple to learn more. Those boys that they felt couldn't handle that would be sent off to do menial work. Needed work but blue-collar work. It is likely that most of these were passed over by the aereodite theologians of the day as if to say you just need to go work with your hands. Yet Jesus goes to those exact people, ordinary people and says no. I'm going to use you? Were they the elite of Galilee? No. I don't think Galilee had any elite. They were considered the low-class. Where does Jesus go to get His disciples? He goes to what the world would consider the bottom of the barrel.

I love this passage in Corinthians. Let your hear wrap around it. That God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not to bring to nothing things that are so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. Do you hear what he's saying? Because He doesn't need the great of our world. He doesn't need the aereodite, those filled with knowledge, the elite. He needs ordinary people who would say even in my unworthiness I stand before you God and say use me. That's where it starts. The core of evangelism is not what you know. It's the size of your heart for those who have not yet come to the knowledge of grace.

And then, I told you there was two. Two. One – willing heart. Number two. You have to cultivate a listening spirit. If you're going to cultivate a willing heart that comes right along side of that is a listening spirit. You say what do you mean by that? Well, Galatians 5:25 is a text that tells us that if we live by the Spirit. In other words, since we are a part of a relationship with Christ, if we live by the Spirit let us also walk by the Spirit. It's that word walk that I want you to gravitate towards this morning. Walk. The idea is basically to keep in step. It's a military term. Have you ever watched someone in the military? Have you ever been in the military? Have you ever gone on a march? What happens if you get out of step? Everybody else behind you is out of step, right? So what is the first thing they do in boot camp? What do they drill you on? They teach you how to what? March. And that's all you do. You just march and march and march, why? Because they want you to get you in order. They want to keep you in step. They want you operating as a unit, right? You see what's going on here? The Spirit of God's infused into the scriptures something very similar to this whole military motif. It's like listen, you have been invited into

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the Kingdom of God. Now stay in step. How do you do that? How do you stay in step with the Spirit? You have to have a listening spirit, to listen – to His promptings.

Have you ever had that happen to you? Where you just sense something's going on as if God is saying you know, you need to talk to him. You need to listen to her. You need to help her. Those are promptings. And do you know what promptings lead to? Open doors. Sometimes you have to work through. You have to experiment with these promptings because we're not always that good at first listening to them. They can be so transparent.

A few weeks ago I received this lovely letter from the BMV and it said at my last birthday I forgot to renew my driver's license. So I went down to the BMV and you stand, you take that little number and you stand in that line. The line that never moves and you're watching your watch the whole time because you're thinking I've got other things to do. I've got appointments. I've got to get out of here. And so you're just biding your time waiting. You get up to the desk. You know. You go through the eye thing and you get your picture taken and you get your little card and you pay your money and out the door you go. Well this was happening to me and I was running late at this point and I had an appointment. I was already five minutes late. The appointment was five minutes away so I jump in my car and I'm on my phone and I'm heading out and I hear this little tap on my window. So I roll down my window and it's this man. He says my battery is dead. Can you give me a jump? Now, at that moment I had this twinge in my spirit. Said help this man. And I said I'd love to but I'm late for a meeting. I've got to go. And I drive away. And my heart is very heavy because I'm thinking that's an opportunity and I feel the promptings. And I'd like to be able to tell you that I got half way down Park Avenue and I turned around and I helped the guy and I had an opportunity to share Christ with him and in a minute we're going to baptize him. But you know what? It didn't work that way. And I carried that through the entire day. And I have wonder, even now what did you have for me Lord that I passed over?

Now, this has happened to me in the past. We're all slow learners. Sometimes we have to go through the same thing over and over again but I tell you but usually when I've come to a situation like this in my life I'm going to walk through that door. I'm going to let whatever go and I'm going to follow the prompting of the Lord. Because every time I've followed a prompting of God it leads me to something I would have never imagined. If I'd just listened it leads me into a life that I could not script and that's the life waiting for you.

Have you ever, let's be honest, have you ever gotten in you Christian life where it's kind of boring? It's kind of dry. Your prayers are bouncing off the ceiling? Do you know what happened somewhere along the line you stopped listening to the promptings. Because when you follow through scripture people who listened to the promptings they live lives that are remarkable. Just, the last place I'm going to have you turn to. Come on over to the book of Hebrews. Hebrews, chapter 11. I want you to turn there because I'm going to send you out with your programs stuffed at Hebrews chapter 11 with some homework. But, Hebrews, chapter 11. It's often called the chapter of faith. The Halls of Faith. Do you know why? Because we learn, and I'll just go ahead and you catch up. Because we learn in verse 11 that faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. So, we walk by faith not by sight. That's

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basically what it's saying. Now, are you there? You're at Hebrews chapter 11. Follow me. Verse 4. By faith Abel. Drop down to verse 5. By faith Enoch. Drop down to verse 7. By faith Noah. Keep going – verse 8. By faith Abraham. Keep going with me. By faith, verse 23 Moses. Drop down to verse 31. By faith Rahab, the prostitute. I love that. And what more he says. By faith. Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, prophets. He says I've got too many people, I've run out of time. You follow these people. You follow these people through the stories of the scripture and you know what you'll find? Every single one of them they didn't live perfect lives. They didn't have all the knowledge in the world. Most of them were not of the elite, upper class. You follow these people through the stories of scripture and you know what you find about every single one of them? They all learned to listen to the promptings of God and what happened with them? These people had dynamic lives of faith. Do you hear that? You want a dynamic life of faith? Have a willing heart with a listening spirit.

Look, I can teach you the blocks and we'll get there but you have to get over the emotional fear of even stepping out and speaking on behalf of God. So the core – what do I want you to develop in your life? I want you to develop a willing heart. Go home, this week, some time, it doesn't matter when. It could be today. It could be later in the week. Find some time and just process saying to God, God, use me. Process what hurdles you might need to jump over. Process exactly what you've been leaning on as your own understanding. Lean off of that and lean and trust in God. Go through the process of physically saying to God use me. I have a willing heart.

And then secondly learn what it means to listen to the Spirit. And how do you do that? Go to the Word. Go back here to Hebrews chapter 11 and go through these stories and realize that your story is yet to be added to chapter 11. It's your story of someday saying by faith God used me and I had the opportunity to lay the blocks out and to tell someone about grace and they received that and they are a changed person today. You say, I want that. Then go. Go. That's what he tells us. Go with a willing heart and a listening spirit. You say, yeah, but what am I supposed to say? Well, I'll tell you that next week. So you have to come back. Let's pray together.