

Series Title / Forward: Our God-given Mission and Vision  
Message Title: Called Forward / Patrick Murphy / 10/18/20

Intro: The 100 questions for community groups. Favorite question: If you could get coffee with Jesus and anyone from history who would it be? ...

The person someone chooses reveals a lot about who they want to become or who they want to learn from. How many people would choose Jesus that don't believe in him.

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of our Forward Series, Our God given Mission and Vision. The past two weeks Jeff reminded us as Christians and believers in Christ we are [looking forward; trusting in the sovereignty of God and looking to Christ as the author and finisher of salvation](#). And last week, Pressing Forward, we are live as a runner committing every fiber of the being to win the race, we too with every fiber of our being pressing forward into the good news of Jesus.

Christ is calling his people forward to tell their stories of grace and forgiveness to win our community and world for Jesus.

The call forward is not free; it is often uncomfortable and requires great faith. Yet the people who answer Christ's call to testify of His goodness receive a blessing and peace that is not achievable. Sometimes the call comes unexpectedly without a preceding action or thought—however, every call for believers to come forward issues from Christ's compassion and unconditional love.

## **1. Christ's love calls us forward for our presence to testify about him.**

**Luke 13:12-13** Jesus saw her, he called out to her, “Woman, you are free of your disability.” <sup>13</sup> Then he laid his hands on her, and instantly she was restored and began to glorify God.”

**What propels Jesus to call any of us forward? Unconditional love and for glory for God.** The woman's suffering for 18 years is hard to grasp, but given the life expectancy of that age, she was crippled for well over half of her life, with a good possibility it was almost all of her life.

- Jesus sees her, has compassion for her, and without her permission or a request, calls out to her, saying, “you are free.” Those who heard Jesus' word understood Jesus was both physically and spiritually releasing her from the bondage she could not do herself. Jesus knows her plight and pain and eradicates it. What does she do as a result? She praises God! Look at what Jesus has said after hearing the death of Lazarus.

**John 11:4** “<sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard it he said, “This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”

- Jesus' call additionally draws her into conflict. She is healed, but her world remains hostile. The implications of Jesus' actions bring attention to her in a way she certainly doesn't want.

**Luke 13:14-17** “<sup>14</sup> But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, responded by telling the crowd, “There are six days when work should be done; therefore come on those days and be healed and not on the Sabbath day.” <sup>15</sup> But the Lord answered him and said, “Hypocrites! Doesn't each one of you untie his ox or donkey from the feeding trough on the Sabbath and lead it to water? <sup>16</sup> Satan has bound this woman, a daughter of Abraham, for eighteen years—shouldn't she be untied from this bondage on the Sabbath day?” <sup>17</sup> When he had said these things, all his adversaries were humiliated, but the whole crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things he was doing.

The synagogue leader appalled by Jesus' action rebukes him, his miracle, and by association, the one who received the miracle. With a vein bulging in his forehead, the man cries foul at the woman's healing, but on what grounds? That Jesus isn't following the rules? So Jesus swiftly defeats his accusers, exposing their lack of empathy and love.

**Luke's inclusion of the miracle acts as a mirror exposing the unchanging heart of the self-justifying religious elite.** Jesus' previous miracles of healing a demon possessed man in chapter 4 and healing a leper and a paralytic man in chapter 5 ought to be changing the religious elite's perspective towards Jesus. That he is not a fluke, he has authority, and his message is right. This miracle is a mirror reflecting the real disposition they have towards Jesus and his mission. A mission to redeem the broken

Series Title / Forward: Our God-given Mission and Vision

Message Title: Called Forward / Patrick Murphy / 10/18/20

relationship between creation and God caused by sin, and when accomplished, the redeemed worship. They will bring glory and praise to God for what he has done. So, Jesus calls our unnamed woman forward as a witness out of love for her to display the transformation he brings.

**Jesus calls for our presence to testify that he is not an observer, but a transformer of lives and the initiator of salvation.** Kelsey and I unintentionally stumbled upon a great ministry of presence. Sitting in our front yard in lawn chairs. We stumbled into it because we have kids who want to ride their bikes up a somewhat busy street. Our two-year-old wants nothing more than to be like his big brothers. So, we sit outside and quickly got to know our neighbors and they us.

Like the woman, Jesus sees us and calls us to freedom through faith. Each passing day he is transforming us out of the bondage to sin that deforms the soul. Changing the way we think, the way we feel, the way we act. Christ has called our mere presence to testify that he is worthy of glory and praise.

Where can people hear your story. Where can they see or hear of the transformations Jesus is bringing.

His call doesn't stop there, though. Presence is only the beginning; he wants our words, actions, devotion.

## 2. Christ's love calls us out of anonymity to reveal our faith.

### Mark 5:25-35

On his way to heal the daughter of Jairus, Jesus is interrupted by a desperate woman. She was suffering from a flow of blood that will not cease. Her anguish intensified at the hands of physicians who could not heal her. She was an outcast living on the outskirts of her town, and to her people, she was unclean. Out of desperation, she pushed through the crowds of people, ignoring her constraint to keep away from others, for her uncleanness was transmissible. Yet she pursued the rabbi as her only hope for healing. Thinking, “this great man, this revered holy man, maybe if I touch the holiest part of his robe, the tassels dangling on his sleeves, maybe then I will know relief and finally, be free.” With her arm stretched out, she brushes Jesus' garments, and to her amazement, she feels a healing transformation in her body. With a sense of great relief, she exhales, experiencing contentment and peace she can't remember having had. However, her new joy was turned to agony when the Holy man stops, turning around and calls out, “who touched me, who touched my clothes.” Fear replaces joy.

What does she fear her healing is complete? Why should she be afraid? In her mind, she's thinking:

- I have stolen his power and made him unclean.
- I touched a holy man and sure to be stoned.
- I have felt his power. He is great, and I am nothing.

After calling out, "who touched me," Jesus pans over the crowd. His gaze is calming the people to a hush, and his eyes are piercing each person.

But why is he calling her out? Indeed, he knows who touched him. Wouldn't a wink to her secretly been sufficient? Hasn't this poor woman already suffered enough public humiliation? Why call her out? Why call her forward? Without knowing why His eyes catch hers. She casts herself down at his feet as if to plead for her life. She begins confessing her story. **She confesses her plight, she confesses her plan, and she confesses her faith.** Every aspect of her story is grounded upon faith in Jesus being able to do for her what no one else could. Where doctors failed, where her resources failed, when her people abandoned her, Jesus was it. He was all she had left, and she was right to place her faith in him. So, he called her forward so she could announce to all that Jesus saves.

Jesus wants more for her than just healing; he wants to restore her to life. He wants her to know the one who healed her also sees her, knows her, and loves her. He says to her, in **Mark 5:34** “**Daughter, he said to her, “your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be healed from your affliction.”** This is the only time Jesus gives a woman the endearing title of daughter scripture. More significant is his blessing to her of peace. **More than a simple pleasantry, he provides with her *shalom*, the peace of wholeness, well-being, prosperity, security, friendship, and salvation.** Her healing cost her something. It cost her anonymity.

Series Title / Forward: Our God-given Mission and Vision

Message Title: Called Forward / Patrick Murphy / 10/18/20

Jesus called her forward to identify her healer and acknowledge the debt she owes him. We are now as the woman was then, being called forward to identify our souls' healer and acknowledge the debt we owe to him for our peace and restoration to life.

As a youth pastor, I would ask the senior class to share their Christian testimonies with the rest of the youth group at the end of each year. A testimony is a person's retelling of their salvation, ongoing transformation, and God's goodness in their life. The students dreaded it and loved it all at the same time. The result was always the same. The ones who listened were blessed, knowing that God is alive and active in our world. The students speaking relived the joy of their salvation and recognized how their agony and hardship became pillars for their faith.

TS: Inevitably, Christ's call forward faces' opposition. At times the resistance is external from people who are opposed to Christ, but more often than not, the opposition is internal.

### **3. Christ's love calls us to persistent devotion.**

**Mark 10:17-22 “17 As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 18 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus asked him. “No one is good except God alone.”**

The man was pious and wealthy. Men want to be him, and women wanted to be with him! Unlike the two women before, he was on the opposite end of the social strata. **Loved and honored, he approaches Jesus seeking him out, wondering if there is anything in the fine print he is missing for eternal life.** He was a shoo-in for eternal life in his society, and by their standards, he was "good." When he addresses Jesus with a mild pleasantry of “good teacher,” Jesus rebuffs him. “Why do you call me good... no one is god except God alone.”

**19 You know the commandments: Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not defraud; honor your father and mother.”, 20 He said to him, “Teacher, I have kept all these from my youth.”**

**Jesus confronts our “goodness” and any notion that goodness comes from humanity.** Jesus undermines the rich young ruler's assumption of goodness, presenting him with the need he still has but doesn't recognize. Jesus lists five commandments, and the man proudly touts he's kept them all from his youth, but five is only half the picture. Jesus mentions there is one thing he lacks. Out of the five that are missing from the list, there is one that stands out, "You shall have no other God's before me."

**21 Looking at him, Jesus loved him and said to him, “You lack one thing: Go, sell all you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” 22 But he was dismayed by this demand, and he went away grieving, because he had many possessions.**

Jesus calls the man forward because he loves him. Because he has something extraordinary to offer him, but the call has a cost. The cost of denying oneself the comforts quickly idolized. This man is to give away his possession and follow Jesus, but he can't do it. His "goodness" is in his possessions, in his status, is in his effort. Jesus was showing him the one thing he lacked. He had another idol before God. **His God was standing before him, calling him into the fullness of eternal life, and he walks away.** Brothers and Sisters, God's loves for each and everyone of us calls forward to receive the joy of being His witnesses.

TS: Our God is calling us forward to testify about his grace and forgiveness. How do you do it?

Series Title / Forward: Our God-given Mission and Vision  
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Three questions for us to answer.

- **How is your presence in this world communicating the loving transformation of Jesus grace and forgiveness?**
- **Why in your testimony of faith needed in your community – in both Christian and non-Christian circles?**
- **What is “the cost” for you to become a more devoted witness?**

The hypothetical question I asked at the beginning, would anyone choose Jesus to get coffee or lunch with from history, is made irrelevant because they have every opportunity to meeting through us. From sitting on your front lawn, sharing your faith, to admitting sacrifices. Out of love Christ is calling us forward, will you answer the call?

Pray with me.

Father,