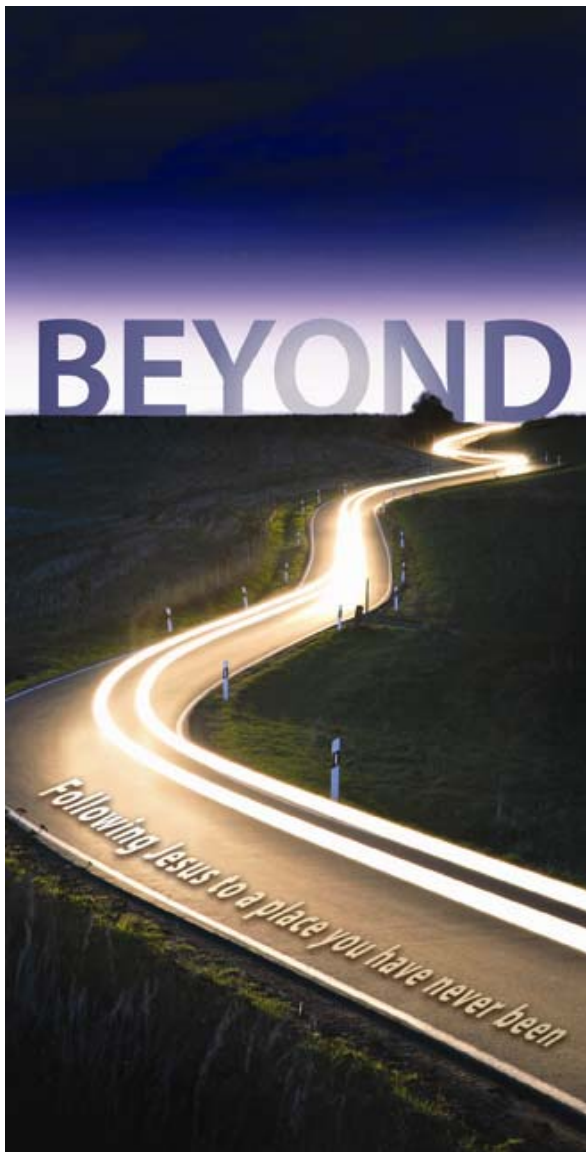


# ***BEYOND***

## SHORT BLURB:

**“Follow me!”** With two simple words, Jesus comes crashing into our lives. If you dare to follow, you quickly discover Jesus **ALWAYS** takes you to new places! He is on the move in our world. And keeping up with him means leaving some things – even precious things -- behind. The call to follow Jesus means going **BEYOND** where you are now. **BEYOND** what’s comfortable. **BEYOND** the routine. **BEYOND** the way we practice our Christianity. **BEYOND** the kind of people we are today. It’s time to go **BEYOND**. Way **BEYOND**.



## Medium length BLURB:

Jesus says, “Follow me!” Those who dare follow him quickly discover Jesus always *takes you to new places!* He is on the move in our world, and keeping up with him means leaving certain things behind. The call to follow Jesus means going **BEYOND** Christianity-lite. It means going **BEYOND** some of the comfortable ways we live and “do church.” Take a good look at our world today. Followers of Jesus know this is no time for business as usual. *Deep in you heart, do you hear the urgent call to move **BEYOND?*** Will you dare allow the radical message of Jesus Christ to confront you and disturb you into new ways? When that happens, we find ourselves going **BEYOND** where are now. **BEYOND** the kind of Christians we are today. **BEYOND** the church we are today. **BEYOND** comfortable agendas. **BEYOND** the same ol’, same ol’. **BEYOND** what we can do on our own power. Jesus is calling. God wants to change our lives, and the face of the church today, and he needs adventurous followers to do it. It’s time to go **BEYOND**. Way **BEYOND**.

## LONGER BLURB:

On the shores of Galilee, Jesus called out to some friends one day with words that would change their lives forever. “Follow me.” When they dropped their nets and followed Jesus *it changed everything*. Those first disciples found themselves going **BEYOND** what they knew to new worlds of trust, love, courage, and powerful action. That’s what it meant to follow Jesus back then.

It still does. In days like these, those who truly follow Jesus are being led **BEYOND** where we’ve been as disciples. **BEYOND** where our comfortable Christian lives are these days. **BEYOND** where our churches are right now. **BEYOND** the horizons of our expectations, and **BEYOND** the limits of our comfort zone.

The world is in trouble without Christ. Our culture is adrift. More and more people are hurting and misguided – so many aimless sheep without a shepherd. The colossal problems we see in our families, our communities, our cities, and our nation are overwhelming. It’s truly **BEYOND** us.

What’s worse, the Christian church in America is losing ground – big time. Many congregations seem invisible. Most have lost their impact. Too many Christians are seen as irrelevant, often missing the issues people – and Jesus – care about. In the world’s eyes, the reputation of Christians is bleak: we are bigoted, marginal, irrelevant, weak. And inside the church we sometimes wonder if we’re really getting the job done – are we truly making real disciples, transforming lives, changing the world the way Jesus intends....?

This is no time for business as usual. We need the Power and the Presence that will take our lives **BEYOND** where we are now and lead us **BEYOND**. It’s time for our

ministries to go **BEYOND** our current ways of “doing church.” We need believers with guts and leaders with faith who will drop the old nets and follow Jesus – wherever he leads -- even if it means changing everything.

### **BRIEF OVERVIEW:**

If you are hungry to follow Jesus with courage and faith, then let's go:

## **BEYOND the Old Life (1 of 6)**

*Daring to follow Jesus past the edges of the way things are – even when you know it means leaving treasured things behind -- so he can lead you to a new place. You need to drop some nets, because the life you are living right now is the Old Life. In so many ways, Jesus is calling you BEYOND.*

## **BEYOND the Great Omission (2 of 6)**

*Making more and better disciples – with Jesus-like passion for both. Letting God stir in us an equal passion for reaching the lost and growing up disciples.*

## **BEYOND Words (3 of 6)**

*Being Jesus in word and deed through holistic global impact -- that makes our mission more than just talk. When the Word becomes flesh faith takes action where the rubber meets the road.*

## **BEYOND Racial Zones (4 of 6)**

*Moving past our self-segregating ways to the way Christ's church looks in Acts and Revelation. When we realize this issue is close to God's heart we'll move beyond racism to gracism.*

## **BEYOND The Walls (5 of 6)**

*Reaching beyond our buildings into our community with uncommon love and service. We need to stop going to church. It's time to be the church.*

## **BEYOND Me (6 of 6)**

*Living today with an eye on eternity will help me make an impact, and finish well. The biggest obstacle to going BEYOND is...me.*

<b>EXPANDED OVERVIEW:</b>
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If you are hungry to follow Jesus with courage and faith, then let's go:

**TITLE: BEYOND the Old Life (1 of 6)**

**THEME:** *Daring to follow Jesus past the edges of the way things are – even when you know it means leaving treasured things behind -- so he can lead you to a new place.*

**TEXTS:** Mark 1:14-20

<sup>14</sup>After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. <sup>15</sup>"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. **Repent and believe** the good news!"

<sup>16</sup>As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. <sup>17</sup>"**Come, follow me,**" Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." <sup>18</sup>**At once they left their nets and followed him.**

**TOPICS/THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS:**

Jesus is not stagnant or dormant, dead or static. He is on the move and his invitation is to FOLLOW him. Christians are Christ followers, always on the move. That means following Jesus will take you to go BEYOND where we are now. That means I always have a next step. It means Jesus is leading me AWAY from some things, and TOWARD some things. BEYOND is about moving out of comfortable patterns, preferences, and ruts. Without going BEYOND we can not experience REPENTANCE. Without going BEYOND we can not move forward in SANCTIFICATION. The life I'm living right now, whatever it is like, is the OLD LIFE which Jesus is calling me BEYOND.

**TAKE AWAY:** I "get" the whole BEYOND thing – and sense the urgency for the CHURCH to go BEYOND. But I make it personal today, by realizing that I am not where Jesus wants me to be yet in my spiritual life with him. I identify a next step of faith I must take to follow Jesus. What do I need to add to my life to more fully follow? What net do I need to drop? Where is he leading me to go BEYOND?

Ultimately I recognize that in some deeply important way, God is NOT FINISHED with me yet, and I have some place I need to be. The only way I'll get there is by following Jesus. I need to finally get it that this present life I'm living IS precisely "the old life" that I am called to drop like a fishing net in order to pursue Jesus full time.

**TO CONSIDER:**

- Message includes a haunting video showing how the world is changing.
- At Mountain we included some vision for our multi-site campus as part of the application to go BEYOND as a church. The message could focus instead more narrowly on the need for individual believers to go BEYOND.
- We gave away small pieces of rugged fish net as a keepsake to remember the things they were laying down in order to follow Jesus more fully. They are

symbols of the OLD LIFE that must be left behind in order to go with Jesus BEYOND. We still see these nets dangling from rear view mirrors and stick shifts and tucked in Bibles and wallets as daily reminders. We bought large nets and cut them up into approximately 4 x 6 inch squares. It was an inexpensive and memorable takeaway.

## **TITLE: BEYOND the Great Omission (2 of 6)**

**THEME:** *Making more and better disciples – with Jesus-like passion for both*

**TEXTS:** Matthew 28:18-20

18Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Therefore go and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptizing** them in<sup>a</sup> the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and **teaching** them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

### **TOPICS / THEOLOGICAL IDEAS to TOUCH ON:**

*Evangelism* – aching with the heart of Christ for those far from God

*Spiritual Formation* – aching to see Christ formed in those close to God

This message talks about the importance of a healthy church and a healthy Christ follower caring with equal passion for BOTH halves of the great commission. It will poke around to reveal the potential *blind spots* people have when we omit either “half” of this Great Co-mission from Jesus – which is what happens when we care only for reaching people but not for growth, or when we care only for feeding ourselves but are not concerned if others have spiritual food.

We will speak frankly about the importance of reaching people who are far from God and how that is sometimes difficult and uncomfortable -- and how ugly churches and people become when they simply don't give a rip about it. We'll speak candidly about the false perception that arises when we hide behind a false front of spiritual maturity when it is nothing more than a thin guise for the selfishness of an unconverted heart which does not beat for the lost. Where this spirit of concern for the lost is not alive in a person, we have to ask, is the Spirit of Jesus alive in the person? We must let God mold us into his likeness.

We must also speak frankly on the other hand as well, about the importance of growing up. Making babies is fun – even spiritually speaking. But there goes with it the responsibility to grow up. Move off milk to meat. To get past the “feed me!” stage, the elementary doctrines (Hebrews) and childish things (1 Corinthians) until Christ is formed in us (Colossians 1:28).

Both of these we will attempt to apply both corporately in a “this is what this church is committed to” kind of way, at the same time as applying it personally in a “this is what each of us must be committed to” kind of way.

**TAKE AWAY:**

I feel Jesus calling me BEYOND where I am now in terms of my heart and actions in REACHING out in evangelism, or BEYOND where I am now in my thoughts and character in terms of GROWING in spiritual formation. We’re looking for a personal application in which I take responsibility to reach out to others AND grow myself.

**TO CONSIDER:**

We used a homemade video of two guys in a row boat – to show what happens when you only row with one oar. You go in circles. So it is with a church that only reaches the lost without growing them up, or a church that is all jazzed about discipleship but doesn’t reach those far from God. Jesus had both oars in the water. It was an easy video to create and made the point memorable.

**TITLE: BEYOND Words (3 of 6)**

**THEME:** *Being Jesus in word and deed through holistic global impact -- that makes our mission more than just talk*

**TEXTS:** Matthew 4:23

**TOPICS / THEOLOGICAL IDEAS to TOUCH ON:**

Showing how we are called to go BEYOND to make a global impact through holistic ministry to the whole person. We dare not pass by on the other side of the road while a world is hurting without Christ. Notice the Kingdom lived out in the parable was MORE THAN JUST WORDS. The gospel is more than words.

Jesus’ ministry was ‘holistic’ – Matthew 9: he came “teaching and preaching and healing the sick.” The message Jesus brings makes a difference in real life, not just the “spiritual” realm. It improves life. So our missions is more than just throwing money at things, or making ourselves feel as if we’ve done something, but truly helping to transform, by helping shape communities with the good news of Jesus.

**TAKE AWAY:**

I discover that God is alive and well around the world in many places far beyond America, and I’m encouraged to realize what a great world wide movement this is!

I hear stirring stories about what a difference Christ makes in life – changing the woman from the streets to a contributing member of her family and our Family.

We interviewed Doug Priest, from CMFI who did a great job helping tell stories of what God is doing around the world.

I see some concrete ways I can plug into global impact through my church (child sponsorship, short term missions, special offerings, etc.)

How is God calling ME to go BEYOND?

**TO CONSIDER:**

Promote short term trips and other cool stuff happening around the world with missions.

Include interview with Doug Priest from CMF about our partnership in Africa, and the holistic ministry being done there – examples of life and whole community transformation.

We used the amazing video called “**A Thousand Questions**” on this week. It is a Willow Creek product and was shown at the 2008 Leadership Summit. It is amazing and powerful and was the high point of the service. Highly recommended. It is available at the Willow Creek resource page which you can access on the BEYOND resources page.

**TITLE: BEYOND Racial Zones (4 of 6)**

**THEME:** *Moving past our self-segregating ways to the way Christ’s church looks in Acts and Revelation*

**TEXTS:** Galatians 3:28

28There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, **for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Acts 2:5-9; Revelation 7:9

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

16**So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view.** Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18All this is from God, who **reconciled** us to himself through Christ and **gave us the ministry of reconciliation**: 19that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And **he has committed to us the message of reconciliation**. 20We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21God made him who had no sin to be sin<sup>a</sup> for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**TAKE AWAY:**

I understand that racism is sin, and feel convicted about it, and I think very deeply about ingrained or inherited assumptions, prejudices, stereotypes and biases I have which are lodged inside of me – which are keeping me from thinking, feeling, or acting according to the way Jesus thinks and therefore prevents the oneness Jesus intends for his people.

I make a commitment to build a bridge of friendship with someone different than me. I become an agent of reconciliation – not just to God, but to another.

Where is God calling me to step BEYOND racial zones and go BEYOND politeness to true reconciliation?

**TITLE: BEYOND The Walls (5 of 6)**

**THEME:** *Reaching beyond our buildings into our community with uncommon love and service*

**TEXT: Matthew 5: Salt and Light**

**TOPICS/THEOLOGICAL IDEAS:**

Community impact – when Jesus’ followers show up with uncommon love and service, it turns heads, opens doors, and changes hearts.

Jesus has left the building – he’s not just “in here” but “out there” – when we go as the Body of Christ – to be Jesus in our community.

We’re called to be living proof of a loving God to a watching world.

We’ve talked about global impact – but we also need to be the light of Christ here at home in our own back yard. We are called to make a difference at the GLOCAL level.

Salt preserves. We are the salt of the earth. Light improves how things look. We are the light of the world. We are called to serve as a preservative and to improve the world we live in – “thy kingdom come, on earth, as it is in heaven.”

This question: If the church disappeared from our community, would anybody notice or care? Same question applied to my own life. Am I adding any Jesus-value that would be missed?

**TAKE AWAY:** I am sold out in the belief that the church is at its best not just “in here” but “out there” and I decide to help this church go BEYOND its walls by being Jesus through serving and loving and sharing my faith. I know HOW to do this practically because of the examples and on ramps provided.

**TO CONSIDER:** Lots of ways to sign up for stuff, and well featured advertising for ServeFest, Second Saturday Serve, and ways for small groups and families and individuals to get involved in serving.

Throw out “ideas” more than programs – so that they can “roll their own” and this can be a value that takes wing – rather than trying only to get them to feed what we’ve got planned.

**TITLE: BEYOND Me (6 of 6)**

**THEME:** *Living today with an eye on eternity will help me make an impact, and finish well. I am leaving a legacy behind. Is the legacy I'm building about me and mine or is it a legacy that continues to have a Kingdom impact long after I'm gone?*

**TEXT:** Numbers 13-14 – Caleb

**TOPICS / THEOLOGICAL IDEAS to TOUCH ON:**

We seriously consider “what kind of old man/woman do I want to be?” Then I begin becoming that person today.

Through this series, we've seen that Jesus says, follow me and he's always on the move. We've been called to follow Jesus Beyond to a place we've never been. To follow Jesus Beyond however, means that we never stop following. Going Beyond Me requires shifting our focus off of ourselves and to seek Kingdom first to the very end – and Beyond. This shift enables us to live missionally today instead of being wrapped up in our pursuits. It enables us to pour ourselves into others, inviting them to join us on mission, both now and after we're gone. Finally, going Beyond Me causes me to live my life and leave my life with Eternal priorities.

*I am leaving a legacy behind. Is the legacy I'm building about me and mine or is it a legacy that continues to have a Kingdom impact long after I'm gone?*

**TAKE AWAY:**

I realize the biggest obstacle to going BEYOND is ME. So I make decisions today that will impact what kind of legacy I leave.

