

Whatever It Takes

Joy Over One, Pt. 5

Mark 2:1-12

Allan McCullough

Grace Hill Church

April 7, 2019



I. INTRODUCTION

a. This June, Kim and I will celebrate our 10 Year Anniversary!

- i. But we dated for 6.5 years before that so we've been together as a couple for 16.5 years.
 - That's crazy!
- ii. And one of the things I love doing for Kim is pulling off the epic surprise.
 - And over the 16.5 years that we have been together, I have pulled off three epic surprises with 100% shock value.
- iii. The first was when we were in college.
 - Both Kim and I were back here in town because the next morning, Kim was flying out to study abroad for three months in Athens, Greece.
 1. She had an early morning flight from Dulles to JFK and then a 10-hour layover at JFK until she flew to Athens.
 2. And she was really nervous about this long layover by herself at JFK.
 - So, I remember saying good bye to her and then getting in my car to drive back to school, which was about two hours away because I had class in the morning.
 1. And as I was driving, the idea hit my head.
 2. I'm not driving back to school. I'm driving to New York City!



3. So, I drove to New York City through the night, skipped all my classes, lied to my parents about where I was and was waiting for Kim at JFK airport when she got off the plane.
 4. Completely surprised her.
- iv. **The second epic surprise was during our first year of marriage.**
- I had lied to my wife that I was going away for the weekend with some buddies to South Carolina to ride four-wheelers.
 - But I really drove down there to go to a breeder where I got Kim and puppy.
 - And I got back on a Saturday afternoon and Kim was working but when she walked into our home after work, there was a puppy there to greet her.
- v. **And the last epic surprise was about two years ago on our eighth anniversary...**
- I organized a four-night trip to the Florida Keys where I secretly cleared her schedule, figured out people to watch both of our kids for four nights in row, hid the finances from her - and the night before we flew out told her she needed to pack because we had to be at the airport early in the morning.
- vi. **When it comes to surprises, for me, it's all about the shock value.**
- It's only successful if the person had literally no clue it was coming.
 1. I am willing to do whatever it takes to pull off an epic surprise.



b. And when you think about that attitude – a whatever it takes attitude.

- i. What that means is that one is willing to do things they normally wouldn't do, willing to sacrifice things they normally wouldn't sacrifice in order to pull-off whatever it is they are trying to do.
 - So, for me, in order to pull off these surprises, I did things like lie, spend more money than I probably should have, drive all night...
 - Because I was willing to do whatever it takes to pull off that surprise.

c. And as we continue in our series “Joy Over One” – I want us to think about what it would look like to have this kind of approach when it comes to our faith.

- i. The Bible says there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance.
 - And so, as a part of this series, we have challenged all of us to commit to one person - who lives locally, and who does not know Jesus - to pray for them, invite them to church, and to share the gospel with them.
- ii. And I want us to consider this morning, what it would look like to take a “whatever it takes” approach to creating an encounter between this person and Jesus.



- To take an approach where we are willing to step out of our comfort zone, to do things we normally wouldn't do, to sacrifice in a way that we normally wouldn't sacrifice in order for our one to have an encounter with Jesus.
- iii. And we read of a great example of some people who did whatever it took to get their friend in front of Jesus in Mark 2.

II. MARK 2:1-12

a. In Mark 2, we are towards the beginning of the ministry of Jesus and he had just returned to where he was living in a town called Capernaum in Galilee.

- i. And as we'll read, we'll see that a bunch of people had crowded into a house – the house that Jesus was staying in or the house of one of his disciples – and Jesus was teaching them...and a few people were desperate to create an encounter between their friend and Jesus.

b. Read Mark 2:1-12

- i. Here is an example of people who were willing to do whatever it takes to get their friend in front of Jesus.
- They were willing to do something unconventional, they were willing to do something risky...
 1. They dug a hole in the roof of someone else's house to get their friend in front of Jesus.



2. How would you react if we were all gathered at your house...and someone was teaching the Bible...and someone wanted to get in to hear the Word of God...and they smashed window or ripped a hole in your roof to get in?
 3. You would not be happy.
- These guys did whatever it took to get their friend in front of Jesus.
 1. And that's what we need to wrestle with this morning: Am I willing to do whatever it takes to create encounters with Jesus for others?
 2. Am I willing to do whatever it takes to create an encounter between Jesus and my one?
 - And so as we think about this along with Mark 2 – I have three points I want us to take away from Mark 2.

III. POINT #1 – OUR JOB IS TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO CREATE ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS FOR OTHERS.

a. Read Mark 2:4 again.

- i. See in this text, the men carrying the paralytic wanted their friend to encounter Jesus but they ran into a problem.
 - The house was too crowded. They couldn't get close to Jesus.
 1. They had a reason to tell their friend: "sorry man, not today...maybe we'll try again next time."
 2. They had an out. They ran into an obstacle. They had an excuse.



- But these guys were willing to do whatever it takes...they were not going to be stopped by obstacles.
 1. Because they loved their friend and they knew that what he needed was Jesus.
 2. And they were willing to get him in front of Jesus no matter the cost.
 3. They were willing to do what they normally would not do.
 4. They were willing to sacrifice.
 - And this is our job too. To do whatever it takes to get people in front of Jesus.
- ii. Now, obviously, Jesus is no longer with us physically and so your not going to run into a situation where you need to rip a hole into a roof to lower someone in front of Jesus.
- Our job is not to get someone physically before Jesus...our job is to deliver the message that Jesus gave us.
 - So, what does it look like, today, for us to have a whatever it takes attitude to get this message to people?
- iii. I have two things we have to be willing to do in order to have a whatever it takes attitude.
- b. First, we have to be willing to overcome our personal discomfort when it comes to talking to others about our faith.**
- i. You know I imagine that when those four guys were carrying their friend to the house and they realized that the house was too crowded for them to get in...



- That there was one guy in the group, because there is always this guy in the group, who was like: “Guys, I have an idea! We need shovels, rope, and a sheet.”
 1. This is all speculation because this is not in the Bible.
 - But I imagine that one of the guys had the idea to dig a hole in the roof and there probably was at least one guy in the group, because this guy is always in the group as well, that was like: “I don’t know if this is a good idea...what if we get in trouble...what if the roof collapses...what if the homeowner gets mad...?”
 - And those guys had to make the decision...that they were going to overcome the obstacle, overcome the discomfort, not make an excuse, and get their friend in front of Jesus.
- ii. **Many of us are really uncomfortable with the idea of sharing our faith or inviting someone to church.**
- We’ll consider doing it because we feel like we should do it.
 - But if an obstacle comes up or if we find an easy excuse...we’ll take it.
 1. We could hurt somebody if we put a hole in the roof.
 2. The owner will get mad at us.
 3. I had a long day at work today.
 4. I don’t know what to say.
 5. I don’t think my neighbor would appreciate me talking to them about this.
 6. You’re not supposed to talk about this stuff in the workplace.
 7. It’s too late.



8. I'll wait till we naturally run into each other instead of initiating a conversation about this.
 9. I'll just drop some hints that I'm a Christian and let them be the one to bring it up if they're interested.
- iii. **But doing whatever it takes, means that it is going to cost us something, it means getting out of our comfort zone, it means doing things we normally don't do.**
- And we need to ask ourselves: at what point does my "whatever it takes" attitude turn into an "anything but that" attitude.
 - At what point do we say: I'm not going to dig a hole in that roof. That's crazy. That's too far.
- iv. **So, having a whatever it takes attitude means we need to be willing to overcome personal discomfort.**
- We need to be willing to say: I normally wouldn't do this...but I need to do whatever it takes to get this message to my one.
- c. And the second thing we need to be willing to do to have a whatever it takes attitude is be proactive and intentional.**
- i. If we are willing to do whatever it takes to create an encounter with Jesus for others, that means we need to proactively take the time and put in the mental effort to intentionally plan for this.



- Here's what I mean...it's not likely that your neighbor, your co-worker, your one...is going to be the one to initiate a conversation with you about Jesus.
 1. It could happen. Pray it does happen. But it's not likely.
 - It's not likely that if you put a fish on your car, talk about how you spent your weekend doing church activities, or if you pray before your meal while you're out to lunch...that your co-worker is going to drop his fork and say: "I need to know how to be saved!"
 1. Pray that happens, because that's awesome.
 2. But that cannot be our strategy.
 3. That's not a "whatever it takes" attitude.
 4. That's a passive attitude and these guys in Mark 2 were not passive...they were proactive.
 5. They made the encounter happen.
 - We need to be intentional and proactive to create an encounter with Jesus for others.
- ii. **This could be as simple as planning to spend more time with people.**
- Invite your neighbors over for a cookout.
 1. Don't wait for them to invite you first.
 - Be intentional about learning the names of the parents on your kid's sports team and planning on engaging them at games and practice instead of staring at your phone.
 1. Remember their names and what they tell you so you can follow up and show you care.
 - Go to the happy hour with your co-workers if you are able to partake in that responsibly.



1. And be a redemptive, caring presence instead of gossipy presence.
 - One of the people that I have committed to pray for and engage is a business owner here in Herndon. And I have intentionally put time in my calendar to go and be a customer at that business on a regular basis so I can begin to befriend this person.
 1. And actually last Thursday, I was talking to this person and invited them to our Easter service and they are bringing their whole family.
 2. But it took me being proactive and intentional to engage this person.
 - See, here's the thing about intentionality...it means we have to think about this person ahead of time. It means we are the ones who are proactive.
 1. We have to clear space in our schedule and our minds enough for these people.
 2. And that doesn't sound radical, but it is radical in our DC Culture.
 3. We are so busy. Our minds are so busy.
 4. It's not easy to create margin in our minds, in our schedules, in our budgets...in order to be intentional to create encounters with Jesus for others.
 - I really believe for some of us, even just that is equal to ripping a hole in a roof.
- iii. I want to brag on my wife for a little bit because she is leading our family into doing something proactive and intentional to reach out to our neighbors.



- We live at the entrance to a cul de sac in a neighborhood with a lot of kids and one of the things we've noticed is that parents seems to congregate in front of our house when their kids are playing because they are able to better watch any cars coming from where our house is.
- And so my wife had us go to Lowes and buy a wooden picnic table...and she painted it turquoise...and we're putting it in our front yard where those parents congregate.
 1. And she wants to put flowers on it, a plate of cookies, a pot of coffee, or whatever else.
- Because she wants to be intentional about creating space where our neighbors can sit and talk.
 1. And she envisions that this is a space where encounters with Jesus could occur. Amazing Idea.

iv. Here's another way you can be proactive and intentional.

- We have these Easter Invitation Cards out in the lobby.
- Go grab a stack. Go home. Bake some cookies. But them in a bag with the invitation.
 1. Knock on your neighbor's door sometime next week and say: "Happy Easter, I brought you some cookies and I wanted to invite you to my church's Easter service."
- You can plan that today. It would not be hard.
 1. Make a grocery list and schedule a time to do it.



d. Our job is to do whatever it takes to create encounters with Jesus for others.

- i. It means getting over some personal discomfort. It means being proactive.
 - That's what we have been called to do.
 - But let me encourage you with this...

IV. POINT #2 - JESUS HONORS THE FAITH OF THOSE WHO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES.

a. Mark 2:5 is one of my favorite in Scripture.

- i. **Read Mark 2:5.**
 - Did you catch that?
 - Jesus saw *THEIR* faith...
 1. That's plural. That's what's in the Greek.
 2. Jesus saw the faith of the four men who just dig a hole in the roof.
 - Then he looked at the paralytic and said: "Son, your sins are forgiven."
- ii. Jesus honors the faith of those who do whatever it takes.

b. I'll never forget about a year and a half ago, one of our members here at Grace Hill had an older family member who was dying of Leukemia.

- i. This guy was not a believer but his wife was.
 - And as he was getting closer to death, she begged him to let some people come pray for him and talk to him about Jesus.
 1. And he was hesitant.



- But she was so persistent and he could tell it really meant a lot to her, that he decided to agree for her comfort.
- ii. **So one night, me and a few others from Grace Hill went over to pray over him and share the gospel with him.**
 - And before this guy arrived at the house where we were going to do this...I read Mark 2:5 to his family.
 1. Because this family was willing to do whatever it takes for this guy encounter Jesus before he died.
 2. And we prayed that God would honor their faith.
 - That night, he was antagonistic to the gospel. Incredibly nice guy but thought we were crazy for believing in Jesus.
 1. A few weeks later. Less than 24 hours before he died. He surrendered his life to Christ.
 2. I believe God honored the faith of his family who so desperately wanted him to know Jesus.

c. And I believe Jesus honors our faith when we love someone so much that we are willing to do whatever it takes for them to encounter Jesus.

- i. I know it's hard to overcome personal discomfort to tell others about Jesus.
 - But I believe Jesus honors our willingness to overcome that discomfort.
 - That doesn't mean every person we share with will believe



- But I do believe it means if we begin to take this seriously and begin to live a life of doing whatever it takes to share Christ with people that we will see some incredible things happen.
- ii. I long for a day where we begin to see baptism after baptism after baptism because God saw the faith of this Church and decided to let this Spirit loose in saving people.
- There is nothing that will revitalize your joy in Christ...like taking a step faith in sharing Christ with someone...and then getting down on one knee alongside of me later as we baptize that person because they are declaring that Jesus is their savior.
 1. I want that for you.
 2. And Jesus will honor our faith in this.

V. POINT #3 – JESUS’ JOB IS TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO SAVE.

a. Remember, Point #1 was that our job is to do whatever it takes to create encounters with Jesus for others.

- i. And Point #3 – Jesus’s job is to do whatever it takes to save.

b. Read Mark 2:6-12.

- i. The four men who went above and beyond to get their friend in front of Jesus had no authority and no ability to heal their friend or to forgive the sins of their friend.

- That’s obvious.



1. Their job was just to get their friend in front of Jesus.
 - ii. Jesus is the one who has the authority and the ability to save.
- c. And when we talk about that our job is to whatever it takes to get people in front of Jesus, we have to understand that we have a Savior who was willing to do exactly what it took in order to save and transform the people that we are bringing to him.**
- i. Jesus was willing to step out of the comfort of his heavenly dwelling with God the Father.
 - And not only take on human flesh but enter into a broken world where sin, temptation, and brokenness would be all around him.
 - ii. Despite living a righteous life, Jesus was willing to be arrested, beaten, spat upon, mocked, and nailed to a cross all while keeping silent and not defending himself.
 - And even though He had the power and authority to get himself off that cross and to end the pain and the agony, and even though people mocked him and said if he really was God he would do that...he stayed on the cross.
 - He was willing to do whatever it takes.



- iii. **Despite never betraying his Father, the sin of all of us was placed on Him and God the Father turned his back and allowed his son to endure His wrath for our sin.**
- And he died and went to the grave and paid off every debt that you and I owe for our sin....and stayed in the grave paying off that debt until it was finished...and rose again from the dead having accomplished what needed to be done so we could be saved...so our one could be saved.
- iv. **This is the message that we have been called to deliver to those in this world who do not know Jesus.**
- This is the message that you have been called to deliver to your one.
 - And your job is to do whatever it takes to get that message to them.
 - Because when you get this message to people, you have created an encounter between them and Jesus.
- v. **And Jesus' job is to save. Jesus' job is to do the work of forgiveness and reconciliation and transformation in their hearts.**
- You don't have to worry about having the power and ability to change their hearts, convince their minds, and heal their souls.
 - That's Jesus' job.
- vi. **Our job is to get them in front of Jesus.**



d. Here's my question...

- i. Are we going to be that guy who at the first obstacle, when an easy excuse comes up, we say...we'll try it some other time.
- ii. Or are we going to be the guy who says: who's got a shovel and some rope?
 - Let's get this guy to Jesus.

VI. PRAY

