



VOX CHURCH :: Start With Yes

Keep Saying Yes

Justin Kendrick :: Sunday, January 19th, 2020

We are in a teaching series called "Start With Yes", start with "yes". This idea that "yes" has a profound power in our lives, and I want to look at a story today in the Book of Acts; this is in the New Testament, Acts Chapter 10, and we'll read kind of the end of the story to start, and then we'll go back and read some of the other portions of the story to fill in the gaps, but I want to begin in Verse 30 of Acts Chapter 10 and I'll read down to Verse 39.

It says this, "And Cornelius said four days ago about this hour, I was praying in my house about the ninth hour, and behold a man stood before me in bright clothing and said, 'Cornelius your prayers have been heard, your alms have been remembered before God. Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon, who is called Peter; he's lodging in the house of Simon, a Tanner by the sea.' So I sent for you at once and you've been kind enough to come. Now, therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you had been commanded by the Lord." Verse 34 is where we'll focus. It says this, "And so Peter opened his mouth and say truly," everybody say, "truly". "Truly," he says, "I understand that God shows no partiality." If you want to jot some notes down today, the title of the sermon is, "Keep Saying Yes." Let's get to work, let's open our hearts to God, and invite him to speak to us today.

I don't know about you, but for years now I have suffered with what I would call the natural "no". The natural "no" is the proclivity or inclination to say "no" even before you know everything that's involved. You know, like my kids might come to me and say "Daddy, can I buy?" And I'm like, "No." It's like, "I don't even know what you want to buy, but the answer's "no." "Can we spend... ""No." "Can we go... " "No." "Can I try... " "No." It's just this natural "No", like it's the assumption that things aren't going to change. It's the assumption that people aren't going to change. Maybe you have a natural "no" towards your spouse; maybe you have a natural "no" towards your parents. Maybe you have a natural "no" towards your financial situation. The natural "no". I think that it's common for many of us to carry around with us a natural "no", that things aren't going to change; nothing's going to get better. That things will not shift in my favor. But I have a confession for you church, and my confession is that over the last few years, God has been untangling my natural "no". He's been untangling my natural "no", removing my natural "no", and deep in my spirit teaching me a supernatural "yes."

You know, there is a great power in a yes. I think back in my own life 18 years ago now, I was just a 19-year-old kid in a Youth Hostel in Reykjavík, Iceland, playing the guitar and singing a song to my girlfriend. I then got down on my knee and I asked her to marry me, and she said, "Yes." And ever since she said "yes", she has been living in the constant blessing of that decision to the glory of God. She said, "Yes," and it changed the whole trajectory of her life and it's never been the same.

This weekend is a weekend we celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King. You might not know this about his story, but in 1955 as a 27-year-old preacher, he was invited to a small gathering where they asked him if he would consider leading a citywide Bus Boycott. And Dr. King said, "Yes," and that one decision literally changed the course of history in our nation and is still changing the course of history. The power of one yes, just to say yes, there's a profound power, and I believe that it is God's desire in our time and in our day to allow and release

spiritual awakening across New England. I really believe that. I believe that now is his time for your family members to meet Christ, that now is his time for cities to be changed by the power of the Gospel, that now is his time for the church to grow, to expand, to make a difference in those that are in need and in those who are far from God. I believe that now is the time, but it is critical that if God is going to launch his people into a life of greater impact, one of his primary strategies is to teach his church a yes point of view, to teach his church a yes in our spirits, both to him and to his work.

And it's happening right here in a miraculous measure. If you were with us this whole fall, we went through a nine-week series called, "Wake My Heart" that launches us now into a two-year fulfillment phase of our generous commitments. We challenged our church to generosity and our goal was \$17 million over two years of giving. We each made our own individual commitments, and we've been in this process now over the last few weeks to begin to fulfill those commitments. Well church, more people keep committing and more people keep committing. And right now, we have \$19,561,454 in commitments. Somebody say, "Yes!"

Friends, that's evidence of a move of God's Spirit. That's evidence that God is working. And I encourage you, if you took that step of faith, if you stretched with us, then keep stretching and trusting, believing and fulfilling and watch what God does in your life as you say, "Yes", as you keep saying yes. A couple of little updates by the way, we've already started work on the central offices. And then after that we'll begin all the construction on the main building there. Next Sunday night is our first pre-launch service in New Britain. I am excited about Vox New Britain; that's going to launch weekly on Easter Sunday. And then Vox Church Worcester, at all of our locations you can sign up to be a part of the launch team for Vox Church Worcester. We already have a large team of people committed either to moving or to driving up to Vox Worcester for the launch in October.

I love the way the Apostle Paul puts it; he says it like this in Romans Chapter 12. He says, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed." You may have seen this if you've followed Christ for any length of time, "by the renewing of your mind." He's saying you can't grow on the outside what you haven't grown first on the inside. And so, you have this pattern that you're adopting whether you realize it or not; it's the pattern of thinking, pattern of living that this culture, this world produces in us. And in order for us to grow, it's going to require a transformation. It's going to require a transformation like a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly. This divine, unique, incredible metamorphosis, this transformation. And the way God does transformation and the way he does spiritual renewal is by changing our minds, by changing the way we think. In Acts Chapter 10, we get an example of how this transformation actually plays out in the life of a believer, and I want to look at it as a model for us today as God pushes us to new levels of supernatural growth.

Let me set the stage for you if you're not familiar with the story of Acts Chapter 10. Peter has been commissioned by Jesus to go into all the world and preach the gospel. He is a Jew, and he is living in a Roman occupied era in history. Up to this point, there were no followers of Jesus that were not Jewish; all of the Christians of that day up to this time were Jewish. And so, God had a plan to bring the Gospel to the non-Jewish world through the Apostle Peter, and he is beginning to orchestrate that plan. God speaks through an angel to a man named Cornelius. Cornelius, we are told, is a centurion; that means he's a Roman commander in the army of 100 soldiers. He's most likely wealthy because centurions were paid well, and soldiers in that day we're famous for oppression especially oppression over the Jewish populations.

So here's this man, who is a Roman soldier, who has this experience with an angel, and we're told that he lives in Caesarea. Now, Caesarea was like the seat of Roman oppression over Israel. If you were a Jew, the very last place you'd ever want to go is Caesarea, and this is where Cornelius lives. And so of all the people God could have chosen to begin the Gentile church with, he chooses a Roman soldier, the same people who crucified Jesus. He chooses a man who is living a very wealthy lifestyle from the taxes oppressing the Jewish people, and he chooses a man who lives in a land that is most prejudiced against Jews of all the region.

This is the man that God chooses to draw Peter to, to preach Christ. Now, while Cornelius sends messengers to

go get Peter in Joppa, Peter is praying on the roof of the house, and he has a strange vision in his prayer. Take a look at it with me in Verse 9. It says, "The next day as they were on their journey," that's the men coming to get Peter from this man Cornelius, "they're approaching the city. Peter went up on the house top about the sixth hour to pray." Of course, he doesn't know that these men are coming or what God is up to, and he became hungry, he wanted something to eat, "but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and he saw the heavens opening." Check this out, "and something like a great sheet descending being let down by its four corners upon the earth and in it were all kinds of animals, and reptiles, and birds of the air. And there came a voice that said to him," look at this, "Rise Peter, kill and eat." Now up and to this point Jewish tradition and culture said there were certain animals you could not eat, and now God is giving jurisdiction for the ceremonial law that's been fulfilled through Christ to now allow Peter to eat these various foods.

And so, it's like, "Rise, Peter, bacon is back on the menu," right? "And sausage in Jesus' mighty name." And Peter said... Look how Peter responds, he says, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. By no means, Lord." He says, "I can't do that, that is a violation of the ceremonial law," and Jesus is trying to teach him, "Peter, I fulfilled the law. They were all shadows pointing back to Christ," and so now this is a picture or a clue for Peter about what he's going to do. And so, God responds in Verse 15 to Peter's natural, "no". He says, "No. Oh, no, no, no, naturally, no. I don't do that." And now, God speaks back. Look he says, "And the voice came to him again a second time and said what God has made clean do not call common. What God has made clean... " I'm speaking that over your life today, by the way, you're still buried in shame, you're still condemned from your past, you're still feeling like God can't forgive you. What God has made clean, don't you dare disagree with God. If he says you're clean, you're clean in Jesus' name. If he says his blood is strong enough to wash you, it's washed you in Jesus' name. Don't listen to the lie of your own conscience if it condemns you above the grace of God because God's grace is stronger even than the declaration of your own conscience. What God has called clean, don't you dare call uncommon.

Watch how Peter gets back and shift gears right away. Look at Verse 17. It says, "Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what this vision that he had might seem to mean, behold the men who were sent by Cornelius having made inquiry for Simon's house stood at the gate, and they called out and asked whether Simon who's called Peter was lodging there. And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, 'Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise, go down, accompany them without hesitation, for I've sent them.' And Peter went down to the men, and he said, 'I'm the one you're looking for. What is this reason for your coming? I'm the one you're looking for.'" He just dives right in. I love that about Peter. He goes from a "no" to a yes in about three seconds, right?

Now what would change someone's direction so quickly? If you know much about Peter, he has a propensity to argue with God and lose the argument. In fact, the New Testament is just full of stories where Peter argues with God and loses. Like the very first time he really interacts with Jesus, he's fishing, and Jesus the carpenter comes up to his boat and he says, "You haven't caught anything all night, huh?" He says, "No, nothing all night." He says, "Well, why don't you just throw the net on that side of the boat?" And Peter's like, "Really, I've been fishing all night. You want me just throw the net out one more time?" "Yeah, throw it out one more time." He does and he catches hundreds of fish and he says, "What is this all about?" Later, when Jesus is talking to Peter about the fact that he's going to go to the cross and die for the sins of the world, Peter pulls him aside and says, "By no means, Lord, you're not allowed to do that." And Jesus looks at him and says, "Get behind me, Satan, you don't even know what you're talking about. This is the center of God's plan to save the world and you're not going to disrupt it."

See, Peter had learned through the course of experience with Jesus that often times God has a plan that he cannot understand, and when he thinks he understands it, he's probably at that point about 1000 miles off. But he's also become convinced through experiences with Jesus that the plan that God has is bigger than you could imagine and better than you could have hoped. I said the plan that God has for you for your life is bigger than you could have imagined, and better than you had hoped. Roman 8:28 says it like this, and you've heard it

before: "God works all things for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose." God has a cosmic plan that he is working out in the course of your life and the plan in the end is always for you're good. Now, this is a precursor for spiritual growth. In fact, those that embrace this grow; those that do not embrace this get stuck. And so, if you want to grow spiritually, you begin here. Spiritual growth begins with the conviction that God has a greater plan. A greater plan that you can't fully see, a greater plan that you cannot fully understand, but a greater plan that you must learn to trust.

One of my favorite artists is the artist, Chuck Close. You may or may not be familiar with his artwork, but he's famous for these huge portraits of people's faces. And I found one that I wanted to show you today; this is a portrait entitled "James". Go ahead and put James up there. There he is, what do you think of James, nice, right? Looks like a little pizza bagel, thing, all little squares with little circles, little amoebas in it. I don't know if you'd hang that on your wall, but that's James. He's handsome. I think James is handsome. You know, you look at Chuck Close's painting and you go, "I don't think Chuck Close is that good, Justin. I don't think he's a very good artist, really. Those are just little strange amoeba squares. They look like pizzas, kind of, or I don't know. They look like fungi of some kind. That's not something I'd hang on my wall."

But the problem is, right now we're just zoomed in on one little section of the painting. When you zoom out, you can go ahead and zoom out, you realize that James has all these various squares in his life, but collectively the squares display his face; see every square ultimately serves the intention of the artist, and though when you zoom in they may look ridiculous, they may look like they don't belong, they may look like they're not that beautiful, when you zoom out, you realize that every one of them is there by intention. Every one of them has been used for a greater purpose, and every one of them reveals a face, reveals an identity, reveals something glorious.

In the same way in your life; if you live your life zoomed in on one little square, "Why did that have to happen? Why did this person have to die? Why did that struggle have to take place? Why did I have to lose that job? Why did that marriage fall apart?" Zoom in on one little square, and then you indict God based upon that one square, you'll never see the glorious plan God has for you and you will never grow because spiritual growth begins with the conviction that God has a greater plan. And so, let me prophesy to you, right now in 2020 at all of our locations, the Spirit of Jesus right now, is enabling you by his grace to zoom out, enabling even you right now to begin to see that the thing that you're facing is not nearly as big as you thought it was, that though it may look like he is not active, though it may look like some ridiculous little pizza bagel square, he's got a purpose behind it. He's got a plan for it. He's going to work it together for your good. All things work together for the good of those who love him.

And so I love this story 'cause Peter doesn't stay on the roof. He doesn't stay on the roof, he gets off the roof, he trusts God, and he follows these men back to Cornelius's house. Look what happens, Verse 23. "The next day he rose and went," look at the word went, "away with them and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him, and on the following day he entered," that's an important word, entered, "Caesarea, Cornelius was expecting them, had called together his relatives and close friends, and then Peter entered," there it is again, entered. "Cornelius met him, fell at his feet, worshipped him. Peter pulled him up, said, 'Stand up. You don't know what you're doing. I'm too a man.' And as he talked with him, he went..." There it is again, went, "and found many persons gathered."

So, in this little short piece of the Scripture, we get these words again and again; the writer is trying to emphasize something. He's emphasizing Peter's action in the midst of uncertainty, and so he says, "He went, he entered, he entered, he went..." It's a literary tool to emphasize the work of faith that's happening inside of Peter because the truth is, Peter does not know why he is going to Cornelius's house. He does not understand that God is about to launch through him the Gentile church, and yet him not understanding doesn't stop him from acting. Okay. He keeps saying "yes" even in the midst of partial understanding. You remember the story of Jericho, where the people of Israel are told for seven days to march around the great walls of the city. I would imagine

that the vast majority of people in the Army are like, "Why are we doing this? I've been walking for seven days. Walking does not make walls fall," but they just do it, and they do it, and they do it, and they do it seven days. Well, on the seventh day, they raise up a great shout of victory, which is ironic because they're shouting for victory in a victory they don't have, and the walls come down because they obeyed in faith before everything made sense.

There's a story in the Gospel of Luke about 10 lepers, who Jesus says he heals and he tells them to go back to the chief priests and show them the healing that he has performed. But the problem was they weren't physically changed; they were lepers with leprosy. He says, "You're healed; go back to the chief priests," and they're like, "We are not healed. Why are we going?" And so it says, "As they went, they were healed." As they went God manifested the miracle. See, some of us are waiting for God to explain himself before we act, waiting for God to describe and answer all of our questions. You might be holding on to unforgiveness today, you might be holding on to doubt, you might be holding God captive with some idea and you've said in your own heart, "I'm not going to let it go until I understand." Friend, you have condemned yourself to a life void of spiritual growth because spiritual growth requires that you act on yes before you understand.

Spiritual growth requires that you act on yes before you understand. And I understand that for many of us that is an uncomfortable concept because we like to cause God to submit to our own rational concepts. But that's not the way God works; he gets to have the ways that are higher than our ways; he gets to have the thoughts that are higher than our thoughts. When God speaks to us, when God commands us, when God decrees over us, we must act on that yes before we fully understand. This, by the way, is exactly how the Gospel of Jesus Christ works in your life. The scripture tells us that Christ came as your representative. He died as your substitute, on the cross. When he shed his blood, he washed away your sins from the beginning of your life to its end. He's already forgiven tomorrow's sins, and if Christ has completely washed and cleansed you and completely decreed over your life that you're a new creation, the only way you begin to experience the reality of that new creation, is if you accept it before you fully understand it. You must receive the grace of God before you can understand the grace of God. You'll never fully understand the grace of God until you receive the grace of God.

I love the way, CS Lewis put it. He said, "A man can eat his dinner without understanding exactly how food nourishes him. A man can accept what Christ has done without knowing how it works. Indeed, he certainly would not know how it works until he has accepted it." You have to receive God's kindness by faith. You have to receive his identity for you by faith. You have to receive the truth that he loves you, and when you receive it, it now goes to work in becoming real in your own heart.

I believe that there are some walls in your life that will never fall down until you start shouting the victory before the walls come down. There are some issues in your life that will never change until you surrender your need to fully understand. Once you surrender your need to fully understand God will bring divine understanding. Look what happens in the story. Peter is now gathered in the home of Cornelius. Cornelius is not Jewish. All the Christians at this time are Jews. Peter is standing before this man brought there by a divine encounter and look what happens. It says, Verse 28, "He said to them, 'You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with you or visit anyone from another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean.'" I could just imagine Peter being like, "But God has shown me. I'm progressive, I understand these things." And then he says, Verse 29, "So when I was sent for, I came without objection." I love this part. "I asked them, 'Why have you sent for me?'"

This is amazing. Maybe you don't see the tension. Peter is the great apostle called by Jesus to preach the Gospel to the nations. God has set up a divine circumstance in which Gentiles are all gathered in the house waiting to hear him talk. He has been brought there, the one who is called to preach to the nations. He is standing before a captive audience asking them to, they're asking him to teach them about God, and Peter has no idea that he's been brought there to actually share the Gospel. He brags about how enlightened he is. He brags about how

progressive he is, but he's never considered the fact that the unclean Gentiles in his mind could actually be made clean just like the Jews are made clean by the grace of God. See in Peter's mind he was suffering from what we could call a blind spot, a blind spot. Now, you've been driving on the highway before and you've had a blind spot, right? Maybe your windows get foggy, or your side mirror gets all hazy and you start to turn right and you hear a horn. And you're like, "Whoa, what was that?" And you realize there's a car there that you couldn't see. Has that ever happened to you?

That's a blind spot. A blind spot is simply an area beyond your field of vision. Peter has a blind spot. He never considered that God would save the non-Jews. He had come from a cultural paradigm. He'd come from a prejudice paradigm that did not allow him to think beyond those borders, and so he never considered that Jesus could possibly be bringing him there to lead them to faith in him. I heard a study recently that found in America that the vast majority of those polled said that racism is a significant problem in our nation today. When asked if they were racist, the vast majority of participants replied, "No." So we have a huge problem of racism with no racists. Blind spot.

I love what Russian philosopher, Fyodor Dostoyevsky said, he said, "Every man has reminiscences which he would not tell to everyone but only to his friends. He has other matters in his mind that he'd not reveal even to his friends, but only to himself, and that in secret. But there are other things which a man is afraid to tell even himself. And every decent man has a number of such things stored away in his mind." The story of Peter highlights a critical truth, that right now, you and I are living with some false convictions about God, some false convictions about ourselves, and some false convictions about the world. And you don't even know that you are holding these false convictions.

Peter thought he knew that God had made the unclean clean through the Gospel; he thought he knew that. "God has shown me that never to call something unclean that God has made..." He thought he knew, but his information had never been transformed into revelation. Information is something I know, revelation is something that's been made real. See, his information had never been transformed into revelation. And I want to make a suggestion to you today that your greatest need in 2020 is not more information, but more revelation; that there are lots of things you know but you don't know. There are lots of things you believe but you don't believe. There are lots of things that you say you commit to, but in your core, they haven't changed you. I believe that the greatest need in our lives right now is for God to take the information we have and make it revelation inside of us.

You might be here today and you say, "Oh, Justin, I know I'm forgiven." You know that Jesus said he forgave you, but you're not living in the revelation of forgiveness. You're still carrying shame, you're still carrying condemnation, you're still trying to do enough things and earn enough brownie points for God to like you or bless you or help you or heal you. You don't understand the power of grace to be truly forever fully forgiven. You have it up here, but you don't have it down here. You might be here today, and you say, "I know God has a great plan for me." You say you know that, but you're still stressed out of your mind; stressed about work, stressed about the bills, stressed about the plan, stressed about the future. How can it be that you know that and still live that way? That is a conflict because you have information, but you don't have revelations. See I believe the greatest need in your life is for the information you have to be transformed, for the caterpillar to be transformed into the butterfly. For that thought you know to become the truth you live.

How does information become revelation? How does an idea become a reality? How can I remove a blind spot that I can't see, and I don't even know is there? Because right now underneath the surface there's an iceberg, and you are a collision of insecurities and fierce doubts, anxieties, pain you've been carrying around from your childhood, broken heart, all kinds of issues that exist beneath the surface, and the vast majority of which you are not even aware that they exist. And they are holding you back from the fullness of God, just as Peter's prejudice was holding him back from the call of God in his life. But he didn't even know he was prejudiced. He didn't even know he was making that distinction. How can you change if you can't even see the car in your blind spot?

And that's why this story of Peter and Cornelius is such an encouragement to me. Cornelius explains again, "Well, let me tell you, again, Peter. See, I saw this angel and he told me to get you and he told me you were in Joppa, and he said that I should call to you and that you would come and you would tell me about salvation. So, I've gathered my friends and my family. I've put out some food. I've put out some desserts. I cleaned the house. We're all waiting. Why are you here? I don't know why you're here; you tell me what is it that you know that I need." It's in this moment, in this instant, something on the inside changes in Peter, and he articulates it in Verse 34. Look at it with me, he says it like this. It says, "So Peter opened his mouth and said, 'Truly I understand.'

Understand. "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality." Now I love this because reading that in the English doesn't give us the full breadth of what he's actually saying because we hear the word understand and we think, "Now I perceive. Now I put two and two together." And there is a Greek word that means understand, and it's not the word he uses. In fact, the word that's in that text right there, the word that's used there, this is the only time in the entire New Testament that that word is translated "understand." That word literally means "to be apprehended". So, if you listen to what Peter said, literally, it's, "Now I have been apprehended by the fact that God shows no partiality." Or you could say it, "Now, I have been overtaken." Another translation of that word is to be ambushed. "Now, I have been ambushed by the truth that God shows no partiality." It's the word that was used in Mark Chapter 9 to describe a boy that was possessed by a demon. They said he's been ambushed by the demon; he's been overtaken. That's the word that he uses. It's the same word in John Chapter 8 that we use to describe the woman caught in the act of adultery. It says, "She was ambushed and pulled out of her sin. She was apprehended by the authorities."

That's the word that describes this. And so here, he's not saying, "Listen, I kinda have come to the conclusion through my own perceptions and..." No, no, no, no. He says, "Whoa. God just ambushed me. God just overtook me." How did Peter get to a place where he was ambushed by God to see his own blind spots? Well, the story shows us because at each stop in the road for what Peter could see he responded with a yes. He said "yes" on the roof. He said "yes" to the visitors. He said "yes" to enter the city of Caesarea. He said "yes" to going into Cornelius' house, which was a violation of his customs. He consistently chose "yes" for the next step that God put in front of him. And that unhindered "yes" unleashed God's Spirit within him to change him in ways he did not even know he needed to be changed. Here is the real secret of how you and I grow. Look how the Apostle Paul puts it in Philippians 2. He says, "Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you and now that I am away it is even more important; work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear." And so Paul says, "Listen, here's how you grow spiritually, you have to obey God in the things that are right in front of you. You have to say "yes" to God again and again and again. Keep following the instructions."

You see it right in front of you, say "yes". And he says, "And if you will do that," Verse 13, "For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him." Do you see it? As you say, "yes" to God in the areas that you can see, God works in the invisible areas you can't see. While you're saying "yes" to community or you're saying "yes" to serving, or you're saying "yes" to trusting him, or you're saying "yes" to forgiveness, God is untangling your fears. He's curing your insecurities. He's healing your offenses. He's exposing your pride. He's softening your heart, and then one day you're going to be ambushed by the reality and go, "Whoa, that anxiety I dealt with I don't seem to deal with anymore. That addiction that consumed me it seems like it's 100 miles back in the rearview mirror. That brokenness that I always carry that I need to please people, I'm not exactly sure when, but it's gone in Jesus' name. Because I just kept saying, 'yes.'"

The Lord who never slumbers or sleeps does a work in you that you need most, even if you can't see it. If you open every door of your heart and just keep saying, "yes". Jot this thought down. **You're unhindered "yes" towards God turns information into revelation.** Your unhindered "yes" towards God. You might ask, "Justin, how do I get the love of God to become the seat of my identity? How do I get the joy that the Bible describes? How do I get the peace that surpasses all understanding? Say "yes" to the things that are right in front of you

now and keep saying "yes", and keep saying "yes", and keep saying "yes". If you live with the mindset of an unhindered "yes", the day will come where God ambushes you with the fullness of joy, and life, and peace, and you may not even be able to discern the moment in which it arrived.

I have a crazy idea for you: what if in 2020, you lived this entire year from an unhindered "yes" towards God? What if this year you lived from the inner position of, "Whatever you want, Lord, I'm in. Nothing too great. I'm convinced that even though I might just see a square, you're the artist crafting a great portrait. I believe your plan is good, and I don't have to fully understand before trusting it." What could God do with a life that was lived from an unhindered "yes"? I'm talking about a "yes" to his ways. I'm talking about a "yes" to his plan. A "yes" to letting him be in control. A "yes" to every one of his promises. A "yes" to the identity that's found in Christ. A "yes" to the purpose that he has for your life. A "yes" to holiness, a "yes" to community, a "yes" to surrender. Most importantly, a "yes" to the Gospel. I am who you say I am. I find my center in you.

For somebody here, saying "yes" to God means joining a community group because you've been living isolated and nobody knows what you're going through and God wants to heal you through your brother through your sister. For some of us, it's a "yes" to serving because we've been all about us, and God needs to teach us to be all about him, and so signing up for a servant team is your next "yes". And saying "yes" to serving is going to unlock greater joy in your heart and in your life. For some of us saying "yes" means forgiving someone, forgiving someone who's hurt you and maybe hasn't asked for forgiveness, forgiving someone that maybe has already passed away.

For someone, saying "yes" means trusting God. I'm talking to you in the waiting. You didn't think it would be this long. You didn't think it would take this long. And yet here you are still without... Fill in the blank. Saying "yes" to God in every department means saying "yes" in the waiting. Here's a question for you, where have you allowed a "no" or a "maybe" towards God? What door in your heart has been locked or closed towards God? Because right now, right here, God calls you to the place of an unhindered "yes". And I believe that if you will go there, he's already planned to ambush you with your information turned to revelation in your heart.

Is there a corner of your life where you've had a hesitant "yes", or a natural "no"? Is there an area that you've been unwilling to trust him with or that you found yourself climbing back into? You might be here, and you say, "Justin, I believe that God has a great plan, but the truth is I'm living with tons of stress." Well, then you don't believe that God has a great plan. You might say, "Well, I believe that he loves me, but I find myself as a man pleaser." Well, then you don't believe that he loves you; not the way that you need to. He wants to set you free from that.

Can you see anywhere in your life or heart that right now he is calling you to say "yes", and you've been saying, "maybe or no". I want to urge you in this moment to give your "no" to God. In this moment, give your hesitant "maybe" to God. And right now, right now, say "yes". "Let's pray. Father, in the name of Jesus, I pray that like a rushing mighty wind, you would sweep across this room. I believe that even right now you are delivering people from oppression, that even right now you are breaking the chains of the past, that even right now addiction is falling off, that even right now insecurity is being swallowed by grace. Lord, I believe that there's someone right now that can hear my voice that has been crippled by fear, and you are releasing them from a spirit of fear and giving them a spirit of power, and love, and self-control.

Father, I pray, let the Spirit of Jesus begin to do a profound, invisible work that no man could do. I pray that you would move through this place and that every single heart as we turn to you as we say, "yes", would be awakened by your spirit. Right now, as we worship, right now as collectively we lift up the name of Jesus, I pray for the fire of the Holy Spirit to fall and an unhindered "yes" to grow inside our hearts like never before, in Jesus' name, we pray.