



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor
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NUMBERS 3-4

Numbers Series

I enjoy studying Israelite history, especially when it comes to the Bible because there's a lot of Jewish Old Testament history that forms the foundation for our understanding of Christianity and who we are. If we only studied the New Testament, although we get a lot of practical ideas and understanding about who God is and so on, the Old Testament really goes into depth, it seems to me, about who God is and what He does.

When I look at a book like the book of Numbers that has a lot of detail in it, I see something about God that changes my prayer life. I see about God that He is very particular about things. You're going to see that today. I hope that you'll feel that today that God is particular about things.

There are some people who believe God is whatever I want Him to be. I'll just kind of put Him in my back pocket and I'll ask Him like a genie to bless me wherever I go. But God is a personality. He has personality. He's a person. He's very particular and it's very important for us to get to know Him.

It changes my prayer life in this way because instead of praying God will you do this for me and God will you bless my plans, I now pray God, what are your plans for me today? What are your activities that you want me to be involved in? So my prayers change because I want to get to know God and what He's doing in this world. I know that He is a particular God.

You're going to see that here. You can't just come to God any way you feel like it, whatever you believe about God is true. It's not the case. God is very particular and we're going to see that in Numbers 3-4 today as we go through this passage.

So open your Bibles with me to Numbers 3. Verse 1 says: *This is the account of the family of Aaron and Moses at the time the Lord spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai.*

Up to this point we have seen that the Israelites are told how to camp. So they're camping in all this special order that God designed for them. They're all counted in Numbers 2, but we really haven't talked about the Moses and Aaron and their family and the Levites. So now we come to that group of people and we're going to understand what God has for them. So we're taking inventory again of them and giving them special assignments in chapter 3. So that's why it says *this is the account of the family of Aaron and Moses at the time the Lord spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai.*

Verse 2: *The names of the sons of Aaron were Nadab the firstborn and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. Those were the names of Aaron's sons, the anointed priests, who were ordained to serve as priests. Nadab and Abihu, however, died before the Lord when they made an offering with unauthorized fire before him in the Desert of Sinai.*

They were just getting started. They had learned how to offer sacrifices to the Lord. The priests were given specific instructions about how to offer incense, how to light the candles for the menorah, how to light the burnt offering altar, all of that. Fire was very important. It was ordained by God. It was especially established for them and determined for them.

But apparently Nadab and Abihu being priests thought they could do something else. They could add to God's plan with some other ideas that they had. So they brought some *strange fire* (it's called here), but it's really foreigners is the word. Strangers or foreigners. Foreign fire – that is not fire that God had ordained, but they had brought their own from their own place or something and they added it to what was happening in the tabernacle and God struck them dead.

I think a very important lesson for me as a pastor, very important for any of us who lead, any of us who are trying to do God's work, we must follow the Lord and not think that we can add anything to salvation. We can't add anything to God's plan or work.

Certainly God has given us spiritual gifts and we bring our individuality to the process. That's why when you read the gospel of John you have John's personality in the writing. It's very different from Peter's writing. So Peter's grammar isn't the best grammar. Whereas Luke, the doctor, when he writes his grammar is like perfect grammar. So we do bring our personalities to do the work of the Lord, but we need to be very careful that we don't bring our pride in and say, "I've got something in addition to what God has for you that is the Lord." We need to be very careful.

These guys were killed because of their inability to follow the Lord's direction. The story, if you want to read about it, is Leviticus 10.

Now referring to these two men that died it says, *They had no sons, so Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests during the lifetime of their father Aaron.*

Verse 5: *The Lord said to Moses, "Bring the tribe of Levi." Levi is the whole tribe now, the tribe we haven't dealt with. We've dealt with all these other tribes. There are twelve by the way, but if you notice on the left-hand side Ephraim and Manasseh are two sons of Joseph, so they represent one son of Jacob. There's really eleven sons represented, but Joseph got a double blessing so Manasseh and Ephraim are two tribes there. But there is another tribe, a thirteenth tribe as we might say here, and that's the tribe of Levi.*

The Lord said to Moses, "Bring the tribe of Levi and present them to Aaron the priest to assist him. They are to perform duties for him and for the whole community at the tent of meeting by doing the work of the tabernacle."

The tabernacle was the portable temple that was used from the time they left Egypt on their way to the Promised Land. So when they get into the Promised Land then they're eventually going to build a temple. But from all of that time they have this portable temple called the tent of meeting or the tabernacle, and these Levites are going to have the care of it.

Verse 8: *"They are to take care of all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, fulfilling the obligations of the Israelites by doing the work of the tabernacle. Give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are the Israelites who are to be given wholly to him. Appoint Aaron and his sons to serve as priests; anyone else who approaches the sanctuary is to be put to death."*

So these guys are set apart. The word 'set apart', the Old Testament word is 'holy.' Holy means to be set apart. Same thing in the New Testament. the word *hagios* is the word set apart. They're different. We are different. *Hagios* is the word 'saints'. We are set apart for God. God says, "I'm going to take the Levites and they're going to be the tribe that's going to be the assistants to Aaron and the priests."

It's very interesting how this develops. You're going to see here that God really values the firstborn through all of this process. Do you remember back in Egypt when the Passover took place that the Israelites were told to take and put blood on the doorposts. When they did then the death angel would pass over them. That's why we call it Passover. Those who didn't have blood on the doorpost, all of the firstborn would die. So all of the firstborn of Egypt died because they didn't have the blood on the doorpost.

At that same moment though, the firstborn was set apart by God within Israel. They didn't die, but God is going to take them as the firstborn and they are going to be those who are serving at the tabernacle. I want you to see that develop here as we continue on in verse 11. They're going to be a gift to Aaron and the priest to help do the spiritual worship for the people.

Verse 11: *The Lord also said to Moses, "I have taken the Levites from among the Israelites in place of the first male offspring of every Israelite woman. The Levites are mine, for all the firstborn are mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set apart for myself every firstborn in Israel, whether human or animal. So even the firstborn of all the animals were set apart for God. They are to be mine. I am Yahweh or I am the LORD."*

There's only one tribe that's allowed to do this spiritual work around the tabernacle. You see there's a distance between the ark of the covenant, which is in the middle of the whole encampment, and then there's a distance with all the other tribes. The Levites are going to be camped all around there. They're the only ones who can participate in this getting ready of all of the sacrifices and the setting up and taking down of the portable temple that was there called the tabernacle. If you didn't have Levi genes, you couldn't do it. Alright. Let's go on.

Verse 14: *The Lord said to Moses in the Desert of Sinai, "Count the Levites by their families and clans. Count every male a month old or more."* If you remember, everyone who was twenty years old and older would be fighting men around those other tribes. But when it comes to the Levites He says, "I want to know who they are. Who are they?" *Count the Levites by their*

families and clans. Count every male a month old or more. So Moses counted them, as he was commanded by the word of the Lord.

These were the names of the sons of Levi. So we're going to come to these three groups, these three sub-tribes of Levi because he had three sons, *Gershon, Kohath and Merari*. We're going to learn about all of those as we continue to go forward. We will see their names all the way through here and they're going to tell what responsibilities they have. I want you to see how careful God is about the details of how He wants His tabernacle, the presence of God in the midst of people taken care of.

Verse 18: *These were the names of the Gershonite clans: Libni and Shimei. The Kohathite clans: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. The Merarite clans: Mahli and Mushi. These were the Levite clans, according to their families.*

Now we're going to look at the Gershonites. They're the first ones. Notice I put them there on the west side of the tabernacle where the ark of the covenant is. We're going to continue in verse 21.

To Gershon belonged the clans of the Libnites and Shimeites; these were the Gershonite clans. The number of all the males a month old or more who were counted was 7,500. The Gershonite clans were to camp on the west, behind the tabernacle. The leader of the families of the Gershonites was Eliasaph son of Lael. At the tent of meeting the Gershonites were responsible for the care of the tabernacle and tent, its coverings, the curtain at the entrance to the tent of meeting, the curtains of the courtyard, the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard surrounding the tabernacle and altar, and the ropes (or cords)—and everything related to their use.

So these guys had responsibility for all of the curtains that surrounded the whole tabernacle in essence. They would wrap up the cords. It kind of reminds me of what we do on Sunday mornings. We wrap up all these cords.

What you do when you set up and take down or help us with that on Sunday morning is spiritual service to the Lord. It's preparing worship. It kind of reminds me of what they're doing here. Everybody had their job of what they would do. They're contributing to the spiritual worship of the people.

That's the Gershonites. Now we go to the Kohathites, and I put them down here on the south side. Verse 27: *To Kohath belonged the clans of the Amramites, Izharites, Hebronites and Uzzielites; these were the Kohathite clans. The number of all the males a month old (so we're just counting every male who's a month old) or more was 8,600. The Kohathites were responsible for the care of the sanctuary. The Kohathite clans were to camp on the south side of the tabernacle.*

God is very particular about where He wants people to be. He knows their address, He knows who they are, He knows where they're supposed to be.

The leader of the families of the Kohathite clans was Elizaphan son of Uzziel. They were responsible for the care of the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the articles of the sanctuary used in ministering, the curtain, and everything related to their use. So they're in charge of the furniture, in essence, the things inside.

The chief leader of the Levites was Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest. He was appointed over those who were responsible for the care of the sanctuary.

So this is the furniture that's used in the tabernacle, which is the portable temple. They were the ones who would carry it and were going to give them some specific information. They're not given carts. The other guys, these Gershonites, they're given carts to carry all these curtains on. But these guys have to carry it all on poles. We're going to learn about that in the next chapter.

Verse 33. Now we come to the Merarites and we're going to put them on the north side. *To Merari belonged the clans of the Mahlites and the Mushites; these were the Merarite clans. The number of all the males a month old or more who were counted was 6,200. The leader of the families of the Merarite clans was Zuriel son of Abihail; they were to camp on the north side of the tabernacle. The Merarites were appointed to take care of the frames of the tabernacle, its crossbars, posts, bases, all its equipment, and everything related to their use.*

So after these Gershonites came and took all the curtains, they left this structure there and the structure with all of its pieces was taken down by the Merarites. They were the ones who took care of all of those things *as well as the posts of the surrounding courtyard with their bases, tent pegs and ropes.* So they're responsible for the framework.

It just reminds me how in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 12 God gives every person a spiritual gift. Do you know what your job is here? Do you know why God has brought you to this place? I think God is very specific in His calling of us. "I want to give you a vision," He says. "I brought you to this place for a reason." As a pastor I want to be really sensitive to the visions and the things that God has brought here because they're valuable and we need them in order to be the church that God wants us here in this location.

Verse 38. Let's go on. *Moses and Aaron and his sons – I'm going to put them over there on the east side. That's the front. The direction which is front for us is usually north. We think of that as the primary direction. In their case it was east as the sun was rising. Moses and Aaron and his sons were to camp to the east of the tabernacle, toward the sunrise, in front of the tent of meeting. They were responsible for the care of the sanctuary on behalf of the Israelites. So they're responsible for this whole thing that's happening. Anyone else who approached the sanctuary was to be put to death.*

The total number of Levites counted at the Lord's command by Moses and Aaron according to their clans, including every male a month old or more, was 22,000.

Anybody doing the math here? Anybody do it? Come on, guys. Somebody's got to do the math. Alright. Let's do it together. You've got 7,500 Gershonites. You got that number? You see it

back in the passage. The next number is 8,600 Kohathites. Got that? The next number is 6,200 Merarites.

I don't know if you're good at adding, but do those numbers add up to you? No. They don't add up. They add up to 22,300. That's the addition. But look at the passage. The passage says in verse 39 *the total number of Levites counted at the Lord's command by Moses and Aaron according to their clans, including every male a month old or more, was 22,000*. If you add the numbers they're 22,300. We're missing something here. We don't know exactly what we're missing here, but you can't say, "Oh they don't know how to add back there." There's something going on that they didn't tell us here.

Now commentators try to figure out what that is. The best idea I heard or saw as I was reading this was that they're going to have to, as you see in the passage, account for the firstborn of all Israel and they're going to kind of buy back all the firstborn of all of the tribes, all the way around, by taking the Levites. And they're going to do it with an exact number. You're going to see that. As they do it with an exact number they're going to have a remainder of 273.

Mike and I were talking about last week whether these are rounded off numbers or not. I don't know how to fit all that in as I was thinking about this because these are pretty round numbers as we're coming forward, but he's going to end up with a remainder of 273 you're going to see written right in the passage here.

So someone suggested this why the numbers don't match: The 300 represent the firstborn among the Levite tribe that you can't count if you're trying to redeem them. So they took the 300 out of there, so they're not counted in this number 22,000. I don't know. Maybe as I read forward this will make more sense to you in the numbers, but I just wanted to point that out so you could see what's happening as we go forward.

Verse 40: *The Lord said to Moses, "Count all the firstborn Israelite males (now we're not talking about the Levites. We're talking about all the Israelite males. Very particular God is here) who are a month old or more and make a list of their names. That's every Israelite male who's a month or older who's a firstborn. So when we do that, He's saying, Take the Levites for me in place of all the firstborn of the Israelites, and the livestock of the Levites in place of all the firstborn of the livestock of the Israelites. I am Yahweh."*

So Moses counted all the firstborn of the Israelites, as the Lord commanded him. The total number of firstborn males a month old or more, listed by name, was 22,273.

If you like the book of Numbers then it's because of the math in there. So those of you math people will enjoy the math that's in here and I try to throw up the math whenever I can. There's 22,273. That's the total number of firstborns in Israel. Now you're going to subtract the 22,000 and that's going to leave you a remainder of 273.

Well let's read on and see what God's going to do about that problem because He wants to be exact here.

Verse 45: *The Lord also said to Moses, “Take the Levites in place of all the firstborn of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites in place of their livestock. The Levites are to be mine. I am the LORD.*

Verse 46: *To redeem the 273 firstborn Israelites who exceed the number of the Levites, collect five shekels for each one, according to the sanctuary shekel, which weighs twenty gerahs. So here we go. Five shekels. I’m going to multiply times five, see how that number comes out. Give the money for the redemption of the additional Israelites to Aaron and his sons.”*

So Moses collected the redemption money from those who exceeded the number redeemed by the Levites. From the firstborn of the Israelites he collected silver weighing 1,365 shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel. So yes, that math works. So now we have 1,365 shekels according to the sanctuary shekel. Moses gave the redemption money to Aaron and his sons, as he was commanded by the word of the Lord.

Now what God is doing here is He’s in a very specific way illustrating that He wants to take a portion of these people. They’re like the tithe – He’s not going to use the word tithe here, but they’re like the representative portion of all of the group that are going to serve Him. It’s very particular what He’s saying here. It’s exact. He wants to make sure that everything is covered. So the extra 273, they’re covered too. We’re going to take an offering for them that’s going to cover them because we don’t have a Levite in corresponding to them. It’s fascinating to me the exactness here of God and how particular He is.

It just says to me when I get up in the morning God has some exact things for me that I need to consider. I don’t just go wander around in my life wondering where God’s going to show up. He’s a very particular God. He has a plan. I can’t just treat Him like some genie. I’ve got to recognize who He is and what He does. So very specific, very particular. It’s giving me an understanding of God. It’s giving me a greater respect for Him and what He wants to do in my life.

I hope as you’re getting to know God you’re seeing that He has certain requirements. He has certain things that are important. He’s given us commands, Ten Commandments, a lot of other commands and instructions in His word. They’re very important. We can’t just write them off and say, “Oh that’s a cultural thing.” These are specific commands. God is particular.

Let’s go on. I want to go through Numbers 4.

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: “Take a census of the Kohathite branch of the Levites by their clans and families. Count all the men from thirty to fifty years of age who come to serve in the work at the tent of meeting.

“This is the work of the Kohathites at the tent of meeting: the care of the most holy things. When the camp is to move, (so that’s when they’re getting ready to move and go to the next place) Aaron and his sons are to go in and take down the shielding curtain and put it over the ark of the covenant law. In other words, the Kohathites can’t do that. What happens is the priests are the

only ones. They come in and they take the shielding curtain and they're going to put it over the ark so that it's hidden, it's covered.

Verse 6: *Then they are to cover the curtain with a durable leather, spread a cloth of solid blue over that and put the poles in place.* So they're getting it ready for the Kohathites to come and hold it on their shoulders with poles. All the furniture is going to be taken into account in this way.

The next piece is the table of the Presence. This is where the bread will be placed inside the holy place. *“Over the table of the Presence they are to spread a blue cloth and put on it the plates, dishes and bowls, and the jars for drink offerings; the bread that is continually there is to remain on it. They are to spread a scarlet cloth over them, cover that with the durable leather and put the poles in place.* So now it's all covered and set up and it's ready for the Kohathites to come and take it.

“They are to take a blue cloth and cover the lampstand that is for light, together with its lamps, its wick trimmers and trays, and all its jars for the olive oil used to supply it. Then they are to wrap it and all its accessories in a covering of the durable leather and put it on a carrying frame. All these utensils get put on a carrying frame for the Kohathites to come and carry it on their shoulders.

Verse 11: *“Over the gold altar they are to spread a blue cloth and cover that with the durable leather and put the poles in place.*

“They are to take all the articles used for ministering in the sanctuary, wrap them in a blue cloth, cover that with the durable leather and put them on a carrying frame.

“They are to remove the ashes from the bronze altar and spread a purple cloth over it. Then they are to place on it all the utensils used for ministering at the altar (you can just think of all of the things they would use), the firepans, meat forks, shovels and sprinkling bowls. All things you would use when you're camping. Take all the camping gear, throw it in the altar and it's going to be wrapped carefully. Over it they are to spread a covering of the durable leather and put the poles in place.

Verse 15: *“After Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy furnishings and all the holy articles, and when the camp is ready to move, only then (only then) are the Kohathites to come and do the carrying. But they must not touch the holy things or they will die. They can't touch them and they can't look at them. They can only carry them. That's their job is to carry them. Fascinating. The Kohathites are to carry those things that are in the tent of meeting.*

Verse 16: *“Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest, is to have charge of the oil for the light, the fragrant incense, the regular grain offering and the anointing oil. He is to be in charge of the entire tabernacle and everything in it, including its holy furnishings and articles.”*

Verse 17: *The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “See that the Kohathite tribal clans are not destroyed from among the Levites. So that they may live and not die when they come near the*

most holy things, do this for them: Aaron and his sons are to go into the sanctuary and assign to each man his work and what he is to carry. But the Kohathites must not go in to look at the holy things, even for a moment, or they will die.”

God is very specific about what He’s calling these people to do. He’s very specific about the job He’s given them each to do. That’s just the Kohathites. We’re going on to the Gershonites now. But I just want you to see it’s very specific. I’m hoping this is going to make an impression on you. It may even make a personal impression on you that God has something very specific for you.

The Gershonites. *The Lord said to Moses, “Take a census also of the Gershonites by their families and clans. Count all the men from thirty to fifty years of age who come to serve in the work at the tent of meeting. So they can serve between the ages of thirty and fifty.*

“This is the service of the Gershonite clans in their carrying and their other work: They are to carry the curtains of the tabernacle, that is, the tent of meeting, its covering and its outer covering of durable leather, the curtains for the entrance to the tent of meeting, the curtains of the courtyard surrounding the tabernacle and altar, the curtain for the entrance to the courtyard, the ropes and all the equipment used in the service of the tent. The Gershonites are to do all that needs to be done with these things.

All their service, whether carrying or doing other work, is to be done under the direction of Aaron and his sons. You shall assign to them as their responsibility all they are to carry. This is the service of the Gershonite clans at the tent of meeting. Their duties are to be under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the priest. Very specific tasks that they had. They were carrying for all of these curtains that were out there.

Next we have the Merarites, the third group of the Levites. *“Count the Merarites by their clans and families. Verse 30: Count all the men from thirty to fifty years of age who come to serve in the work at the tent of meeting.*

As part of all their service at the tent, they are to carry the frames of the tabernacle. So obviously verse 31 is indicating they had other jobs besides moving stuff around. They were probably assisting maybe and greeting people who were coming to the tabernacle with their offerings, bringing them to the priests, helping the priest do this and that, clean out this and that, do the things for spiritual worship.

But, verse 31, *As part of all their service at the tent, they are to carry the frames of the tabernacle, its crossbars, posts and bases, as well as the posts of the surrounding courtyard with their bases, tent pegs, ropes, all their equipment and everything related to their use. Assign to each man the specific things he is to carry. This is the service of the Merarite clans as they work at the tent of meeting under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the priest.”*

Verse 34: *Moses, Aaron and the leaders of the community counted the Kohathites by their clans and families. All the men from thirty to fifty years of age who came to serve in the work at the tent of meeting, counted by clans, were* (now we have the Kohathites and the Kohathites were)

2,750. 37 This was the total of all those in the Kohathite clans who served at the tent of meeting. Moses and Aaron counted them according to the Lord's command through Moses.

The Gershonites were counted by their clans and families. So now we go to the Gershonites. All the men from thirty to fifty years of age who came to serve in the work at the tent of meeting, counted by their clans and families, were 2,630. This was the total of those in the Gershonite clans who served at the tent of meeting. Moses and Aaron counted them according to the Lord's command.

The Merarites (that's the next group) were counted by their clans and families. All the men from thirty to fifty years of age who came to serve in the work at the tent of meeting, counted by their clans, were 3,200. This was the total of those in the Merarite clans. Moses and Aaron counted them according to the Lord's command through Moses.

So Moses and Aaron are obeying the Lord and doing all this counting and setting up and telling people what they need to do in very specific ways. Let's read the conclusion of the passage and that's going to give the total, and it of course adds up.

Verse 46: *So Moses, Aaron and the leaders of Israel counted all the Levites by their clans and families. All the men from thirty to fifty years of age who came to do the work of serving and carrying the tent of meeting numbered 8,580. At the Lord's command through Moses, each was assigned his work and told what to carry. Thus they were counted, as the Lord commanded Moses.*

Now you understand why the name of the book is The Numbers. Right? A lot of numbers in here, a lot of math, a lot of things that we're being drawn attention to. I just want to consider the application here. In the New Testament theology we are developing who we are in Christ. We start imagining all this stuff going on in Israel and the setting up of all of this. Who are we when it comes to that? We are the people who are the priests. We are not like all these other people. We are the priests.

In 1 Peter 2 it says this: *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

In the New Testament as Peter is looking back on his Jewish history, he's saying we are the priests. That's who we are. We are the ones who are set apart. We are the ones that God has endowed with very specific things to do. That means that God has called you and me and given us specific tasks for our day tomorrow. We don't even know what some of those are. As the day unfolds in the course of tomorrow those interruptions that take place may be interruptions that God has ordained because we are priests and we need to be ready for those things.

God has brought you to this fellowship, if you are a part of Calvary Chapel Living Hope, with a purpose. He's brought you here with gifts and talents. If you're not using those the way God has prescribed for you then we're missing out on something that God has set for you specifically.

Because Peter says *you are a chosen people*. We're special. We're set apart. *A royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession*.

I hope that by looking at the book of Numbers you will view yourself as someone special, that God has picked you out. The Bible tells us that God has even the very hairs of our head numbered, that He cares for us more than the birds that fly or the lilies of the field. We are special to God. He's a particular God. He has particular rules and particular guidelines and particular ways that we are to approach Him. So that's very important to understand what God has for us.

If you think, "Well I have these other special things in my life that I need to do something different than what God prescribed," we've got a problem. We need to submit ourselves to the God who created us, the God who designed us, the God who has prescribed for us where we need to go.

I love the book of Numbers. I think it's a great book for us to study. I think it's going to help us to understand a little bit more about God and who He is. We need to get to know God. Not imagine who He is, but get to know Him.

As we continue on in the next week, you can read ahead. We're going to look at kind of an interesting chapter, the next chapter. We're going to look at some judicial things. How do you handle this kind of problem? And what about that problem? So we're going to cover some of those things as we're moving forward in the next couple chapters of Numbers. Actually not next week because I won't be teaching next week. But we'll continue on after that. Okay?

Let's stand and pray together.

[PRAYER] Father, we come before you now recognizing that you have ordained that there is one way to come to know you, that Jesus came and He said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*" Lord, we recognize that there is only one way to obtain your salvation. Our world doesn't understand that, so give us ways to illustrate that and help people to grasp this truth. We know that as we share the gospel with other people that you go before us, that your Holy Spirit is touching people, working in their hearts, preparing them for the message that we share. It's really your work to lead people to Jesus Christ and that you may use us as vehicles to reveal ourselves and to reveal our pilgrimage and our walk with you. Lord, we ask for your direction and guidance as we serve you this week. We offer our bodies as spiritual service of worship to you today. And now, Lord, we continue to worship you and exalt you. In Jesus' name, amen.