

## The God Who Is There

1. Luke 7:31-35. I want to read you a small exchange between Jesus and the religious people of his day. As the centuries moved on, it took very little time for religion to, once again, become a tired, set, series of actions with little room for joy, eating and drinking.
2. The great Christian philosopher and theologian, Francis Shaeffer, wrote a classic book called “The God Who is There.” While his work helped many thousands, that isn’t why I chose this title. I chose it because I want us to see that the coming of Jesus, Advent, was not a one time thing. As long as Christians walk as Jesus did, God is here. Advent is an ongoing reality through the Spirit and through us.
3. OSHC is determined to be a church that moves at the speed of the Spirit of God and moves at the speed of love and grace. And so, we celebrate as well as mourn. This is a month of celebration and, so, we showed several birthday greetings last week and we want to show a few more this week. Some are serious and some are silly. Sounds just like the kind of people Jesus was around in Luke 7.
4. I think the two from the Canadians are the most celebratory. Last week, during lunch, they were the ones that got the loudest applause and laughter. This time, we will show them during what some people would call “the worship service” or “the worship hour” because there’s no such thing as a worship service or worship hour. This is home, this is family, and this is the church.
5. You’ll see six short videos here. Two from Canada, one from North Carolina, one from Alaska, one from Texas and, finally, one from Wyoming. [show all videos without interruption here but NOT the one from Sarah Mounts]
6. We are grateful for all of our people and for how fast God is growing this movement. The church has truly left the building and the simple faith of early Christians is once again in our neighborhoods and homes.
7. Remember Matthew 25. This is stunning and very offensive to many Christians though they would never admit it. We have a Naaman

complex: telling us to love each other seems way too simple so we demand a harder thing to do. [elder waited until I was out of town to say that holiness was greater than love]

8. Until we, like Naaman, humble ourselves, get over ourselves, and forget about building monuments to ourselves (while claiming we are building them to the Lord), we will always be tripped up by Matthew 25.
9. In Matthew 25 there is no mention of law, rules of worship, political leanings, or liturgy. I find liturgy wonderful and helpful and beautiful until it isn't, when crisis hits us and we find ourselves alone or when crisis hits a community and we find that our church isn't rallying to help (and no stamping labels on the food). Liturgy is beautiful and a wonderful addition to our daily worship but it is NOT what we were called to do and be.
10. We were called to love one another and serve one another just as God has loved and served us through the person of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. Those watching need to know that many, many of other people watching aren't just watching; they are acting. [slide from Spokane]
11. When we started collecting winter gear in new or like new condition, so did they. Another of our members, Kim Risling [show pic] made winter wear and distributed it in Alliance, Ohio. While we do not have pics from other places, I know that, for example, Maggie Mansdoefer in NJ takes goods to the veterans' home there. So, so many stories can be told here.
12. What would the world be like if Christians decided to do the simple thing and quit asking God for the hard thing? What if we just took the attitude of Jesus and served where we were to who was there with what we have? Can you imagine?
13. Well, you don't have to imagine too much. We had no idea this was going on until this last week. One young lady went into far off lands. She and those with her had one simple task: ATL, ask the Lord. Over the course of 11 months...well, let's let her tell her story. [Sara Mounts video].

14. Because one young lady decided to ask the Lord and act on whatever and whomever He placed before her, we have friends now watching us from nations that have been very, very resistant to Christian missionaries. I've asked Sara Mounts to allow us to consider her our minister to these countries and she has accepted. She will keep us up to date.

15. Just like Ivanna Ortiz in Paraguay. Last week she told us that she was going to start translating our lessons and notes into Spanish. Overnight, the reach of God's simple word of love was extended into far countries. We will most likely never hear the vast majority of ways OSHC has blessed the nations...but we are hearing enough to know it is.

Because it isn't about OSHC and it never has been nor will it ever be. This is all about Jesus. He told us in Matthew 25 how we will be judged. God's Spirit told Micah the same thing in Micah 6:8 –

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God.

Get past your Naaman complex and get busy where you are, with what you have, for and to whomever is present. Ask the Lord. Watch and pray. And then...love.

For Christ's birth was the coming of Emmanuel, God with us. And God is now with us through His Spirit and through the hands, hearts, mouths and money of those who have accepted the call.