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The Broadcast

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I've been thinking and praying a lot about what my first message with you would look like, sound like, feel like. What would the topic be and how would it help us shape our time together. Through those prayers, I was guided to focus our attention on the kingdom of God.

Jesus spent a lot of time telling stories, giving reference points, guiding us to recognize what the kingdom of God looks like. And in many of those stories the kingdom of God looks like seeds, some that grow, some that don't and some that surprise us. In other stories the kingdom of God is compared to that which is precious; things that are precious and worthy.

In these kingdom stories Jesus points to God as the Sower; the Sower of seeds. And if you've ever been a seed planter, a Sower, you may know that one term that is used to define a method of planting seed is "broadcasting". The act of flinging seed widely, generously all over the place, is to broadcast. A Sower broadcasts seed. Now there are lots of things that are being "broadcast" in our world today. All kinds of seeds. Seeds of love, peace, joy, and beauty. But also seeds of hate, anger, judgement, seeds of despair and division.

And in the midst of all of that God brings the gospel message in Jesus Christ, broadcasting that that kingdom of God is near.

Luke 8:1 Soon afterwards He (Jesus) went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God.

The good news of the kingdom of God. Whoo hoo! Exciting, but also vast, hard to imagine with so much in our world that seems to be the opposite of the kingdom of God. However, God, the original broadcaster, the OG of broadcasting, gives us a place to start. It goes a bit... well... a bit... something like this.

About 5 years ago my wife and I celebrated our 20th anniversary and so we decided to take a trip. And since our anniversary is in late December, we decided to do one of those flying trips to a beach off the coast of eastern Mexico, otherwise known as Cancun. And my wife thought that the "we" we were talking about should also include our kids. That kind of "we". What? Really? 20th anniversary trip with our kids? They weren't there on that glorious day 20 years ago when my now wife made the best decision of her life. Why now? So, I said no. Which means no.

So, a couple months later I'm swimming off a beach in Cancun with my kids... and my swimsuit begins to deteriorate. It had been a swimsuit that had served me well for years – years and years. It was my favorite and I seemed to be its favorite as over the years it had, well, had grown along with me. We'd been through a lot together and that swimsuit never judged. Like the father in the story of the prodigal son... it always welcomed me back home.

However, the salt water had finally exposed the wear and tear and after much hesitation, accompanied with the fear of going to a Mexican prison for exposure, I laid that much loved article of clothing to rest. The problem was that I did not have a backup suit, so the 4 of us marched down to the guest shop for a new suit. I say the 4 of us because of course I could not be trusted to do this quite "complicated" task on my own.

And yet, it did turn into a complicated task. The first hurdle was finding a dressing room within the guest shop. After my family picked out several suit options for me, the very nice lady in charge cleared out an office in the guest shop so I could have some privacy. There were about 5 other employees in there with their laptops working away, so with a look of annoyance at the entitled American, they

picked up their laptops and waited in the guest shop with some other shoppers and my family. The second hurdle was the suits themselves. As I mentioned, I had not been in the swimsuit market in a long time and the technological advancements of these suits... who can fit in those things? Super tight and basically unwearable. It didn't matter how many I tried or how much I sucked in... not happening. What I didn't realize... well there were several things I didn't realize, and several others that I was well aware of... but the first was that a crowd had gathered, both employees and guests, to watch the spectacle. Side bets were being made... every suit I was given also accompanied shouts from the odds makers. I was told later that that one event was actually where Draft Kings got it's start.

After several more tries, this very kind lady looks at me and broadcasts for the whole resort, and maybe for the whole eastern coast of Mexico to hear, "You need stretchy?" And she made the universal sign for "stretchy". Now in that moment I thought that she had asked me a question "You need stretchy?" But in reflecting on that experience, she didn't ask me a question – she told me what I needed – "You need stretchy." Her broadcast to the world was not a question it was a statement. Her broadcast was a statement based on the lived experience of myself and the cloud of witnesses that had gathered. And her simple, yet tender broadcast of the truth of what I needed in that moment, changed the whole trajectory of that day. I still wear "stretchy" to this day.

As I begin my time with all of you and for all of those who are not part of our community yet, let's begin with a reminder. God has and is generously broadcasting to us the truth of what we need in our lives together, and that broadcast is all about forgiveness. God is urging us to live "stretchy" with one another. Stretchy... That's actually the Greek meaning of

the word forgiveness. No, not really, but what is, is the phrase "let go". Which, well, is what "stretchy" kind of does.

We read about this forgiveness, the letting go, in our Family Prayer that Jesus taught us to pray that we've also called the Lord's Prayer. This is not just the Lord's Prayer this is our Family Prayer. This prayer starts with the words – Our Father. Not Thy Father or Your Father but Our Father and Our Father calls us to forgive. This prayer may just be the biggest broadcast of forgiveness ever prayed.

Our Father... forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (Mat 6:12 NRS)

Our Father let go of our sins as we also have let go of the sins against us.

And this is a prayer we pray over and over and over again to remind us that we need to be "stretchy" with one another. There may be prior grievances here at Prince of Peace that have not been processed or healed but for us to move forward they need to be let go, forgiven. Many of us have lots of ideas and goals for our community. Promises or plans may have been made that I don't know about. I ask for "stretchy." Lots of "stretchy".

In this next chapter of Prince of Peace there is also a lot for us to do. Many, many challenges are ahead of us. There will be lots of conversations, plans that we will make to meet those challenges, and I can't promise that everyone will be super jacked about those plans. But here is what I do promise. We will do all of this together. We will live "stretchy" with one another. And if words escape us, lets use the universal sign... "stretchy."