

Remembering Who We are: How To Fight Against Missional Drift

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[0:00] Today's scripture reading is taken from Acts 13, verses 1-12.

Please follow along your Bible. If you don't have a Bible, please do still grab them from the front of the stage or at the back near the door. Our passage is on page 866 in the Church Bible.

866. 966. Hear then God's word to us today. Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon, who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manan, a lifelong friend of Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul.

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then after fasting and praying, they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

So being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews, and they had John to assist them.

[1:13] When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. He was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.

But Elimus the magician, for that is the meaning of his name, opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, You son of a devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight path of the Lord?

And now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time. Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand.

Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. Let us believe and respond to God's true and living word.

Amen. Hey, it is a genuine joy to be together in this room. Like I said, in a couple of hours, there will be a bunch of people, your brothers and sisters, your family, that will gather together in Mumbai, praying for you.

[2:34] One of the things that I am really looking forward, just like you, when I die and go to heaven, through the work of Jesus, is to see him face to face. But along with that, I'm also excited to see many brothers and sisters that we may not meet on this side of eternity, that has actually carried us in prayer.

And today, I actually get a foretaste of that reality as I'm standing here. So thank you for having us here. Thank you for hosting us. I know that hosting comes with its own challenges.

We really enjoyed your city. We went to a Japanese restaurant a couple of days ago, and I had a foretaste of heaven as well there. So it is great. It is really great to be here.

Hey, let me just give my heart to the Lord before we start. Father, would you help us, Lord God, to enjoy Jesus this morning? Would you help us, Lord, all the things we know in our head and believe, I pray, would explore as worship in our heart?

And Holy Spirit of God, would you help me today to lay aside all of my insecurities and teach and preach to the joy of my Heavenly Father? In Jesus' name we pray.

[3:37] To be plainly instructed and consider well that the main end of your life and studies is to know God and know Jesus Christ.

Now, believe it or not, my friends, this is the mission statement of Harvard University when it was originally founded in 1636. Can you imagine a mission statement like this in one of the educational institutions in today's world?

It's hard to do that, right? But yet, this is the reason why this school existed. Harvard was started with the vision of forming character above all else, existing largely to raise up ministers of the gospel who would carry the gospel to the ends of the earth.

In fact, I don't know if you knew this, but the diplomas awarded during that time had a seal which led in Latin, truth for Christ and truth for the church. Now, about 80 years later, a few New England pastors got together and they started feeling that Harvard has started to move away from this vision or this mission.

And so they decided that they're going to start Yale with an even more explicit commitment to Christ and his gospel. Now, today, I think it's fair to say that we can all perhaps agree in this room that these two institutions are not the bastions of the Christian faith that it once was started to be.

[5:01] So what really happened? What really happened? Friends, what happened to Harvard and Yale could be called missional drift. Missional drift. Now, the thing about missional drift is that it doesn't happen overnight.

Nobody wakes up one fine morning and decides to throw away everything that you value in your life. Drift happens much more subtle than that.

Drift happens, missional drift happens when other things, when a multitude of different things starts to crowd out the things that we once valued in our heart. Comfort and preference and approval and familiarity and control and anxiety, little by little, these things start to crowd out the things that we once valued in our heart.

Now, the thing about drift is that drift doesn't happen to just institutions. Drift happens to the very best of us. In fact, I would say that drift is probably the natural regression of life in a broken world. Think about it. In the world that we live in, nothing moves from chaos into order on its own. Nothing moves from confusion to clarity on its own.

[6:13] Drift happens to the very best of us. Let me give you a couple of examples. It happens to our bodies. All you need to do is just gorge on that shrimp tempura and just forget that anything else exists in this world.

Right? Stop exercising. Right? Stop, ignore, I mean, ignore rest completely and your bodies will remind you that missional drift is real. Right? Same thing happens to our bank account.

Like, stop balancing the checkbook. You know, I mean, stop paying attention to inflows and outflows and before you know your bank account drifts into zero. Our relationship drifts into distance. Our homes drift into clutter.

Order requires effort. Disorder and drift are simply the default mode. But here is the good news that I want to share this morning. The same God who calls our heart to himself also calls our drifting hearts back to himself.

Right? Drift is real, but so is the grace of God that meets us in our drift and restores us back to the grace of God. Now, the church of Jesus has faced all kinds of drifts all through her existence in history.

[7:21] Right? Throughout every cultural shift, every kind of pushback that the church has faced, the church has had to do the same essential work throughout history.

And it's not the work of reinventing herself or it's not the work of coming up with something really trendy or cutting edge. But it's the work of going back to that sacred identity that Jesus has purchased for her and that sacred calling that has been entrusted to her.

So today, I want to take the rest of our time together to look at one of my favorite passages from Scripture that gives us a beautiful, healthy vision of who we are and why we exist.

A healthy vision that comes together to remind us our sacred identity and the sacred calling that has been entrusted to us. And for that, we can go to all kinds of places in Scripture.

But we're going to zero in on Acts chapter 13, the passage that we just read this morning. Now, as we get there, let me lay a little bit of context. If you're new to the Bible, the Bible can be approached as a library of six to six different books.

[8:27] And the New Testament tells us the story of Jesus and the story of the early church. And Acts of the Apostle is found in the New Testament, 28 chapters. And from chapter 1 to chapter 28, there's a 30-year span of time that is passing.

And in this 30-year span of time, the movement of Jesus moves from a small ragtag group of 120 people gathered in an upper room all the way into thousands upon thousands of followers of Jesus into the very heart of the Roman Empire.

And right in the middle of all of that action, we see this small church called the Church in Antioch that gives us the most clear picture of what a gospel community looks like and why we exist. So today, four things that I want to show us from this passage that hopefully helps us to not only remember, but also rehearse the beautiful vision of gospel community. I'm going to just read a couple of verses at a time and then we'll work through this passage.

Picking it up in verse 1. Now they were in the church at Antioch, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manan, a lifelong friend of Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul.

[9:38] So here's the first thing that we see from this passage. A gospel community exists because of Jesus. A gospel community exists because of Jesus. Friends, here's why I'm saying that.

The community at Antioch makes zero sense apart from the gospel. Imagine sitting in for one of their leadership meetings. You got a Jewish man called Barnabas on one side, and right across him is an African man called Simeon, and a Roman non-Jewish Gentile called Lucius.

And all of this is happening, by the way, in a society that is so segregated, right? And you have a guy called Manan, and Luke, the author of Acts of the Apostle, throws in an extra detail there, and reminds us that this is the man who grew up with a guy called Herod Antipas.

Now Herod Antipas, his dad is the one who tried to kill Jesus when Jesus was born. And this Herod Antipas that Manan grew up with before he encountered Jesus, is the same Herod Antipas who beheaded Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, right?

And then, of course, in the midst of all of that, you have Saul. You know, you have Paul, the Apostle Paul, who used to be called Saul because he was terrorizing the church, kicking open doors, and arresting people and persecuting people for their faith in Jesus.

[10:54] What a wildly, wildly diverse bunch of leaders, right? This is not the kind of leaders that LinkedIn will put together in an organization, right?

It's not going to go well, right? Different backgrounds, different cultures, different stories, different experiences, yet somehow Jesus brings all of them together and makes them one family.

One family. Now this is hard at times, and we'll talk about that in a second, but it's also beautiful, right? It's also beautiful. Friends, how are we supposed to grow if everyone around us thought like us, talked like us, right, saw life the same way that we did and agree with everything that we agree upon?

Like we have gospel communities just like you guys have gospel communities. And I want you to imagine this. Imagine if everybody in your gospel community had the same background, same opinions, same personalities, same giftings, the same way of seeing things.

And some of you are like, that is awesome, right? Some of you are like, that's our dream, right?

Well, that's going to be awesome for like five minutes, right? Jesus draws together a diverse bunch of people and uses those differences to expose our blind spots, to challenge our assumptions, to teach us what it means to be patient, and to help us to see things that you and I would never see on our own.

[12:18] This is what makes the church at Antioch so beautiful. The gospel does not erase their differences. The gospel does not make them like a monochromatic blob, right? The gospel does not erase their differences.

It brings their differences together under one Lord and one mission. Friends, this is not just a historical commentary that we are reading this morning.

This is what Jesus is doing in this room. This is not just true about the church of Antioch back in the day. This is true about you and this is true about me and this is true about our gathering in Mumbai, right?

Think of it like this. With all the different personalities, interests, and stories, this is actually what makes our gospel communities a unique offering to our watching world, right?

We are learning to put Jesus at the center. We are allowing Jesus to teach us how to love people who are not like us and how to move towards people who are completely different than us.

[13:22] And it's going to be uncomfortable at times. And here's why it gets uncomfortable at times, right? Sometimes when you sit across people who think differently than you, who communicate differently than you, this is the perennial struggle of my marriage.

My wife is a three-point communicator. She dreams in PDF, you know? And for me, it takes an hour before I warm up to my first point. In fact, Kevin has kept my passport and said that if I don't preach

in a reasonable time, I'll have to walk back to Mumbai.

So I'm going to be careful here. What happens when the people who talk in points, three points, and the person who's a storyteller, usually both of them are in the same community group, right?

And what happens when they come together? When they come together, everything in you will feel like, man, I just need to fix this problem, right? In the first three years of our marriage, I was like, man, if only Cheryl can be a little bit more like me, then all of the problems of our life would be solved, right?

But unfortunately, she was also having the same thought, right? This is not a problem to solve.

Look, this is part of being, this is the whole point of being a gospel community. I love how Dietrich Bonhoeffer captures this in his book, *Life Together*.

[14:31] Here's what he says. He says, Christian community is not an ideal which we must realize. It is rather a reality created by God in Christ that we've been invited to participate in.

The more clearly we learn to recognize that the ground and strength and promise of all our fellowship is in Jesus Christ alone, the more sober-minded, the more serenely shall we think of our fellowship and pray and hope for it.

Church, here's why this matters. You and I find ourselves living in a world that is increasingly getting divided. The promise of connectivity, the promise that we'll all be more connected with social media and all the other things have kind of, in one sense, failed us.

The world is becoming increasingly more tribal, right? Even in the last one year. We're all encouraged to find our people, our side, people that agree with us and then find your group, find your people and then draw lines between, you know, dividing lines between them.

And that is happening in a culture that says that who we are is found in what we look like, how much accomplishments that we have, what we studied, right? What kind of resume that we have.

[15:47] I don't know about the context here, but back home it is like, which part of the city you live from, what kind of vehicle you drive. Like, this is the culture, this is the world that we live in. And while those things can maybe, some of those things can maybe tell part of our story, none of those things were meant to tell us or meant to be the deepest part of our identity, right?

So the church actually has the opportunity, through the work of Christ, to offer the world a different vision of community because our deepest identity is not found in what we have or what we've accomplished.

It is actually settled and secure in the accomplishment of another, in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. We're a diverse group of people being brought together.

We're learning what it means to grow together. We're learning what it means to be loving and patient towards one another because Christ has made us siblings in his family.

The eternal siblinghood of Jesus has been given to us, right? This is what we've been called to practice. So this means that when conflict comes, when relational tension comes, when we feel stretched, we don't get to take our ball and go home, right?

[16:59] We're not like the kid that takes his ball and goes home. We don't get to run away. We don't get to triangulate. We don't get to slander. We don't get to say things like, well, if that's how it's going to be, then I'm just going to not involve or get engaged because that's not how Jesus is moving towards you and I, right?

Even with all the things that we don't get right, even with all the things that we drop constantly, Jesus is patiently moving towards his bride.

And because of that, he's inviting us in his strength to do the hard work of moving towards each other humbly and by faith. This means that we stay in conversation.

We listen. We listen to own our part. We give the benefit of doubt. We honor, we outdo each other in showing honor, right? Even when things are uncomfortable, we do this because we know that Christ is at work.

And for some of us, I think it's helpful to hear this this morning. Sometimes the very tension that we are trying to avoid is where God is doing his best work, right? Because that's where we are learning to be patient.

[18:07] That's where we are learning to give grace. We can sing about grace and we love grace, but then when you have to give grace and when you have to offer grace, that's when, that's a big difference between learning how to swim through a PowerPoint and somebody throwing you in the water, right?

Those are two different things, right? Grace is not just a theological construct, but it's an experience reality in the broken community of God's people. So here's a question that's worth sitting with this morning.

Is Jesus truly the deepest reason that we belong to his church? Or are we here because of our preference, because of our comfort, because of our friendships, or because of familiarity?

Friendships and familiarity and comforts are not bad things, but they're not ultimate things, right? A gospel community exists because of Jesus. Point number two, a gospel community exists under the authority of Jesus.

A gospel community exists under the authority of Jesus. Look at the next couple of verses. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

[19:17] Then after fasting and praying, they laid their hands on them and sent them off. I love what's happening in this passage. Acts 13 shows us that these believers, followers of Jesus Christ, were worshiping the Lord and fasting.

The striking thing about this group of people is that their worship goes way beyond singing songs, right? They're worshiping the Lord by obeying him as Lord in worship. And here's how we know that.

In the middle of their worship service, can you imagine this? In the middle of the worship service, the Holy Spirit speaks, and he says, Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul. Now there's a little bit detail in there.

It says that there were teachers and prophets present there. That's like a unique community, right? I imagine that the Holy Spirit is speaking through the prophets. Again, in today's context, it's very rare when teachers and prophets are working together, right?

Yet that is what is being seen in this community. So the Spirit asks them to release two of their best leaders, and how does the church respond? The church sets apart a committee, and the church says that, hey, let's actually talk about the merits and the demerits, commissions the committee and say, give us a report in one week, right?

[20:24] Let's talk about the merits and demerits of what God is asking us to do. That's not what happened, right? The church responds in obedience. The church responds and says, yes, Lord.

And this is simple obedience, but this is a costly obedience. This is the kind of obedience that's going to cost them something, right? Two of their best leaders have been set apart. They're willing to part with two of their best leaders, and this is going to cost them something.

And this is one thing that I love about this passage. I think this passage shows us the difference between admiring Jesus and submitting to Jesus. Two different things, right?

It's one thing to say that I really like some of the things that Jesus says, but it's a completely different thing to say he's Lord, and his voice carries authority in my life. And if you look at the ministry of Jesus, he's always upfront about the cost of following him.

He's not building an MLM, you know, scheme. That he's not trying to sell us like some kind of a ponzi, bait and switch scheme. He's always been upfront about the cost of following him.

[21:28] Listen to his voice in Mark chapter 8. And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, Jesus said to them, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me, right?

If anyone would come after me, anyone means that it's a completely inclusive call. Invitation is wide open to anyone who would hear, anyone who is willing to follow Jesus, but then he's also honest about what that'll cost.

Let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me, right? This is why I believe true gospel community exists under the authority of God.

It means true gospel community, trust that God knows how we were made to live better than we do. That God gets to call balls and strikes. He's made us and created us and he knows how best human beings will flourish on this side of eternity, right?

This means that the voice of Jesus gets to shape what we believe, how we live and how we treat one another, even when we have to handle our differences. This is what makes real Christianity different from whatever that is heart and culture for a minute, right?

[22:40] Gospel community is one way we say we belong to Jesus, we live under his authority and because we belong to Jesus, we belong to each other. This means that between my brother Kevin and I stands Jesus.

Like when I have to approach him, I can't approach him outside of Jesus. The same grace that God has offered me is offered to him. There is something about relating to each other as Jesus being the mediator of the new covenant, between each other in community.

That leads me to the third thing that I wanted to see from this passage. Not only is gospel community because of Jesus and existing under the authority of Jesus, a gospel community exists for the sake of the mission of Jesus.

Look at verse 4 and 5. Friends, this church community had some really beautiful things going on for them, right?

They had a beautiful community. They were united together. I mean, imagine, they worked through their differences, right? They had, their diversity is seen in their leadership team and the leadership team represents different communities that is a part of this church.

[24:03] So they've done the hard work and they've built something beautiful and the easiest thing to do would be to say, hey, let's build a fence around this thing and let's protect this, right? Let's protect this.

But the Holy Spirit interrupts their comfort. The Holy Spirit says, set apart for me Barnabas and Saul. So the Spirit's first command to this church was not keep your best leaders to yourself but send out your best leaders.

In many ways, you and I are sitting here on the shoulders of what this church did, right? When this church sent out Paul and Barnabas, this church had no idea that God, the Holy Spirit, would use Paul to write half of the New Testament, right?

And all of this should not surprise us. If you've read our Bible, this is the same pattern that God does. God is ascending God. The Father sends the Son. The Son sends the Spirit.

The Spirit sends the church. So this should not surprise us that gospel communities are never meant to become this place of comfort where we say that, look, I've found finally my people. Gospel goodbyes are hard, right?

[25:06] Can we say that I've done gospel goodbyes? Mumbai is a transient culture and it seems like we do gospel goodbyes every couple of months, right? But here is why gospel communities are worth it because this is the heart of God, right?

This is the heart of God. It is never meant to be about our comfort. It is never meant to be about saying, look, it's us four and no more, right? I love how Christopher Wright puts this in his wonderfully dense book, Mission of God, right?

Here is what he says. He says, it is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world as that God has a church for his mission in the world, right? It's not that God has a mission for the church.

God has a mission and he has a church to advance that mission. So whether in Hong Kong or Mumbai or Oklahoma City, God keeps sending people. Between Sundays, God keeps sending his people to neighborhoods and universities and food courts and families and communities so that more people can hear the gospel, the more people can encounter Jesus and be welcomed into the family of God.

And this has always been God's plan. I love this verse in Revelation 21. Listen to this verse. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

[26:24] He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God. Until that day coming, until that day comes, there's a day coming where God will make his dwelling amongst his people.

And until that day comes, Jesus is redeeming, reconciling, restoring all things to himself and in his wisdom, in his providence and in his grace, he's called you and he's called me, his church, to be a part of this work.

Now here's what happens when we drift and lose sight of this mission of God. We become bored and we become inward focused. A bored Christian is a dangerous thing.

Right? And here's why a bored Christian is a dangerous thing. When we encounter Jesus, when our hearts come alive to Jesus, our heart comes alive to the mission of God. Right? There is faith and there is passion and there is energy, that missional energy that God, the Holy Spirit puts in our heart.

And all of that is supposed to lean outward. Right? And when we lose sight of the mission of God, all of that starts to lean inward. Right? Then we, when we start to lose sight of the mission of God, the kingdom of God starts to shrink and the kingdom of self starts to expand.

[27:37] Right? Then we are caught up so much in our little trinkets and our little kingdom. Right? This is when our imagination is no longer captivated by the glorious calling of the mission of God.

Everything starts to revolve around us. Right? We become, this is when we become easily offended. This is when we start to chase all kinds of things that promises all kinds of things but fails in the end.

Right? This is when we, we have voracious appetites to consume but it's never satisfied because we were meant to be advancing the kingdom of God by the power and work of the Holy Spirit.

This is when we start to look at, compare our ministries with other ministries. This is when we start to think about our giftings, shrink our giftings as related to somebody else's gifting.

Right? It's a dangerous thing to lose sight of the mission of God. I remember hearing the story, I actually met the person, this person who has been a follower of Jesus for over 40 years who almost split a church because somebody asked him to sit, scoot one space over for a new family that is visiting.

[28:45] Like what happened? He didn't start there. Over time, he lost sight of the mission of God and life started to become about our convenience, our preference. The self started to be enthroned.

Right? This is a dangerous thing. So where has our sense of mission quietly shrunk down to just our own comfort and our own preference and our own schedules?

And notice what happens when the church is sent out on mission. Look at the rest of the passage. When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus.

He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elimus, the magician, for that is the meaning of his name, opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?

[29:53] So the moment Barnabas and Saul are sent out on mission, what happens? They encounter opposition. And friends, this is not an interruption to the mission. It is actually part of the mission.

It is actually part of the mission. Have you ever felt this? The moment you step out in obedience to Jesus, resistance starts to show up. Resistance starts to show up. We've experienced this throughout every season of planting in Cornerstone, in Mumbai.

Kevin alluded to how we showed up with a lot of joy, a lot of excitement to be faced with a global pandemic. Like nobody even knows what is going on, right? But Jesus' plans cannot be thwarted. Even a global pandemic cannot stand in the way. And then throughout the seasons of planting, there has been many moments when we've looked at each other and we've talked to us, God, we know you've called us, but why does this feel so hard?

Why does this feel so hard? There have been seasons of disappointments and misunderstandings and relational tensions and loneliness, many, many moments when we wondered if the cost was even worth it.

[30:57] And it's not just us. You have your own versions of that, right? But here is what I want you to remember this morning. Opposition doesn't always mean that you're on the wrong path, right?

Sometimes it's evidence that you're moving exactly where God has called you to move. That brings me to the last thing that I want us to see from this passage. A gospel community exists to confront darkness in the power of the Spirit.

Let me say that again. A gospel community exists to confront darkness in the power of the Holy Spirit. Look at the language Paul is using here. A son of the devil, an enemy of all righteousness, full of deceit and villainy making crooked the straight paths of the Lord.

I'm like, Paul, what is going on? Like, why are you so mad, right? Who is Paul speaking to? Is he speaking to just a fellow believer? Or is he speaking to a difficult person, dealing with a difficult person in this community?

No, my friends, that's not what's happening here. Paul is confronting a deeper spiritual reality, right? This is what spiritual warfare and spiritual resistance look like in this context.

[32:05] Throughout the book of Acts, the mission of Jesus is not seen as just a battle against difficult situations and difficult people. There's a real spiritual enemy who opposes the advance of

the gospel, right?

And I get it. That can sound a little strange, right? But depending on where we are coming from, this is 2026. We are living in global cities. Like, it is hard to think about things that we can't see, things that we can't quantify, things that we cannot logically explain.

But the Bible is clear. The same Paul who wrote a dense theological treatise like Romans also wrote Ephesians 6. And listen to his words. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Friends, the book of Acts shows us that the Holy Spirit repeatedly empowers the church to do something that we can't do on our own. Like, we need the empowerment of the Holy Spirit throughout the history of the church.

Even today. It doesn't matter if it's the most resourceful place in the world or the most under-resourced place in the world. We have been given a mission. We've been entrusted a task that we can't complete on our own.

[33 : 23] We need the power and the presence of the living God through the work of the Holy Spirit for this. Right? I'm not persuasive enough. Our team is not strategic enough.

We don't have enough resources. We don't know all things to actually get behind the advance of gospel mission in Mumbai. But yet, one thing we know is that the spirit of the living God is fulfilling the promise of Jesus whether it's in Hong Kong or Mumbai.

Jesus promised he will build a church and the gates of hell will not prevail against her. Right? And the spirit of God is actually bringing that promise to pass through the church. Right? Through his working.

Through his power. Like it's not up to us. Right? In one sense it is. Like by faith we stand but we also stand depending on the spirit. Like we lean on the spirit to have him complete this work.

Like no one can help us see Jesus like the spirit can. Right? So we need his presence. We need his work. So friends where do we go from here?

[34 : 32] The gospel community is together because of Jesus together under the authority of Jesus. It's together for the sake of his mission and we are together to confront darkness in the power of his spirit.

So today can we take a moment of honesty? Where do we need grace? When you think about these four things where do we experience missional drift in these four areas?

Where do we need God's help this morning? One of the greatest gifts the gospel offers us is the gift to come to God needy and honest. I realize that sometimes I avoid the very things that makes me that poises me my heart to receive God's grace.

Right? Beautiful gift that the gospel gives us is the freedom to come to Jesus needy and dependent. So here's my question. Where do you need God's grace this morning?

Where do we need God's grace this morning? For those of us who can honestly name a couple of areas I have good news for you. The same God who called you and I is calling our drifting hearts back to himself.

[35 : 47] And here's the beautiful thing. We don't have to do this alone. You get to do it with the people sitting to your right and the people sitting to your left. You get to do it together as we gather on Sundays and as we scatter all across Hong Kong and Mumbai between Sundays in community.

And here is why we can step towards this in both confidence and humility. Wherever we fall short of this Jesus has already done the work perfectly on our behalf.

Right? There's never been a moment in his life where Christ has drifted. He has stood firm and completed the will of God in our place and he invites us today to simply come in faith and repentance and stand in his work.

Stand in his work. Right? For all the ways that you and I attempted to look towards familiarity, move towards people that we are familiar with, move towards comfort, right? Move towards people who are just like us, Christ has left behind the comfort of heaven and the familiarity of heaven and he's moved towards the people who are nothing like him.

Right? And in doing so, he's moved towards you and I in all of our imperfection, in all the ways that we experience the weight of brokenness and sin, and he makes us family through his finished work.

[37 : 07] Church, for all the ways that you and I have failed to submit to the authority of God, Jesus perfectly submitted to the Father's voice in joyful obedience, obedience even to the point where he's

embraced the Father's mission of seeking and saving the lost, even to the point of being broken apart on a Roman cross in our place for our sins.

And in doing so, Jesus confronts the deepest darkness of our hearts and by the power of the Spirit who raised him from the dead on the third day, he establishes dominion over death, over sin, and over Satan.

And he does that so that this morning, none of those things have the last word over God's people. Jesus has the last word over his church. Today, he's both our substitute and our example, and he offers us a real power to repent from our drifting and experience a renewal to be the kind of gospel community that he's already made us to be.

Right? He's already made us to be. So today, as we close, where do we need God's grace? Where do we need God's grace? If you're today here and you're not sure about what you believe or maybe you are hearing all of this and you say, look, I resonate with some parts, but I'm not sure if I'm yet in a place to be a follower of Jesus.

I'm so glad that you're here. Right? I'm so glad that you're here. I want to say this. I want to say this on behalf of this community, that you're among friends. You're among friends. You're not among people who figured it all out.

[38:43] You're among friends. We don't have to pretend that we figured it all out. Today, the offer of grace stands true for every single one of us. Even in the preaching of God's word, God is moving towards us.

He's not leading away from us. So let's take a couple of minutes. Let's quiet our hearts. Let's bring our hearts before God. Where do we need God's grace this morning?

Would you pray with me? Father, we thank you so much for the real work of your spirit that calls our hearts back to yourself. Would you help us, Lord God, to remember who we are?

Would you help us, Lord God, to walk out our calling? Would you help us, Lord God, to remember that you have anchored us in you? In a million years from now, the most true thing about us is that we are loved by God through Jesus, that we are siblings, brothers and sisters brought into a family by the finished work of Jesus.

So today, Lord God, would you help us, would you help us, Holy Spirit of God, to remember this reality, not just in this moment, but when the mundane things of Wednesday starts to move our hearts to boredom, would you bring our hearts to remember, Lord, who we are and what we've been called to do?

[40:02] Would you help us, Lord God, to submit your word? We thank you that your word is authority over us. Would you shape us and form us? We pray, Lord God, that you would light up our devotions, Lord God, as we open God's word, would you help us, Holy Spirit of God, to cherish and treasure Jesus?

As we read your word, would you help your word to read us? Would you help us, Lord God, to remember the calling to be a part of your mission? Would you give us boldness? Would you give us grace?

Would you give us creativity? Would you give us, Lord God, wisdom, Father, to proclaim the gospel and demonstrate your kingdom wherever you have planted us? And finally, Lord, we pray, God, that we do acknowledge that we can't do this on our own.

We need you. So we pray, God, that you would push back against everything that pushes against the advance of the gospel in Hong Kong. Would you use Watermark Church, Lord God?

I pray, Father, that our story would be such that there will be a day when we stand in your presence, when we say, because of your prayer, because of your willingness to send, because of your willingness to open your mouth and advance the gospel, I'm here.

[41:13] I pray, God, that that would be our story. Lord, we love you. We love you. We thank you. It's amazing, Lord, that you've called us to your work. And would you help us, Lord God, would you fill us with your spirit and send us out of here, Lord God, with boldness, humility, joy, and courage.

In Jesus' name we pray. may may