

The Gospel Means New Creation

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[0 : 00] The scripture reading comes from 2 Corinthians chapter 5. Please follow along in your bulletin or on the screen. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh.

Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God.

[1 : 02] For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. This is the word of God. Thanks, Jefferson, for reading our passage today.

Can everyone hear me okay? Yeah. Okay. Ed can always hear me. Good morning again. If you don't know me, my name is Oscar, and I serve as one of the elders here at Watermark.

It's great to see people back from holiday and also to see some new faces here as well. Now, before I give today's sermon, I'm going to pray what we call the pastoral prayer.

And I would love for all of us to pray this prayer together. Jesus said there's an amazing power when two or more are gathered in his name to pray. So as I pray, please don't zone out.

Please focus your hearts and minds and let us pray this prayer together. Father in heaven, Holy Spirit, Lord Jesus, we give you praise this morning.

[2 : 10] We worship you. We adore you. You are the sovereign God, the most high, the great I am. There is truly no one in this world or in heaven that can compare to you.

You are our creator, our provider, our sustainer. But then you also gave your life for us while our backs were turned firmly against you, God.

You died for us. Thank you, Jesus. This morning, God, we want to pray for the leaders here at Watermark, our staff, elders, and community group leaders.

Above all the practical day-to-day responsibilities and duties, I pray, God, that our first love will be our Lord Jesus. May the awe of God and the love of Christ drive the way we serve and lead.

And help us understand what it means to be a true servant leader. Please give us humble hearts that are soft and willing to admit mistakes, faults, and sin, because we realize that Jesus has already paid the price for all of these things.

[3 : 16] And I pray for unity among our leaders, that with one heart and one mind may we labor together to disciple and build up your body. And Father, we also want to remember the people who have been affected by the flooding in Indonesia, the volcanic activity in the Philippines, and the fires in Australia.

We pray for those who have lost their homes or even family members. Oh, God, would you please comfort these people. Show them your tender love.

And would you protect those who are now exposed to polluted water or polluted air or toxic ash. Oh, God, have mercy on them. And may your common grace fall upon all those affected in these countries.

And Father, as we consider the sermon this morning, we ask that you speak to us from your word and by the power of your spirit. As we continue learning about the gospel of Jesus this morning, would your spirit teach us, rebuke us, correct, and train us in righteousness so that we would be equipped to do your work.

Help us to see the depravity of our sin. But would you also open the eyes of our heart to see the beauty of Christ. And would you cause us to be in awe of you.

[4 : 33] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Anyone know where this picture was taken from? No, it's not a Sunday morning worship service here at Watermark.

It's not a Bruno Mars conference. Did someone say retreat? Our retreat? Nope. This picture has nothing to do with Watermark at all. This picture was taken from the Masters of the Century Seminar, held last October in Singapore.

And at this event, over 5,000 people came from all over the world, paying up to 12,000 Hong Kong dollars a person to listen to a number of so-called celebrity motivational speakers speak about how to become better versions of themselves.

I'm very tempted to give my opinion on this conference, but I will refrain from doing so, at least up here this morning. Ask me later. But what I will say is that when I read about this conference, two things came to mind.

The first is that many people are desperate to become better versions of themselves. Usually the goal is to make more money, which I think was the theme of this conference in Singapore.

[5 : 41] But we also desire other things as well. We want to improve our relationships. We want more discipline. We want to be in better physical shape.

Think about all your New Year's resolutions. You probably made and broke already. Generally, we desire to be better versions of ourselves. And second, many people will look to the teaching of a person or a group of people to help further this goal of becoming better versions of themselves. Now, if you've been with us since the beginning of the year, you'll know we started a new teaching series called Watermark Essentials, talking about what we believe as a church and why, talking about our core values, which are gospel, community, and mission, right there.

Kevin kicked us off over the past few weeks on the gospel, while we must continue to teach and preach the gospel as a church, while we must continue to bathe ourselves in the gospel as individuals, and how the gospel changes us.

And this morning, we'll be continuing to focus on the gospel, but perhaps from a slightly different angle. Whereas last week, Kevin spoke about how the gospel changes us, today, as we consider this passage from Paul's letter to the church in Corinth, we'll look at the process of this change, the process, and what this looks like day to day.

[7 : 05] And to do this, we'll slowly walk through this passage from 2 Corinthians to try to extract what God's word is trying to tell us. That's where we're going this morning, in case you're wondering.

Now, a little background on Corinthians and this passage. Around AD 50, when the Apostle Paul planted the church in Corinth, Corinth was a thriving, cosmopolitan city in Roman-controlled Greece.

As you can see on the map, because of its strategic location, on a narrow strip of land connecting the southern peninsula to the Greek mainland, Corinth controlled sea traffic from both the east and the western seas, and was therefore a hub of trade and finance, kind of like Hong Kong.

And so Corinth attracted people from many different socioeconomic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. There were wealthy Greeks from the mainland, there were Roman nobles, but there were also poor immigrants from Egypt and Syria as well.

Temples of worship to both Greek and Roman gods stood side by side in Corinth and were probably in close proximity to the church that Paul planted. And the church that Paul planted was also probably a microcosm of broader Corinth with people from all different kinds of backgrounds.

[8 : 20] But the problem with the church in Corinth was that instead of being a light to the city, instead of influencing the city, the church in Corinth was being influenced by the city.

And when we read Paul's letters to the Corinthians, particularly the book of 1 Corinthians, we see Christians whose lives are pretty out of whack with the teachings of Christ. Disunity and division were widespread among congregants.

Disculpting and divorce were encouraged. And there was very little care for the weak and the helpless within the community. And when we read Paul's letters, we can sense his pain.

After planting the church, he left after 18 months to continue planting churches around the region. But when he heard about how the church in Corinth was living deeply out of step with the teachings of Christ, he wrote to them a number of times, encouraging them, but also challenging them in the

gospel.

Paul says to them, hey guys, we're saved by the very blood of Jesus Christ. We're saved by his grace. We can no longer think and act like how the world does. Our lives must fundamentally be different.

[9 : 29] And looking at today's passage, Paul starts off by saying, if we can turn to verse 16, from now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh.

One of the struggles Paul had with the church in Corinth, at least at the time of writing this letter of 2 Corinthians, was that the church was being influenced by false prophets, false teachers.

And as a result, some in the congregation were saying of Paul, hey, look at him. Look at Paul. Look how weak he is. He has no money. He's so poor. He's always getting thrown in jail and getting persecuted.

How can Paul be a true apostle of Christ? Shouldn't a real apostle be wealthy, have a nice slick hair or white teeth and a fancy car?

Those that slandered Paul were valuing or judging him according to the flesh, i.e., based on their worldly perspective. But what Paul is saying is that when we become followers of Christ, we no longer judge or size up people according to worldly standards.

[10 : 37] People are no longer put into the categories of wealthy or poor, Republican, Democrat, blue or yellow. You know, we've heard churches in Hong Kong where community groups, small groups have broken up because of such extreme political views.

Paul would say that's crazy. He spent one and a half chapters in 1 Corinthians rebuking the church for putting their pride ahead of their love for their brother and sister in Christ. For when we see people through the lens of Christ, we see them for who they truly are, broken and in desperate need of a Savior.

Look at how Jesus interacted with people when he walked this earth, whether it was a Roman officer or a wealthy Jewish Pharisee or the woman caught in adultery. Jesus cared and loved every single person that he met.

For to Jesus, we're all the same. We're all inherently messed up, unable to save ourselves. The gospel really is the great equalizer because we're all broken and in desperate need of a Savior. But if our lives are in Christ, we're all equally and lavishly loved by God. And this relates to those we love, those we hate, and those that we're indifferent about.

[11 : 58] It's easy to love those we love, right, by definition. It's much harder to love those we hate or those to whom we're indifferent. So next week at that Chinese New Year dinner when you're seated next to that annoying uncle who's lecturing you about something random, remember, he's broken and in desperate need of a Savior.

Remember that. And that waiter or waitress who's serving you that you may ignore or maybe you're being rude to because she's a bit slow, remember, she's broken and in desperate need of a Savior. Paul continues and says in the second half of verse 16, Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.

What Paul may be referring to is perhaps his own experience prior to his conversion. In his former life, Paul believed that the teachings of Jesus were a threat to the standing of Judaism and so Paul persecuted many who followed Christ.

But when Paul says here in this verse, we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, he may also mean that your understanding of Jesus is either too narrow or totally wrong.

[13 : 18] Paul is saying the way you live your life reflects this. You say you love and follow Jesus, but your pride and arrogance causes you to slander your brother behind his back and to gossip about your neighbor.

He says you say you love Jesus, but you remain indifferent to the poor. You hoard all your wealth to yourself. So how do we view the person of Jesus Christ?

Is he a moral teacher? He taught us, he can teach us some good values or how to be better versions of ourselves. Or is Jesus like the genie in the bottle where we pray to him when we're desperate for a new job?

Or we're lonely, want a relationship? Or do we see Jesus for who he truly is? The son of God. The one who formed the earth with his very breath.

The one who was both king on his throne ruling over heaven and earth, but also the one who died and gave his life for sinners like you and I. The one from whom if you lost everything in this world,

you would still have tremendous hope, peace, and joy.

[14 : 21] Because the truth is, if Jesus really is who he says he is, the savior of the world, the Messiah, God himself, our lives must be fundamentally changed forever.

And so, for those of us here who have put our faith and hope in Christ, those of us here who call ourselves Christians, our outlook, our worldview, the way we live and act must be radically different from that of the world's.

Paul says in verse 17, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. A new creation. The old has passed away.

Behold, the new has come. Nicky Cruz was a hardened gang member. Born in Puerto Rico, Nicky was beaten as a three-year-old boy by parents who practiced witchcraft.

His mother even called him the son of Satan. At the age of 15, Nicky moved to New York City where he joined a violent street gang, eventually rising to become their leader. He committed numerous violent crimes and was caught up in both drugs and alcohol.

[15 : 31] But one day, a young pastor by the name of David Wilkerson from Indiana started preaching to Nicky. He shared with Nicky about God's love. At first, Nicky threatened to kill David.

He spat at him and said, Don't come back. I'm going to kill you. But David persisted. Day after day, he went back to Nicky sharing about God's love. And after a while, Nicky's heart softened and he confessed that he had messed up.

That he was messed up. And he gave his life to Jesus Christ. And for the past 60 plus years, Nicky Cruz has traveled all over the world sharing his testimony to over 50 million people.

Countless others have been dramatically, have been inspired and their lives have been changed by God's testimony through Nicky's 17 books. Nicky's life, his testimony, is an amazing example of what the power of the Holy Spirit can do.

Right? An example of someone whose life has been dramatically changed after giving his life to Christ. But what about those of us here today who are already Christians?

[16 : 44] Those of us here who are already supposedly new creations? Why don't we feel so new? Why do we still struggle with the same old habits and sins?

Why do we feel shame? Why do we feel like we're never good enough? Well, Paul didn't say, hey, listen to this, right? Paul didn't say that if today our lives are in Christ, we are a perfect creation.

He didn't say that, right? He says, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. For those of us here today who have given our lives to Christ, we aren't perfect, but it's okay.

The day we confessed, repented, and professed our faith in Christ, we started a new life from zero. And we don't go to 100 overnight. What did Jesus say?

Jesus said that we were born again. Think about that analogy, like babies, right? What do babies know when they're first born? Nothing. Right? We have two babies. They're going to fall 100 times before they can walk.

[17 : 42] They have a lot to learn. And so do we. And then Paul says, the old has passed away. Behold, the new has come.

In some ways, this is a prophetic statement, referring to the future when the old will really pass away. The old world, the world as we know it, and our old bodies, our existing bodies, will be exchanged into a new earth and our new glorified bodies.

And Christ says the same thing in Revelation when he says, I am making everything new, referring to the new heaven and the new earth, where there'll be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things will be passed, has passed away.

If today our lives are in Christ, one day we will be perfect. But between now and then we will remain imperfect.

But not stagnant. When Paul says the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. He's also referring to this process in this life of sanctification, of constant heart renewal, of becoming more and more like our beloved Jesus over time.

[19 : 00] And how does this happen? This happens when our love for Jesus deepens. As we go more in love with him and as the gospel gets deeper into our hearts, our old habits, our old ways, our old addictions are left behind.

But it's a constant continual renewal process which happens over the course of our entire lives. It's like when a snake sheds its skin. Snakes shed their skins to promote growth and to remove parasites.

But they don't just do it once. Snakes shed skins many times a year and many, many more times throughout the course of their entire lives. I've been a Christian since I was a child. But if I'm honest, as a teenager and into my 20s, I don't think I had a clue about the gospel at all. My thought as a Christian was that it was what I needed to do. It was about my hard work, my holiness. I needed to work hard to be a good person. It wasn't about what Christ had already done for me. And it wasn't until I came actually here to Watermark and I learned about gospel-centered teaching that I realized that actually I was much worse than I thought I was.

[20 : 15] But I was much more loved and cherished and precious to God than I had realized. And in this process of confessing sin and growing more in love with Jesus, I have seen a newness in parts of my life.

Many years ago, I struggled with an addiction to poker. It sounds funny, but it was actually pretty bad. I loved Texas Hold'em.

I would play in casinos, I would play in poker clubs in New York and Hong Kong, I would play in people's homes, I'd even have games in my own home. I loved the competitive aspect of it, the strategy, trying to outwit your opponent, bluffing.

I would go online and listen to YouTube videos of professionals to get better, I read books, I knew all the odds, mathematical odds of poker to gain an advantage. But looking back now, I can admit that I loved poker.

I was so deeply invested in it, I was so focused on it. I loved poker more than I loved Jesus. It was an addiction. It was an idol. But it wasn't that I woke up one day at rock bottom where the only direction I could go was up, and it wasn't like I had some amazing God moment.

[21 : 34] It's that over time, as I became aware of my own depravity, I realized I needed Jesus' death on the cross more than I'd realized. And then as my love for Christ grew, my appreciation and love for Him grew, there wasn't space in my heart to love this poker.

And so that love died. And even in recent years, as my love for Jesus has grown, stuff that was so important to me in the past just isn't anymore. I used to think that life was about doing well in school, getting good grades, getting a great job, winning tennis matches along the way, and moving up the food chain to the top so I could make a lot of money.

And in recent years, as I've loved Christ more, my drive to succeed in these worldly things has sort of diminished. Don't get me wrong, I still work hard and I still respect work and I appreciate it, but I guess what I'm trying to say is here that its former place that was up here has been de-elevated. It's now down here. Because I think as our love for Christ grows, God's Spirit gives us a bigger heart to love what He loves and who He loves.

He wants us to love our families, our wives and our children well, to cherish them. He wants us to love our community here at Watermark, to sacrifice for them. He wants us to love our neighbors. He wants us to love strangers.

[22 : 58] He wants us to love widows and orphans, the poor. But also, as our love for Christ grows, there is no room to love that which Christ hates. And what does He hate? Idols, addictions, and sin.

Whether it's an addiction to poker, to alcohol, pornography, the idol of our kids' education, the idol that money can give us happiness, these things diminish when our love for Christ increases.

This is what happens when the gospel gets deeper into our hearts. We become constantly renewed, a new creation, so that today we're more like Christ than we were yesterday, and tomorrow we'll be more like Christ than we are today.

This is the power of the gospel, as Paul says in Romans 1, right? And we're not renewed, right, by some wise words or some celebrity motivational speaker that says how to live or how to think or act, right?

We're renewed by the very power of God, by His Spirit. But again, we're not yet perfect. And in case you had the view that I'm some sort of saint, well, you should ask the elders.

[24 : 05] Better yet, ask my wife or daughter. They know me well. I'm not sure if I shared this story.

Late last year, Celeste and I were driving to my cousin's wedding in Kuntong. We were already late when I took a wrong turn and I went down a one-way street and I was stuck.

Excuse me, one second, excuse me. So I was stuck down a one-way street and the only way to get out was to turn around the way I came. But the only way to turn around was to reverse into this driveway of a car park.

And there's one of these orange cones blocking the driveway so I got out of the car, picked the cone up, put it to the side, but as I got back into my car, the manager of the car park picked that cone up and put it right back in the middle of the driveway.

So I'm like, dude. Well, I didn't say dude. I said, sir. I just need a couple seconds to reverse so I can get out of here. You can see I'm stuck, right? Obviously, he knows I'm stuck, right?

[25 : 08] And he goes, sorry, no one can come in unless they pay. I said, I don't need to pay. I don't need to come into your, I don't need to park. I just need a couple seconds to reverse so I can get out of here.

I'm late for my cousin's wedding. Come on, have some pity on me. He looks at me with arms crossed. No one comes in unless they pay. And so I flipped out.

I yelled at him. I didn't curse, I didn't swear at him, so just make sure you understand that. But I definitely wasn't gracious, I wasn't kind. I yelled at him and I'm not proud of it.

I'm not proud. My voice was raised and my anger burned at him. I still have a lot of renewing to do over the course of many years.

But thankfully, God has made a way for my heart and for your heart to be continually renewed. And this renewing is only possible because God has reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ.

[26 : 10] Let's look at verse 18 and 19 now. And Paul says, all of this is from God, referring to being a new creation, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting our trespasses against them. The fact that reconciliation is needed indicates the fractured relationship we have with God because of sin.

Paul writes in Colossians that apart from Christ, we are enemies of God. God. In Ephesians, he writes, we are aliens and foreigners to God's household because of sin, because of our trespasses. We absolutely cannot be in the presence of God. But God himself has made a way. Notice Paul writes, all this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself.

See, we can't reconcile with God. It isn't like when we husbands, you know, say something mean to our wives and, you know, in an attempt to win them back, so to speak. We buy them chocolates or flowers to win them back, right?

[27 : 16] It doesn't work this way with God. We cannot reconcile with God. There is nothing we can do to reconcile with God. It's only through Christ's blood poured out on the cross that you and I are reconciled with God.

And being reconciled means we have a relationship with Almighty God. We can know him. We can commune with him. Even now, during this service, we are communing with God as he speaks through the songs or through the scripture or through the message.

We respond to him in confession, in worship, in adoration. And then, in verse 21 here, Paul ends with one of the most significant statements in the entire Bible explaining how it is that you and I, if our faith and hope is in Jesus, we can be reconciled with God.

Verse 21, for our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. This is the gospel.

This is the gospel. Jesus' death on the cross enables us, Jesus' death on the cross enables us to be reconciled with God. The cross is the bridge which provides a pathway to God, a pathway to know God, to be in a relationship with him.

[28 : 46] But the sacrifice of the cross cost Jesus everything and his death reveals three fundamental points at the heart of the gospel.

The first point is that sin, the sin in our hearts, the darkness that resides in each and every single one of us is much worse than we understand it to be. If you think about yourself, perhaps you've never committed murder or robbed a bank, but I imagine every single person here has burned with anger against someone.

Maybe your boss, maybe your parents, maybe the manager of a car park. You may have never committed adultery, but I imagine most if not every single person here has lusted after someone who they weren't married to.

I know I have. But Christ was very clear when he said that the sin we commit in our heart, that secret sin that no one else knows about, he knows, and that's still sin.

And the second point is that God is much holier and just than we understand him to be. In fact, I would be remiss to think I can even find the word to describe God's holiness.

[29 : 56] But one implication of his holiness is that God absolutely cannot stand sin. And I don't just mean murder and grand larceny, I mean all those sins that you and I commit in our hearts.

There is not one single sin that will go unpunished by God. God demands justice for each and every sin because of his holiness. So yeah, if our sin wasn't that bad and if God wasn't that holy, then sure, in that pretend parallel universe, maybe we can get a pass for our sin.

So when Kevin and Claire were considering moving from Cape Town to serve here at Watermark, they came on a brief trip to Hong Kong. And on one of those days, my wife Celeste and I took them out on a sightseeing tour.

We were heading towards Causeway Bay, but I missed the exit. And so I made the quick and wrong decision to cross a double line to make the exit.

And of course, very soon after that, the police, the lights were flashing in my rear view mirror. I was getting pulled over by the police officer asking me for my license. But somehow, miraculously, by the grace of God, the police officer just said, don't do this again.

[31 : 17] And he let me go. Amazing, right? I got in the pass. But it doesn't work this way with God. The God of the Bible, whom we worship, cannot give a pass to anyone.

Every sin must be punished. Every evil thought and action will be accounted for. But, the story doesn't end there. If it did, it's pretty depressing, isn't it, right?

It doesn't end there. The beauty of the gospel is that God didn't just give us a pass. Instead, he made a way to satisfy his own wrath through punishing himself.

I mean, who does that, right? He made him to be sin who knew no sin. Jesus Christ, who was equal to God in every way, the radiance of God's glory, the one who never sinned, and the one who was perfectly holy, became sin.

That is to say that the sin of the world, your sin, and my sin, were literally put on the shoulders of Christ so that Christ became our substitute.

[32 : 22] Instead of you and I facing the just punishment of God, Jesus on the cross hung in our place, bloodied and bruised and facing the terrible wrath of God.

And he did this for us because he loves us. And through his death on the cross, the perfection of Christ, his righteousness has been given to us.

It has been imputed to us. We now have Christ's righteousness if we confess and repent of our sins and put our faith and hope in Christ. When God the Father considers us, when the almighty, powerful God looks at us, he doesn't see our sin, he doesn't see all the nasty thoughts in our hearts, he doesn't count against us all the times that we have messed up, he doesn't see our addiction, our greed, our pride, our lust.

What he sees is he sees Jesus Christ, the perfect, unblemished Christ. When God considers us, he sees Jesus. And what this means is that God doesn't just put up with us.

He doesn't just sort of like us but wish we'd go away like an annoying dog. He loves us deeply because he loves Jesus. Remember in Scripture when Jesus was baptized, God the Father said about Jesus, this is my Son whom I love, with whom I'm well pleased.

[34 : 00] The Father loves the Son and yet put him on that cross for us. And through the cross and only through the cross, when God considers us, he sees Jesus, the one he loves.

And therefore, he loves us. And here we come full circle. When the gospel of Christ gets deeper into our hearts, the implications are huge.

We aren't perfect today but we absolutely cannot be the same person. That is why Paul says, if anyone is in Christ, the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.

As our love and appreciation for Jesus grows, our hearts become constantly and increasingly renewed because in Christ we are a new creation. And what freedom this gives us.

What a release. No more shame. No more having to hide all your secret sins. No more having to be, no more holding bitterness against our brother in our hearts.

[35 : 06] Instead, we can confess our sins. We can say, sorry. Can we make up? I messed up. We can be sacrificial. And in this process, God renews our hearts.

Let me close. Brothers and sisters, our hope is that this year and for many more years to come, the message of Jesus Christ and his gospel will sink deeper and deeper in our hearts.

It doesn't matter whether or not you don't know Christ today. It doesn't matter or not whether you have been a Christian for 90 years. The gospel of Christ must get deeper into our hearts as every day goes on.

For his message is not from some celebrity motivational speaker who's here today and gone tomorrow. And this message of the gospel is not from Kevin or from me either.

This gospel is the very power of God. the good news of Jesus Christ, the one who is eternal, the one who always has been, the one from everlasting and the one who has proven his love for us beyond any shadow of a doubt on the cross.

[36 : 17] And the gospel of Christ is our ultimate hope in this world. And as it sinks deeper into our heart and as our love for Christ grows, we are compelled to be continually renewed.

We're compelled to love people that aren't lovable. We're compelled to shed old habits like a snake sheds old skin. And yes, we're still imperfect.

We will still mess up. And we all need community around us to sharpen each other, to encourage and challenge each other in the gospel like how Paul cared for the church in Corinth.

And that is why we exist as a church in Hong Kong, to grow each other in mutual faith, to make disciples of Jesus Christ who impact Hong Kong for the glory of God.

So let us walk this journey together with joy and hope, always pointing each other to Jesus Christ.

Let's pray. Oh Father, thank you so much for Jesus, for sending him into this world all those years ago to live a perfect, unblemished life, a life of holiness and perfection, and going to the cross to die in our place as our substitute.

[37 : 44] And thank you God that as a result of the death of Christ, we now have his righteousness, God, and that we can live freely in Christ. And I pray God that your Holy Spirit would continue to do a great work in our hearts, God, to cause us to hate our sin but to love, cause us to hate our sin but to love you deeply, Father.

I pray for revival in our hearts, God. We need revival, God, in our hearts. And for those of us here today who have not yet given our lives to Christ, I pray that you would speak to them today, God.

The message that only you can speak, Lord. Reveal yourself to them. Tell them how much that you love them that you always have so much so that you died for them. Help us all today, God, to see Jesus for who he really is, Savior of the world, our Messiah, the one who loves us.

Open up our eyes to see him. To see him.