

Same Same, But Different

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[0 : 00] Good morning, Watermark. Well, that's a good, good morning. Good morning, Watermark. How are you guys? Good. Okay. My name's Graham, and I'm one of the elders here at Watermark.

In 1975, two 20-year-olds, both with the name Steve, decided to start a small little venture. And they set themselves up in the parents of one of the Steve's garage, and they decided to call their venture after a fruit, and they called it Apple.

And they began working on a computer, but they needed money. They had nothing, so they sold what they had, right? So Steve, one of the Steves, he sold his VW Microbus, and the other Steve, he sold his HP calculator.

Now, who would have thought selling a calculator would generate enough money to start a business? But they managed to put together over \$1,000, and they began working on the Apple I. And the Apple I sold, not very well, but it did sell, and it gave them enough money to begin working on the Apple II. So two years later, in 1977, they released the Apple II.

[1 : 16] And in the first year alone, the sales were \$3 million. And two years later, the sales had reached \$200 million.

And we know that today, Apple is one of the most valuable companies in the world. It's just an amazing story. Any business school studies this model.

It's incredible. And, okay, let's see. Raise your hands if you have an Apple product. All right. Okay. So what began in a little garage somewhere, in some parents' garage, has affected us here today. We're part of that, right? By the way, if you have a Samsung, we still love you. And we'll pray for you, but we still love you. Okay. So I kind of think about it.

That story is a little bit similar to how the church started, right? Same, same, but a little bit different. You see, the church started with no money, no buildings.

[2 : 22] They had no great influence. They weren't greatly educated. They had no army to force themselves on anyone. They were few in number.

In fact, they were hated and persecuted and killed for what they were trying to do. And yet, in all that, the church started.

And it didn't just start. It flourished. It took off like a rocket. It spread around the world. And we are part of that story. Like Chris said last week, we're still living out that story.

We are the Acts 29. We're still going on. You know, even historians who are not Christians look at the beginning of the church, and they're amazed by this story.

And it's incredible, right? And we're part of that. So, to prepare for today, I thought, well, let me read the whole book of Acts. Let me get a great overview of what it's about and get into it.

[3 : 22] And as I began reading Acts, honestly, guys, it was like a punch in the guts. You know, I would read it, and then I'd say, well, they did this. This happened.

They lived like this. And it was quite painful, right? And you guys like the pain, too, because you keep coming back, right? So, you guys are in for pain today.

I'm going to say that. That's my disclaimer. Today is going to hurt a little bit. And I kind of think of it as like that deep massage maybe some of you go for where it really hurts.

You know, they dig the thing, but afterwards, you know it's been good for you. So, that's my disclaimer. Today is going to hurt a little bit. So, this is where we are, right?

So, here's the setting. Jesus has just ascended into heaven. There are angels there. It's an incredible sight. He's now seated at the right hand of the Father.

[4 : 17] And he says to this little bunch gathered there watching him go, all right, guys, you go and change the world. Easy, right? That's your mission. Go and change the world.

Preach my kingdom. That's it. Now, these guys are just standing there. That's it. Angels say, all right, what are you waiting for? Go back in. And he tells them to do one thing. He tells them to wait. Because you guys are not going to do this on your own. If I leave it to you, you're going to fail. What you need is the Holy Spirit.

Right? You need power, and it's coming. But you need to wait for it. Now, Chris said last week, he said, when we mention the Holy Spirit, often it freaks people out. They either think too much about it or they don't think enough about it.

And there's a great phrase also in the book of Acts which describes the Holy Spirit. And it's called the Spirit of Jesus. And I like that, right? The Spirit of Jesus.

[5 : 14] So when you think of the Holy Spirit, think of the Spirit of Jesus. That's what you need to wait for. It's better that I go, but I'm going to send my Spirit to be with you. So these guys turn around, and they take a Sabbath day's walk back to Jerusalem.

Now, before you think that was a long walk, lots of time to process, it was about a kilometer. So these guys are not big hikers. They just turn around. They walk one kilometer, and they're back in Jerusalem.

They're kind of huddled in a room together. You've got the apostles. You've got women, which in itself is amazing. No other religion, when it was founded, had women present.

But they're the woman. They're there. They're part of this. And you even have Jesus' mother, Mary. She's there too. And she's not there exalted as a saint.

She's there as part of the number. She's making up a number. She's there to be a witness to her son. I mean, I do think that's kind of weird, right? Imagine being Mary and witnessing to people.

[6 : 16] Hi, I'd like to tell you about Jesus. He's my son. He's God. You know, I meet lots of parents who do think their children are God. But for Mary, it really was true, right? But anyway, okay, forget that.

But there's 120 of these people. Now, that gives me great encouragement, right? We're not obsessed by numbers. 120, and you guys are going to change the world.

I mean, that's less than what we have here today. 120 people. And this guy, Peter, he stands up. He's obviously the leader. And he tells the rest of them a story about another one of the disciples, a guy called Judas.

And I don't know about you, but I kind of chuckle when I get to this point. Because here's Peter, right? And he's saying, listen, that bad guy, he got what he deserved.

And when you think about who it is that's saying that, wow. But this is Peter who just a little while before, he had denied Jesus three times, right?

[7 : 22] A little girl comes up to him. No, sorry, it's not me. I don't know him. And here he is now the leader of the church, and he's saying the other guy, Judas, got what he deserved.

So we're going to look at Peter and Judas. Okay, hands up if you know anyone or if you called Peter or you know anyone called Peter.

Hands up. Okay, all of us know someone called Peter. Okay, now hands up if you know someone called Judas. Okay, he was a disciple, right?

So why is it that one of them we revere? We name our kids after them. We name churches after them. We name buildings after them. And the other one, it's a horrible word, right?

You wouldn't even call your kids that kind of thing. In fact, to call someone a Judas straightaway, people think you're a traitor, right? So why is it, right? These guys had so much in common, and yet they're very different.

[8 : 20] Their outcomes are very different. I mean, Judas, he was the talk of Jerusalem, right? Everyone knew that he had portrayed Jesus, and he portrayed Jesus for 30 silver coins.

I happen to have a silver coin here. It's a real one. It's actually an Australian silver coin. But for 30 of those, he portrayed the Son of God. Now, in that time, in biblical times, 30 silver coins was the price of a slave.

Now, to have a slave was kind of like a status symbol. You have someone who can do your work for you. You kind of got something to show off. But, I mean, it was a lot of money, but it wasn't really like enough money to change your life, right?

Like, it's not enough money to retire on, and that's it. But he did it for 30 silver coins, the price of a slave. And what he does, he's filled with sorrow and guilt for what he's done.

He tries to give the money back to the Pharisees. They don't want it anymore. So, he goes and he buys a field, and he hangs himself. Now, we don't know whether maybe the branch broke or when they cut him down, but he falls down, and his guts just kind of split open, right?

[9 : 42] He's this mess lying down there. So, we've got one guy who's now leading the church, and we've got the other guy who's just blood and guts all spread out.

That's how they end, the end of the story for both of them. But I want to take you back because, actually, these guys traveled the same path for a while.

What made them different? So, let's look at the similarity. These guys were both disciples of Jesus. They both were with him when Jesus taught.

They both saw Jesus perform miracles. They both lived with him. Both of them, on various occasions, were rebuked or corrected by Jesus.

Jesus warned that both of them would fail even before they did it, and both of them failed anyway. They told him, listen, you guys are going to do this, and they did it anyway.

[10 : 40] They both failed big time, and both of them were filled with sorrow over what they had done. But what is the difference between them?

Okay, same, same, but very, very different. And the difference lies, essentially, in two things, how they related to Jesus and how they responded to Jesus.

This is how Judas related to Jesus. You see, Judas looked at Jesus, and he kind of thought, well, if I hang out with Jesus, right?

Because Jesus was a big thing in Israel. He's on the scene. He's performing miracles. He's been talking about it. Israel hasn't had a prophet for 400 years. And Jesus is this big thing.

And Judas kind of reckons, you know, if I hang out with Jesus, I get a little bit of this fame for myself. And Jesus was kind of his ticket to fame and fortune.

[11 : 37] And essentially, Judas is interested only in what he can get out of it. He's interested in himself, right? This relationship is all about Judas. And Judas, to Judas, Jesus was really just a means to an end, right?

I use Jesus, and I'll get noticed, right? I'll get noticed. But for Peter, bless Peter, right? Peter, I just, when you read about the character of Peter, there's something about him.

I mean, this guy, he blows hot and cold. He says the most ridiculous things. But for Peter, at the heart of it, Jesus was the end. Jesus was the ultimate goal for Peter, right?

He even says, he says, Lord, like, who are we going to go to? I mean, you have the words of eternal life. You are it. There's nothing else. It's about you. But Judas, Judas loved the idea of Jesus that was going to be a political Messiah.

He had the idea that Jesus was going to come over, and he was going to kick out the Romans, and then he was going to take over as king, and he could ride on that. And when Jesus turned out not to be what Judas kind of hoped or thought he would be, then quickly that love Judas had turned to betrayal.

[13 : 00] Right? Very easy. It's not going to work out for me. I'll try and make a quick buck out of it. And even if you look at the motive for their biggest failure, you've got Peter.

He denied Jesus, right? Like, let's be honest here. A little girl comes to him and says, do you know Jesus? No. No. No. I mean, it was a cowardly act.

But Peter is essentially motivated by self-preservation. He doesn't want to die. Later in his life, Peter is prepared to sacrifice himself for Jesus.

He does end up dying for Jesus. There's a strong tradition that Peter requested to be crucified upside down because he couldn't even be crucified in the same way as his Lord.

But at this point in time, he's like, I don't know him. I don't know him by a little girl. But the motivation is self-preservation. And you look at Judas, his portrayal is motivated by greed.

[13 : 58] He wants something for himself, right? He wants a little bit of power, a little bit of influence. And if you look at Peter, Jesus just has to look at him, and it breaks Peter.

It just breaks him. He absolutely breaks him. But Judas, I mean, this guy, he could walk up to Jesus. He could kiss him on the cheek. He could call him his master without the slightest bit of conscience pricking him.

And that's how they related to Jesus, right? But all that is nothing compared to how they responded to Jesus. Despite all that had gone before, this is the key moment.

They fail, and now what are they going to do? Because both, if you look at it, both actually experience sorrow for what they did.

But they both responded in very different ways, right? If you look at Peter, his sorrow was built on the fact that he had sinned against the one he loved.

[15:08] It got him, right? Like, Jesus, I let you down. I sinned against you. And what does Peter do? He turns to Jesus, to the one he sinned against.

He seeks forgiveness, and he finds it. And it's the kind of repentance that leads to salvation, right? Now, the word repentance in the Greek is the word metanoia.

And it literally just means to change your mind, to turn from something to turn to something else.

And that's exactly what happened to Peter. He turned to Jesus.

He didn't run away from him. He turned to Jesus. Paul writes about it to the church in Corinth, and he says this. He says, Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret. But worldly sorrow brings death. So, Judas, he's also filled with a sorrow, but it's a worldly sorrow.

[16:11] And the only word I could think of that really sums up what worldly sorrow is, is remorse. Kind of where you're sorry that you got caught, right?

Or you're sorry it didn't work out the way you had hoped. And if you look at Judas, he was just sorry that circumstances hadn't worked out like he had hoped.

But, you know, and in his deepest moment, his deepest despair, who does he turn to? He turns to the Pharisees, right?

The ones he knew would betray Jesus. I mean, they used Judas as much as Judas used them. And he turns to them, right? He doesn't turn to Jesus.

And at this point, Judas still makes a choice. He chooses death rather than turning to Jesus. After everything he knows about Jesus, he still chooses death.

[17:09] And he thinks that by ending his life, his problems will go away. But really, he is just running away.

And guys, there's a lot of this in our lives, too. I think most people, they avoid sin, not because they have this desire to please Jesus and just inherently be good.

They avoid sin because of sin's harmful effects to them, right? And if you think about it, you're motivated by a kind of self-love, right?

Because if I sin and people find out, that might destroy my reputation, might have a harmful side effect on me. But if I could sin and I could get away with it, I'd probably do it.

So there was a survey done in 2015. So two years ago at the University of North Dakota. I've never been to North Dakota.

[18:11] I don't know anything about the university. But they did this survey, and they interviewed college men. And they said to them, if you could rape a girl on campus and get away with it, would you do it?

And one in three of them answered, yes, they would. Now, as a dad, that horrifies me. My daughter is never going to go study at North Dakota. But there is something about the human heart that if you could sin and you could get away with it and it wouldn't damage your reputation, would you do it?

Yes. But we know that that's not always true, right? Because when we do get caught, we feel this remorse. Sorry, shucks, that's bad. But here's the difference.

As a follower of Jesus, our lives should be marked by a love for Jesus. And that means repentance, not remorse for our sins.

You see, repentance is the key to being a follower of Christ. Your Christian journey, the moment you come to faith, begins, or it should begin, with repentance.

[19:22] And you go on repenting. This is what Paul says, right? Paul. We all know Paul. This is what he says in Acts 26. He says, so then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.

So Paul had a vision from heaven of what he was supposed to do. He met Jesus. And then he says this, first to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem, then to all Judea, and then to the Gentiles. I preached.

What did he preach? I preached that they should repent and turn to God and. Okay, I told you it's going to hurt. This part is going to hurt.

Get this. And demonstrate their repentance by their deeds. That's what Paul preached. Often, when I talk to people who are going through problems or struggles or doubts with their faith, I will ask

them the question, tell me how you became a believer.

How did you become a follower of Christ? And very often, I find out that they were never taught to repent. They were taught only believe. That's all you need to do, just believe.

[20 : 36] And they were never taught about repentance. And they certainly never asked to demonstrate their repentance by their deeds. Because, you see, it's not just about saying, gee, Lord, I'm sorry, I sinned.

Right? Really, what is that? That's not biblical. You don't find it in the biblical thing. Sin is always plural, and it's always specific. And if you look at the New Testament, when they did repentance, there was action involved.

They burnt books. They gave money back. They were doing repentance. For me, I think I've told you before, but I was a university student, and I was invited to an Alpha course.

And for 10 weeks, I argued my way through Alpha. We had an Alpha retreat yesterday, by the way. Amazing, right? So I went away on that retreat 20 years ago.

That's almost how long it was. And I argued my way through that weekend. And eventually, after 10 weeks, I got to a place where I couldn't run anymore. I couldn't hide anymore. God had me where He wanted to.

[21 : 42] And I remember very clearly, one night, after talking to someone about faith in Jesus, I went home. And I began repenting. And it was good teaching.

They told me to repent. And I began. And I began naming some of the things that I was confessing, right, that were in my life. And the more I began to name sins, the more another one would come in my mind, and I would name that one again.

And the more I repented, the more I realized, gee, I'm not as good as I think I am. And the more I'm repenting, the more I realized, God, I need a Savior. I need someone to save me from all this crap that I'm giving you.

And the more I repented, the more I realized how beautiful He is as a Savior. He is offering me His forgiveness, His grace.

And the more I repented, the more I realized that He is giving me the power to live right. I mean, it's an amazing deal, right? Here I am, a sinner.

[22 : 45] I give Him my sin, my rubbish, all the things I've thought and done. And He is giving me His righteousness, His sonship, His adoption to me, right?

It's an amazing deal. But come to know Him. But, guys, I have to be honest. That was 20 years ago. And often in my walk today, I've become very casual. I've become casual with God. I've become casual with my sin. And often, the rubbish that's in my life, I'm probably more remorseful over than I'm repentant over.

I'm just kind of sorry that my sin catches me out and gets me in trouble sometimes. But I'm not repentant. I'm not repentant to the one I'm really sinning against.

So, the question for us as a church, is there stuff in our lives that we are perhaps maybe remorseful over, but not really repentant over?

[23 : 52] You guys, the horrible thing about remorse is that it just leads to guilt, shame, despair, and ultimately death, secrecy.

There's no life. Remorse ends in death. Repentance ends in life. And I think sometimes we forget that we serve a holy God, a perfect God.

There's nothing evil in Him. He's just pure. But He's also merciful and gracious. And He longs to give mercy to those who ask for it and come to Him.

He longs for it. Are we coming to Jesus in repentance? At this point in the story, Peter, who was a Jew, he would have been soaked in the Torah.

He would have known the Psalms. The Scripture comes alive to him, and he suddenly realizes, hey, this was predicted a while ago. And he quotes two passages from the Psalms.

[25 : 02] He says, look, this is it, right? God knew what was going to happen. He's not surprised by all this. But we need to do something. We need to seek God's will and find a replacement for Judas, right?

So we're going to stop here for a second. We're going to talk about God's will. Now, God has two kinds of will. He's got His general will and His specific will.

Now, God has revealed His general will to us already. So if you walked in here today and you're asking the question, gee, I don't know what God's will for my life is, I'm going to tell you.

All right? Are you ready? This is what God wants for you. It comes from 1 Thessalonians 4. This is it. It is God's will that you should be sanctified.

That means changed into Jesus slowly or fast, however you respond to Him. That you should avoid sexual immorality. That you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable.

[26 : 07] Here's another one from chapter 5. Rejoice always. Pray continually. Give thanks in all circumstances. For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

And then we get His specific will, right? The Bible doesn't tell us where we're going to work, who we're going to marry. But I find very often most people are more interested in knowing the specific will than they are interested in doing God's general will.

That's true for me, right? God, just tell me what to do. But I'm not really seeking His general will. So my little guy, he's six years old, right?

So my general will for him is that he would develop a godly character, right? That he would tell the truth. That he would be kind to others.

That he would listen to his parents. And then my specific will for him, as a South African, I would love him to play rugby. Right?

[27 : 17] That's my specific will for him. Now which one do you think I take greater pleasure in when I see him doing it? I take far greater pleasure in my general will for him.

When I see him acting that out, then I will if he plays rugby or not, right? I'm far more interested in who he is rather than what he does.

And God is exactly the same. He is far more interested in who you are than what you do. And by the way, my son has no interest in rugby, so I've lost that battle.

He loves football for some reason, right? Yeah. So these guys, right, now they're seeking God's will. And my challenge to myself, I'm preaching to myself as I preach to you.

Do we desperately want to seek God's general will for our lives, or we're more interested in his specific will? So these guys, there they go.

[28 : 23] They knew they had to seek God. There was nothing in their scriptures that told them who it was that was going to replace Judas. So they had to do some seeking of God. And they had a criteria, right?

They didn't throw their brains out the window. They actually came up with a sensible list. And they said, look, it needs to be someone who was with Jesus the whole time and was a witness to his resurrection.

So anyone here meet that criteria? Okay, no, move on, right? You guys don't qualify. But there were two guys that did qualify. And they brought them up. And then they prayed and they trusted God. And then they cast lots. Now, it was probably, could have been, where they took a bag and they put a couple of stones in it and wrote their names on the stones.

And then they trusted that God would lead the hand to pick the right stone. And it comes out, Matthias, that's the one. And that's it.

[29 : 25] So, guys, that's it for today. If you want to seek God's specific will, go home, get a bag, write whatever you want, a couple of stones, and that's it.

Do we do that? Imagine you came to Chris as a pastor. You came to one of the elders and said, I've got this girl, two girls, both love Jesus.

By the way, guys, that's a criteria, right? That's the bottom line criteria. They have to love Jesus. If they don't love Jesus, they don't even meet the list. You take them off the list and you start again.

But, and girls, the same way, right?

The guy has to love Jesus. That's your criteria. But let's just pretend. I've got two girls. They both love Jesus. I'm not sure about the two girls. And the elder says to you, or Chris says to you, I know, let me just grab a bag.

Let's write their names on a piece of paper. We drop them in. All right, quickly. Ah, there it is. Judy. Now, if Chris did that, what would you think of him? He's lost his mind, right?

[30 : 28] But he could just take you to Acts 1 and say, there it is. You know, or maybe that's how you got a job decision. Which one you're going to take? Pull out the bag.

So do we do that? No. Good. Right? And there's a very good reason for that. Because this is the last time you ever see this practice in the Scripture.

There was evidence in Israelite community, the story of Achan and Jonah. They cast lots. But it was also very much a pagan practice to cast lots.

The reason is we are still in Acts 1. Acts 2 is still coming. And what did Jesus do? What did he tell them? At the beginning of the story, you need to wait for something.

What did he tell them to wait for? The Holy Spirit, right? The Spirit of Jesus. This is what you need to wait for. And Jesus said, it's better that I go because I'm going to send the Holy Spirit.

[31 : 26] And the Holy Spirit is going to be a guide. He's going to be a counselor. He's going to be a comforter. In other words, instruction is going to give way to intimacy.

Instruction is going to give way to intimacy because you are going to be able to know him. You're going to be able to know his will. In my day job, I'm in education, right?

From Monday to Friday, sometimes on a Saturday, that's what I do. And we have this phrase in education. We say that the process is as important as the product.

The process is as important as the product. And sometimes, guys, God takes us through a process. But you know what I want?

I want the bag. I want just tell me yes or no. Tell me this or that. I don't want the whole process. I just want God to tell me what to do.

[32 : 31] But God sometimes, when we think in his infinite wisdom, what he's doing is he wants to know you. He wants to know you. So it's not just about the product.

It's not just about his specific will for you. It's about drawing aside. It's about seeking him and enjoying him. So the question we have to really ask ourselves is, how do we relate to Jesus?

How are we responding to him? You know, are we following a Jesus as he is? Or are we following a Jesus as we want him to be?

And sometimes, I follow the Jesus as I want him to be. You know, guys, this really, really, as I work through this passage, it's just, it really was like a punch in the guts.

It really is convicting. Jesus is not far off, right? Sometimes I get the feeling that he's far off. He's not far off. He wants us to seek him.

[33 : 34] Because ultimately, what it boils down to is knowing him, right? Paul writes it. He says, I want to know Christ. That's what it's about. It's about knowing him.

We talk about this as Christians all the time. We tell people it's about a relationship. It's about a relationship. It's about knowing the Father and him knowing us. And we need to hold on to him, right?

I often think about this, right? Like, when we focus on mission, and we know that as Christians, we should be telling the world, the lost, about the Savior.

But if we do not know the Savior, or we kind of know him, he's a little bit of a stranger to us, how much joy and motivation is there going to be in telling others, right?

It becomes a duty. It's like, oh, yeah, yeah, you know, you've got to come to Jesus. He's good. But if you really know and experience him and know him and know that he's good and know that he's in your life, you're going to be far more understanding and have a deep love for people who don't know him.

[34 : 40] I want to finish with story, right? Over the Easter period, my family and I, we had the privilege of going to Australia for holidays.

We went to Melbourne. So out of all the nasty things I've ever said to Australians, you have a beautiful country. You still speak funny, but you do have a beautiful country. And part of the trip, the first few days, we were in the city center.

And after that, I had booked and planned to rent a car and go out into the countryside. So we're busy checking out of the place where we're staying.

And I go downstairs to get the car. And he has my booking number. I give it to the guy. And he says, can I see your license? And I give him my international driver's license.

And he says, can I see your Hong Kong ID? I give him a Hong Kong ID. And he says, can I see your Hong Kong driver's license? I said, I don't have my Hong Kong driver's license with me. It's not a photo ID.

[35 : 43] If you have one, know it. And he says, sorry, I can't give you the car. I said, but all it says, you know, if you look at the Victoria, state of Victoria driving thing, all you need is an international license.

He says, sorry, our rental rules is I've got to see both. And so anyway, I go back to our room. And I open the door and tell my wife.

I said, she's busy packing the bags, getting the kids ready. And we're planning on going in the car, driving out to the countryside. I said, we've got a real problem here. We don't have a car. And they're not going to give it to me.

So anyway, we packed the bags. We still have to check out. And we're going down in the lift from the 30th floor. And I said, let's just pray. Right? So there it is. Wife, kids, bags, suitcases.

And we're praying in this lift. And anyway, we get down. And we're going to try again because now God is with us. And we go in. And we're like, can we rent the car?

[36 : 42] And my wife puts on a sad face. Nothing. Nothing. These Aussie guys, they're stoic. Right? Nothing. No feeling. I'm sure they're bitter because we beat them at everything.

But anyway, they didn't give it. Nothing. So we kind of walk out of the car thing. And I thought, well, let's try another one.

So there was one called Thrifty. I thought that sounds a little bit more dodgy. Maybe that will help us out. Thrifty. No ways. Same thing. We're not going to give you your car. And the whole time we were there, we had beautiful weather.

Sunshine, everything like that. But on the one day, it starts to rain. So literally, we're out on the pavement, suitcases, kids, and it's raining. And the only thing we have, we know no one there.

The only contact we have is some friends of ours in Hong Kong who, from Sydney, heard we were going to Australia. And they said, we know a couple in Melbourne. If you have a chance, give them a call.

[37 : 41] So pull out the phone. And we send a text message. Hi, you don't know us from a bar of soap. Could you rent a car in our name?

And yeah, thanks. Hi. Hi. Now, I mean, for the insurance implications and stuff like that, a dodgy South African, I mean, would you do it?

No way. Push send. I mean, I'm kind of uncomfortable with doing this. Less than a minute later, we get this reply. Don't worry.

We have a spare car for you. How long do you need it? And when we said, you know, like, wow, or thank you, da-da-da, we need it for this day. It works out perfectly.

The exact time that we needed it for was the time the car was available. And, I mean, this couple, they had just bought a replacement car, and they hadn't sold this other one yet.

[38 : 37] There were people coming to look at it the day after we left. Exactly the time we needed it for. And it was a nice car. It was a Volvo. It was pretty cool. Except you can't drive fast in Australia anyway.

But we got there, and we got to meet this couple, right? They invited us into their home. We joined them a little bit later for Easter, and our kids played together.

And we got to hear a little bit of their story and their story. And they're going to come to Hong Kong sometime, and we're going to catch up again then. But really, this whole thing taught me so much, right?

It taught me that God cares. I mean, even this is a car on holiday. Come on, first world problems. But God cares about that.

And he doesn't answer in always the way that we think he's going to answer. It's often a lot better. But it's a process that was more important, right? I, as a guy, I often find it very difficult to ask for help or accept help.

[39 : 37] And there it was. God put me in a list. He took me through a process where I had to reach out and ask strangers for help. Guys, this is the God we serve.

This is the God who knows us, who wants us to know him and take us on a journey of faith. Do you know him? Do you want to know him?

Is this desire as us of a church to reach out and know this God? God, can I pray for you? Father, we so often use the phrase, God is good.

And we use it so casually, God, that we don't even know really what it means. Just the depth of your righteousness, the depth of your forgiveness and desire to know us.

My prayer for me and for us as a church, Lord God, is that, Lord, you will help us, Lord. That you will show us by your spirit areas in our lives that we need to put right, that we need to bring to you in repentance, that we may live with no regrets, that we may live in freedom and life and get to know

you better.

[40 : 58] Lord, I pray that whatever each one of us goes through and in seeking you and knowing you, may you reveal yourself to us this week. May you take us through a process where you change our hearts with a real desire to know you more and then go and tell the world that you are good and that you care and that you are watching over us and that you do adopt us as children.

Father, we love you. Help us to follow you. In Jesus' name. Amen.