

Salt and Light in the City of Hong Kong

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Preacher: Kevin Murphy

[0 : 0 0] We're going to pray now. This is a time every week where we pray for different churches and parts of our city and for our own church. I want to invite you to come and pray with me.

This morning we're going to pray for, again, another church. If you were here last Sunday, we prayed for Ryuta and Double O Cross Church in Tokyo. This morning we're going to pray for another church in Tokyo.

This is Seita and Emma Sagaguchi, and they lead Toyoso Community Church. Seita is Japanese. His wife Emma is from South Africa.

They met in America and are busy planting this church, Toyoso Community Church. We're going to pray for them this morning. I want to encourage you to join me as we pray for them.

Their new church plant is all in Japanese. Emma doesn't speak any Japanese. She's learning fast and furiously. We can pray for her. She's doing language courses every week.

[0 : 5 6] But that's one thing we can pray for. When we pray for Seita, that's who we're praying for. Will you join me as we pray together this morning? Heavenly Father, we have gathered this morning to worship you.

To, in some small measure, give you the praise and the worship that you deserve. You, O God, are creator of all things and everything, and we are created.

You, O God, are infinite, and we, Lord, are finite. You are sovereign, and we are not. And so, God, we've come to remind ourselves and one another that there is no one like you.

That you stand apart from all creation in your splendor, in your glory, in your majesty. And, Father, we've come to bow down. We've come to fall on our knees, as it were, and to worship and to honor you.

Father, this morning we confess that so often, too often, in fact, you are not first in our hearts. You are not supreme. Something or someone else has taken that place in our lives.

[2 : 0 0] And, Father, we do confess that. We acknowledge that. And we ask you to forgive us. But we also ask you, Father, to set us free from the delusions of safety and comfort that false gods and false idols offer us.

Gracious God, we ask you to give us faith to trust you supremely, God. Open our eyes and to see you correctly. That we will, as a church and as followers of Jesus, both love you and fear you, God.

Help us, we pray. Help us to love you with all of our heart and all of our soul and all of our mind and our strength, God. Jesus, thank you for your amazing grace. That though we squander your kindness, though we drift and we wander, your grace is as constant as the waves on the ocean, God, never ceasing.

And we praise you and we thank you for that. Father, this morning we want to bring before you Sater and Emma and their family and all at Toyosu Community Church.

Thank you, Jesus, for their incredible faith and their faithfulness, even in the midst of this great challenge as they plant this church. Father, won't you encourage Sater and Emma in the midst of their work?

[3 : 08] We want to pray for those that have joined their fledgling church, that some of these people will come to know you and trust you and love you and follow you. We pray for men to get saved and baptized and born again.

God, we ask you to continue to look after their finances as they go about planting this church. And we pray for their children, God. We really do lift up all four of their children to you this morning. We ask God, Holy Spirit, fill and flood their hearts.

Draw them to you, God. I pray that they will see the privilege of ministry and church planting, God. We pray for Emma, God, and her language studies. Why don't you encourage her and strengthen her as she goes about that?

Father, this morning we want to pray for the children of Watermark, for Kristen and Anastasia, for all the children's teachers. God, we really do want our children to grow up to love you and to trust you, to know you deeply and to follow you.

And so we ask, God, that their lessons won't just be occasions for entertainment or to babysit them, but they'll learn about the wonder of Jesus. They'll learn about the problem of sin and the incredible grace, God, that you offer us.

[4 : 13] God, we pray that they will know what it means to follow you. Holy Spirit, we ask you to fill their classrooms. Even this morning, God, fill their hearts. Anoint them and awaken their hearts to you.

Draw them to yourself, we pray. May they, at such a young age, be kept from false gods and trusting in themselves and come to know and trust you. Make our young children worshipers of you, we pray.

Father, we pray these things trusting the safe and sovereign name of Jesus. Amen. Amen. Let's listen to God's word as it's read to us this morning. The scripture reading comes from Matthew chapter 5.

Please follow along in your bulletins or on the screen. You are the salt of the earth. But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world.

[5 : 21] A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

This is the word of God. Great. Thank you, Joe. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Well, if you are new to Watermark, we as a church are busy working our way through Matthew's gospel.

We start in December, and at the moment we find ourselves in the Sermon on the Mount. This wonderful passage of teaching, which really is a summary of Jesus' teachings as he went around the towns and the villages of Galilee.

He would teach, and Matthew has compiled this and put it together in what is now the Sermon on the Mount. And so last week we looked at the Beatitudes, this wonderful block of teaching of Jesus.

[6 : 30] And this morning we get to this passage about salt and light. And the Sermon on the Mount really is Jesus' teaching about what it looks like to live life in the kingdom of God.

Remember in chapter 4, he says to his disciples, come and follow me. He says the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and he invites his followers to come and join him. And the way that they do so is by following him.

And the Sermon on the Mount is his teaching of what it looks like to follow him. Now our passage today asks us a question. And the question it asks is this, what is the duty of a Christian?

Or maybe to put it in Matthew's language, what must we do once we've said yes to following Jesus? Jesus comes and he says to us what he said to his first disciples.

He says, follow me. And if you're a Christian this morning, if you're not a Christian this morning, Jesus' invitation to you is to turn from false gods, which don't really satisfy, to turn to the living God and to follow him.

[7 : 33] But then the question is, what do you do once you follow him? What is the duty of a Christian? And maybe that presupposes a question, which is, what is a Christian? If you are a follower of Jesus this morning, I hope that you would answer that question something along the lines of, a Christian is someone who has been delivered from God's judgment of sin by the sheer mercy and grace of God alone, not because of any good works or moral effort on our behalf.

We are saved from God's judgment because Jesus died on the cross and we've put our hope and our trust in him. If you're a Christian this morning, I hope you'd say that a Christian is someone who because they've drawn near to Christ and because of God's work in our hearts, our character and our conduct is becoming more like Jesus.

We are starting to act and behave in a way that represents Jesus in some ways. That's in fact what the word Christian means. It means a little Christ, someone who takes after the Christ.

But there's a third aspect of what it means to be a Christian and that's what Jesus is picking up on here. Jesus tells us that a Christian is not only someone who has put their hope and faith in Jesus.

A Christian is not only someone who's becoming more like Jesus in conduct and character, but as a result of these two things, a follower of Jesus is someone who joins God on his mission into the world, who joins God in pushing back darkness and bringing healing and light and health and wholeness to the world, someone who joins God in glorifying God in all of creation.

[9 : 06] Maybe another way of saying that is a Christian is not only someone who has come to know Jesus as Lord, a Christ follower is not only someone who's come to delight in Jesus as the source of all goodness and beauty, but additionally, a follower of Jesus is someone who reflects Christ or represents Christ or mirrors Christ into the culture and the society in which they live.

Look at how Jesus says this in verse 13. He says, you are the salt of the earth. Now, what does Jesus mean by that?

What does Jesus mean when he says, you are the salt of the earth? Well, in ancient times, salt had two main purposes. The one was obviously to flavor food, to give it that extra taste and flavor to bring out the flavors.

Melvin would be very disappointed if salt were to suddenly evaporate from our world. Salt, being a man of much food and loving the taste and the flavors of food, salt does that, right? It brings out the flavors.

But in the ancient world, salt had a more important purpose, and that was it was a preservative. Preservative of meats. Remember, in the ancient world, they didn't have refrigerators. And so if you had a piece of meat and you wanted to preserve its shelf life, you would rub salt into it.

[10 : 26] And this would preserve it. It would stop decay from coming, and it would prolong its lifespan. And so what is Jesus saying? He's saying those that have come to know him and love him are now commissioned or sent out by him as his agents to be effective influences in society, in the cities, in the towns in which they live.

Not only are followers of Jesus to flavor society, to bring out all that is good in society, but more importantly, to act as a kind of preservative, to push back decay in the city of Hong Kong by living out kingdom lives and kingdom norms.

And similarly, he says this, you are the light of the world. Again, light in our day and age is such a common commodity that we just take it for granted. Just switch on the light switch or switch it on with your cell phone.

But in the ancient world, electricity obviously hadn't been discovered. And so light was a very precious commodity. It allowed you to extend the workday beyond just the setting of the sun.

Light pushes back darkness, not only physically but socially. It exposes evil. Light exposes that which is hidden or lost. And so Jesus is saying here, those that have come to discover our hope and life and rest in him, those that have come to know him and follow him, those that have taken up his invitation to follow him, he now commissions us to be the light of the world.

[11 : 53] Those sent into our city and into our workplaces, into the sports fields, into the restaurants, into the clubs, and into our families, those who are called to bring light and health and truth and transparency and purity to our city as we care for the sick.

As we show compassion to the hurting and the marginalized. As we show patience to work colleagues. As we forgive those that wrong us. As we go and look after the widows and the orphans and teenage moms.

As we fight for justice and stand up against injustice. As we share the gospel with neighbors and colleagues and family and friends. And Jesus is saying, this is what it means to follow him.

And so in chapter 4, Chris preached about this two weeks ago. Jesus goes to his disciples and he says, come and follow me. Follow me. And the question is, what does that mean? What does that look like?

And part of what that means is, go and be my agents. Go and be my salt and my light in the cities and the society in which you live. May in some way Hong Kong be more representative or reflective of heaven.

[13 : 03] Because the people of heaven are living in Hong Kong today. Does that make sense? Okay. Except there's a problem, right?

And the problem is, this is very challenging. It's one thing for Jesus to say it. It's another thing for us to actually live this out. And it's one thing for us to personally ask Jesus into our lives and to follow him.

But asking us to go into this city as his representatives. To be sent out as his agents to influence Hong Kong. Most of us feel unequipped. Most of us, when we try and we try and make a difference.

And we try and maybe speak to our neighbors or witness for Christ. We mess it up. Or we say something dumb. Or sometimes it feels like, let's just leave this to the professionals.

Let's just leave this to those that know what they're doing. And those who know have all the right answers. But look at what Jesus says here. Jesus says, he doesn't just say, go and try and be a little saltish.

[14 : 05] Go and try and be a little lightish. What does he say? He says, you are the salt. You are the light of the world. In other words, he's saying, this is intrinsic to who you are as a follower of Jesus.

When you become a Christian, when you join God's family, you also join his rescue plan. His mission into the world. To bring the kingdom of heaven to Hong Kong. As a Christian, you carry the name and the nature of Jesus.

You carry the Holy Spirit in your heart. But you also carry the name of Jesus in your life and in your lifestyle. And so as you go into the city, who you are is a representative of Jesus.

The question is, how well will we represent him? Will we represent him well? Or will we represent him not so well? And so look at what Jesus says here in verse 13.

He says, you are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It's no longer good for anything except to be thrown out on the pathway and trampled underfoot.

[15 : 07] Now, those of you that are more scientifically minded might point out, but hang on. Salt can't become less salty, right? Salt is made of sodium chloride, I'm told.

I'm not a scientist at all. And sodium chloride cannot lose its saltiness. It's like, it is what it is, right? And so what's Jesus going on here? Maybe, you know, Jesus just needed a little bit of science and then he would really know what he's talking about.

Well, in the ancient world, what would happen is they didn't, salt wasn't dehydrated like it is today and purified. And so what would happen is they would walk the banks of the Dead Sea and they would harvest this kind of white powdery substance, which did contain sodium chloride in it.

And so it was salty, but it was full of other impurities. It wasn't pure salt. And so what would happen is it was often dirty and they'd get some, maybe some sand with it. And so in order to wash it out and to make it to look like this white purified powder, they would wash out this substance.

But sodium chloride was the most soluble of the ingredients. And so that would often wash out first. And so they'd try and clean this stuff thinking I've got salt, but actually a lot of the real salt, the essence, was washed out.

[16 : 19] And what they were left with wasn't very salty at all and wasn't very effective. And so Jesus says when that happens, when the salt you try and purify it, but actually it gets washed out, you're left with the substance that looks like salt, but actually it has no essence to it at all.

You might as well just throw it on the ground because it's not going to preserve any food. It's not going to add any taste to any substance. The Greek phrase here, which is to lose one's taste, literally means to become foolish.

It's a Greek idiom. It's a play in words. And this is what Jesus is saying here. Don't be so foolish. Don't be fooled into thinking that one can be a Christian on Sundays in the family worship service, hands raised, singing the words, and yet be someone completely different in the office on Monday or in the sports field on Monday evening or at the home on Tuesday morning.

Don't be fooled or deceived into thinking that you can be one person in the Christian community and someone else, something else. Because what you are, your essence, intrinsic to what salt does is that it influences.

It stops decay. It changes the flavor. It affects that which it comes into contact with. And when it stops doing that, it's because the essence is no longer there. It's lost its vital ingredients.

[17 : 39] And it's lost what makes salt, salt. And Jesus says likewise with light. He tells us, imagine a city on a hill. The sun sets, it's dark, and all the lights go out because now that the sun has set, nobody wants to walk around with light.

He says it's ridiculous. It's kind of like imagine a modern day equivalent. He says imagine you've got a lighthouse that's on a rocky island just off the coast.

And every night the light keeper turns the light out in order to save electricity. It's ridiculous. It doesn't make sense. It's foolish, he's saying. And Jesus says in the same way, that's what it's like for followers of Jesus.

That makes about as much sense as someone who has been born again of the Holy Spirit, whose heart has been shaped by the gospel, who has come to know Jesus, and they're deciding to orientate their entire lives around Jesus and delight in him and take up his call to follow him to then go into the world and not reflect him.

And so what's Jesus' instruction? He says, let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. You see, Jesus is saying, don't just be salty.

[18 : 55] Don't just be lightish. Don't just be lightish. No one goes to some salt. They rub it in a piece of meat to preserve it, and then they speak nicely to it and say, Salt, I'm really asking you now, won't you please be very salty and just preserve this meat?

Because I've got a big family reunion dinner coming up on Tuesday, and I really need you to be salty. No one goes to the light switch and switches on the light switch and says, Please just shine brightly for me because I've got an important date coming, and I don't want you to mess up the atmosphere.

Salt does what salt does. Light does what light does. And so Jesus says, you are the soul of the earth. If the gospel is inside of you, just go and be what you are. If the light of the gospel is inside of you, just go and be what you are.

Let your love for Jesus and your trust in Jesus and your obedience to Jesus spill out into your everyday life. Let the light of the gospel be experienced by those who do business with you. Let the light of the gospel, what Christ has done in you, be experienced by your family around the dinner table or in the car on the way to church.

Let the light of the gospel, Ed, I've experienced that many times. Let the light of the gospel shine upon you and through you at university or as you're dating someone.

[20 : 11] Let the light of the gospel be felt by your colleagues in the office, by your boss that you report to, and by those that report to you. Let the light of the gospel shine on the powerful and the influential and the rich and the famous in Hong Kong.

But let it also shine on the most marginalized and the cast aside. Let it shine in the way that you care for widows and orphans and teenage moms and those caught up in the sex industry.

But whatever you do, let the light of the gospel so shine through you that those who interact with you and encounter you taste that there's something different about you.

And this is how Christians have always understood our faith. That the gospel is internal, but it's also external. It's personal and it's communal, but it's also missional.

That it's upward, it's me and Christ, it's inward, what Christ does in my heart, but it's also outward into the world in which God has called us. Listen to how Christian writer expressed this many years ago in one of his prayers.

[21 : 24] He said this, Jesus says, Now, the question is this.

That's all well and true and good, but why is this so hard? Why is it that we find this so difficult to do? Why is it so easy to come to church and to sing the songs and to take communion and to say, Yes, I recognize Jesus.

I identify with Jesus and his death and his resurrection. And yet on Monday morning in the office place or Monday evening at home or Monday afternoon on the sports field, so few of our family and our friends and our colleagues would know that we're followers of Jesus.

Why is that the case? Why is this so hard to actually live out? Well, I think there are a couple of reasons for it. The one is, maybe we want to avoid people thinking that we're weird, right?

That resonates with anyone? Maybe we want people to like us. We don't want to be unpopular with our friends. Maybe we don't want people to mock us or to think we're unintelligent or we're naive.

[23 : 07] And so it's easier just to hide the light of the gospel under a bowl, right? And keep it hidden. Turn off the lighthouse light. Take out that salt and dilute it.

Not let anyone see. I felt that temptation. Especially when the internet is so full of weird Christians doing weird things and saying weird things, right? Sometimes it feels like I don't want to be associated with one of those.

And so I'll just keep the gospel to me. But friends, Jesus tells us that people will think you're weird. Most of our city is living by a completely different paradigm.

Most of our city is living by the motto that says, He who has the most toys wins. Most of our city is living by the paradigm that says, Blessed are the pushy and the self-assertive and the self-confident, for they will be kings and queens of the earth.

And so when you come along and you hear Jesus' words that says, Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those that are meek. Blessed are those that forgive others. In some ways, it's so difficult to live in the kingdom of the world and the upside-down kingdom of Jesus at the same time.

[24 : 15] Those two kingdoms don't often go well together. And so in many ways, it's just part of the nature that our world will not understand the ethic and the paradigm by which we live.

In some senses, you may never be admired by the world when you march to a different drumbeat. And yet in a strange way, the gospel is the very thing that the world is hungry after.

Now, Martin Lloyd-Jones was this amazing doctor in the 1920s. He was the assistant to a guy called Dr. Horton, who was the physician to the King of England.

And Martin Lloyd-Jones was in his 20s. He was about 25, 26. And he was the medical doctor to many of the royal family, parliamentarians, the rich and the famous, the very elite of London society.

And Lloyd-Jones had this problem because he said people used to come to him and he would deal with their symptoms, but he could never deal with the root cause. He said, you know, people were eating too much, drinking too much, substance abuse, and he would help them get over the symptoms only in order for them to go back and do the same thing and then come back to him a week or two later for some medical advice.

[25 : 28] And so he wanted to get to the root cause. And so he worked with this doctor, Dr. Horton, that was the physician to the King of England. And Dr. Horton was looking to retire. And so everyone expected Lloyd-Jones, this young 25-year-old, would become the next king's physician.

But Lloyd-Jones realized that just healing bodies wasn't what he was called to do. And so he decided to leave medicine and become a minister. And so he becomes a minister in this small rural town in the south of Wales, in this small mission church that nobody had ever heard of.

And the whole medical field in London was aghast and confused at his decision. But listen to what Lloyd-Jones says. He says, You see, the influence of Christians in and of society depends on Christians being distinct from society, not exactly identical to society.

We are meant to be salt. We are meant to be light. We are meant to stand up and shine out and let the light of the gospel shine through us so that Hong Kong will see there's something different.

They may not like it. They may not admire it. They may ridicule it. Friends may mock you. But they will notice. And some will even come and ask you about it. And some will come to love Jesus because of it.

[27 : 01] First reason. We don't want to seem weird. Second reason why we sometimes find this so hard is we sometimes want to win over the world without any conflict. Okay?

So maybe you don't want to come across as judgmental. Judgmental. Maybe so it's easier just to not let people know that you're a Christian. Maybe as soon as you let people know that you're a follower of Jesus, everyone will assume that you're judgmental.

There's so many judgmental people out there anyway. Okay? Best just to, you think the temptation is just to keep it hidden that you know and love Jesus. And keep it hidden. Maybe the temptation here is to think that if people like me and I don't, if I don't tell them I'm a Christian, they'll really like me and they'll think I'm such an amazing person.

And then they'll come and ask me why I'm such an amazing person. And then I can tell them that I'm a follower of Jesus. I felt that temptation myself. John Stott says, He sometimes wonders, he sometimes thinks how nice it would be if curious onlookers would come to him and say, Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

How I wonder what you are. In other words, he says, I sometimes think, wouldn't it be amazing if people would come to me and say, John Stott, you're the most amazing person I've ever met. What is the secret to your amazingness?

[28 : 18] But he says, The truth is that that seldom happens. Nobody's ever done that. And friends, in reality, that doesn't happen. The truth is that the more Christians try and be like the secular world, the more we try and dilute our salt of our Christian beliefs, the more we try and turn down the dimmer switch of the light of the gospel in order to not confront the world, the less the world takes the gospel seriously.

You see, friends, unbelievers are looking at our lives and they're saying, I want to know, do you really take Jesus and his gospel seriously? Because if you don't take it seriously and you call yourself a Christian, why should I take it seriously?

My older brother, I've got an older brother who's three years older than me. He lives in Singapore. And he went to, or we actually both went to the same school from year one to year 12.

Okay. From six years old to 18 years old in South Africa. And in my brother's year, from year one to year 12, there was a guy in the class called Christopher. And Christopher, I hope he never listens to this podcast, was a brat.

He was a bully and he was the kind of kid that nobody wants their parent, no parent wants their kids to become friends with. And every parent at the beginning of the year hopes that Christopher isn't in the same class as their child.

[29 : 38] Okay. I know you've never met one of those, but they do exist. And Christopher, in particular, spent 12 years making my brother's life difficult and especially mocking his Christian faith.

He just did everything he could to let the world know what a loser my brother was because he loved and followed Jesus. My brother left school at 18 years old and said goodbye and good riddance to Christopher, hoping to never see him again.

But about three or four years ago, this guy Christopher tracks him down through Facebook and he finds him and he sends my brother an email. And this is what he says.

He says, Simon, I want to apologize for making your life a misery for 12 years. I want to say I'm sorry for all the times that I mocked your Christian faith.

The truth is that actually I admired you and I saw something inside of you that I wanted, but I didn't know how to find it. And the only way I knew how to respond was to ridicule you so that people wouldn't look at me and see the emptiness in my own life.

[30 : 47] He says, Friends, the world is asking us, Will we really take Jesus and the gospel seriously?

Because if we don't take him seriously, why should they? Third reason why we find this so hard is that we often feel insecure in our beliefs.

And this is actually the most common and it's the most deep-seated of all the reasons, that we actually feel insecure in our beliefs. Maybe many of us here, we know we love Jesus, we know we believe in Jesus, we know the gospel is true, but we don't know how to express that.

We don't know how to communicate that. And so when someone asks us questions, we kind of just shrivel up and say, I don't know, it somehow makes sense to me. And so maybe the temptation there is because it feels awkward, we don't know how to defend the belief, we don't know how to make sense or how to explain it, it's just, we just keep quiet.

Now, this actually brings us to the heart of how we apply this message. See, how should we apply this? Jesus says, if you're a follower of Jesus this morning, Jesus says, you are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world.

[32 : 18] So what should we do about this? How do we actually apply this message? How do we take our lives and our children's lives and our family lives and live lives of influence? How do we push back darkness and bring light and healing and health and goodness to the city of Hong Kong?

What can you and I do today and tomorrow that's going to make us effective in helping Hong Kong be more like heaven because the people of heaven live here? Well, there's many things, but I want to give us two applications as we close this message.

Two very simple applications. The first one is this, love Jesus supremely. Love Jesus Christ supremely.

What I mean by that is that let the affections of our hearts, let the things that we delight in and enjoy, what makes the deepest parts of our hearts happy and joyful, make sure that the primary thing that you love and delight in and can't wait to spend time in, make sure that more than anything else in the whole world, that thing is the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Friends, if you and I are going to impact Hong Kong for the gospel, if you and I are going to make a difference in the city and push back darkness and help bring light and truth and purity and goodness come to our city, then you and I need to delight in Jesus Christ more than we delight in our children, more than we delight in our work, more than we delight in our security or our money, or more than you delight in anything else in all the world, Jesus Christ needs to be supreme in our hearts.

[33 : 54] And so I want to ask us this morning, what occupies the first place in your heart? Friends, what makes you most happy in life? What makes you most secure in life?

What makes you most resting in life? What makes you feel most safe? Because if it's anything other than the wonder of who Christ is, if it's anything other than the beauty of Christ, if it's anything more than the intimacy and the deep joy and the love of Christ in your hearts, then that thing is actually a functional God.

And in your heart of hearts, you're worshiping that thing. And though it promises you safety, it cannot keep you safe. And though it promises you abundance, it cannot provide for you.

And though it promises you protection and peace and rest, you'll never have peace because there's always a danger that that thing will be taken away from you. Friends, the only way that you can be secure enough to obey Jesus' words today is if you and I, in our heart of hearts, the thing that ravishes our hearts and the thing that we delight in the most and the thing that we enjoy the most and the thing that gives us the most rest and peace is Christ and our intimacy and our relationship with Him.

Friends, I must confess that my heart often doesn't live in this place. I go for weeks at a time when I read my Bible and I go through the motions.

[35 : 20] I lead prayer meetings and I preach on a Sunday and I lead devotions and my heart is numb. And there are times when there's no tears. There's no tears of joy and there's no anguish in my heart at my sin.

And I do what every Hong Konger does. I grind it out because that's what we do in this town, right? When things get tough, we just dig deeper and we just grind on out. And so I pray often, God, send revival to Hong Kong.

Send revival to Hong Kong, but God, start with my heart. Friends, is Christ supreme in our lives? Second thing is this.

It's similar, but it's slightly different. It's delight in the gospel extravagantly. Delight in Jesus and who He is. Delight in what Jesus has done for you and how that changes everything.

In other words, think often upon the fact that if you're a Christian here this morning, you were once dead in your sins. Not just a little bit sick or a little unwell, you were dead in your sins.

[36 : 24] If you're a Christian this morning, think often upon the fact that your destiny was once hell and eternity without Christ. Think often upon the fact that you had no way of reaching out to God.

We were so dead in our sins that we didn't even have the faith to reach out to God. And so God reached out to us and gave us faith to call upon Him. And then because of our faith, He caused us to be born again.

We sang it earlier, but think deeply upon the words of the song. He took my sins and my sorrows. He made them His very own. He bore the burden to Calvary. He suffered and He died alone.

Friends, the gospel tells us that we were traitors. We were rebels. We had given God the middle finger and said, stuff you God, I'm gonna do things my way. And God then went to us as traitors and rebels and He welcomed us home.

And He brought us into the family home. And He gave us a seat at the table and He gave us the family name. And friends, He did it, why? Because He loves us.

[37 : 28] Because He loves you. Not because you're amazing, but because He's amazing. Parents, I wanna say, don't teach your children, don't teach your children, don't teach your children how to become Christians.

Or don't teach your children to be Christians. That may surprise you, but please don't teach your children to be Christians. Don't tell your children, this is what we do because we are Christians.

Or this is how Christians behave. Tell your children about the wonder of Jesus. Tell them that they were dead in their sins. Show your children how their hearts are bent in on themselves and they're living for themselves.

Tell your children that Jesus loved them so much that He died on the cross for them. Tell your children that they're part of God's rescue plan to make the world a better place. Tell them that they're part of God's plan to push back darkness and to shine light into the city of Hong Kong to help people glorify Him.

Don't tell your children to do good things because that's what Christians do. Teach them to make sacrifices. Teach them to love the poor and to serve the marginalized and to love widows and orphans because Jesus is worth it because He is supreme in our lives.

[38 : 41] Friends, do you know that if you're a Christian this morning, if you've surrendered your life to Jesus and you've taken up His call to follow Him, do you know that Jesus loves you? Do you know that He delights in you?

Do you know that He enjoys you? Do you know that Christ is delighted at the thought of spending all eternity with you? Friends, maybe something has gone wrong in your life.

Maybe you've encountered some difficulty and your heart has grown hard towards God. And maybe you haven't served Him very much. And maybe you haven't been great light and you haven't been salt. Maybe your heart has grown bitter towards Him.

Do you know that He still loves you extravagantly? He hasn't changed one iota His love for you because His love for you is not found in what you do for Him. It's found in His own heart for you.

Friends, do you know that if you give a million dollars to the things of Christ and you start a prayer meeting at work and you start an orphanage and you start some great organization and you do extravagant things for Jesus, do you know that He won't love you one single bit more?

[39 : 50] He loves you just because He loves you. He loves you enough to die on the cross for you. He loves you because of what's in His heart. That's the gospel.

And friends, if we're going to be salt and light into our city, we need to delight in that extravagantly. Friends, when you know that, when the truth of the gospel has gripped your heart, you'll be the greatest witness in the world.

People won't be able to shut you up. You'll shine the light of the gospel wherever you go. You won't be able to help yourself. Your heart will overflow with compassion for those around you. You won't be able to stop yourself but to serve the needs of those around you.

You'll show forgiveness and mercy to those that have wronged you. You'll serve the widows and the poor and the teenage moms. You'll serve those that society hates and you'll do it with such joy in your heart with no arrogance or snobbishness.

You'll do it just because you love Jesus. It'll overflow without you. But the other thing is you won't care what people think of you. You won't mind if they despise you and reject you.

[40 : 52] Delight in the gospel often. Let Jesus be supreme in your heart. John Newton wrote that song, Amazing Grace. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

I once was, how does it go? I once was lost but now I'm found. Was blind but now I see. I know the words amazingly, right? At the end of his life, John Newton, he's an old man and he says this amazing line.

He says, though I'm old and my memory is failing, two things I will never forget. I am a great sinner and Christ is a great savior. Friends, delight in the gospel often.

Love Jesus supremely. Let Jesus be so beautiful in your sight that you'll pay any price to represent him. Let Christ be so glorious to you that he'll embrace any cost.

Delight in the gospel and what he's done for you. Friends, the wonder of the gospel is that despite our sin, despite our self-centeredness, despite our self-glory, Jesus loved you and I so much that he went to Calvary, was flogged and beaten beyond human recognition, hung there to die, and he did it gladly.

[42 : 04] And there in that moment, he says, Father, forgive them. They know not what they do. Friends, do you know this gospel? Do you know Jesus? Do you love him?

Has your heart grown cold towards him? Have you become familiar with him that he no longer moves you? Do you feel like Jesus is a good add-on to your life or do you need him every day and every hour?

Friends, come to him once again this morning. You see, coming back to that last point, the truth is that none of us will have every perfect answer to every question. People are gonna challenge you. People are gonna come to you and say, what about this?

People are gonna throw a thousand reasons at you why your faith may seem unreasonable. They're gonna throw a thousand reasons why it's ridiculous to follow a dead religion from 2,000 years ago. And friends, you'll never have every perfect answer to every question.

That is true. But the gospel does answer the deepest questions of the heart. The gospel does answer the questions of why we're here. The gospel does tell you what your purpose in life is.

[43 : 04] Why God created you. Why are you in this world? Why are you having existence and where are you going? Friends, let the good news of the wonder of Jesus. Shine and let men and women see it.

And some will wonder. Some of them will even give glory to your Father in heaven. Some will even become followers of Jesus. Jesus said, you are the salt of the earth. But if salt has lost its taste, how will it be made salty again?

It has no purpose. Might as well just be thrown out. Jesus said, you are the light of the world. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket. They put it on a stand. It'll shine.

And its light will shine out. In the same way, let the light of the gospel shine before others that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Let's pray together.

Lord Jesus Christ, we come before you this morning and we ask you, God, not just to make us better witnesses, though we do want that. we ask you, Lord Jesus, not just to help us answer questions and objections.

[44 : 12] Jesus, we come before you this morning. We ask you to fire up our hearts to love you more. God, we confess, as we said earlier, that so often other things take place of preeminence in our lives.

Christ, come and have your way. Come and God, I pray that the wind of the Spirit will blow on the embers of our hearts and fan into flame our love for you once again. God, where our passion for you has grown cold, Jesus wants you to revive that.

Revive our hearts, we pray, God. Revive Hong Kong, but start with us. God, for those of us, Lord, that have become blase and familiar with you, for those of us, God, where we just go through the motions and we go to church and we read our Bibles once a month, God, I pray, arrest our hearts.

Christ, come and be supreme. Holy Spirit, won't you come and blow and fall upon us, God, and cause us to love you deeply. Jesus, forgive us, we pray, God, where we've trusted in other gods and false gods.

God, won't you open our eyes and give us faith, Lord Jesus, to trust you and to love you supremely again. God, come and dismantle those false idols in our hearts, we pray. Lord, I pray that, watermark really, we will be a church, that out of the overflow of our love and our passion for you, God, we make a difference in our city.

[45 : 33] That tens of people, hundreds of people will come to discover the wonder of Jesus, will come to discover the truth of who you are and have the light of the gospel shine in our hearts because of this simple church, Lord, because of our love for you.

Come and do it, we pray. In your name, Amen.