

Living the Great Commission

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Preachers: Chris Thornton, Ed Tsui

- [0 : 0 0] One of the things at Watermark that we want to do is be a church which is also raising up other people to preach and to lead in different ways.
- So today's going to be a little bit different from normal. There's going to be two of us preaching. Don't worry, it's not going to go on until past your lunchtime. But Ed and myself will be preaching this morning and just bringing God's word to us as we continue the series looking at mission.
- But before we do that, I want to invite Gary and Iris to come and bring God's word to us in scripture reading. The scripture reading comes from Matthew and 1 Peter.
- Please follow along in your bulletin or on the screen. In Matthew chapter 28, we read, Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.
- And when they saw him, they worshipped him. But some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
- [1 : 2 2] Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.
- And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. And in 1 Peter chapter 3, we read, Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?
- But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled. But in your hearts, honor Christ, the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.
- Yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.
- For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.
- [2 : 5 6] This is the word of God. God bless you. Amen. Hi, good morning, Watermark.
- My name is Ed. I'm one of the members here, and also one of the elders here. Now I just want to lead us into a time of pastoral prayer. It's not me praying, but it's Watermark praying to our sovereign and living God.
- So if I could just invite you to pray with me. Dear Heavenly Father, as we enter into this Lenten season, we thank you for your son, Jesus Christ, who advocates for our righteousness and salvation.
- We thank you for being a powerful and sovereign king, and yet a gentle servant king, who continues to pursue us individually. We pray for your Holy Spirit to minister to those who are affected by the COVID-19 virus, for those who are sick in Hubei and across the globe, for the health workers who are strained and pushed to their limits.

We pray for those family who have experienced loss and are hurting. Families in China who may have had their relative pass away in Hubei and experience a scent of hopelessness because there's nothing they can do.

[4 : 16] The city remains closed and they cannot visit them. God, will you draw close to them. We pray that the Holy Spirit be with those who suffer and mourn, and now pouring of your grace and love upon them, may you let them know that there is a Heavenly Father that deeply cares for them, that they are not alone.

We pray that as the world tackles COVID-19, we pray that you will use this time and situation for an awakening, for the hearts to become receptive to receiving you as Lord and Savior, as confidence in man-made things diminishes.

We pray that as you take away busyness from the lives of people in Hong Kong and globally, that we will learn to be still and know to grow in all of you being God.

We pray against fear. We pray against racism. We pray against division. We pray against bigotry. We pray that we will see each other as inherently valuable as you do during this time. We pray for unity among Hong Kong churches as you prepare your church for a new season.

We pray that your will be done, that you will prune the church as you will, that you will bring unity to church as you will, and that we will be a united church ready to be your hands and feet for the revival in Hong Kong, that we pray that is to come.

[5 : 27] We pray for Watermark Church, that will be a body of Christ that takes on the mission of Christ. We pray that the missions, the value of missions, drops deep into every one of our hearts, and that we will take up our cross for the sake of the cross.

We pray for an emboldening of our hearts. We pray for testimonies, many, many testimonies, as we step out in faith and encounter Jesus in the mission fields. We thank you, Heavenly Father, for who you are, for sustaining us and giving us this very day.

And all these things we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, last week, Kevin preached that to be a people of God, we are also the mission of God, that we were invited to take part of God's movement to restore a sinful and broken world to him.

Now, as in Acts, and as in Psalm 67, it reads, May your ways and salvation be known among nations. May all nations praise you.

Now, this week, as Chris just mentioned, we will continue in talking about missions, and you get two for the price of one. I guess there's a lot of bargains out there during the COVID virus, and you get one today.

[6 : 39] Now, the Great Commission is a sermon passage that I think a lot of us are very familiar with, probably heard a lot. And for me, personally, as the sinner that I am, when I reflect on the Great Commission, what I think of in my mind is my highlight reel of Ed's greatest evangelistic moments.

Top five, top ten. Was it the time that I got to minister to my colleague at work because he started dating a Christian girl? Or was it the time that I brought my long-term high school friend, who I haven't met in a long time, after a casual steak dinner and invited him to pray the repentance prayer, and he did.

At other times, I approached the Great Commission with this laissez-faire approach. It's like, I treat it as, Great Commission is great, but it's for those who are called to the mission fields.

Someone like Amelia. Amelia was called to minister to the Hakka people of Taiwan, so she dropped her things, decided to drop her life in Hong Kong, moved to Taiwan, started learning Chinese for the past two or three years, and she's following that mission.

Great Commission is for her. You know, people in the foreign mission fields, not for me. But in both of these responses, whether I act as a performance Christian or a licensed Christian, those, my heart is in the wrong place.

[8 : 14] And today, we're going to be talking about what the Great Commission is really about. Jesus. It's all about Jesus. In fact, the Great Commission begins because of Jesus, is a response to Jesus, and is sustained by the Spirit of Jesus.

When we read the passage of the Great Commission, it's very easy to focus on, go and make disciples of all nations. Because that's kind of probably the most famous phrase. But, there is a radical claim that Jesus makes right before that, that I would argue is probably even more important.

Because Jesus says, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. That is, when the resurrected Jesus makes the claim, Jesus is claiming in no uncertain terms that his status is that of equal to God.

One who rules over kingdoms is Lord of Lords and King of Kings. I think we're just working. There's some slides in the background that could pop up. Now, to the Jewish people, the Gospel of Matthew was written for the Jewish people.

To the Jewish people, this would have been a radical, radical claim. Very eye-popping. Because to the Jewish people, there's only two authority. There's Torah, the Word of God, and Yahweh, God himself.

[9 : 39] And so, when Jesus makes this claim and challenges the authority and worship of the Jewish, the paradigm of authority and worship, Jesus is making a very bold claim.

And that's really the key point to the Gospel of Matthew. That Jesus is Emmanuel, the fulfillment of the Messiah that is, the promised Messiah of the Old Testament.

In fact, in Matthew chapter 1, Matthew begins with tracing the lineage of Jesus to Abraham. And as we learned last week, from Genesis 22, 18, it says, through your offspring, this is God speaking to Abraham, through your offspring, all nations would be blessed.

Every Jewish reader would know that the implied implication of that is that Jesus is the Messiah. Twelve times Matthew mentions that Jesus is the fulfillment of this prophecy and that prophecy.

And at the bookend of the Matthew of Jesus, it said, Jesus, what does Jesus say? Go and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

[10 : 45] Equality, but distinct. Distinct, but equal. The point is this. It was always God's plan to bring salvation to this world. And Jesus is the fulfillment of that.

Jesus is God's promised salvation to mankind. Without Jesus, there is no Great Commission, because there would be no path to salvation. There is no way back to be with our Heavenly Father who is holy and righteous.

The Great Commission is a movement that begins because of Jesus, because of who He is and what He has done. Now, in the passage, the disciples are traveling to Galilee, and they encounter Jesus, and they worship Him.

And that's a natural response for seeing a resurrected Messiah. You just saw this guy die maybe like, you know, a couple weeks ago, and here there he is, the resurrected Messiah standing there. And of course, you're going to worship Him.

And then Jesus goes and commissions them and says, go and make disciples. Now, why is this sequence of events important? The disciples first encounter, then the disciples worship, and then the disciples get commissioned.

[12 : 01] This is important because missions always starts with an encounter and worship of our Lord. You have to be changed by the gospel to want to share the gospel.

You know, I believe everyone, I believe, has a thing that they like to share with their friends or family. You know, it could be your favorite book, your favorite restaurant. I think most topical these days is we want to share the most latest COVID news, right?

Where to go to get toilet paper, where to go to get masks, where not to go because there's infected people. Well, my thing is sharing good deals. I love to scour the, if you know me, you know me.

I love to scour the internet for good deals, mostly with regards to good places to take Trish to a discounted date night dinner, good places for a staycation, best value, or also best ways to accumulate Asian miles for free flights.

Now, I love to share this with my friends. Why? Because these are good things. I mean, these are good experiences and good deals, and I want to share good things with my friends. And in the similar way, the motivation of missions comes from the worship of our Lord.

[13 : 16] Mission begins with an encounter with Jesus that changes you. Unless you encounter Jesus and see that he is a treasure above all earthly treasures, you wouldn't naturally look to make disciples.

But where this analogy totally ends is that, you know, Jesus is not merely a good thing. Jesus is life-giving. And so, if I'm so willing to share about good things and good experiences with my friends, sometimes I always ask myself, why am I not more bold in sharing about Jesus, who gives life and is infinitely more valuable?

Now, the most integral part of this passage is make disciples. Like, this is a really important instruction that you read in this passage.

And as such, it is imperative that we understand what discipleship looks like. Now, discipleship, as it was meant in this, written in this text, is defined in the context of the Jewish religion.

If a rabbi agreed to be a disciple of a younger boy and a man, that disciple will agree to submit to the authority of the rabbi in all areas of his life with regards to the interpretation of scripture for all of his life.

[14 : 37] That's a very, very high bar for devotion. The rabbi-disciple relationship is deep, is relational, and transparent. The disciple would observe how the rabbi deals with things, matters of the family, with marriage, with money, and he would choose, he would seek to copy him, to emulate him.

And that's the role of the disciple. And there's a story once told that a disciple so wanted to learn from the rabbi that he hid in the rabbi's bedroom so that he can learn from the rabbi how to be intimate with his future wife.

So that's how close there is. It's total devotion, and there's total transparency, and it's very deep. When we translate this rabbi-disciple relationship to what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, it means that as a disciple of Jesus, we are to fully surrender to him and take Jesus and his teachings as our only and ultimate authority.

Our love for Jesus versus the things of this world must be like in Luke 14, 26, which says, If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, even their own life, such a person cannot be my disciple.

That is, on a relative basis, versus our love for even the most dearest things to us in this world, we must love Jesus infinitely more, many folds more.

[16 : 15] A disciple then, therefore, if we read into all this context, would naturally take on the mission and the purpose of Jesus. As in the parable of the lost sheep, where the good shepherd leaves the 99 sheep to seek that one sheep.

That is the heart of Jesus. Jesus' heart is for that lost sheep. His heart is so that he knows that everyone is so valuable that he will go to the ends of the earth to go after every one lost sheep.

And if to be the disciple of Jesus means to take Jesus as the only authority and ultimate authority, and if Jesus' heart was about lost sheep, then as disciples, we have to be about lost sheep as well.

To be the people of God is to be the mission of God. And I think you heard that from Kevin yesterday. But this is the key point. You cannot be a true disciple of Jesus and not be seeking to make disciples.

And I just repeat that because this really spoke to me. Because being a disciple of Jesus, this sermon really helped me define what my walk with Jesus should really be like.

[17 : 37] You cannot be a true disciple of Jesus and not be seeking to make disciples. Because that is his heart. Now, making disciples, that's a daunting task.

I mean, that's a daunting task. And I think in our culture, you know, our DIY, do-it-yourself culture, we, you know, we just think about, let's pull up our bootstraps and let's just go out there. Let's follow a formulaic plan.

You know, five steps to evangelize in the workplace, ten steps to make a disciple, and let's go. But the reality is, the Great Commission is not a movement that belongs to us.

It's God's movement. And so making a disciple means changing the hearts of an individual. And how can man, how can we change the hearts and affection of another person?

That is impossible. Heart change is the work of the Holy Spirit. And so this impossible task is only possible with the help of Jesus, the Spirit of Jesus.

[18 : 37] The Holy Spirit is so important that in the movement, that in Acts 1-4, it says, Do not leave Jerusalem. Jesus says to his disciples, Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

And in the same vein, Jesus reassures his disciples in verse 20, Surely I am with you always to the very end of age. And now he instructs them to go. Go to all nations.

Now remember in verse 17, when the disciples encountered Jesus, it says, They worshipped him, but some still doubted.

Well, Jesus' disciples weren't the crackerjack, hot shots, faithful men that we all put them out to be. They were actually still very much sinners. And they still struggled to trust in Jesus.

But yet, Jesus still entrusts his mission to them. The thing that is going to make you successful is not how well you speak, or how well you argue.

[19 : 38] It's that Jesus is with you. And practically speaking, that means we need less of us and more of him. It means that we pray for heart change more than try to change hearts.

It means that we are bold in impossible situations, because it's not about us. And it means that we can be bold in missions, because nothing is impossible with him. This is God's movement, and not our movement.

And I think John 15, 5 summarizes best. I am the vine, you are the branches. If you remain in me, and I in you, you will bear much fruit. Apart from me, you can do nothing.

So when I reflect back at how I respond to the Great Commission, whether it be Ed Choi's greatest evangelistic highlight reel, or passing the buck to missionaries like Amelia, I am led to repentance.

I repent that I fall short of being a true disciple of Jesus, where someone who takes Jesus as my only authority, and ultimate authority in my life.

[20 : 42] How many voices do I have commenting to me on this and that, about how to live life? And how many times do I listen to those voices instead of Jesus? I repent that there still exists a large gap between my heart and the heart of Jesus, especially with regards to lost sheep.

And I repent that oftentimes I choose to glorify myself than to bear the cost of missions. I want to invite Chris now to share about 1 Peter and the cost of missions.

Great. Thanks, Ed. That was really helpful. So I want to just really follow on from what Ed was talking about and having a look at the 1 Peter passage, which is written about 30 years or so after the Great Commission.

And you're getting to see where this Great Commission flows out in practice in people's lives. Because many of us, if you're a Christian and you've been in church for a while, you know that we're supposed to share the gospel and be bringing Jesus' love to people.

Most of us are not unaware of the information. But actually, most of us struggle in reality with that. And it's not because we don't know the information.

[22 : 08] It's because mission will always cost us. You see, it costs Jesus everything. His whole life. And if we are following as his disciples, it's also going to cost us too.

You know, I read a story of a family in the U.S. who befriended this guy in their neighborhood who is a very private, kind of lonely, reclusive kind of guy.

And their relationship started off as they just got to walk their dog with him. And they built up a friendship. And eventually, they invited him into their home. And they were beginning to share the gospel. He was hanging out with their family.

And then one day, they woke up to see over in his house, the police had cordoned off the whole of his house. And they were bringing out drug-making equipment from his property.

And they discovered that he'd actually been making crystal meth and producing it in his basement. And then all the neighbors around them, suddenly, because this family had associated with him, they began to start, like, rumors started going around.

[23 : 21] Everyone started kind of backing off and backing away from, like, are you involved? Like, how could you do this? How could you encourage this in our neighborhood? And people, they would walk down the street, and people would just walk the other way from them.

Because they had associated with this guy. And their reputation became linked to this guy's reputation. Now, when we are following Jesus as God, as the Lord of our life, Jesus isn't a drug dealer.

He's not actually even just a nice teacher. If you really see who Jesus actually is, for many people, he's really somebody who's actually quite weird and dangerous.

If you really see what he's actually saying in our lives. You see, in Peter's day, who's writing this, no one had a problem with worshiping Jesus. They had a problem with worshiping only Jesus.

Because that was too exclusive. Because the pagans around them, all their gods required worship. And if you weren't worshiping them, then you could bring the anger of the gods on your community.

[24 : 34] And that was going to be dangerous for you. And so Christians at that time, were treated either indifferently, or they were mocked, or just treated as a threat.

You know, when I was in the UK, actually, there was Franklin Graham, who was the son of Billy Graham, was actually coming to just, do some sharing of the gospel with people. But he was banned from speaking, because of some of his views on gay marriage.

And there was actually, when I was there in the city, there was a massive campaign against him. Because people think that Christians, and some of their beliefs, it's not just old-fashioned any longer.

It's even dangerous. And isn't that what we fear? We fear a sense of social rejection by people. Don't we? That was the situation for them.

And Peter here, he says this in the passage. He says, even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you will be blessed. Don't have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy.

[25 : 41] You see, when Christ is Lord, it challenges our idols and our fears. Do you know that word, honor Christ as Lord? It's actually one word in Greek, which is sanctify Christ as Lord.

That means set him apart as Lord. He is Lord. He has all authority. But actually, we can sing about Jesus as Lord, and we worship him on a Sunday, but actually we can go out in the rest of our weeks and worship somebody else as Lord or something else as Lord in our weeks.

Because in our hearts, we fear other people more than we fear him. In our hearts, we want to please other people more than we want to please him. We fear awkward conversations more than we fear dishonoring him.

And you know, the mission of God puts in crystal clear focus whether Jesus is not just Lord of our mouths, but is Lord of our hearts too, because it's uncomfortable.

And I'm really challenged by this, but actually I think it's true that the only reason, the only reason that stops me from boldly proclaiming Jesus as Lord and shaping my life around his mission is because functionally, I'm making something else in my heart Lord and not him.

[26 : 57] I'm worshiping something else and not Jesus. Because if, like Ed was saying, if Jesus is filling my heart, he's got to overthrow flow in the way that I live my life and the words that I speak.

You know, last week I was in a cafe and I got talking to the server behind the counter and we started having a great conversation. We were talking about, we talked about sin, we talked about death, we talked about church, and then I knew I needed to come on and talk about Jesus.

And suddenly I was like, I felt weird. I was kind of, and Jesus, it's kind of mumbling. And I thought to myself, why do I do that?

And I do that because, you know, you see that look? Here's a religious nut kind of look. You know that? Right? And I don't like awkward conversations and I don't like making other people feel awkward either.

I'd like just life to be fairly smooth for you to like me. You know, you can have your faith, but I want nothing much to disturb my life. Anyone like me? One person at the back.

[28 : 06] Good. Everyone else is sorted. I'll just talk to you, Tiff. But I've got this friend in Shanghai and he's a lawyer. And at board meetings or client meetings, he would come in and he'd bring his Bible with him and put it straight on the table.

And then people would look at it and go, what's that? And he'd go, well, just very briefly, he'd say, well, I'm a Christian and Jesus is the most important thing to me and I just want to rely on his words.

That's risky, right? That's like, he could lose clients because of that. That's like somebody who's actually saying, Jesus is really Lord.

Because for him, he knows that actually, even though someone thinks I'm weird, and actually, I can tell you, he's had so many conversations where people have then gone to him, huh, so what is it that you believe?

And what Peter says is, be prepared to give a reason for the hope that you have. And because he's been living in a way where he's honoring Jesus as Lord, so it's actually enabled him to have opportunities to then go, and here's why I believe this.

[29 : 19] This is what Peter is talking about. But in mission, if Jesus is Lord, then my reputation isn't. And so we don't play it safe any longer. We're willing to put our reputations on the line.

So, you know, Peter says here, have no fear. Have no fear. Have no fear. Why? Because I've got this.

You can trust me. But actually, we often justify our idolatries, the things we put before God, with excuses. Some of the excuses we go, I'm not very good at arguments.

Right? I'm not very smart. I always seem to kind of mess up conversations. Things always seem to go badly. Has anyone ever thought like that? But if Jesus is Lord, do you know what he says?

He says, why are you relying on your ability? If I, as the great king of the whole universe, have entrusted you and you're representing with a message of the king whose love is so expansive and great that the universe cannot contain it, how on earth do you think that you can possibly adequately communicate that by yourself?

[30 : 34] That's actually arrogance. Why are you making all about you? Because he says, no, the gospel humbles us to go, Jesus doesn't choose adequate people.

He chooses you if you're completely inadequate. In fact, if you think you're adequate, then you're going to screw it all up. He chooses people who fumble and are clumsy and, you know, just make mistakes and just, we're sinful.

So that's why he gets the glory, which is what Ed was saying. That's why he says, when I am with you, he's the only one who can guarantee this mission will succeed. Isn't that encouraging?

I'm encouraged. Maybe three of you are, but I... But the things, there's this great passage in Acts 4. I don't know if you've read it, the disciples come before the most powerful religious leaders of the time and they're grilling them about their faith in Jesus.

These are the most intimidating intellectuals of the time. You know, we always have some people who are intimidators, right? These guys are intimidating and it says in Acts 4, they knew that the disciples were uneducated common people.

[31 : 49] Okay? Intellectuals, uneducated. They hadn't even got through grade three at school. But it says here, and I love this, this is beautiful, it says, and... But these religious leaders, they were astonished because they saw that these people had been with Jesus.

That's our qualification for mission. Have we been with Jesus? Have you been with him? Have you experienced him? Let the fact that most other powerful people in the world only want to be with you if you've got something to offer them.

But Jesus, who already has all power and you have nothing to offer him, wants to be with you. Today, tomorrow, every day this week in your family, in your workplace, wherever you are, he's going to be with you.

And he's Lord. That's encouraging. So if Jesus is Lord, it strips and challenges our idols and our fears.

Practically, if he's also Lord in your hearts, it means we're going to prepare for his mission. He says this, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

[33 : 12] Many of us go, but I don't know how to share. And Peter would go, have you prepared? Like, have you actually even thought about how to share the gospel with people? because, you know, if something's really important to you, you prepare for it.

Right? Like, you've got a presentation, you're not just going to, like a really major presentation, you're not going to just go, I'm going to wing it today. No, but if the mission of God is that crucial to who we are and what Jesus calls us to be, then we're going to prepare for it.

We're going to go, okay, in our CG's, like, if someone comes to you and says, why are you a Christian? Do you know how to answer that? If someone says to you, like, what's happened in your life?

Are you able to just share your testimony in two minutes? I want to encourage every one of us in our community groups to actually take the time to just prepare. You know, my mom, whenever we'd have people around at our house, sometimes we had people who are not Christians, and at the end of the meal, they'd be leaving, and she'd just kind of go, oh, I've got a great book I'd love to hand to you.

And I'd be going, God, that's just really awkward. But not because Jesus was Lord, more important than just whether it was awkward or not. And actually, for some of us, if you're looking for, like, resources to help you or to give, this is a great book.

[34 : 40] It's called Confronting Christianity by Rebecca Glocken. I highly recommend it. It's great for you to read, to prepare yourself. It's great to give to other people to read.

I really encourage us to have some resources and tools just so that you can be ready and prepared. Is that clear? Yeah? Because if Jesus is Lord, it's going to strip us of our idols.

It's going to help us to actually prepare. Last thing, if Jesus is Lord, it's going to help us to be courageously gentle. Peter says this.

He says, you know, if you get into this conversation about Jesus with people who might be pushing back against you, do it with gentleness and respect.

It's really interesting. You know, I don't know, I have many conversations with people who are atheists or call themselves agnostics. And often what happens in the conversation, it goes something like this.

[35 : 42] Christianity is stupid and unscientific. And I just go, atheism is stupid and irrational. And then we just kind of start attacking each other and trading blows. And then it just, the temperature goes up and afterwards, I never want to do that again.

That is not gentleness, by the way. Because when you're attacked, we naturally want to feel like we want to attack back. But if we're disciples of Jesus, how does Jesus respond when he is attacked, what does he respond with?

Grace, gentleness. It's not weak gentleness, it's courageous gentleness. Someone once said, gentleness is strength under control. I love that.

Strength under control. Doesn't that typify Jesus on the cross? Strength under control. Everyone's throwing things at him. Strength under control.

And if Jesus is Lord, we're secure because we're under his control. So whether someone laughs at me or, you know, I lose the argument.

[36 : 47] Sometimes you can win an argument and lose a person. Right? But actually he says here, the way that you bring Jesus to people is not just with your words, it's also how you respond to people.

There are many people here that I know, you have said to me, I was just like obnoxious to every Christian that came to me for like a long time, but they were so patient with me and gentle with me that actually after a while God just did something in my heart and now I'm a believer.

Anyone else seen that? What would it be if we have a community of courageously gentle people who know Jesus is Lord?

And the thing is, sometimes we want to attack because we feel insecure and if we lose the argument we feel like we're defeated. But if Jesus is Lord, then I'm not a failure for trying to obey him because his verdict over me is more important than somebody else's verdict over me or what I think of me.

And what he says is, if you're a Christian, you're his child. He delights in you. And do you know when you see a child learning to speak and they go like, da-da here or something, da-da here.

[38 : 08] The father doesn't go, you stupid child, get your grammar correct. He doesn't, he goes, yes, woohoo, he said da-da. That's how Jesus looks at us when we try and share the gospel with people.

Not in a kind of like, and you know, it's fumbling, we're like, oh, I just should have said that. He's going, yes. Because he loves us as his children and he loves us to respond to him.

And the thing is, if someone laughs at me or mocks me or rejects me, it's okay because Jesus is my savior and I have laughed at him. I have mocked at him with my life in so many ways and yet he's so patient with me.

He's so gracious to me. He's so forgiving of me. And if that gets into my heart, it doesn't matter. And I need to hear this again and again, right?

It doesn't matter because Christ is Lord and that gives me the courage and patience and gentleness to be able to respond in that way to others. I'm going to finish with two things.

[39 : 19] One is, I love Simon here. If you don't know Simon, you've got to get to know Simon. He's great. You know, ever since I've known Simon, I've known him for years.

He's always been telling me about him trying to share the gospel with his brother. And quite often, over the last time, he's come back to me just feeling very discouraged.

It's kind of like, it felt like talking to a brick wall. He thinks everyone who believes this is stupid. All that kind of stuff, right? For years. But Simon has just been trying to share the gospel.

And recently, I can't remember when, but God's done a miracle in your brother's life, hasn't he? You can talk to him later. But what he's done, he said this, and Simon told me this just on Tuesday.

He said, his brother told him, I think last week, was it? That actually, you're the only person I know who would ever keep on telling me this message for so long. Now, I don't think he was just beating him into the ground into submission.

[40 : 28] But there's something that actually just that persistent, courageous, gentleness, but kindness, just continually saying, I just want this person to come to know Jesus. That is actually what Jesus does.

And he said, like, he's gone from being this worry-driven, fret-filled man to suddenly have this lightness and joy in his life. That's what the gospel does in people. That's why we want to share it with people.

And if Jesus is truly Lord of our lives, we can trust him. We can trust him. So how do we respond?

How do we respond? I think the first response we need to do is to get real. Our problem with mission and sharing the gospel is not a lack of skill.

It's a problem of our priorities. And we just need to be honest about that. We need to remove any excuses that we have and just come before God and just repent before him and say, God, I've placed so many other things before you.

[41 : 31] I get distracted by so many other things. I fear other people more than I fear you. change my heart. We repent of making it about ourselves, about our performance.

And we start praying. You know, what would it be if 150, 100, 150 people in Watermark, and this is something I'm just really praying, that we get on our knees and ask God to do such a work in our heart that his spirit takes us from being chickens, cowards who just, we kind of, you know, we like fumble over Jesus.

He takes us from chickens to lions. He takes us from cowards to courageous gospel warriors for him who are willing to put in the work to prepare for the mission that he's called us to, knowing that we are inadequate, completely inadequate.

But if we're an adequate people who are Jesus-loving, spirit-filled, humble, gentle, yet irresistibly fearless, because we know that Jesus is Lord, and he's Lord not just in our mouths, but he's Lord in our hearts, and we know that he loves us, then I think from this week, Satan is going to be trembling in his boots.

As we launch out from here for the rest of this week, every day, every morning, why don't you start by saying, today I'm not my own. I'm yours.

[43 : 20] Spirit, would you just lead me today? Give me that courage to put you as Lord in my life. And I think he's going to do something, because God loves answering prayers like that.

If you are not a Christian, Jesus is calling you today, because if he truly is Lord, that means anything else in your life is going to be always lesser than him, and one day you will come before him, and you'll have to give an account of your life.

And Jesus says to you, I have given my entire life to die for you so that you could come to know me. Now lay down your own sense of wanting to live your life your way.

and say, Jesus, I want to accept the gift of your salvation to me. And right now to recognize you're a sinner who is in desperate need of saving, but you have an amazing Savior in Christ.

And come to him today. Come and see me. Come and see one of the other elders, because we want you to come to know him. So let me just stop here.

[44 : 41] I want you to pray. And I want you just to get real with God. Let me just stop and just think, where has my heart been as I think about the mission that God has called me to?

Is Jesus really Lord of my heart? And let's just do some business with him. Maybe the musicians can come up. Maybe the prayer team can come up. If you like prayer, and you just know actually, this is an area you just struggle with.

Jesus is not bringing condemnation to you. He's bringing challenge to you, but he wants you to come and run to him. So come and just spend some time. Get right with God right now.

Pray that before him. Lord, I'm not my own. Help me to live this week not as my own, but for the one who died for me, gave his life for me, so that I might no longer live for myself, but him who loves me outrageously.

You might just want to ask yourself, do I ever prepare?

[46 : 23] Or am I so wrapped up with fear that I don't see the people around me, so wrapped up with my circumstances, with the things I want to do, I want to get on and do, but I don't think, well, God, what do you want me to do?

Father, I pray for us as a church, we desperately need you. I know in my own heart, Lord, so many other things compete with you as Lord. I don't want that to be the case, Lord.

Pray for us as a church that we would see that you are more beautiful than anything else, and we may take gospel risks because of the fact that we're utterly, utterly secure in you.

give us that courage this week not to play it safe any longer, but to really want to seek your face and love you with all of our being and that other people might come to know you.

in Jesus' name, in Jesus' name, Amen.