

# A Call to the Nations

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Again, my name is Chris. I'm on the pastoral staff here. You're just, again, very welcome if you're new here. Ramadan started last week. I don't know if you knew.

I don't know if you're celebrating. Shavuot, the Jewish festival of weeks, started yesterday. A month ago, it was Buddha's birthday. And on Friday, the European football championship started.

We live in a world of competing religions and a world of competing traditions and cultures. And we live in a globalized, global city of Hong Kong where we're surrounded by cultures that even 100 years ago you'd have only read about in a textbook.

And, you know, I go into Kennedy Town and there's an Egyptian fish and chip shop. There's a Hong Kong pizza place. I went to Cheung Chao the other day. There's a restaurant called Morocco's which sells Indian and Thai food.

I mean, multiculturalism. There's this mix of nations coming together in this one city. And us sitting here, just as you listen to the different languages, we're a mix of nations which have come together to one place.

[ 1 : 2 0 ]     And God has placed us in a city, and this is increasingly true of cities around the world, where there are now opportunities for nations which would have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ to come in contact with us.

People who would never have heard it in their home country have come and are coming to cities like Hong Kong. Watermark we planted five and a half years ago.

And right at the heart of our DNA is that we're a church which is not just about making life comfortable for ourselves, but the way that a church is healthy and fruitful and every individual Christian will flourish and grow is if you're living for something bigger than just yourself.

that each of us has a deep longing inside of us for some kind of purpose, to do something meaningful with our lives.

And I listen to so many people, and they tell me, I just don't know what I'm supposed to be here for. And God has placed a desire in our hearts because he says, I want to call you as a church, as individual Christians, to something which is so much bigger and greater than your mission for your life.

[ 2 : 3 9 ]     I want to call you to my mission. And my mission is to go and make disciples of all the nations. It's a global vision. That's why we believe in church planting here at Watermark, because we believe this mission is something which is greater than what our own desires are.

And so we've been looking in this series at Isaiah, at mission. And Isaiah is this just amazing invitation for us to join in with what God is up to in the world.

And it's an invitation that you don't want to kind of RSVP maybe to. It's one you want to get on board with, because what we've seen over the last few weeks is that the mission starts when you find that God is soul-quenchingly satisfying to the thirst that we all have.

And when you know that God satisfies your thirst, then you go out to a thirsty world which is hungry and looking for something, and you can say, look to Christ because he is satisfying.

We've looked at how we all have a craving for acceptance and belonging, and Jesus dying on the cross welcomes us as outsiders into a family so that we can be those who welcome outsiders into his family.

[ 3 : 59 ] We've looked at how God reached out to us in our spiritual poverty so that we could be people who reach out to those who are also poor and disadvantaged.

And if you're a Christian, here's the point, if you're a Christian, you cannot, cannot enjoy God as he wants you to enjoy him if you don't get on his mission.

Because to not overflow with the love that you have received to others is like finding a cure for cancer and keeping it to yourself. Every Christian is a missionary.

And so that's what we're going to look at today. Every Christian is a missionary. Now, I don't know about you, but I kind of have this problem with the word missionary because when I think of missionary, I think of guys in kind of oversized hats with like ridiculous moustaches, kind of walking into exotic countries, telling people they're uncivilized heathens, and then forcing them to convert to Christianity, taking their land away at the same time, and then thinking they're doing God's will because now the natives will have Jesus and they've all got to have tea time at five o'clock because that's what God likes.

You see, I'm British. And God obviously likes British things. But my guard once said to me, he said when I started talking to him about Christianity, he said, Christianity, that's a foreign religion.

[ 5 : 33 ] We Chinese, we have our own religions, thank you. We don't need Western people like you imposing your way of doing things and thinking on us. We have got our own things already.

And it's that kind of image that Isaiah and that world that Isaiah is actually speaking into, where religion was actually synonymous with power, self-righteousness, wealth, injustice, and the people of Israel, God's people, had lost their vision for what God had called them to be, which would be the mission and a light to the nations around them.

So God had brought them down low. He'd exiled them. Nations had come. They'd stripped them low. They'd been exiled in a foreign land like the Koreans and Chinese who were shipped off to Japan in the Second World War.

That's kind of what Israel had happened to them. And it's a dark time. They're feeling like God has abandoned them. And some of you know what it feels like to feel like God may have abandoned you.

But Isaiah comes to them and says, there's a new day. There's a new hope. There's a new vision. There's a new hope for you.

[ 6 : 46 ] So here's my two key points I want us to really talk about. One, the sun has risen, so wake up. Two, God's vision is global, so look up.

The sun has risen, so wake up. God's vision is global, so look up. The sun's risen. That first verse that we read, Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

The image here, and I've put in your bulletin chapter 59, because that comes before, is it's nighttime. It's dark. It's not Hong Kong dark, you know, where there's so much light pollution that you can't see the stars.

This is like power cut, complete pitch black darkness. Some of us watermark men, we went on a blind simulation.

I don't know if you've done it. It's called Dialogue in the Dark. We went there last year, and it's pitch black. You cannot even see your hand in front of you. And I don't know if you've had experience, but it's extraordinarily what you do when you can't see anything.

[ 7 : 53 ] You see, in this situation, you start groping men's legs and hairy hands in front of you just to kind of feel your way. And you do kind of stuff which you'd just be completely ashamed of if people could see you.

But, you know, it's kind of reassuring when you begin to grab hold of somebody because you actually feel like, oh, I've found somewhere to go. And the picture Isaiah 59 paints is the sin of the people of Israel.

It's cut them off from God, and they're kind of groping around like blind men, trying to find some reassurance. They're lost. They're purposeless. They need some direction. And then suddenly, up over the Mount of Olives outside of Jerusalem, the sun starts rising.

A new day is dawning. And when the sun rises, it does a couple of things. Light, first of all, it exposes what you've been doing in the darkness.

You know when you turn the lights on? If my hand was still on Graham's knee as the lights came on, I'd have been pretty embarrassed. When light comes, it brings your shame.

[ 9 : 01 ] It brings the darkness. It brings the things which are deep down inside. It brings them to light. And that's painful. You know, you didn't think your room was dusty, but then the sun flooded in, and in the rays of the sunbeams, you suddenly see there's a million particles of dust in your flat.

That's what God's light does. It reveals the depth of your sin when you thought you were okay. But that's not all light does.

Light also comes, and it dispels darkness. The sins of the past that have been revealed are wiped out. The despair, the lossless, the purposelessness is a thing of the past.

There is new direction. There's new hope. It's a new day. That's what light does. Now, every religion in the world recognizes in some way that humanity is in darkness.

You know this? You just turn on the news. I mean, even last night, there's violence at the European football championships. There's racism. There's so much suffering and pain in the world, and every religion recognizes that we're in a dark hole we've dug of our own selfishness, ignorance, guilt, shame.

[ 10 : 14 ] It recognizes those things. But every other religion says the way out of this hole that we're in is to try and climb your way up to God somehow. Islam says you have five pillars if you do them.

That's why you do Ramadan, because if you do these things, you'll kind of be able to get out of the hole and maybe get up to God, get up to some salvation, get up to find some light somewhere. Buddhism says you've got to meditate to get enlightened.

And if you meditate enough, you'll get light, you'll get out of the hole. Atheism says, in the words of the humanist chaplain of Harvard University, Greg Epstein, he says, we have the potential for strength, wisdom, and love inside of ourselves.

We've just got to tap in to the potential we have and pull ourselves out of the mess. There's no one else to help us. Whichever way, whichever religion you take, it tells you you've got to get out of the hole by yourself of the darkness.

And maybe if there's a God, just kind of hope he'll give you a hand halfway if you've been good enough at climbing. The problem is, if you try and climb out by yourself, how high is good enough for God to help you?

[ 11 : 25 ] And the problem is, no matter how much you climb, you know, we keep seeing to dig the hole deeper as well because we keep sinning. We slip back down. And either what we do is when you rely on your own efforts to kind of get out of the hole, you either end up feeling so much better than everybody else who seems to be a little bit lower than you.

And you kind of look down and you exclude people and you feel contempt for them. Or you, when you realize you've slipped back down and you feel like you're a failure, you end up kicking yourself and think, oh, I failed again.

But Christianity comes in and says, we don't hide what's in the darkness. We don't deny, we don't blame others and blame the people out there for our problems.

We just say, the way out of the hole is not if I try and climb out because I can't. I need somebody to climb into the hole to come down to us.

Christianity says, God came down to us because we could not go up to him. Your light has come.

[ 12 : 40 ] We love God because he first loved us. You know, when the sun rose this morning, what did you do to make it rise?

Did you send it a quick kind of reminder text just to say, hey, just in case, it's kind of six o'clock. Did you send an email? Is it a mail? No. The sun rises not because of your effort but in spite of you.

It's what the Bible calls grace. And this sunrise in verse two is God himself, God's glory.

You see, the light that every religion, every person is looking for in the world, in John 8, Jesus comes and he refers back to this prophecy of Isaiah and he says, I am the light of the world.

Not just of a few little religious people. I'm not just the light of the guys who climbed really well out of the hole. No, I am the light of the world, even of the British.

[ 13 : 52 ] He who follows me will not walk in darkness. You'll not stay in the pit but will have the light of life. All religions say you've got to make your own way out of the hole.

Christianity says God made his way down to us. On the cross, Jesus came into the pit of our selfishness, our ignorance, our pride.

He died our death when we couldn't reach him. He brings us into relationship with the God of the whole universe. Religion, even religion dressed up in Christian clothes makes it all about you, all about your efforts, all about what you've done.

The world and your salvation is on your shoulders but Christianity says we have an amazingly glorious God and no other God in any other religion is like this God because no other God would come down to us.

Your light has come. There's no other salvation in the whole of history. Read any religious books, there is no other God who does this as a holy God of the universe who comes down and dies for his people.

[ 15 : 10 ] There isn't one. That's why Christ is our light. If you're not a Christian, Jesus is asking you, reaching down and saying, will you stop trying to climb out of the hole by yourself, trying to do your, get your way up to kind of make yourself feel good and write about yourself through your work, through all the other things that you try and do and will you let go of the wall that you're climbing and hold on with a hand of faith to Christ.

Repent of making life about you when actually life is about the worship of the creator God of the universe. Pastor John Piper, he says, missions exist because worship doesn't.

You know, you only praise something according to the worth of the deed or the person. when I was about seven or eight, I managed to swim 25 meters.

I told my mom, that's about all the glory and recognition that that deserves. But you know, it's the Olympics this year and if I won the gold medal at swimming, which I'm not going to, then that would deserve global recognition because that's a feat that is worthy of praise.

But if the God of the whole universe, the holy, awesome God, creator God who is so far above us would choose to come down and die on a cross for you and for me, is that not worthy of global praise?

[ 16 : 42 ] For millennia, people have been looking to get out of the hole, but Christ has come down. And so he calls us, he says, your light has come.

If you're a Christian, notice what the response is. Arise, wake up, shine, your light has come.

You've got to shine because your light has come. Now if you're a Christian, you know some of this. But, but it says, strange, arise and shine.

Think about it. If you tell a reflective surface to shine, that's a bit weird. Right? Because it just shines automatically.

Okay? You see, normally it's like the IFC. You know, when the sun hits the windows on the IFC, you see the light shining. Right?

[ 17 : 46 ] And the picture here is of the city of Jerusalem which represents God's people shining, radiating, reflecting the light of this amazing God out to the people, the nations all around.

That's the image. But, why does he command you to shine? Well, because the thing is, the only way the IFC will not reflect the light of the sun is if it's wrapped in one of those, you know, those green kind of skyscraper blankets.

Do you know those kind of things when they're doing the scaffolding and they kind of wrap them around? You know, and Isaiah is saying, the sun, Jesus Christ, has risen on you so you can't put God on snooze in your life.

Turn over and wrap yourself in a blanket saying, God, I quite like the light but now is not the time that I want to reflect you. I don't really want to wake up now. I'd like to be comfortable.

I've got a few other things that I'd like to do with my life. Let me just kind of wrap myself up a little bit more. I've got work to do. I've got kids to get in school. I've got this. I've got that. I've got all these different things and he says, wake up.

[ 18 : 51 ] You say it to your kids in the morning. Wake up. Shine because you're not going to experience the beauty and the warmth and the grace of the sun if you don't, if you're hiding under the blankets.

The preacher Spurgeon once said, I believe that there are some Christians who've wasted a large part of their lives for need of somebody or something to wake them up.

He says, there's more evil worked in the world by lack of thought, by people just being comfortable with their own lives, than by downright malice. There's more good left undone through lack of thought than through any aversion to doing good.

Some Christians, he says, appear to have been born in the land of slumber and they continually live in their native country of dreams. They occasionally rub their eyes and suppose themselves to be wide awake.

But they're in the enchanted ground and though they know it not, they're little better than sleepwalkers most of their days. Are you a Hong Kong sleepwalker who is actually just loving the comfort of your own bed, your own world, your own mission?

[ 20 : 08 ] Because God says, wake up. I've got a bigger calling for you than your little tiny vision of just building your career.

I've got so much more than your tiny vision of just getting your kids into that right school. I've got something so much bigger for you and I want you to enjoy me.

I want you to know me. But if you just stay in that bed wrapped up in your blanket, you're never going to enjoy the sun. There's a purpose in life and he wants you to be on his mission.

Wake up. Some of us, we've seen the light but you know, we've taken steps and you're busy, you're active, you're doing things in church, you're doing all this stuff but it's so easy that we think that God has all these expectations on us and we're trying to meet up to all the expectations that we think he has.

So when you hear God say something about get on the time to mission, it just feels like another burden, another kind of heavy weight that I've got to do. And you maybe look at the things that you've done or you haven't done and you feel you've messed up and you've failed again.

[ 21 : 28 ] And so it sounds to you like I'm telling you to climb out of the hole again to kind of make yourself a better Christian and God's call to you is not get on mission because it will make you a better Christian.

God's call is look back to the sun of God's grace and God's mercy because that's, if you want to radiate the sun, you look at the sun.

You don't become obedient to God by focusing on your sin. You become obedient to God when your sin leads you to the cross. You see the depth of his love, his grace, his mercy, his forgiveness for you and you respond in worship and that's going to leave you and motivate you to love him to get on his mission more than guilt or failure ever will.

Wake up. See the sun. Your light has come. Secondly, there's a global vision. So look up.

It says, verse 2, 3, For behold, darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the peoples.

[ 22 : 38 ] But the Lord will rise upon you and his glory will be seen upon you and nations will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your sunrise.

That's the word of your sunrise. Lift up your eyes all around and see. God's mission was global before globalization.

And there is an inauguration of this vision when Christ, the light of the world, comes. And there will one day be a completion of this vision when Christ returns and all the nations will come and bow down at his feet.

But in the meantime, in the gap between the cross and the Christ's return, Jesus says to his disciples in Matthew 5, he says, You are the light of the world.

Did you know that? He says, You are the light. And you think, But Jesus, you just said, You're the light. And he says, Yeah, yeah, yeah, I am the light, but you, like the IFC, are called as my people because I'm creating a new people who have seen this light, who have a new identity in Christ from all the nations.

[ 23 : 56 ] And you are to reflect this beautiful image to a dark world around you. A people who are not hiding our light under a basket or a blanket, but a people who are not defined by our culture, but are defined by Christ and his identity.

As we've said, we live in a city which is surrounded by many nations. In this church, we have many nations. Who here is from South America or America?

Who here is from Europe? I do count, even though England wants to be out of Europe. Who here is from Asia?

Good proportion. That's good. We're in Asia. Okay. Who here is from Oceania? Like, that's Australia, New Zealand, if you didn't know. Okay. Who here is from Africa? Okay.

Who here is from Antarctica? Okay. Milan thinks he's a penguin, but, yeah, we're a little lacking on the Antarcticans there, but you get the point.

[ 25 : 11 ] God has brought nations even into this church. Isn't that incredible? God wants to open our eyes to see that his mission is not just about kind of getting up and being more busy with more activity.

His mission is about giving you a new lens to see the world around you. It's a new lens to see, and he wants you to look up and see what is around you so that you begin to see who God might be calling you to.

He's bringing a multi-ethnic people to himself, but the lens through which you need to see has a couple of lenses.

I just want to talk about a couple here. One lens through which will help us to see the people that God has placed around us is this. God loves unity in diversity, and God is making a people whose chief identity is not their culture, but is Jesus Christ.

The light that we're drawn to is Jesus. That's our centerpiece. However, cultural diversity is beautiful and celebrated. I don't know if you looked in this passage, but did you see there are Arabic tribes, you know, Midian, Ifa, Sheba, that's kind of Yemen direction.

[ 26 : 36 ] There are traders, that's the ships of Tarshish, foreign traders, all these formerly enemies of Israel, and do you know what they're bringing? Sheep, goats, camels, frankincense, gold, all kinds of things.

These are the cultural and national treasures of these tribes, of these ethnic groups, and they're offering them in praise to God.

You see, when God called Adam to fill the earth, well, that's the one commandment we've done pretty well. We have filled it. You know, there is, we have.

You know, there's languages, there's languages, and it's not just babies, okay? There's languages, there's music, there's food, there's architecture. Every culture, language, ethnic group has wealth and beauty that when the nations are drawn to Christ, that beauty is not just kind of ignored and suddenly everyone's become monochrome.

But actually, that is glorious. Because, you know, samba was never meant for the glory of Brazil. It was meant for the glory of God. The iPhone was not meant for the glory of America.

[ 27 : 51 ] It was meant for the glory of God. Dim sum was not meant for the glory of Hong Kong. It was meant for the glory of God. And one day, that will happen. But in the nations, when we come, we should celebrate.

Each of us has something unique that God has placed in us because of our cultural heritage. John Piper again says it like this. He says, the beauty and power and praise that will come to the Lord from the diversity of the nations are greater than the beauty and power that would come to him if the chorus of the redeemed were culturally uniform.

There is more depth of beauty is felt from a choir that sings in parts than from a choir that only sings in unison. Unity in diversity is more beautiful and more powerful than the unity of uniformity.

Do you get that? Unity in diversity is more beautiful and more powerful than the unity of uniformity. So when you look around at each other when you look around at each other do you see the beauty?

Because there is a picture of heaven here but as his people now in the church we are called to be a foretaste a little picture not perfect that will come but a little picture and it is amazing privilege to be an international church in an international city and so often we fail to miss it fail to see it so let me ask when did you last celebrate the fact that you have got people from every nation in this place in your community groups?

[ 29 : 37 ] How do you look to actually thank God for the cultural differences that you have? because if you want to have a mission for the nations you have to see the glory of God that he wants to transform and you need to see there is a unique beauty and there are some cultures you can see everyone can see the beauty more than other cultures and we all have a different view there are some cultures you think I can see the beauty there are some cultures you think I'm looking but there is beauty and if you want to get a vision for the nations you have to see where the beauty is that's one lens the second lens though is every culture is in darkness that's what it says the nations are covered with like thick clouds so the sun is blocked out from reaching it that's the language there there is evil and idolatry in every culture one culture is not better than another

I mean just look around look at the caste system which is still which is illegal but still exists in India look at ISIS and the stuff that's going on in Syrian refugees look at the racism that's going on in Europe and America and all the strong anti-immigrant feeling look at the tensions in Hong Kong and the mainland look at you know I walked into a shop in Central and the shopkeeper spoke to me very politely behind me was someone like an Indonesian helper and suddenly her tone of shopkeeper changed completely there was a look there was a tone which said you are not worth something every one of our cultures has a darkness of a racism of a self-importance and the church is called to be a different light the reason is in the darkness every culture needs the gospel religion telling yourself to get out of the hole is not going to do it the gospel has the resources to say to every single culture there is beauty but there is also brokenness you need a light you need a savior and the thing is for me

I can be so indifferent to the darkness that I see around me so wrapped up in my world in my work and all those other things that I haven't woken up to see the darkness here or I can find my identity so much in my own culture that I don't see the need of the gospel I only see the things that I dislike I don't see myself as particularly racist or nationalistic I grew up in an all white town but a second family was a beautiful family from an Angolan family who were refugees I've taught people from pretty well every country in the world I'm married to someone from Hong Kong I have friends in every continent except Antarctica but I used to teach in a place with a lot of Muslim students from the Arab world and our staff room was right next to the bathroom and break time would come and while we were trying to relax just get a few minutes break before I had to teach another lesson suddenly through the door and the wall

I would hear this and then again for ten minutes and I would go into the bathroom because you need to go and it would be covered like I mean Noah's Ark could have floated on the water there because of the ritual washings that had been going on it had soaked the whole floor and I'm kind of skating around thinking I can't believe this I can't believe these kind of people so inconsiderate they are disgusting that's what I thought disgusting now to my mind did I kind of think well actually I may be the only Christian that these people have ever met in their entire lives what an opportunity to share the gospel with these people was that a thought that came to my mind not even close didn't even cross my mind all I could think about was and how these guys were making my bathroom break just so much worse than I thought it should be because you see it's not that there are things that don't annoy you in other cultures there are some are just neutral cultural things some are sin things some are you know it's a whole mix of things but I would



I would even with the other teachers we'd kind of knowingly you know there's that there's that kind of knowing look do you know when someone comes past that kind of superiority thing oh it's them do you know you know that kind of thing British are experts I don't you know we've taught the world you know it's it's called self-righteousness and that's how I was responding and you know the reason why I'm sometimes blinded to see the people around me and the opportunities that there are around me is because sometimes I don't like the differences in culture it's sometimes uncomfortable it sometimes offends what my own culture holds as important you know British culture doesn't do that but when someone offends what your culture judges as appropriate behavior we end up judging them and thinking we're culturally superior to them and we often end up excluding and then we have comments then we have looks and when we do that what I've done is I've begun to find my identity in my culture more than in Christ and I've blinded me to seeing other people's need for the gospel because I think

[ 36 : 12 ] I'm actually a little bit higher out of that hole than they are they're obviously so deep too deep for Jesus but it's actually I mean it's insane I think I'm better because I'm more polite but they could turn around to me as a British guy and say why are you so bad at hospitality because actually they would open up their home at the drop of a hat to have a stranger even come in with a meal and if you go in the UK to invite a stranger into your home is like inviting a terrorist to tea it's like you know it's like you don't do it but every culture has brokenness our greatest need and the greatest need of the people who you see around you isn't more politeness that will be nice sometimes particularly when you're on the MTR but that's not the greatest need of people around us the greatest need we all every culture needs the light and when we've forgotten when I act with that self-righteousness

I'm saying my righteousness is not in Christ I'm saying that I've forgotten that Christ came down into my darkness crossed over the greatest cultural barrier between heaven and a pit of racism a pit of segregation a pit of hurt a pit where we just we just love the idea of tolerance but we hate the idea of actual people right we love the notion of tolerance until you actually meet people who are just not like you but the gospel has resources to level the ground and it tells us I can't base my identity on my culture because the culture is both beautiful and broken I need to see when I'm faced with that my own need of grace I'm not defined by my culture I'm defined by an amazing God who is worthy of universal worship that's what we proclaim and you know even as an international church it's very possible for us to be international but still segregated because we still have attitudes in our hearts we're actually deep down even though we don't say we kind of think we're better and Christ says the gospel changes that you're a new people you're united in me celebrate the culture where there's difference remember grace remember grace because Christ crossed that barrier for you

I know that we all have stereotypes you know stereotypes are natural we all generalize you know we all generalize we generalize because we have to survive you know if you see three English guys all drinking tea at five o'clock you assume that all English guys drink tea at five o'clock right you know we do that yeah and you see another guy and then it just kind of confirms your stereotypes but when your stereotypes stop you loving the people that God has placed you around you and you withdraw from them that's when you see the gospel as you've forgotten the gospel you've forgotten the gospel and the cross because Jesus crossed that cultural barrier for you will call you to cross maybe even in this church there are people that you have never gone up to because you're actually just afraid you don't know what to say you don't know what to do and why don't you start and reach out and just say hi

I'd love to find out about your culture because that's where when we begin to see the beauty we begin to God begins to open our eyes and we begin to be a light in this dark place which is segregated so terribly in so many ways so practically what does this mean I think one thing get curious get curious get curious think about the people in your offices think about where you're going on holiday think about the business trips that you take you may be going into places and meeting people and their cultures where they've never heard the gospel or they think they know the gospel but they're actually just religiously trying to climb their way out of the pit and you may be the only light of grace that they see so get curious about their culture show an interest because you can say my God is a God who loves cultures why don't you get curious and go and chat to Amelia afterwards and find out about what she's up to we have a Mandarin ministry in Watermark if you speak Mandarin there are a million

Mandarin speakers in Hong Kong many of whom have never heard the gospel what an amazing opportunity for us to be here and be involved go and talk to David or one of the guys who are involved in the Mandarin ministry come and see me when you go on holiday this summer some of you are going to go why don't you get your kids if you go on get your kids to actually research how many people are Christians in that country what's the church like in that country what's the religions like in that country because when we get curious about things God begins to open our eyes to see the need God has given us as a church a unique privilege to impact nations some of you are going to transition out and God's going to transition you to other nations that is a great missionary call to a new place and it's not that we have to go in and just lambast everyone with the gospel it's there we go as a light showing grace and reaching out to them and in that process of doing that and asking about somebody else we begin to then see where the gospel makes a difference in their own lives and we call people to see a God who is worthy of worship final thing this vision the last book of the Bible

[ 42 : 40 ] Revelation do you know Isaiah 60 is in the last book of the Bible Revelation 21 22 it says that heaven the new creation God will be the sun and the light because there will be no more need for light because God alone will be the light of every nation and it says the kings who represent cultures will come in God is the one who is worthy of our worship he's worthy of the people in your office knowing about him will you wake up will you look up will you see that God has got us on this trajectory where all the nations you know there's going to be samba in heaven there's going to be hip hop there's going to be all the cultural expressions so let's enjoy let's see let's get on board with a God who is worthy let's pray

Father I pray that right now you would show us where some of us have actually I think probably all of us in different ways myself so often that we actually find our identity more in our culture or more in the way we think things should be done than in you show us where we're blind to see the people around us because we've been so wrapped up in our little blankets open our eyes to see that you're calling us to something greater show us what that means show us what the next step that you want us to take is whether it's just greeting somebody whether it's just asking questions whether it's actually we need to get and giving money whether it's we need to just find out whether it's we need to just see the people in our own congregation and begin to start reaching out may we be a church which reflects the beauty of a God who has such diversity may we be a people in a world of segregation and racism and self-righteous judging and pride that we don't when we see that in ourselves we just run back to the gospel may we see that

Jesus you're our only hope you're a light and may that be something beautiful in this divided city that other people will be drawn to the worship of you in your name amen and hear life you're our only who's the ■