

The Catalyst

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[0 : 00] Now, as Dan already mentioned, we are continuing this series in Acts that we started last year. Some people asked, are we going to do Acts again? No, no, we're continuing because it's a rather long book.

And so, yeah, why don't you open your Bibles to chapter 6 already? In a moment Annabelle will read. But, yeah, I thought let me just talk a little bit about what happened because some of you are new, some of you weren't here last year.

Yeah, what is this book of Acts? So I thought let's start there. And the reason we're starting, we're starting actually at 6 verse 8. That seems so random. But the reason is 6 verse 7. If you look at 6 verse 7, it says, And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem.

The word of God, the gospel, increasing and multiplying. That is what we see in the book of Acts. And the same phrase, it occurs three times, dividing the book into four parts. We did the first part last year. This is the second part.

And, yeah, it's, you know, why is the gospel increasing? Well, this is what Jesus is doing, right? At the start of the book, you know, Jesus, of course, he died. He rose again. He went to heaven.

[1 : 13] And he gave the spirit. And the spirit who would, you know, make people prophesy and, you know, make people believe. And that's what we see happen. It's such an exciting book as thousands and thousands of people come to faith in Jesus.

And, yeah, form the church and form this beautiful new community. It's really great. Of course, not everything was perfect. There are some hypocrites in the church. And God deals with them.

The church grows and some minorities get overlooked. Again, they do something about that. They get a team of deacons to help out with that. One of them is Stephen, who we're going to meet today.

Also, there's rising opposition. Not everyone likes the church. Not everyone likes their message, particularly the Jewish leaders. Because what is the church saying? Well, the Jewish leaders, they killed Jesus.

But God raised him, right? And it's not really nice to be reminded of that crime you've done. And so, yeah, there's been a few run-ins for the leaders with the authorities.

[2 : 13] Well, that brings us then to today's passage. It's a very long passage. It's 71 verses. The whole book of Jonah was only 48 verses. So we've got a lot to cover.

So, you know, my guess is you'll have lots of questions that I'm not going to answer. Please come and talk to me afterwards. But I hope we can read enough and see it as one thing.

Yeah, because it is a big step in God's plan. But let's pray, and then Annabelle will come up and read for us. Father, thank you for your word.

Thank you as living and active. Thank you what we see of how your word worked back then and how you're still at work today. Pray that you would speak to each one of us as Annabelle reads, as we hear your word. And then as I try to, yeah, say a few words about the passage.

Father, please speak to each of our hearts where we are at, yeah, to encourage us and to change us. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Today's scripture reading is taken from Acts chapter 6, verse 8 to chapter 7, verse 3.

[3 : 25] And then we'll go to chapter 7, verse 35 to chapter 8, verse 3. Please follow along in your Bibles. And if you don't have a Bible, please do grab one now from the front of the stage or at the back near the door.

And our passage can be found on page 860, 860 of the Church Bible. And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people.

Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the freedmen, as is what called, and of the Cyrenians and of the Alexandrians and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen.

But they could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which he was speaking. Then they secretly instigated men who said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.

And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes. And they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council. And they set up false witnesses who said, This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law.

[4 : 39] For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us. And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

And the high priest said, Are these things so? And Stephen said, Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.

In the following verses, Stephen goes on to speak about God's dealings with Abraham, Joseph, and Moses. We now pick up Stephen's speech again at chapter 7, verse 35, which is on page 861.

At verse 35, we continue to read, This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, Who made you a ruler and a judge? This man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush.

[5 : 56] This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for 40 years.

This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers.

He received living oracles to give to us. Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt.

Saying to Aaron, Make for us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.

And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets.

[7 : 04] Did you bring to me slain beasts and sacrifices during the 40 years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? You took up the tent of Moloch, and the star of your god, Rephan.

The images that you made to worship, and I will send you into exile beyond Babylon. Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, just as he spoke to Moses, directed him to make it according to the pattern that he had seen.

Our fathers, in turn, brought it in with Joshua, when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our fathers. So it was until the days of David, who found favor in the sight of God, and asked to find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.

But it was Solomon who built a house for him. Yet, the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands. As the prophet says, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.

What kind of house will you build for me? Says the Lord. Or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?

[8 : 24] You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.

Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the righteous one, whom you have now betrayed and murdered.

You who received the law as delivered by angels, and did not keep it. Now when they heard these things, they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him.

But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven, and saw the glory of God. And Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

And he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed together at him.

[9 : 27] Then they cast him out of the city, and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.

And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And falling to his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not hold this sin against them.

And when he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem.

And they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Devout man buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him.

But Saul was ravaging the church. And entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. This is the word of God.

[10 : 36] All right. Thanks so much, Annabelle. It's a long passage. But, yeah, a very famous story. I don't know about you. I guess it's wonderful to come here, right?

Sunday is like the highlight of the week for most of us. It's so great to, you know, to get together, to sing, to hear preaching, to chat. And it can feel so far removed from normal life, doesn't it?

Because tomorrow, well, you're back at work and it's spreadsheets and emails and commuting and, well, or maybe you're home and there's nappies and, you know, potty training and those kinds of things.

And that's all fun. Or maybe you're at uni with tests and books and exams. And we're in the middle of that. And we really long for Sunday, right? Sunday is special, right?

That's when we really meet with God. But that sounds like life is quite hard, right? We have one and a half hours, maybe two hours on a Sunday. And there's 166 other hours in the week.

[11 : 35] It's hard to live that way, right? If God really feels far away when we have to live for him, but we, we feel alone. Well, the wonderful thing is that God doesn't want us to live like that. Today's passage has really great news.

If you feel like that, this is, yeah, this passage, you know, I don't know what you thought of when I read it, that seems weird. How is this relevant? Actually, this is one of the most wonderful truths about Christianity, about, you know, what we believe about the gospel, about our life.

But how do we get there? Because you probably wonder, okay, here's a Christian being killed for their faith. What is, you know, what does it have to do with that? Well, we need to think a bit about that.

Now, this passage, I think it is a bit confusing. In some ways, many people wonder, this is, you know, if you're writing a book, why would you include this? I mean, first of all, it's quite a long passage, right?

Just about someone dying. The apostle James, he dies in chapter eight, he gets like one verse. Why did we get 70 verses about Stephen?

[12 : 44] Why did we get this really long speech? Right? We know this famous speech that, you know, the sermon that Peter gives at Pentecost, right? Well, this speech is twice as long.

It's the longest speech in the book. That's very weird. Why is that here? Right? I mean, we've mentioned there's growing opposition from the authorities.

Three times, there's like this meeting with the council. This is the third one, right? Chapter four, chapter five, chapter seven. And it gets worse every time. Chapter four, you know, the two apostles are kind of put in prison for a night.

And then they, well, they get a warning and they go home. The second time, it's all the apostles.

And, you know, the authorities, they get really angry. They try to kill them, but they, they decide not to.

And they, they just beat them up and send them home. But today, as you heard, yeah, someone gets killed, right? And there's a big persecution. Stephen, one of the seven deacons, he's preaching, doing miracles and, you know, attracts a lot of opposition.

[13 : 45] So they, they seize him, bring him to the, to the leadership of the Jewish leaders, the council, you know, we, we, we, we, we, we, we, we, we, Starts politely, but doesn't end very politely, as you've heard.

Yeah, and then, well, they drag him out of town and they stone him and he gets killed for his faith. Very sad. But because it seems to be this climax, why isn't it at the end of the previous section, right?

The end of this section about Jerusalem. Well, that's because this speech is not an end. It's a beginning. I think that's what God wants us to see.

This is a beginning. Stephen's, you know, the speech, the martyrdom, it's a catalyst. It's the start of something new. And this is what helps make it happen. And so it's right that we are starting a new section with this speech.

Because what is this section about? What are we going to see over the next nine weeks? Well, we see that the gospel goes out from Jerusalem. The gospel is going out from Jerusalem.

[14:47] Because, you know, the first six chapters are very exciting. But, you know, those thousands of believers, they're all Jewish. And they all live in Jerusalem. And they all meet every day in the temple.

Right? That is what the church was like. That is what Christianity was like. But that's not God's plan. And this section of Acts that we're doing now, that's where the gospel is no longer just Jewish. It's going to Samaria. There's all kinds of outsiders who are going to come in. It's even going to go to Gentiles. People, you know, the nations that are away from God, that have nothing to do with God.

That's where the gospel is going. And that's a big change. And this chapter, yeah, is the catalyst for that. In two different ways. I'll first look at, you know, I'll look at the speech later.

The content of the speech. But first, you know, the event. And, yeah, this is the occasion for the gospel to go out. The occasion. After all, what happens?

[15:47] Well, Stephen's speech, as you heard, it leads to him being, yeah, being killed. And it's not just Stephen, right? Because the people are now really angry with the Christians.

And as you heard in 8 verse 1, and there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem. And they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Right? This, you know, maybe he should have been a bit more polite. But this, you know, what Stephen did, it led to persecution. And, you know, all the believers were scattered in Judea and Samaria.

But then again, Judea and Samaria, does that remind you of something if you've read Acts? It does, right? Because Jesus gave this commission at the start of the book. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Except the apostles haven't gone there yet, right? The believers haven't gone there yet. Well, this thing is what sends a lot of believers to Judea and Samaria.

[16:55] This is part of the plan. And indeed, 8 verse 4. Now, those who were scattered went about preaching the words. Thanks to what happens, the gospel is now being preached in Judea and Samaria.

And it's going out. And it's more than that. It really shows, okay, this is God's doing. This is God's plan. I don't know if you noticed that Stephen's death sounds really familiar, right?

If you know your Bible, some of you are new. But if you know your Bibles and you hear Stephen's death, it sounds so familiar, right? He was someone he has dragged before the Jewish council, right?

And there's false witnesses who claim that the temple was going to be destroyed. And he's going to get interrogated by the high priest. Doesn't it sound familiar, right? Or some of the sayings, right? How he says, what is it? I see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. And then as he dies, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Lord, do not hold this sin against him.

[17:59] Again, you notice, right? That's Jesus. Jesus, of course, yeah, he was, you know, dragged before the council. False witnesses. Destroying the temple. And he said, well, the Son of Man is, shall we see the death of the right hand of the power of God?

Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And his death is exactly like Jesus. Well, not exactly the same.

One thing that's interesting, who does Jesus pray to? He prays to the Father. Who does Stephen pray to? Lord Jesus. And maybe some people, they always say, oh, the first church, they just thought Jesus was a good teacher.

And then 300 years later, they decided he was God. No, Jesus is someone they pray to, someone who is standing at the right hand of God, right? Jesus is really the Son of God.

But Luke wants to say, Stephen's death is like Jesus. But why? Why does he put all these details in? Right? Well, why does he, you know, book would be a lot shorter without it.

[19 : 04] It's not just saying that Christians will suffer like Jesus. Actually, a few times in Acts, there's a death that looks a lot like Jesus' death. And always after that, you get this big move of the gospel.

Just with Jesus himself, and later with Peter, with Paul. But yeah, Jesus died and rose, and the gospel went out, right? That's what he says. What did Jesus say is God's plan? Well, end of Luke 24, thus it's written, the Christ should suffer and the third day rise from the dead. And that repentance and forgiveness of sin should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

And so, you know, at the end of Luke, Jesus dies and rises, gospel goes out. And now Stephen dies, the gospel goes further. And then later, another one. And the gospel, a big step in the gospel. Constantly, big movements of the gospel come after this. So, this is God doing it, right? This is a big move of the gospel, God's initiative, God's plan, God at work, right?

[20 : 11] Again, we want to see lots of people believe. If you're here as a visitor, we'd love you to come to believe. But that's not our idea. That is God who wants the gospel to go.

God wants everyone to come to Jesus. I don't know if you've ever been invited to a party and, you know, you ask, can I bring a friend? And they kind of go, well, okay then, right?

That's, well, okay, not really, but that's not what God is like, right? God wants you to invite your friends. He wants you to make new friends so that you can invite them as well.

You know, God wants to save people and he is making that happen. And he does that in all kinds of ways. Of course, we saw in Jonah, he's in control.

He uses fishes and storms and worms and plants. Here he uses persecution. But he uses things to get his plan done and get the gospel to spread.

[21 : 13] And that may involve suffering. I mean, at least it's good to know that it's for a purpose here, right? You mean Stephen didn't die for nothing. Just like Jesus. Jesus didn't die for nothing. And maybe we go through things.

It's good to know as a Christian, it's not for nothing. God is using it for his plans. And ultimately, of course, it's not like Stephen was lost, right? But as I say at the end, he fell asleep.

I mean, he was really dead. But for Christians, he was asleep. Because later Jesus will wake him up from the grave and he'll be fine. He'll be with Jesus. It's okay. But that's the occasion.

And by the way, did you notice that cameo of this guy called Saul, this young man who starts, who seems to be in charge of the persecution? We're going to meet him again. This is a beginning in many ways.

But so the gospel is going out. But that still leaves some questions, right? Yes, the gospel is going out from Jerusalem. But is that possible? Because, you know, for 2,000 years, God's people were all Jewish, right?

[22 : 22] And for 1,500 years, it's been centered on the temple. And for 1,000 years, it's been centered on Jerusalem. And so this is a big, massive change, right?

For, you know, the gospel to go to all these other places. And yet it's not a change. It's not something new if you think about it.

And that is why the content of this speech. Now, Luke, he doesn't just put his comments kind of in the writing. He tells a story. But he makes his point through speeches.

And this long speech is like Luke's manifesto. Hey, this is what I want you to really know. And that's why we have such a long speech. And I think this is the foundation for the gospel going out.

It's the foundation. Why can the gospel go everywhere? Well, look at this speech. And I think the key to that, what is the speech about? If you look back at 6, verse 13, these are like the charges that he's supposed to answer, right?

[23 : 24] Verse 13, and they set up false witnesses who said, This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.

It's about the temple and the law. The temple, of course, was the heart of Jewish religion. This is where God lives, right? This is where your prayers come to God.

This is where you have forgiveness through sacrifices, right? That's why the temple was so important. And the law. The law was their standing before God, right? It marked God's people off from everyone else.

You know, the temple and the law, they're such important things for the Jews. They're so important. Well, Stephen will have a few things to say about it.

Because as he gives his speech, he gives this nice long Bible overview. It's really, of course, that's what they have in common, right? Hey, you guys believe the Old Testament. I believe in the Old Testament. Let's go through it.

[24 : 29] And he points out two important things. First of all, God doesn't need a temple. God doesn't need a temple. A lot of this speech is, you know, God doesn't need a temple.

I mean, that's how he starts. It's not that the temple is bad. But look, 7 verse 2. Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia. He was not in a temple. He was not in Jerusalem. He was far away in Mesopotamia. And God appeared to Abraham and spoke to him. No temple, right? Goes on to Joseph, verse 9.

And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt. But God was with him and rescued him out of all his afflictions and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh.

Right? Here's Joseph all the way in Egypt. Again, no temple, far away. But God was with him and rescued him and gave him wisdom and favor. Right?

[25 : 31] God was with him. Moses, a few things about Moses, but then, yeah, the burning bush. Right? Verse 31. When Moses saw the burning bush, he was amazed at the sight.

And as he drew near to look, there came the voice of the Lord. I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob. And Moses trembled and did not dare to look.

Then the Lord said to him, take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. Holy ground. Right? They say, oh, the temple, that's this holy place.

Well, here was a bush on a mountain in a desert in Arabia. And that was a holy place because God was there. Right? I hope you see the point.

Right? None of this had a temple. This was hundreds of years before the temple. God doesn't need a temple. He's greater. And, of course, later they did get a temple.

[26 : 28] They did get to the land. But even then, the prophets kept reminding them God is bigger. Right? Verse 49 from Isaiah. Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool.

What kind of house will you build for me? Right? Here's an infinite God. He doesn't fit in a limited, finite building. Right? God is bigger. And then, how about the law?

Right? Oh, the law. It's the law. It's so important. Well, Stephen also says, look, people never kept the law. Right? They say, oh, Moses.

We follow Moses. We honor Moses. Well, Stephen goes through their history. Look at how you treated your leaders and Moses. I mean, already with Joseph, chosen by God, but they sold him into slavery.

But then, Moses, right? Moses, he came to rescue you. Verse 25. Yeah? He thought, supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand.

[27 : 28] Verse 27. But the man who was wronging his neighbor, trust him aside, saying, who made you a ruler and a judge over us? You know, Moses got rejected. And later as well, in the wilderness, verse 39.

Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside. And in their hearts, they turned to Egypt. And, you know, they started worshipping idols. They made a golden calf.

Right? The law said, love God with all your heart. And then they worshiped idols. You know, God's people never really honored Moses. And Moses said, there are going to be prophets.

And they're going to be, Jesus will come. And what did they do? Verse 52. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the righteous one, Jesus, whom you have now betrayed and murdered.

Right? Not a very good history. So you who received the law as delivered by angels and didn't keep it. And now maybe he could have spoken more gently. Not very pastoral.

[28 : 31] But you see the point, right? They're charging him. You are against Moses. Well, God's people have never kept the law. They've never done exactly as Moses wanted.

Right? So the law, in a way, it's not that important. Right? It's holy and good. But no one keeps it. None of them did. But I hope if you put those two together, you can see why this is so important to

Luke.

Right? If God doesn't need the temple and people never kept the law, well, then the gospel is free to go to other places. Right? That's why the gospel can go out from Jerusalem.

And that's why this is here. You know, so far, yes, it's been Jewish meeting in the temple, all circumcised men and law keeping women. And, you know, but now it all changes. Right?

It goes to Samaria and to the Gentiles. Is that possible? Yeah. God is greater than a temple. Right? He doesn't need a temple. You can worship God in Samaria.

[29 : 31] You can worship God somewhere else. Right? And, yeah, you don't need these things. That's why this is Luke's manifesto. Hey, the gospel is for the whole world. Why?

Because God is greater than the temple. He's greater than the law. Right? That, you know, so he's greater than the Jews. Isn't that so wonderful? I mean, we don't think about it.

Right? We become Christians. We take it for granted. Can you imagine that, you know, you have to go to Jerusalem to be a Christian? Right? I mean, how, you know, think about how big the world is.

I mean, now we have airplanes. Back then, they didn't have airplanes. Right? The gospel could never have spread much beyond Jerusalem itself. Billions of people couldn't get there.

But now, yeah, we can just meet right here in Hong Kong and worship God. Right? We don't need to go to Jerusalem. I mean, there's probably two billion Christians in the world.

[30 : 29] Can you imagine two billion people in the temple? It wouldn't even fit. Right? Isn't this wonderful? We don't need to go there. We can meet here in Hong Kong. And not just even here on Sundays.

Right? It's not that, okay, here on Sunday we meet God. God is, he's bigger than the temple. He's also a lot bigger than Viva Place. God is everywhere.

You go to your workplace tomorrow. Well, God is with you. In a way, you should take off your sandals because it's holy ground. Right? Because God is with you. Right?

You're there, but God is at work. He's there to help you, to heal you, to forgive you, to guide you, to strengthen you. God was with Abraham, with Joseph, with Moses.

Jesus, he is with you in your workplace or in your uni or in your neighborhood. Right? That's wonderful. I'm not saying Sundays are not important.

[31 : 24] You know, we should come here as you can. But, you know, but God is greater. And for some people, that's wonderful. I know people, they can't come on Sunday because they're working. It's really hard.

You know, if you have to come here on Sunday, otherwise you couldn't be a Christian. That would be really hard for them. But, no, you know, God is everywhere. You can pray. You can read the Bible. You can go to CG. You know, outside Sundays, outside Viva Place.

Isn't that wonderful? You don't need a law either for the men among us. No circumcision. Very nice. But generally, right?

I don't know if you've ever read Leviticus. I don't think it was that great to be a Jewish believer, right? And have to do all that. You no longer need that. Just turn from your sin and trust in Jesus.

Like we said two weeks ago, turning is sufficient, right? In Jonah, turning is enough. Just repent and trust in Jesus, and that's it. That's all you need to do.

[32 : 23] That's so wonderful. Of course, I say trust in Jesus because we still need Jesus. It's easy to – some people, they read this and they think, okay, oh, we don't need a temple at all anymore, right?

We don't need forgiveness, and we don't need to be right with God. Of course, that's not true. It's just – Stephen doesn't mention it, but there's a new temple. Jesus is that new temple.

And, you know, sometimes in the gospel, Jesus – like John 2, famous example, he says, destroy this temple, and in three days I'll raise it up. And John says, well, he was speaking about the temple of his body.

And Jesus is the temple. It's not like we can just pray to God by ourselves. I mean, why would God listen to me? You know, we just confessed our sin. We're terrible people.

God wouldn't listen to us. It's through Jesus, right, in Jesus' name that he listens to us. Again, we need forgiveness. Just because we don't have a physical temple, we still need forgiveness. But it's in Jesus.

[33 : 26] And, again, we need a right standing before God. But just because the law is gone doesn't mean that we don't still need righteousness, right?

So Paul says in Philippians, he says, being a Christian, well, it's not be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ. The righteousness from God that depends on faith. Don't take this to mean, okay, hey, we don't need anything anymore. We need Jesus. But the thing is, Jesus is at the right hand of God. You know, Jesus is everywhere.

And so, therefore, we can come to God at all times. We can go everywhere, right? It's wonderful. Christianity, yeah, I don't know. Some people think Christianity is such a boring religion.

There's no temples, no special days, no special places, no special rituals. No, that's just a wonderful thing, right? Because everything is special in a way, right?

[34 : 24] We can just, you can relate. We don't need those things because, you know, we can come through Jesus to God at any time, in any place, everywhere. Isn't that the most wonderful thing?

Isn't that the most wonderful religion in a way? And if you don't know Jesus yet, you know, look into it. It's an incredible thing to, yeah, to have God with you 24-7, right?

Even for reaching out. Because I talk about, you know, our work and God helping us. Of course, ultimately, God talks about reaching out. You know, this section is about the gospel going out.

Even with the gospel. God wants the gospel to go out, right? To your workplace, to your university, to your family. Isn't it wonderful that God is with you for that? Imagine if someone needs to become a Christian.

They need to come here on Sunday. But my colleague can't make it on Sunday. Well, not a problem, right? The God of glory is everywhere. He is in your office.

[35 : 25] He is at work. He is there. He can save. You just need to tell people of him. You just need to pray, right? Isn't this a wonderful thing?

No, I hope you see it. It's this passage. It's wonderful news if you think about it. We just take it for granted, right? We've been Christians for so long. Actually, what God has done through Jesus is such a wonderful thing.

Why don't I pray and give thanks? Why don't we bow our heads and just pray that this would be a real truth for us as the music team comes up? Father, this was 2,000 years ago.

And these days we don't think about it anymore. But it's such a wonderful thing that we don't need a temple. We don't need a law. We just need Jesus. And each person here can just know you and relate to you if we come to Jesus.

It makes such a difference. Every day of our lives, everywhere we are, you are with us. We are your people. Make it more real to us.

[36 : 39] Make it exciting for us. Give us joy in that. Give us peace, security, everything we know from just you being with us.

And would it be something that we want to share? Lord, this is about the gospel going out. Would we share this wonderful news with many people? And knowing that you are with us as we do that, that you are in our friends' and colleagues' lives because you want to save them.

In Jesus' name. Amen.