

The Missionary God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 February 2020

Preacher: Kevin Murphy

[0 : 0 0] The scripture reading comes from Genesis, Matthew, and John. Please follow along in your bulletin or on the screen.

In Genesis chapter 12, we read, Now the Lord said to Abraham, Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you, and I will make of you a great nation.

And I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse.

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. And in Matthew chapter 4, we read, While walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

And he said to them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And in John chapter 20, we read, On the evening of the day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked, where the disciples were for fear of the Jews.

[1 : 3 2] Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, Peace be with you. When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. This is the word of God. Great. Thank you, Jonah.

Will you join me as we pray together? And we're going to pray this morning. We often like to pray for other churches in Hong Kong. We're going to pray for GCC, Gospel Community Church.

Ian Ma is one of the new leaders there. And so, just so you know, when we pray for him, that's who he is. Ian is from GCC. We're going to pray for them this morning. But let's pray together.

[2 : 3 4] Great and glorious God, God, this morning we gather as a church family to praise you and to glorify you, to lift up your name, and to give you the worship that you deserve.

Father, in this world, we are constantly being pulled in a thousand directions with innumerable concerns and worries on our hearts. God, this morning we've gathered to have our eyes set on you and to focus, to know you and to know that our peace and our hope is not found in any of the great things that you've given us, but it's found in you.

Father, this morning we acknowledge that the one thing that deserves our greatest attention and devotion, the one thing for which we were made is to glorify you who have given us our being and to be a blessing to those that you've brought across our path.

And yet, Father, so seldom is that our true motivation. We live for ourselves without much regard to your great glory and honor, without thinking about the good of others.

Oh, Father, forgive us, we pray. God, we pray that you will do a deep work in our hearts, each one of us, that we will truly learn to live for you and your glory and live the well-being of others.

- [3 : 52] God, particularly in times like this when the brokenness of our world is so evident, may we, your people, be truly salt and light in the city at this time. God, as we go from this place, may we be sent by you into our city as agents of healing and restoration.
- God, we long for our city to experience your peace, for the anxiety of our hearts, God, to be stilled, and for the restlessness, God, with which we, as so many of our city are struggling, God, to be eased.
- Father, come, we pray, come to our city and use us. God, as Isaiah said, here we are, send us, God. Use us, we pray. Father, this morning, as we look at your word, we pray that you really will speak to us.
- We've said it a thousand times, but God, we're not interested in just the opinions of man. We're not here just to be inspired or encouraged. We're here to encounter you, the living God. We want you, God, to speak to us.
- And so we pray, God, this morning that your word will come alive. God, we pray that the message of your scriptures will speak to us today. God, take my words, and anything that's not of you, we pray it will fall aside, Lord God.
- [5 : 01] Come and speak to us, we pray. We want to meet with you, God, in your word today. God, this morning, as we look across our city, we want to pray for our friends at GCC, Gospel Community Church.
- We want to pray for Ian Marr, the new pastor there. And God, as he's getting established in that church and finding his feet, we do pray for him. We bring him before you. We pray for unity around the church leadership.
- We pray that they will be on the same page and there'll be deep levels of trust and oneness. Thank you for bringing Ian there. Thank you for the work of Rob and Joy Penner over the last five years or so.
- Thank you for that community that really does love your gospel. And God, we pray that as they go into this new season, that you will lead them and guide them. As they are seeking to establish vision for the church this year, we pray that they will capture your vision for their church.
- God, we pray for their mission and their outreach, that for their position near PolyU and other campuses, we pray to use them, God, to really bless the city. Establish them deeply on the gospel, we pray.
- [6 : 06] And then finally, Father, we pray for our great continent of Asia. We pray in the, as we are grappling with the middle of the coronavirus. Father, we pray, especially this morning, for South Korea and Japan who have experienced unprecedented increases in cases.
- We pray, God, for profound wisdom for the leaders of those countries. We pray for the doctors and the medical staff that are working and on the front lines of encountering that. We pray for government officials and all decision makers.
- God, we pray that you will give them wisdom how to contain the virus and see it come to an end. And so we pray for our brothers and our sisters and our friends and family and the people of South Korea and Japan, especially this morning.
- Be with them, we pray. Pray for believers to find their hope in you, Lord God, today. Pray for those that are sick and suffering. Won't you strengthen them and encourage them and bring loved ones around them that can really point them to the hope of Christ.
- We pray these things, Lord Jesus, in your wonderful and your powerful name. Amen. Amen. Okay, I forgot to introduce myself. If you don't know me, my name is Kevin and one of the leaders here.
- [7 : 17] Now, if you're new to Watermark, to let you know what you're doing, Chris mentioned it. In fact, I don't feel like I need to preach a whole lot after Chris and Tiffany. They kind of summarized everything I was going to say. Okay?

But just in case you weren't listening, let me say it again. We are working through our values as a church, those things that, you know, are on websites and bulletins and get referenced a lot.

But are seldom actually defined or clarified. And so we're spending a couple of weeks, 12 weeks in total, looking at these three topics. The gospel. What is the gospel? What does it mean to be centered on the gospel?

Community. And mission. And those three things are really important to each one of us individually, but also to us as a church family. And so the gospel is the heart of Watermark.

It really defines who we are, our identity, why it's our reason for existence. Okay? Without the gospel, let's close shop. We're done here. Community is shaped by the gospel because God's worked in our hearts.

[8 : 18] We are now a community of believers. And community defines how we relate to one another. Mission, which is what we're going to look at for the next couple of weeks, is what is our purpose?

Why has God put us here? What are we to do, those of us that have encountered this living God? And so the next five weeks, we're going to be looking at this theme of mission. Now, today's sermon is a little bit different to usual.

Normally, we work through a passage of scripture and we expound it. Today, we're going to step back and we're going to try and get an overview of the Bible story from beginning to end.

We're going to look a little bit at Genesis 12 that was read to us earlier. And we're going to try and get a thematic understanding of God's heart for mission and what does that mean for His people by looking at the Bible.

Okay, so a little bit different, but that's where we're going today. Now, how many of you have bought a book or been given a book, fiction or non-fiction, opened it up halfway, somewhere in the middle, and started reading at chapter 17?

[9 : 21] Okay? Now, if it's a textbook and you're cramming for an exam, you're allowed to do that. But generally, if it's a story, that's not a good way to read a book, right? Why is that?

Well, because you're not going to know what's going on the plot line of the book. You might pick out a few main characters, you might sort of get the plot line of the book, but even if you kind of understand what's happening, you're going to have a very superficial reading of that book.

Many of us make a similar mistake when it comes to the Scriptures. We open up the Bible at the New Testament and we say, okay, let's get to the good news, and yet, we try to make sense of what's going on without understanding the storyline or the narrative arc of the Bible.

The Scriptures actually has a storyline to it. It's the story of what God is doing in the world, and understanding that story, that narrative, is critical to understanding all the individual parts of the Bible.

And so, let's briefly revisit the storyline of the Bible and then see how this idea of God's mission and our mission fits into that.

[10 : 32] So, the storyline of the Bible starts off like this. It starts off in Genesis 1-2 with God's creation. And there we see that everything that exists from giant galaxies and solar systems to subatomic particles, everything that exists, exists because the Creator God has brought them into existence.

Okay? And the pinnacle of this creation is humankind. I know, sometimes it's hard to believe, but it's true. God has said that the pinnacle of His creation is humankind.

He has made us for relationship with Him. And so, the Bible's account of creation gives us some of the answers to the biggest questions that we as humans have.

Who am I? Why am I here? What's my purpose in life? What does it mean to be human? Are we gods or are we merely animals that have somehow evolved more than other animals?

And the answer that creation gives us is that we are not gods. Sorry to tell you that. Sorry to disappoint. We are not just animals that have evolved more than other animals.

[11 : 40] We are a specific type of creature, a specific species, made in God's image to know Him and enjoy Him and be in a relationship with Him, but also to steward, in other words, to look after His creation for His glory.

That's what it means to be human. We are made in God's image to know Him deeply and love Him and enjoy Him and to look after His good creation for His glory. Now, however, not very long, before we are almost out of the starting blocks, things go wrong with the world and with this order.

The good order that God created and designed gets corrupted and we call this the fall of creation. And so in Genesis 3, we see that rather than as human beings we are living a joyful relationship with God, our Creator, rather than loving Him and enjoying Him, as human beings, we decide we want to be our own gods.

Rather than stewarding His creation, we want to rule it. We want to own it. Rather than living for His glory, we want our own glory. And that brings about disastrous consequences.

The result is that sin and wickedness weaves its way into every aspect of life, every aspect of human experience and existence.

[13 : 03] And friends, that's why there's so much pain and brokenness in our world. It's why there's so much heartache in our world. And we see this weaving of brokenness in four dimensions.

Actually, in every area, but four primarily. We see it physically. And so now, as human beings, we are subject to decay, disease, death. Our bodies don't work the way that we're meant to.

Our world is broken. And so our physical world is broken and subject to decay and death. But also, relationally, where we're meant to love and serve one another in relationship, now we use one another.

And so we see as a result things like sexism and racism, wars, animosity, bitterness, resentment, mistrust, all these things. Another way we see it is personally.

So our relationship with ourself is broken. And so now, either we suffer from self-exaltation, self-worship, I am God, or we battle things like anxiety, insecurities, depression, and so our relationship with ourselves is broken.

[14 : 08] But most significantly, our relationship with the God that made us for himself is broken. And so whereas we were designed to live in joyful relationship with God, loving and enjoying Him, now we are alienated from Him and under His just judgment.

And so the problem with sin in the world is not just that we've broken one or two rules, it's not just that, oh, you know, we've kind of done a few wrong things and God's now going to scold us.

The problem with sin in the world is that the whole world is now out of sync. There's a misalignment. It's now out of kilter. And as a result, every aspect reels under the effects of this broken world in which we live.

And we see this straight after the fall in Genesis 3. So Genesis 3 happens and the next couple of chapters, if you read Genesis, are pretty depressing. In chapter 4, Adam and Eve's first son, Cain, rises up and murders his brother because he's not getting on with his brother and so he just kills him.

Then one of Cain's descendants, a guy called Lamech, one day he's boasting to his wives and he's got two wives and he's boasting to them and he's saying, you think Cain was bad? You've seen nothing.

[15 : 23] He's saying, Cain killed a man, I've killed a man just because he wounded me. If Cain's revenge was sevenfold, mine is 77. So that's the descendants of Cain.

And then we get to chapter 6 and there's the flood and the world is broken and people die. And then we carry on in chapter 11. Chapter 11's interesting. There's the story of the Tower of Babel.

Do you remember that story? And the Tower of Babel is interesting because it's a story of great unity. God's people come together, the nations are united but they're not united for good, they're united for evil.

They come together in unison and say, let's fix our own world. Let's solve our own problems. We will make ourselves great again. And so they're united in their rebellion against God.

They say, God, we don't need you. We'll fix our own problems. Thank you very much. And they come together and the result, the same as Genesis 3, is disastrous. There's division, there's disunity, people are spread out.

[16 : 26] And rather than unity and joy and love, division and disunity ensues. And so when we read the scriptures from the beginning, not just starting somewhere in the middle, the storyline we encounter is that the God who made us in the world, made a beautiful world, as we sang earlier, a good world, a world of good creation for us to enjoy and to steward and to enjoy Him.

But because of sin, that world has become corrupted. And now our relationship with ourselves, with our world, with each other, and with our God is broken.

Now, the incredible message of the Bible is that God gives us not just good advice how to fix our world ourselves, God comes with some good news, or biblical word, with the gospel.

God comes with some good news that is big enough and comprehensive enough to address every dimension and every aspect of the brokenness and the fallenness of our world.

In other words, the Bible shows us that rather than God abandoning the world, saying, well, that didn't work very well, let's try again, God moves into His world to redeem and to rescue and to put right that which is wrong with the world.

[17 : 47] And that's almost what the entire Bible is all about. Other than chapters 1 and 3 in Genesis that talk about how the world got to the state that it's in, other than right at the end, Revelation 21 and 22 that talks about how it's all going to end, almost the entire story of the Bible is the story of what God is doing to put the world right again.

That's what the Bible is all about. God's mission to rescue and redeem and reconcile His broken world. And then finally, we get to the last story of the last chapter of the storyline which is the new creation.

God moves and Jesus returns and everything that is wrong and broken with the world, He makes untrue and He brings about His new creation. No more tears, no more pain or agony or anguish anymore.

Okay, so you got the storyline of the Bible, right? Okay. Now here's the question we need to ask. That chapter 3, God's mission to put right a broken world, how is that going to happen?

How does God go about doing it? Well, the answer we find in Genesis 12, which we read earlier, is not what we first expect because the answer is that God is going about rescuing and redeeming His world but He's going to do it through His chosen people.

[19 : 10] Let's read Genesis 12 together and take a look at it. Okay, so if you've got your bulletin, look at Genesis 12 with me. It all starts off with this man called Abraham and so one day God appears to this man called Abraham and He reveals Himself to him and He calls Abraham to be part of his mission, his plan to rescue and redeem this broken and fallen world.

And so look at verse 1, look at the first thing God says. He calls Abraham and He says, Abraham, go from your country, from your family and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.

So the first thing He does is He sends him away. Okay, He sends him on a mission. He says, I know you're from this area, Ur of the Chaldeans. I want you to leave your family background and go to a land that's not your own but that I'm sending you to and I will lead and guide you.

And so He sends him out. But that's not all that God says because look at verse 2. God accompanies this commission, this call to trust Him and obey Him with a promise or in the biblical word a covenant.

A covenant is a solemn oath. It's a promise that God makes and it's a promise that's full of grace because look what He says here in verse 2. He says, Go leave your family and I will make of you a great nation.

[20 : 30] I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. Now remember, Genesis chapter 11, we've got the story of the Tower of Babel, right?

And what is the thing that the people that are building the Tower of Babel, what is their motivation? We will make ourselves great again. Okay? God comes to Abraham and he says, I will make you great.

See, when the people say we will make ourselves great, the result is destruction and heartache and pain. God comes along to Abraham and says, Abraham, I'm not here to give you good advice how you can make yourself great.

I will make you great. And that, friends, is the gospel. See, whenever we try and make ourselves great, whenever we try and rescue or redeem ourselves, whenever our life ambition is I will save myself, friends, that is always, always going to end up in destruction and heartache and pain.

The way to encounter the God of the Bible is to come to him on our knees and say, God, have your will in my life. And so God comes to Abraham and says, Abraham, not you will make yourself great, I will make you great.

[21 : 43] And what does that mean? He says, I will make you a great nation. That means I will give you a large family. You will be fruitful and abundant. And so he's talking about Abraham's descendants, his offspring.

Now, in some ways, it's a little random, right? I mean, God chooses this one 75-year-old man who's married to Sarah.

They are barren. They cannot have any children in the middle of Iraq. And he says, Abraham, I want you to leave your family, go across the Arabian Peninsula and go and settle in a land that I will tell you and I will give you a great family.

Pretty random. Why would God do that? What's the point? Well, let's look at what he says. He says, I will make you a great nation.

I will bless you and make your name great. Why? So that you will be a blessing. So why is God doing this? God's pouring out his blessing on Abraham in order that through Abraham blessing might come to the world.

[22 : 49] He says, I will bless those that bless you. I will curse those that curse you. And through you or through your descendants, through your offspring, all the families of the world will be blessed.

So Abraham, I'm going to rescue you. I'm going to redeem you. I'm going to save you and bless you. I'm going to draw you into my story. I'm going to turn your life around. But my blessing is not to end with you.

You are to be a conduit through which my blessing then flows to the people of all the world, all the nations of the earth. One author put it like this. Abraham's blessing was intrinsically tied to the blessing of other people.

In God's call, these two things could never be separated. He could not just take the one, the blessing that God gave him, and leave the other one. They are one and the same thing.

So God promises to bless Abraham. That's only one side of the coin. The other side of the coin is I'm going to send you to be a blessing. And what does that mean in the grand storyline of the Bible?

[23 : 52] What does it mean when God says you are going to be my blessing? Well it means he's going to send him out to be part of God's mission to rescue and redeem the world. So do you follow the logic here?

The storyline of the Bible is God is at work rescuing and redeeming a fallen world. God chooses some people and then blesses them. He then says the blessing isn't to stop with you.

It is to go through you. You are to be my agents through which I redeem and rescue the world. So God comes to Abraham and says Abraham I'm going to pull you into my story and through you I will accomplish my mission to rescue and redeem a broken world.

Does that make any sense? Okay I'm going to have to work a little harder. Okay Do you follow that storyline? Okay great thank you.

Okay now you might say okay boomer that's all very interesting or maybe not very interesting but what does it have to do with me?

[24 : 54] If you're a Christian this morning okay and that may not be the case you might be a spiritual seeker in which case you're so welcome great to have you here if you're a Christian this morning that has everything to do with you because this passage in Genesis 12 becomes the defining paradigm by which the people of God are then defined in the rest of scripture in the rest of the Old Testament and the New Testament God's call to Abraham is God's call to every one of his people that he will bless us in the gospel in other words that through us his blessing his redemption reconciling mission in the world can come to pass this is what it means to be the people of God to be part of God's people means to be part of God's redemptive plan in the world every person that God calls to know and love him he also sends out as his missionary into the world and so throughout the Old Testament this is what the nation of Israel is all about they are meant to be a light to the nations okay

God's chosen people who are called to be a light to nations and so look at Psalm 67 with me I think I've got it on the slides look at this amazing scripture Psalm 67 if you ever want to pray a prayer for watermark this is a great prayer to pray okay look at what it says may God be gracious to us and bless us yes please may you make your face shine upon us glory okay God shine your face upon us why that we may get bigger and bigger that our finances may increase that people may look at us and say wow that's an amazing church look at watermark why should God bless us why should he pour his face out upon us why should he be gracious to us look at verse 2 that your ways oh God may be known on the earth your saving power amongst all the nations so in Afghanistan and in Iraq and in Indonesia and in Bangladesh and in South Korea and Japan and Indonesia and Myanmar and Laos in every country in Asia may your ways be known oh God your saving power amongst Asia let all the peoples that's not just watermarkers and Christians that's those people out there may all the nations praise you oh God may the peoples praise you let all the nations in the furthest corners of the world be glad and sing for joy because they've encountered your good news gospel isn't that an amazing verse look at Isaiah 42

God says to Israel I am the Lord I have called you in righteousness I will take you by the hand and I will lead you I will give you as a covenant for the people to be a light to the nations to open the eyes that are blind to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon from the prison those who sit in darkness friends isn't that what Tiffany said earlier there are people in our city that are trapped in the prisons and the dungeons not physical prisons but in the dungeon of despair in the prison of despondency and anxiety and depression and God's got a good news message a gospel to bring them deliverance and healing and freedom and restoration to bring good news to our world but how's he gonna do it he's gonna do it by causing his people to be a light to the nations or think of Jonah God sends Jonah to Nineveh and so Christopher Wright he's one of the foremost theologians on this subject he says this at the most fundamental level who were these people called Israel in the Old Testament and what were they there for anyway to be a vehicle of God's mission for extending

God's blessing to the nations and for Christians who are we and what are we here for the answer is the same the answer has to be sorry the same answer has to be given and indeed is given we are also to be the people through whom the nations are blessed so in other words of saying that to be part of God's people is to be part of God's mission to be part of God's people is to be part of his redemption plan to bring healing to the world now as we read the Old Testament one of the things we quickly read quickly realize is that Israel God's people who are meant to be a light to the nations rather than bringing healing and redemption to the nations pretty soon they become just like the nations and so they're meant to go out to influence the nations and to point them to the good news of Yahweh the saving God but pretty soon rather than influencing the nations they are influenced by the nations and so throughout the Old Testament they become more and more like the people around them they eventually start making alliances political alliances they start marrying the people of the other cultures they take on their practices and their customs and very soon they start taking on their idols and their gods and so while there are a few bright moments

Joshua and King David by and large things get progressively worse and worse and worse until Israel is almost extinct they get taken into exile Jerusalem is in ruins the temple is destroyed and Israel is almost extinct and so you get to the end of the Old Testament you think is there any hope I mean are God's plans just lying on the floor and tatters what happened to the people of Abraham what happened to his great descendants that were going to rescue the world what happens to God's mission to bring hope and healing to this broken world are God's plans for redemption ruined forever throughout the Old Testament especially the prophets God continues to speak and in the midst of some of the most dire and broken situations God makes a promise and his promise is this that his word to Abraham is still intact that God is still through the nation of Israel through the people of Abraham going to bring hope and healing to a broken world but how is he going to do that into this context the stunning announcement of the New Testament comes and the New Testament tells us that the answer to what the whole of the Old Testament has been painting is this that God will once again send a descendant of Abraham someone from within Israel and yet who is completely different to Israel someone who would be so faithful when they had been rebellious one who would be obedient to God even in the midst of desert temptations and even to the point of death on a cross one who didn't grasp and seek blessing for himself but who poured out his life for the blessing of the whole world one who through his death and subsequent resurrection would bring about not only the restoration of Israel but the promised salvation to the ends of the earth and who was that one the Messiah right

[32 : 00] Jesus Christ and that's why the gospel writers and Jesus himself make such a big deal about the fact that Jesus is an Israelite he's a Jew he's a descendant of Abraham he's one from Israel one of Abraham's offsprings that is going to bring true hope and true healing to this broken world and so Jesus true Israel does what God's people were meant to do but could never do in fact Jesus does so much more and so how does he do it Jesus takes upon himself one day all the brokenness of the entire world upon himself and he swallows death and he swallows destruction and he reverses and he deals a death blow to the curse of sin so that healing and redemption may really come on the cross Jesus experiences the full consequences of sin in a broken world physically his body is left there for decay and he experiences death socially he's cut off from relationships and even his best friends are denying him betraying him selling him for 30 pieces of silver personally he experiences the depth of anxiety as he cries out to his father and says father where are you do I really have to drink this cup but ultimately spiritually he is cut off from the God that from his father he's cut off from God as he faces

God's wrath and his judgment and so on the cross and the resurrection Jesus brings the central point of the story of redemption that God would accomplish for us on our behalf what we could never do for ourselves that Jesus the perfect Israel the sinless one would stand condemned in our place that we the imperfect people could still be included in God's redemption and reconciliation purposes and so when Jesus dies on the cross he doesn't just die for Israel he dies to the whole world so that now every nation including South Africans and Chinese and Koreans and Australians and Americans and everyone else can be included in the people of God so that now salvation can come to us and as the New Testament says we now are part of the people of Abraham and so what does it mean for you and I if you're a follower of Jesus to be part of the people of God to be part of the people of God means to be part of the mission of God to be part of his redemption purposes and that's exactly what we see when we get to the New Testament and the Gospels throughout the New Testament becoming a Christian is not just joining a religion it's being reconciled to God and then joining his redemption plan to bring healing and hope to a broken world and so in Matthew chapter 4

Chris referenced it earlier Jonah read it to us earlier in Matthew chapter 4 Jesus comes along and he calls his very first disciples so Jesus he's on his own and he's about to launch his public ministry he's about to call his first disciples and they happen to be fishermen and so what does he say to them he says come and follow me and then what and I will make you fishers of men to the very first disciples he says come and follow me and I'm going to send you out to be my people through whom the world is blessed I will bless you so that you can be a blessing to the world and in the next chapter in chapter 5 Jesus says to his disciples you are the light of the world or isn't that what God has been saying to Israel throughout the whole of the Old Testament you are to be a light to the nations a light to the nations and Israel can't do it but Jesus comes and he says to his disciples you are the light of the world you're the people through whom redemption and reconciliation is going to come as you point to me and then at the end of Matthew's gospel

Matthew 28 what is the last thing that Jesus says to his disciples as he is about to go to heaven all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit and know that I am with you to the ends of the age so notice this the very first thing that Jesus says to his disciples is follow me and I will send you out the very last thing that Jesus says to his disciples is wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit and then go throughout the story of the Bible from beginning to end God is at work resting and redeeming his broken and fallen world how is he going to do it he is going to do it through his people those that have encountered the grace and the glory of God those whose lives have been changed by Jesus and the gospel and who now take the gospel to the ends of the earth and so finally in John we read that

Jesus after he dies on the cross he comes to his disciples after his resurrection and he says surprise no he doesn't say that he says as the Father has sent me so I am sending you so I am sending you friends God's mission is the starting place for understanding the church and so what that means friends is that to be part of the people of God is to be part of God's mission and so part of what it means to be a Christian and this isn't just true for the pastors or the elders or the staff or the young lifers or those that are in ministry part of what it means to be a follower of Jesus is that in each and every aspect of life whether you are walking the dog whether you are sitting on the bus whether you are having coffee at your favorite coffee shop whether you are teaching a class whether you are teaching your children at home because they have been off school for six months whether you are on a date with your wife or a date with your future wife whether you are considering moving countries whether you are considering what school to send your children to whether you are having a barbecue with friends whether you are taking care of your elderly parents whether you are meeting your new neighbors or making a business deal

[38 : 07] God's call to those that have encountered his grace is to be those that have been blessed so that they can be a blessing to others to join God's redemption and reconciliation plan to bring healing to this hurting world and so Christopher Wright again says it like this when God said about his great project of world redemption in the wake of Genesis 12 he chose to do so not by whisking individuals up into heaven but by calling into existence a community of blessing starting starting with one man and his barren wife and then miraculously transforming them into a large family within several generations and then into a nation called Israel and then through Christ into a multinational community of believers from every nation all through the story God has been molding a people for himself but also a people for others as Genesis 12 says I will bless you so that you will be a blessing and through you all the nations of the world will be blessed friends this is what God is doing in this world and this is what he's called us to join him on now as we come to a close what does this mean for us firstly if you're not a follower of Jesus this morning we're so glad you're here

I hope that in some ways you've come to see the essence of what the Bible is all about the Bible is not a book of good advice how to improve your life the Bible is not a self help project the heart of Christianity is that every one of us are broken because of the consequences of sin but God hasn't left us there out of his profound love for us his magnificent love God has moved towards us in grace and he's healing and reconciling and redeeming a broken world and that means the world at large but also means your life and my life and primarily that happened when Jesus went to the cross and he took my sin and he took your sin upon himself so that you can know him and be reconciled to him that your sin can be removed and you can come back into joyful relationship with the God who made you for himself and who loves you more than you'll ever know friends if you're not a follower of Jesus this morning don't leave this place the same way you came know him look to him turn to him find hope and healing and reconciliation in Jesus

Jesus came for you and for I you can know him this morning come to him this morning for those of us that are Christians the story of the Bible means that part of being part of God's family or his people is being part of his mission and like we said earlier that's not just for the staff or the elders it's for every follower of Jesus and so the question I want to ask you very gently is are you part of God's mission in each and every aspect of life are you saying yes to joining God in what he's doing in the world and then thirdly for those of us that are part of Watermark if this is your church family what does this mean for us well as a church family we are very far from perfect obviously right if you're here for a couple of weeks you'll know that one of the things we want to try and do is we want to orientate our whole church around who God is and what he's doing in the world and if God if mission is central to what

God is doing it means it must be central to who we are as a church as has often been said it's not that God's church has a missions program it's that God's mission has a church God is doing something in the world and that mission has a church by which to carry that mission and that's going to mean a couple of things and so let me just give us two of them it means firstly that some things might need a change I don't know what those are I'm not announcing any new plans here but there might be some adjustments for us as a church over the next few months or years it might mean we need to change the way that we do community groups as we say yes to God's mission it might mean we need to change the way we do our budget both individually and as a church as we prioritize God's mission in the world it might mean we need to say yes to some programs and no to other programs but chances are as we align ourselves to God's mission that might mean some adjustments and they might not be comfortable but we want to say yes to Jesus the second thing it means is this is that it might mean that our comfort and our convenience is going to be challenged as we say yes to joining God in his mission at times things will be difficult at times things will be uncomfortable no doubt God is going to ask us to embrace suffering remember in the book of revelation the witnesses always end up dead for some reason their heads always get beheaded but don't worry they come alive again but no doubt as we say yes to

Jesus that's going to mean some of us being sent as missionaries to the furthest corners of the world it may mean some of us saying no to high paying careers it may mean some of us just doing our ordinary jobs but with a different purpose and goal in mind no doubt as we say yes to Jesus it's going to involve some challenge but you know what friends it's going to be a glorious and wonderful adventure and we'll get to the end of our lives with very few regrets Jeremy Julie can I call you guys up here let's I don't really know how to respond I was thinking about this all morning I feel like we need to respond we going to respond in song but maybe you can maybe just come before our God and let's respond in prayer let's come before our Father sorry I know that was a little clumsy but let's come before God Heavenly Father great and glorious God you are rescuing and redeeming this broken world and God that is good news for us because each one of us here need your rescue work done our own hearts God we feel the effects of a broken world we see it in ourselves we see it in our relationships we see it all around us

[44 : 19] Father for those of us that are Christians we start off saying thank you praise you God all glory to you for moving into our world God thank you God that you sent your son Jesus thank you Jesus for sending the Holy Spirit to come and rescue us and change us but God like Isaiah we hear you saying whom will I send Father we want to respond and saying here we are send us God include us in your rescue plan include us in your plan to redeem and reconcile this broken world Father if we honest as Chris was saying earlier so often we don't do this because of all sorts of things in our lives it's not because of lack of information we know the gospel it's not because of lack of opportunities it's God because our hearts are often turned in on ourselves Father we want to come before you this morning in repentance we want to say we're sorry God we're sorry for the many times we've lived for ourselves rather than you we're sorry God for the many times we've lived for our own glory rather than you

God where we've received your extravagant blessing but haven't wanted to be a blessing to others because it's uncomfortable Father forgive us we pray but don't just forgive us change us God God send us out as a light to this nation to this great city and to the nations of the world Father I pray for businessmen and businesswomen here God that as we go from Hong Kong maybe this week as you send us out to the cities across Asia Singapore and Japan and Indonesia wherever we go God may we go with a sense of your commissioning it's not just our companies that's sending us you sending us to be a light to the nations use us we pray Father Father have your way in us we pray Amen