

Light Changers

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Preacher: Adrian Turk

[0 : 0 0] Praise God. Well, folks, I want to tell you, in 1954, an American preacher and pastor, the Reverend Swanson, went out to South Korea to preach the gospel to American troops out there.

And while he was out there, he saw particularly children impoverished by war and was moved in his heart to do something about it. And so from then on, he sought to find ways to bring aid to children in this situation and connect people and relationships and churches to bring support and sponsorship to these children. And today we have the Reverend Swanson. No, we don't really.

But that was the beginnings of a charity called Compassion, which has been doing this throughout the world and many, many countries to great effect. And today we have the privilege of a representative of Compassion with us here today. So I'd like to invite you up.

Please give him a warm welcome. Thank you. Come on, we're allowed to clap. And I have, we're going to do a little bit of an interview here. I put the chairs out, but it's probably better if we just stand. That's fine. So please tell us who you are, where you're from, how many wives, children, pets you've got, and a little bit about what Compassion does.

Well, my name is Adrian. Sorry, good morning. Nice to be with you today. I have three daughters, four grandchildren, one wife, and one dog. And I love my dog.

[1 : 4 8] That's one of the best introductions to Compassion I've heard. I thought, who's he talking about? It's a privilege to be with you, and it's a privilege to represent the mission. I call it a mission, not a charity, because it's about the local church. It's about you and I, in some way, connecting with the church in developing countries. 27 countries we're in, working in right now. And what I love about it is that we can empower the local church, you and I, to make a difference in the lives of so many children that are in poverty. And it's interesting because there are over 350 million children in poverty today, but that figure goes over my head. But I'm here to talk about the one. Jesus left the 99 and went after the one. And

I'm compelled today to tell you about the one child, because it's one child that can make a difference. What was the question again? Yeah, that's great. That's great. Well, let me ask you some questions. So I've known Adrian longer than Adrian's known me, because I've seen him doing some work, and I've been involved in some way in compassion. But we've been getting to become friends. And I love that, that it's a mission, you know, and we as a church really want to see how we can do meaningful mission in a relational way. And so let me ask you how, just thinking about this from the perspective of the last few years, and the impact that the pandemic has had across the world, how has that impacted the work of compassion? And what opportunities at the back of that are there for anyone to be involved in the work of compassion? Yeah, so important. I don't know if you can remember that time three years ago, I think this week or next week, when we were locked down. And I can recall that the police were even intervening on people that were out for more than 20 something minutes. I mean, I can't believe that time, you know, three years ago. And I can remember my grandchildren just starting to go a bit stir crazy, because, oh, you know, we've just been on the internet for so long, we've just done this, we've just done that. And I was reminding them that the children in many of the countries that we work in are locked down, and they were in probably a home that was not much bigger than my garden shed, and no electricity, no water, no Wi-Fi. But they're incredibly resilient. I mean, I'm generalizing here, I work in a lot of African countries. And the children I've brought today are from a Western African country called Togo. But it was, it's difficult, because the way Compassion works now in a country like Togo is that we try and raise sponsorships to send the children to school, because schooling costs. But on a Friday, the children go to the project, which is a little bit like the local, well, it is the local church, overseen by a pastor and workers. And there they get taught various life skills. But we couldn't do that during lockdown. So the staff from Compassion would then go out to the houses, they had to improvise, and take resources to the children, and food to the families. And it worked. It was the New Testament church in operation, as anyone had need. And I have to say that probably they're a bit tougher than we are. And, you know, again, generalizing, but many of the people I know coped remarkably well. But we're grateful for the local churches here supporting through sponsorship through prayer. And them knowing that we're standing with them is massive. So it's a little bit of a flavor of how they coped. But just try and imagine how difficult that would be when it was difficult enough for us. But they're coming out of it, and schools are back. And a degree of normality has come into play.

And it's one of the things, sometimes, where we're from, we hear a bit about what it's like for children in poverty, you know, whether it's adverts, whether it's presentations, we hear a bit about what it's like for children in poverty in different places. And many people through that give very kindly aid in different forms. But we don't always get to see the change that that aid brings. So if you could, Adrian, could you tell us what it's actually like for the children, and consequently, their families, of those who are involved in compassion?

I was actually in Uganda just before lockdown. And Steve, you can go one picture back to this little boy. His name was Joshua. And I must tell you a kind of funny story, really. So I saw this little boy, my wife and I sponsored a number of children at that point. And I saw him and I thought, has he got a sponsor? Because I was just drawn to this little boy. And I discovered he had. So I text my wife in Scotland from Africa, I mean, from Uganda. And if you knew my wife, if I text her from the next room, I might not get an answer for a couple of days. But I kind of thought, better to ask for forgiveness than permission. We normally jointly agree these things. But I thought, I'm moving on to another project. I need to sponsor this little boy. And I prayed about it. And I got this kind of vision of, I'm a bit of a Costa coffee drinker, Cal. And the reason I think God gave me this picture is he said, look, if you just cut some of this coffee buying out, you could change this little boy's life. And that, you know, for 94 pence a day, I could help, we could help educate him, clothe him, look at the holistic needs of that little boy and his family. And so I thought, I'm just going to do it, even though my wife hasn't given me permission. And so I sponsored him. And this next picture, Stephen, I went to ask if I could meet with his, long answer, Cal, to this question, but if I could meet his mother. And when I got to their home, it's one room they live in, they handed me a little boy who I'm holding there. And he was four years old. His name was Eric. And he was profoundly disabled. And I just felt helpless. Because there's no infrastructure for me to maybe pay for a wheelchair. And there's no physiotherapy. He's profoundly disabled. His food had to be mashed. And he was four. And he was smaller than his brother, Joshua, whom we just sponsored.

But it was a grounding time. And I thought, I've got to represent these children. So we left that project. And I'd heard his mother wrote to me six months later to say that Eric had passed away. And it really, really bothered us. Such is the importance of the relationship between a sponsor and the family that we're investing in. It's that real. We went to the next project. And my phone went ping. And it was a text from my wife. And I thought, oh dear. So I looked at it and it said, okay. Thank you, Lord. That's all it said. She's a woman of few words. Okay. But it is really quite profound, this relationship between us as potential sponsors for this small amount of money in the scheme of things. And that child. And there's a little video in a moment I'd like Stephen to put on.

[10:23] It's just three minutes long. And it's an English couple who went out to visit one of their sponsored children. And the bit I want you to just look at is the part when the man, the guy, meets the child whom they've been sponsoring since she was two, Violet, her name is. She's now 14. I think this is in Uganda also. When they met for the first time. And whenever I speak to Paul of the couple that went out, I'm telling them I've been using this video. He starts crying again. Because it means so much that that investment into her life has not just saved her life, but it's made a relationship between the family and his family. And, but it's powerful. So maybe Stephen, we could just watch that if we could.

Stephen Sackley I believe it's all about the one. If we can make a difference in one person's life, then who knows what that can lead to.

We take so much for granted in the Western world. And, you know, when you visit a compassion child and you see firsthand, you realise what is important.

We're not able to see our compassion girls grow. We have photographs of them. Those photographs are side by side with our own daughters and our grandchildren.

Violet was quite little and now she's 14 and growing up fast. So it's going to be quite exciting to actually see her in person. This is for us, a dream come true to visit the girl that has been in our prayers, on our hearts, in our thoughts for 11 years.

[12:18] When the family gets a visit, it is actually a blessing. The child meets the sponsor and the child can never imagine how we ever see this person physically. Apart from photos and communication in letters. When there's this sponsor coming physically, wow, it's just breathtaking.

And it's a blessing to the families. When we were maybe 50 metres away, we could hear them. The windows were up, but we could still hear them singing, singing their hearts out. She appeared out of nowhere. I didn't see her coming. But she just threw herself at me. And I don't think I will ever forget that moment.

It was like we'd known each other ever since she was born. And that we'd been apart for so long.

You're not just sponsoring some random person who you never know anything about. Each child is known by somebody. They are cared for. They are looked after. I think about the staff, how passionate they are to see these kids thrive and flourish.

We want to add value on these children's lives. That means economically, spiritually. They know what to do. We only play a small part. But to see the day-to-day running of the project that provides hope, Violet, I will always remember that and remind myself that she's being cared for.

[13 : 56] Looking at each person on that photograph that plays a part in Violet's life. And I think that was the thing that struck me. You know, it's not just us. Each member of staff plays a part in making sure she thrives, making sure she reaches her full potential.

And that's what really struck me. It will really be treasured. I realise that I can't change the world. But I know Linda and I can make a difference in more children's lives.

The only thing that I know for sure is that our lives are not going to be the same again. The only thing that I know for sure is that our lives are not going to be the same again.

■■ ■■■■itions Well, I love what the guy said there.

You know, you might not think, but you can change the world. But you can change someone's world. You know, any one of us can change someone's world. I have a couple of friends in different places in Africa.

[15 : 17] One of my friends who was over here for a while, we studied together. And he has a family out in Nigeria. And he messaged me recently just asking for help. Because they're struggling, you know, poverty, economy, all those kind of things.

And it's just so needed. I just think about how through one child, humans in the world can connect.

Families can connect. Churches can connect. And communities can connect through this one relationship. And this one form of godly aid.

And Adrian, you've had the privilege of being able to see both sides of those connections. And see the impact of that. And so through you seeing both sides of that, why is it you do the job that you do?

Can you tell us? Well, I'm 64 years of age. And I've probably been preaching since I was 16. But the past five years, I've worked with compassion.

[16 : 27] I go out most Sundays and speak at church. I've been more... I'm not belittling all the other years. But I've been incredibly rewarding. Because that picture there probably sums up why I do what I do, Cal.

And this was also just before lockdown. And this was a project in Uganda. And I went to see these children. And the thing that impacted me and will never leave me is when I knelt down to take that picture, these boys started to play with my hair.

I think they thought it was cotton wool or some kind of substance they haven't come across before. But because it was kind of softish. And they would call their friends and they would play with my...

It was so humbling, really. It was just... It was wonderful. And I thought, I've got to advocate on behalf of these children. And, folks, there are a lot of people in mission who do a lot more than I do.

But I thought, I can do a little. I can come and speak to the church. And I can compel the church to make a difference. And my wife and I sponsor a number of children.

[17 : 37] My daughters do. My grandkids will write to those children. And we have a relationship with these children. And I'm compelled to do it.

Because I know that if the local church, if we catch it, as Paul said in that video, it changes our lives. Because we're taking responsibility. We're taking ownership.

It's not about putting some money in an envelope and putting it into the offering. It's about a relationship. And the thought of part of my legacy being that my wife and I have helped remove a family or children from poverty.

And poverty is not just about a meal for tomorrow, not being there. Poverty is a state of mind. I don't really understand it. I'm not in it. But I know it's represented by darkness because we can't see what tomorrow brings.

They can't see that. So when we come along and we are stirred by God in our hearts, and if you are today, to make a difference in a child's life, it's like the lights come on for that child and that family.

[18 : 47] Wow. What a privilege it is. And that's why I go to church, and then when people catch it and want to be part of the solution, I see the lights come on in the church.

And that's why I feel I've got to share that message, Cal. That's amazing. I was listening to a prayer this morning. This chap was getting annoyed. He was telling a funny story.

He was getting annoyed that God had answered a small prayer of his because he was questioning whether he should be praying this prayer. And he said he was getting annoyed that this prayer was answered because there's so many big things that he was hurt by that God didn't answer.

But then he was saying how, you know, this reminds us that we ought to give thanks for the little things that are little and often.

Pray for our daily bread. And there are so many little things that we take for granted, you know. And it could be food on the table. It could be health in a family.

[19 : 45] It could be basic injections in medicine. It could be education. All of which, you know, it could be a local church and a family and a community. And, you know, I think there are many ways to give.

And people should give and bring aid to people in many different ways. But as a church, I'm really keen to see us be connected and involved in something that you really can, as you said, relationally be involved.

And you see that impact. You feel that impact. And you enjoy that relationship. And it's not just between individuals. It's between families, communities, and local churches.

And so I think the final question is, how can a church like ours get involved? Yeah, that's a great question.

And I think the answer to that is to seek the many ways that we work as an organization to be part of that.

[20 : 47] And the great thing about the children I brought today, they're all from one project in one locale in Togo. Which also means that if ever there's an opportunity for someone to go out from the church, they can represent everybody and meet the children that they're caring for.

But for those, I would say, that are stirred in their hearts today to want to invest that, I say 94 pence a day because that's what it is.

But want to invest in a child, I would compel you to do that because it is, for me, it's been life-changing. It's part of our lives. So that's one way to sponsor a child.

There's ten children there. But if finances are difficult, please don't try and do that. Please don't. But you can be praying for the projects. I can be giving Cal information about this particular project for you to be praying.

There's also the opportunity for people that maybe won't be in a position to do this financially. We need letter writers. Because as you may know, one of the things that we do as part of the work we do in this relationship is really encourage the sponsors to write letters to the children.

[22 : 04] I mean, these children don't get letters like we get letters. I was at a stall once. It was the Church of Scotland. And it was in Princess Street. And people were coming up to me.

I mean, it was just women apologizing, asking for forgiveness, but not writing letters to their sponsored child. And I said, I felt like I was giving them absolution, go and sin no more.

And go write to these children tonight. You can do that. You can do it on the app. You can do it online. You can do it by writing a letter. Because three lines from you to say that you're praying for them, you're thinking about them, that you love them, is life-changing for them.

They don't have anybody that does that. And I've been there when letters have arrived at projects. And I've been there when there's been 150 children in the project, and 145 of them have got letters, and five of them are still waiting.

They've not got a letter, because someone's not had time to write. So we need letter writers as well as sponsors. But as the relationship, I hope, grows between you all and compassion, there's lots of other things we can look at doing, as kind of little projects within projects that we can fundraise.

[23 : 25] I can't remember his name, but one of the guys at Calderwood is running the London Marathon. Russell. Russell's running the London Marathon. Well, bless, God bless him. But he's doing it to raise money for compassion.

And so anybody wants to run the London Marathon? Cal? No. So there's so many ways, but it's the beginning of a journey. I believe that God's brought me here today to share the heart of the mission that becomes an integral part of this church, that you become a partner with compassion.

And together we journey. And I've never been to a church that hasn't partnered, that's not turned around and said, we love doing this. So I hope you do. Thank you very much.

And I love that word you used, journey, because it's not like, well, here's this one time that we get an opportunity to do something today and today only. But I'd love to see us start a journey as to how we do mission as a church.

And as much as I think that, you know, on a day-to-day basis that coffee brings life to me in the morning, I can't do anything until I've had coffee. I would trade that in a second to really bring life and light to someone's life and someone's world.

[24 : 41] And so I'd love to see us begin this journey as a church and as individuals. So thank you very much, Adrian. You're going to share with us a little later. But let me pray for yourself in this relationship.

Thanks. Our Heavenly Father, you have brought life and light into our lives through Christ. But not just through Christ, through individuals who had the care and compassion to share the good news with us, to bless us in many ways that you sought our needs.

And Lord, I thank you that you've united us together as a people into a church, a community, and a community that is called out of darkness into your light to bring light to others in the darkness.

And I pray for Adrian. I thank you for him for this time with us this morning. I thank you for the journey that you have brought him on through this in many ways and for his generosity to be with us and share with us this morning.

Please help us to think through ways in which we can help and partner and invest and get involved in wonderful works like this that are doing it in your name.

[26 : 01] And move us in our hearts to think on these things and to do what you would have us do. Lord, we want to bless your name.

We want to bless others. And we want to bring your life and light to the world. Help us to do so in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you. Thanks. Thank you. Thanks. Am I on, Stephen?

Is that okay? Okay. Okay. Wow.

It's so good to be here. I'm so looking forward to being with you today because I'm passionate about local church. The local church matters.

It matters to our community and to our world. And when I have the privilege of going around churches of all sorts with compassion, the thing I always start off by saying is we're God's only plan.

[27 : 16] It doesn't have a B plan like a certain past messy-haired prime minister had or a C plan. God has one plan and that's us. God has one plan. We're the representation of Christ here in this community.

And sometimes when I say that, people look at me and say, what on earth are you talking about? But we're it. We have the DNA. We have the Spirit of God within us. We have something that people out there don't have.

And my word today, I hope, is more encouraging or rallying to compel the local church to be all that God wants us to be.

We want to see this place filled with new life to go alongside the amazing lives that are here right now.

We want to see people that are in darkness brought into light. There's a passage that I'd like to read to you from Matthew's Gospel. Many of you will be familiar with the words of Jesus where he said that you are the salt of the earth.

[28 : 18] Matthew 5, 13 says, But if salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

And verse 14 says these words, You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under the table or under the bowl.

Instead, they put it on a stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and bring glory to your Father in heaven.

We're the light of the world. Jesus in us. It's that lamp that we can either choose to put under the table or we can put it on the table where it gives light.

That we've got the light of Jesus. A lady came up to me when I shared this word a few months back and she said, Could I share something about what you've said today?

[29 : 20] Because my kind of title was Light Changers. You know, we've got the light and we can bring change. She said, Do you mind if I say that God's called the church, us, you and I, to shine our light into darkness, not into light.

And I thought, Wow, that's really quite profound. Because if you imagine taking a torch, a battery torch, and shine it into a lit room, it has no impact.

But turn those lights out. Actually, I found this on the front of your, after I found this on the front of your website, about that story about light. But if you shine that same torch into a dark, dark room, you see the penetration of that light through the darkness.

And that's you and I, folks. And I want to compel you today, I want to encourage you today, that we have the light of the Spirit of God within our hearts.

And what are we going to do with that light? Are we going to put it under the table? Are we going to think that actually we don't have anything that's worth saying or giving away? Or do we recognize that we are the representation of Jesus Christ on the earth, by His Holy Spirit?

[30 : 31] When I was eight years old, my mother and father bought me a red cape. We didn't have all these superheroes that they have today, but I'm not sure if it was Batman or whether it was Superman.

But I kind of got into believing that if I wore this red cape all the time, that I would have superpowers. And I wore, I mean, I wore this to bed. You know, my mother wanted to take it off and wash it.

No, it might lose my superpowers if you wash my cape. But I can remember, and I remember dreaming at that time, and I have dreamt this dream many times since.

And I wonder if you can identify with this. But in this dream, I was flying, a bit like Superman. Anybody brave enough to admit if they've ever had a dream where they've been flying? Oh, well done.

Thank you. And I had one recently, not very long ago, where I was at home. I stay in Fife in Dunfermline. And in this dream, I kind of mustered up this energy to take off.

[31 : 29] I flew across Scotland. I ended up in the Isle of Skye. And I just, you know, walked around for a little while. I thought, right, it's time to go home. And I took off. And that's such a liberating.

And I think it came out of that childhood experience of believing that this red cape would give me superpowers. And I believed that I had superpowers. And then I kind of grew up. And I remember I became a Christian when I was 16.

And I still think I thought I had powers. And I remember, and this is going to sound as wacky as can be, but it's a true story. I just remember being lost somewhere.

And I needed to get home. And I thought, I'm not sure how to get home. But I remember the story in Acts 7 where Philip was praying for the Ethiopian eunuch. And it said, certainly in my translation, that after he baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, the Spirit of the Lord snatched him away.

And he found himself in his otis. And I thought, this snatching away bit. Was it a bit like beam me up, Scotty? I'm going to try this. And I remember clearly climbing into a bush not far from where I was, crouching down.

[32 : 34] It was quite windy. It was quite, the night was starting to fall. And I said, God, could you just transport me home just now? And there was no one around. And I prayed this prayer.

And then the wind died. And I opened my eyes. And I was still in the bush. Now, I then looked around to make sure no one was looking as I stepped out of the bush. And eventually found my way.

But it was just this kind of belief that I had powers. Crazy. And then I got married. And I realized that I did have power to change the weather.

Well, actually, not the weather. But I could change somebody's weather. And I worked for a newspaper in Edinburgh called The Scotsman at that time. And I got up in the early 80s.

And I got up tax rebate, which was about 500 or 600 pounds. Which is a lot of money now, but it was a lot of money then. And I thought, oh, tax rebate. What are we going to do with this?

[33 : 32] And my wife came out with these immortal words. The Lord has told me, oh, dear. That meant the money's gone. The Lord has told me that there's this situation that we need to take that money and give it away.

And I thought, well, the Lord's not told me yet. But, as always, she hears from God a lot more than I do, even to this day. And there was a lady in our church who was going through some financial difficulties.

And my wife said, we need to take that money, turn it into cash, put it in a brown envelope, sneak along anonymously, and put it through her door at night. So, being an obedient husband, I did that, went along sneaking along to her house, put it through her door.

And we just sat back and watched. And we observed this lady starting to blossom as God answered her prayer. And it was the catalyst to her life turning around.

And no one knew, and nobody had to know. But we realized that we were obedient to God. Well, I was firstly obedient to my wife, but then I was obedient to God. And that ability to hear from God was impacting a life.

[34 : 42] Now, I know you might say, oh, that's just, you know, some money. But it kind of begins with us listening to what God is saying. I could have said to my wife, no. The Lord has said I have to keep that money and buy whatever I wanted to buy.

But I just realized that we had power to change lives. We live in a world today which is quite complex.

We live amongst the body of Christ here where the church is in decline. But the needs of the people out there haven't changed in all the years I've been on this earth.

They still need to know hope. They still live in darkness. We try to modify the message sometimes and we try to make it palatable. But the gospel is offensive.

And it's not the easiest road to be a follower of Jesus. But it has one thing. It has hope. It has light. And there are so many people today that are in darkness.

[35 : 46] Through illness, through financial difficulty, through losing a job. Through family breakdown. Through, and I'm sure if I just ask you for a moment, just close your eyes for me.

And ask God to show you right now one person or one situation that you know where someone is living in darkness. I'm not going to ask you to put your hands up. Lord, just, I'm asking God, Lord, would you just show the church today a situation that you may put on their hearts of someone or a family or situation that's in darkness today?

Amen. Now, you can open your eyes. I'm not going to ask you to tell me who that is or what the situation is.

But I suspect most of you would be going in your mind to some situation that needs God's intervention. it's not about my words it's not about your words it's about the spirit of God within us this belief that oh I can't do this but only in our weakness can Christ's strength be only when I can't do this I get up every time at church and speak and I'm always nervous and always think I can't do this honestly I do I don't ever eat breakfast when I'm speaking I'll have a cup of tea because I'm a little bit anxious but it makes me dependent on God and that's true of every aspect of our lives at least it should be so I want you to think for a moment of that situation of darkness but you know what is darkness?

it is poverty when we think of these children here they're living in a hopeless situation where we can shine a light through sponsorship darkness to me speaks about paralysis being paralyzed not knowing where I'm going to go what direction I should go in and when we're not in darkness we maybe don't fully understand or sympathize or empathize with somebody who is in darkness because when we go through trials and tribulations we're forced to lean on God a friend of mine once said that he doesn't worry about Christians when everything is going wrong because when they go wrong they depend on God he worries about Christians when everything is going right because we don't need God anymore because we're okay we know our need of God through trials and tribulations we know our need of God in every aspect of our life but just for a moment when I was about nine years old my father took me up Mount Snowdon anybody been to Snowdonia before?

[38 : 43] oh no one's been to Snowdonia oh you have so I can only remember us going up in this kind of vernacular track machine thing that took us to the top of Snowdon and the reason I remember this and it came to mind when I was preparing this word some weeks ago my dad had a bright idea of us walking back down Snowdon but he misjudged the timing and we were about a quarter of the way down and the darkness fell I mean it was dark I could barely see the outline of his face and we didn't know where the road was where the path was or where the 200 foot drop was we were like paralyzed and he didn't know what to do I just remember that because you always think your dad knows what to do and then we were probably standing there paralyzed for what felt like an age and this vehicle came around the corner and it just lit the whole place up and we could see the road and we could see the path and we could see the drop and it was like we were saved and I that image has never left me when I think about the paralysis of darkness and the fact that that light that vehicle freed us folks that's how people out there are right now they might try and buy their way to happiness but deep down they don't have the hope that we have and we can take that to people in some shape or form we can do that with word and with deed words really matter prayer really matters our actions really matter one last story

I was 13 years of age I was youngest of four boys and my parents were actually born on the island of Malta they came over in the 50s and we had relatives come over from Malta I must have been oh I was 13 at the time so I was the youngest of four boys I think they were from Malta it might have been we had some relatives in the states as well anyway I remember this that we sat in a almost like a bible study circle and these relatives asked my mother tell us about your four boys what's happening in their lives and I'll never forget this so they went to the eldest oh he's great he's doing this he's at university oh this one's higher education this one oh Adrian he's the stupid one now I may have been academically challenged but I just probably skived off school and I wasn't a good student and but I just remember these words 13 year old kid now look folks people have had worse verbal abuse said of them so you know

I was in a loving home I'm not you know but I'm just trying to illustrate the point that Adrian he's the stupid one had an impact for about 10 years on my life had a chip on my shoulder I remember these words more than anything else my mother said she could have said oh Adrian he's the apple of my eye he's my baby he's the young one could you imagine the difference it would have meant to me if she had said those words I wouldn't I just think it was so important she didn't realise now I knew my mum loved me and she didn't always call me stupid and I but I'll never forget that words really matter our words as believers as followers of Christ really matter to be able to pray for a situation and ask God to give us the confidence and the wisdom the ability the power to bring a word to somebody that would just make them feel better than before we met them I have the privilege of meeting many church leaders in my job and building relationships and my philosophy is this even if I just buy them a coffee they've got to be in a better place than before they met me

I want to be a blessing to them even if they don't want compassion to come to their church I want to bless them because ministry is a challenge it's not easy imagine if we all had that attitude that whenever we meet somebody Lord give me something to say give me something to impart to these people whether it's laying a hand on their shoulder and saying I really care we don't have to come up with a bible verse every time whether it's sending a card or a bunch of flowers or whatever it might be that we can make a difference in someone's life we have the power so just in closing I want to show you something that I brought with me which reminds me every day that I have the power I have an Amazon account for those of you maybe you don't have an Amazon account it's just you know it's called Prime and it means that if I pay an annual amount

I get all the delivery costs covered and my kids use it so they see everything I buy and when I bought this they said oh dad you're not going to take this to the local church are you and show them I go oh yes I am but dad don't do anything with it will you just show them and put it back in your bag so I want to show you this today if I may you are wondering what on earth has he got in his bag but it's an adult cape and they said don't wear it dad because they look at me if they watch the stream but I have it because it reminds me I've got superpowers Cal and \$9.99 on Amazon if you bought one but it reminds me that when I get up in the morning and I am moving around in the name of Jesus and doing what I do whether it's with the words I say to my wife or to my children or my grandchildren or my community or in my work or to the ends of the earth that what I have to say and what I have to do matters because I have the representation of Christ let me finish with these words if I can from Colossians 3 where it says this therefore as God's chosen people holy and dearly loved clothe yourself with compassion that act of putting on the garment with kindness with humility with gentleness and with patience and verse 13 of Colossians 3 says this bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone forgive as the

[45 : 31] Lord has forgiven you and it says finally in verse 14 and over all these virtues put on love which binds them all together in perfect unity that act of daily clothing ourselves that we've thrown off the old garments of our past life and we've clothed ourselves with Christ and folks that gives us superpowers what are we going to do with that superpower that light are we going to put it under the table where it doesn't bring light or are we going to trust in God's ability to use us and to bless us rather than the enemy's ability to deceive us and to believe we can't do it we've got the spirit of God and we've got something that people in the world who don't have hope do not have but he's called us to give it away in order that you would give us even more let's pray father bless the work here this is a good church it's a good expression of the body of Christ here and

I'm honoured to be here with my brothers and sisters today I pray that you would stir every heart here to leave this place determined to make a difference determined to be light in the midst of all the darkness that's out there that they would go to people and want to bring them to this place of refuge the body of Christ Lord I want to see this place filled for your glory that we see new life coming in here that we could each one take care of these new lives and just disciple and nurture and care for the new lives that you're going to bring in this place Lord I pray for big fruit for this church I pray for a transformation to the point where we run out of seats why because people come here it represents a place of hope pray you bless Cal and those that stand with him in this congregation that your name through all this place would be lifted up what we do we do knowing that we have superpowers we ask these things in Jesus name amen amen bless you thank you thank you where you that

YOUR