

Those Who Love the Gospel Trust Those Who Love the Gospel

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- [0 : 0 0] Who's that? That's on. Good. Brilliant. It was really nice to be back with you this morning. And it's great. I get the joy of chatting with Cal most days. And it's great just to hear from him.
- Just the encouragement that you are as a congregation, the way that you're continuing to hold firm to God's word and seeking to grow in all that God is doing.
- And, yeah, I want you to know that we pray for you regularly. As a congregation at Calderwood, we pray for you often. And we ask that the Lord would continue to strengthen you in your faith and strengthen you as his people.
- And we pray that God would continue to give you opportunities and probably increasingly give you opportunities to be able to make him known where you are here in Bells Hill, that God would grow his church as people come to hear the good news of the gospel.
- [1 : 0 8] And we pray for that for you because we feel that that's important that we do that as those who partner in the gospel together. This morning, as we come to God's word, we are going to read the letter of 3 John.
- So John's third letter. We're going to read the whole letter. But you'll be glad to know it is only 15 verses. So it's not a long letter.
- We're going to read that together. So if you've got your Bibles, if you open them up, I'm going to be reading from the ESV. This is John's third letter.
- The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health as it goes well with your soul.
- For I rejoice greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.
- [2 : 2 2] Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church.
- You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.
- Therefore, we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth. I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.
- So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.
- Beloved, do not imitate evil, but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God. Whoever does evil has not seen God.

[3 : 30] Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone and from the truth itself. We also add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.

I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink. I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends. Every one of them. Amen.

This is a letter that is all about the mission of God and seeing the mission of God go forward. And you know, we know, don't we, that the task of seeing the work of God go to the ends of the earth is a task that is still ongoing.

It's a task that is still taking place, and we're going to sing about that just now, just before we come to God's word. We're going to stand and sing Facing a Task Unfinished.

[4 : 36] We're waiting for David's extra verse there.

We thought there was a, there was a, I thought there was a verse that was about to get added into, I thought, David's been busy this week. He's been writing a new verse to go with this hymn.

No pressure, brother. You could do that for next week. Thank you very much for leading us in worship this morning.

And it is, I love that, I love that hymn. I want to thank you so much for choosing it. It fits so well with where we are, but do you know, that line, you know, from lethargy awake us, oh, every time I sing that, it hits me somewhere in the gut because I think all of us have times where we can be lethargic perhaps to say, you know, at its best about the mission of God and about our role in the mission of God.

And really, as we get into this letter today, I hope what we'll see is a reminder of how important it is that we are people on mission, that we are people who are declaring and making Christ known.

[6 : 10] And using whatever our gifts might be for the advancement of the kingdom. And that every Christian has a role to play in the advancement of the kingdom.

And it is not a job simply for some, but it is a job for everyone who would claim the name of Jesus. Do you know, living as a church family on mission for God is rarely easy.

I remember going to a Baptist church not far from here, to preach. And I was standing in their foyer at the end of the service and I noticed that they had a little sign in their foyer.

It said, visitors welcome. If you're looking for a perfect church, please look elsewhere. And it reminded me of Charles Spurgeon, something that Charles Spurgeon said.

He said, if you wait for a perfect church, you must wait until you get to heaven. And even if you could find a perfect assembly on earth, Charles Spurgeon said, I am sure they would not admit you to their fellowship, for you are not perfect yourself.

[7 : 22] Isn't that so true? And John, writing this letter to this church, he's writing it to a church that is not perfect.

And like every church, because it is not perfect, it has the potential to go bad. And it's got the potential to lose the gospel from its heart.

And really what John is doing here is as he's seeking to encourage an elder, he's also seeking to try and ensure that this church that he is writing to doesn't lose the gospel from who it is.

This is a deeply personal letter. I wonder when we were reading through it, I wonder if you noticed some of the personal touches that come with this letter.

If you still get your Bibles open, we're going to scan through some of them just now. In verse 1, he begins as he talks about Gaius, he says, this is someone that I love.

- [8 : 27] You don't get the sense, you know, does anybody ever get those envelopes through the door that are addressed to the occupier? You know, could it be any more impersonal?
- You know, to the occupier, whoever happens to live here, but that's not how John addresses his letter. No, he addresses it to someone that he loves in truth.
- In verse 1, and then in verse 2, in verse 5, and in verse 11, John addresses Gaius as beloved.
- again, this is not an unfamiliar term. This is the kind of terminology that you would use for someone that you know, someone that you know well, someone that you have deep affection for.
- In verse 4, he addresses the wider church as my children. And then in verse 1, 9, and 12, he uses names.
- [9 : 45] He addresses Gaius by name. He even addresses Diotrephes, the one who's causing problems by name, and he addresses Demetrius by name.
- These are not hypothetical situations, but these are, this is a real situation involving a real church and real people, and John knows them.
- And as he closes off the letter in verse 14, he describes how he hopes to see them soon. And we'll talk face to face.
- This is like the writing of someone who hasn't seen people that he knows and loves for some time, but he's got a longing in his heart to see them soon.
- He recognizes that there's something not quite the same about writing to them as there is about sitting and talking face to face. And he finishes as he, as he wishes peace to be with them.
- [10 : 59] He says, the friends greet you. He says, greet the friends, every one of them. This is a deeply personal letter.
- It is far from one of those letters that you get through the post that just says, dear occupant. It's far from one of those letters that you get through the post that begins, to the householder.
- Instead, this is a letter that is deeply personal. John knows these people, he knows this church, and he loves these people.
- And you know, it's one of the things that I love about our partnership between Calderwood and Bells Hill is that we know you, that we love you, that we know many of you by name, that we can refer to you by name.
- You're not people over there in Bells Hill that we don't know, that we don't have any real knowledge of, that you're just this bunch of Christians who meet on a Sunday.
- [12 : 03] No, we know you, and we love you, and we have a deep affection for you. We pray for you often, and I hope that as you pray for us, you have that same desire and that same affection, that we can think of you as friends, that I can bring you greetings from our church, and likewise, I can take your greetings to Calderwood.
- And that we have people in common, people that we know and love, other believers in common, and whether that's someone like Cal who we share in common, or whether that's the folks at Deniston Baptist because we share that in common through Stephen and Ruth and the wider family.
- There's a commonality that comes about because we know each other and we have one another in common. this is a deeply personal letter from the Apostle John, the one who wrote the Gospel of John, the one who wrote these three letters, and the one who wrote Revelation.

Revelation. And he's writing to a man called Gaius who is most likely a pastor. A pastor who receives missionaries.

I don't think Gaius is an everyday believer, but I think he's someone who has a position within the life of the church because he's someone who John is writing to here in the expectation that Gaius is in a position to be able to deal with the problem that's going on in verse 9 and following.

[13 : 52] And that Gaius is also hopefully in a position where he could read this letter to the church. It is a letter to him personally, but I think there's an expectation that this would be read to the church.

And what we see in the opening couple of verses from verse 2 to 4 is that John is greatly encouraged that Gaius, that this pastor, is continuing to walk in the truth.

That's what he's encouraged by in verses 2 and 4. And I'm sure that it's not only the pastor who is walking in the truth, but as we'll see there as a reference here to my children.

So there's obviously an encouragement that there are a group of people here in this church who are living according to the truth. But as we'll see, there's someone else in this church who is not walking in the truth.

And in a church, it can become a whose side are you on kind of thing. John wants to make it clear whose example this church should follow.

[15 : 08] Gaius or Diotrephes. And John wants to make it clear that it is Gaius' example that is the good example. And so John begins by telling Gaius in verse 2 that he prays for him.

I love the fact that that hymn we just sung talked about how when we face this task unfinished, it begins on our knees. That is where it begins.

When we look at the mission of God and the work that is still to be done, it begins on our knees. Now it doesn't have us remain on our knees. It has us get up and move into action also.

But it is not enough to simply go out. We must be a people who are prayerful. And here as John is praying for Gaius, he is praying that things may go well for him, that he may be in good health.

He prays for very practical things. And I think it is encouraging to see that it is not bad to pray for practical things. This is certainly not a verse to support prosperity gospel that if you believe in the gospel then everything will go well for you, your health and everything.

[16 : 26] No, John is praying and saying it is okay to pray for practical things, to pray that people might enjoy good health and that life may go well. But notice the second part of verse 2, as it goes well with your soul.

You see, John's not only got his mind on the practical and the physical, but he's praying ultimately that things would continue to go well with his soul.

because you see, ultimately to walk in the truth in every area of life is to have more concern about the spiritual than the physical.

So often we can fix our eyes, to use Bible language, on that which is around us, what we can see. The trials and the difficulties, the challenges that we might be facing.

But of course the Bible encourages us to lift our eyes and to fix them on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

[17 : 42] Because if we are going to be those who are going to walk in the truth, then we have to have more concern about the spiritual than the physical.

this is where the battle is won. When we understand that it is our spiritual strength and our spiritual lives that ought to be built up, when we understand that it is lost souls that we are to seek and to reach out to and to draw to Christ, when we see that, that we realize that the battle is not to spend ourselves simply making people's lives better here and there, but our challenge is to be those who would seek the spiritual welfare of others, whether that's other Christians or whether that is those who don't yet know the Lord.

And John goes on to speak of a testimony that he has heard. He rejoiced greatly when brothers came to him and they testified about the fact that Gaius is continuing to walk in the truth.

And what we see is that God's truth is in this man, that he is a man of conviction, he is in the truth, but he is also a man of character, he is living the truth. And this is important for us as believers, that the testimony of his life matched the testimony of his mouth.

He was a man of conviction and of character. He was not only in the truth, but he was also living and walking in the truth. And this, John says, brings him great joy.

[19 : 36] I have no greater joy, John says, than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. It's quite a statement, isn't it?

To say that he rejoices in verse 3, and that he has no greater joy, verse 4, than to hear that his children are walking in the truth.

I wonder what gives you joy. I wonder what would give you greatest joy. Is it, is it when we look at other believers and see that they are walking in the truth?

I'm not sure if we're honest. I think perhaps there might be other things that would hit the joy list before that. Perhaps some of them would be physical things, and not spiritual.

But for John, he has no greater joy. And I think it's important to remember this because when we are doing the work of evangelism, or when we're seeking to share our faith, that can be a scary thing.

[20 : 51] It can be something that we feel out of our depth with. It can be something that we almost fear a little bit because we think, I don't know, how is somebody going to receive me talking to them about Jesus?

How is my family member or my good friend that I meet for coffee? How are they going to feel when I suddenly start talking about Jesus over a cup of tea or a cup of coffee? And we focus on what happens if they don't like what we say.

And we can be slow to think about the joy that we would feel if they received our message. And if five or ten years down the line, we were to look back and see them still walking with the Lord and to see them now active in their Christian life, following him in truth.

The joy that that would give us to think that all began with a cup of coffee when we started to talk about Jesus. Perhaps some of you can think at the moment, perhaps folks like David or Bill who have been in ministry can think of people in your own ministries who came to faith and when you hear that they continue to walk with the Lord or when you get a message from them or bump into them at a Christian conference, it just gives you joy, doesn't it?

To look and say, they're still walking with the Lord. Perhaps it's someday in your own life that you've had a part to play in them coming to the Lord and you look at them and you think, oh, it gives us a great joy.

[22 : 30] not a pride in ourselves but a joy, a joy in what the Lord has done. And when we think about that great task unfinished, we can be so quick to think about what happens if they reject our message.

We can be so slow to think of the joy that there would be in our hearts if they accept our message and then continue on with the Lord. And so here we see a man who is walking in the truth.

He is walking in the truth. But then in verses 5 to 8, we see that he's not only a man walking in the truth in his own life, but he's a man who is using his gifts to promote the truth.

And this is where we see that there's something about Gaius' life that John really wants to commend him for. And that is his hospitality and his care for traveling gospel workers.

He says in verse 5 that what Gaius does is a faithful thing for faithful brothers. Gaius' household clearly provides hospitality.

[23 : 47] They bring in these traveling gospel workers and they care for them. so much so that they testify to Gaius and his family's love for them in front of the church.

And as Gaius and his household provide this kind of hospitality, what we see is that they are partnering in this gospel work.

The very heart of this partnership is the common cause, verse 7. These traveling gospel workers have gone out for the sake of the name.

For the sake of the name. And it is that common cause that causes Gaius to welcome them into his home, to provide hospitality for them and to seek to send them on their journey in a way that honors God, in a way that is worthy of God.

You see, this kind of partnership in the gospel is done for the sake of the name. The sake of the name that is recorded in Acts 4.

[25 : 16] when it says that Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders which has become the cornerstone, and there is salvation in no one else.

For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. You see, what Gaius is doing here in opening up his home is not simply being a nice person.

He's not simply being hospitable. He's not simply demonstrating an ability to cook or to bake or whatever else they might do to look after these people.

No, he is partnering in the gospel. This is gospel work that he is doing. There's a common cause. These men that are staying with him have gone out for the sake of the name and Gaius believes with all of his heart that there is only one name under heaven that anyone can be saved and that is the name of Jesus and he will use whatever means he has at his hands to partner with people to make sure that that name is made known.

He is a man who is about promoting the truth of the gospel. is Gaius's ministry significant?

[26 : 44] Is Gaius's ministry significant? It's a question to ask, isn't it? Is what he is doing here an important thing to do? Is it a significant thing to do?

Well, John thinks so. John thinks so. He goes to the time and the effort to write in order to tell him that it's an important thing that he does.

But I wonder, when you think of what Gaius is actually doing, opening up his home, perhaps giving these people a bed, providing food for them and perhaps fundraising some money for the next part of our journey, does it seem like a very impressive thing to do?

I think a lot of us would sit and say, maybe does it seem that impressive? It maybe just seems quite ordinary. I mean, after all, he's just giving them somewhere to stay and giving them some food.

Seems like a pretty ordinary thing to do. Doesn't seem like the kind of thing that gets you in the history books. although Gaius finds himself in the best-selling book of all time and which has still been read 2,000 years later.

[28 : 07] I don't think when Gaius opened up his doors and welcomed people in, he thought he was changing history or making history. But this ordinary thing he does of opening up his home, providing hospitality, using whatever means he had to ensure that the gospel went out.

I don't think he thought that was going to change history or make history. But it is significant and it is an important part of ministry.

I'm sure a lot of people would have looked at the traveling guys, the guys who were coming, the guys who have no name in this letter. They are simply known as strangers and brothers. fellow workers.

I'm sure there are plenty of people who looked at them, the guys who were going from town to town to town to town proclaiming the gospel and thought those are the guys who are doing the great ministry. And they are.

But they would forget completely those who made it possible, the likes of Gaius, who if it wasn't for him, these guys would not be able to go from town to town to town.

[29 : 24] you see there's a role in ministry for all of us. Not simply in terms of showing Christian hospitality, but there's a role for all of us in making Christ known.

And there are some who will be more natural at speaking that out. There will be some who are more natural at relationally sitting down. I was talking to somebody in our church the other week and he was saying he was out for dinner and there was somebody at the table, there was another group of people at the table beside them and they were sitting chatting, they were sitting at the table and as they were getting up to leave he just kind of nodded towards them and they said oh how are you?

They didn't know each other, it was just, and he said I'm fine. And he introduced himself and the lady replied and said oh my name's, it happened to be Ruth, my name's Ruth, wasn't you, she wasn't a believer.

And the man said oh Ruth, a wonderful name from the Bible and he began just not to go into a big sermon about Jesus but just to speak, just to say a wonderful name from the Bible and she said oh do you go to church?

And he said oh now you've asked. And he began to just share a little bit of his own testimony. I listen to that kind of story and I think oh my goodness I am not like that.

[30 : 56] You know I don't go from what's your name to talking about the gospel in two questions. You know I just struggle with that. He's just brilliant at it and he does it all the time.

Some folks are just naturally gifted that way. You might be naturally gifted that way where you're someone who's able to bring Jesus into every conversation and that is a gift. Some are like that.

Some are able to speak about Jesus in other ways and some are able to support and encourage and facilitate that work and make it happen.

There's a place for everyone within God's mission. God's desire is to encourage Gaius but that there's a problem here in the church.

And John has a desire to protect the truth as well. Because in contrast to Gaius we're introduced to another man called Diotrefes.

[32 : 08] Diotrefes it tells us is a man who has concern for himself. He likes to put himself first it tells us.

In contrast to Gaius whose concern is for the name, the name of Jesus that can save, Diotrefes well his concern is for himself.

You can contrast Gaius who is a partner in the gospel and Diotrefes who refuses to welcome people and he stops others from doing it and what's worse is that when others do it he puts them out of the church.

I mean imagine yourself in this situation where there is someone in the church who is actively putting people out of the church for committing the great crime of supporting gospel work.

He is not acting in love and he is certainly wrongly using church discipline and John says verse 11 that he is someone because of his evil works who has not seen God.

[33 : 38] He does not recognize the apostles' authority and their gospel and so he is not living according to it.

And this is a danger for the church because we can look and we can think that would never happen in my church. We would spot that a mile off.

But we've got to remember that Diotrophes would not have looked like a bad guy. He didn't come to church on a Sunday with a badge that said false teacher or that said I don't know God.

He perhaps had plausible arguments against John and against the apostles. He clearly had authority and influence in the church because he was able to put people out of it.

So he clearly had influence and people who have influence often people flock to wars. And it would have been easy for this church to look at Gaius and to look at Diotrophes and to think to themselves well this Gaius you know he constantly opens up his home for these folks raises money to support them.

[35 : 11] Maybe he's asking them for money to support them. He's a guy who's making himself poorer for the expense to the gospel.

Or perhaps thinking think of the things that Gaius could do for him and his family if he wasn't constantly receiving these missionaries and he wasn't constantly doing this kind of stuff.

And what he's doing isn't really that significant anyway. Not like Diotrophes who has power and who has influence.

And who's maybe got impressive arguments against John. It would be easy for church members to look at these two and conclude that Gaius just takes things a bit too far.

He's that maverick that's not worth following. And given the option of following Diotrophes, the influential guy who sounds good and whose life looks good, a following Gaius who is constantly worse off, regularly asking people for money to support the ministry, well, the temptation might be to follow Diotrophes and to reject Gaius.

[36 : 35] You see, even in a church, we can find it hard sometimes to follow those who are really passionate about gospel ministry.

Because to be really passionate about gospel ministry means to face all those fears that we have about what happens if people reject us.

It means to put the status quo of our church at risk. because what happens if those people who don't know how to behave in church start coming to church and start shaking it up a bit and they don't know when to stand up and sit down and they don't know when to pray and not to pray.

I remember being in a message at Calderwood and quite often as I do when I'm preaching, I'll say something as a question. I'm not really anticipating the reply back.

I'm about to give you the answer but I'll say it as a question and pause and I did that in Calderwood a few months back and somebody who's very, very new to church just shouted right out. What happens when our kids come in and start running riot a bit and causing a bit of havoc and we've got to embrace all those things.

[38 : 06] you see, being for the mission of God is messy. It's messy. And it may be easy to think, well, do you know what, that option of just looking after one another and reading our Bibles and praying and just keeping ourselves nice and comfortable, well, that option is maybe a valid one to follow.

But you see, that is to forget that God's mission matters. It's to forget that playing our part in God's mission locally and throughout the globe matters.

It's to forget that investing in God's mission is a good thing. And it does involve sacrifice, but we do it for the sake of the name.

We do it for the sake of the only name under heaven and earth by which people can be saved. And so when you stand up at the start of Sunday morning and say we raised 900 odd pounds for a ministry that's going on in India, I sit and I think to myself, some of you are worse off as a result of that.

And our world, especially at the moment, would say that you're crazy. Why would you make yourself worse off? Do you even know if you can afford the gas and electricity this winter?

[39 : 55] No. But you see it's to miss the point, isn't it? That it is a good thing to sacrifice ourselves to see the work of the gospel going forward.

And not only to see ourselves sacrifice ourselves financially, but in terms of our time and in terms of the life of our church, it is a good thing to sacrifice ourselves to see the work of the gospel go out.

Investing in God's mission is a good thing. And when we do that, in whatever way we invest in God's mission, in whatever way we, whether that's by supporting the work of ministry, whether that's by making tea and coffee at church ministry, so if there's an outreach thing and your part is to make tea and coffee so that it provides an opportunity for people to come in, or whether it's, you know, you're that person that just is able to sit down with people at a table and bring Jesus into a conversation, or whatever part you play, you can call yourself, verse 8, a fellow worker for the truth.

but you see, every single believer ought to be able to call themselves a fellow worker for the truth. And if you're sitting here this morning and you're thinking, I don't know if I could call myself that, that's okay, that's okay.

It's perhaps a conversation with brothers and sisters and with your deacons and with Cal that says, I want to be a fellow worker for the truth. I might not be able to do what some people might class as impressive, but I can do something.

[42 : 02] I can do something. And maybe the Lord would honour my something the way that you honour Gaius' something. But there is an enemy to God's mission, even within the church.

You know, Diotrephes had lost the plot, his desire was to put himself first. And though perhaps we might not be as brazen to say that we are putting ourselves first, many of us also lose the plot of God's story.

Our own desires, our own pursuits, our own wants, our own comfort, they can sometimes take priority over God's purpose. Sometimes our desires become more important than the spread of the name of Jesus.

His name is above all names. So it's important because mission matters. And finally, just as we finish up, as someone who was a missionary for a few years, it is important for us to see that missionaries matter.

Missionaries matter. It would seem that these strangers in verse 5 were such. They were missionaries. They were faithful with the gospel.

[43 : 29] They came sent by their local church. And though Gaius and his fellow church members didn't know them, they did know their message. They knew their mission and they knew their master.

And in the eyes of Gaius and his local church, these faithful missionaries mattered. They were an important part in God's mission and that was enough to justify extending practical hospitality to them.

And so they supported them in a manner that was worthy of God. And you know, sometimes missions and missionaries can be relegated relegated to secondary things.

Churches might give money, but it's rare that the whole church knows the missionaries. And in this letter, John pushes against us.

He's encouraging us to be those who would lovingly, sacrificially, and practically partner with missionaries. I remember when we were in South Sudan, I remember a community that we had been working with and traveling to.

[44 : 38] It was 18 miles from where we stayed and I would go there every week to do some work in the community to encourage the few believers that were there and to share the gospel with whoever I had the opportunity to share it with.

It would take me hours to travel the 17 or 18 miles. I mean, it was, you know, the roads were horrendous. And as soon as I was about two or three miles out, there was no mobile phone reception.

So if the car broke down or I got stuck or something happened to me on the road, that was it. I was staying there until I could hitch a ride back. That was basically it.

I would always go. I would go every week and I would go not being sure if I would get back home that night. And it was a road where there would often be troubles and difficulties and everything else along the way.

And it was pretty dangerous. Not just the physical condition of the road, but sometimes folks would take advantage of that and try and rob folks on the road and different things.

[45 : 50] And I would go there week after week after week to a community where there were only a handful of believers. And most people followed tribal religions and they rejected these few believers completely.

And you know, I went there week after week these were poor, poor people who literally ate whatever they could grow. And if they couldn't grow it they didn't have money to buy anything else.

These were poor, poor people. I remember one day being down there and I was getting into my car ready to come back and one of the old Christian ladies who came to faith just a few years before came running towards the car obviously thinking I was about to go and she came running towards the car shouting, wait, wait.

I came out and there she was holding a chicken alive, legs bound, flapping its wings and clucking away and she said this is for you and for your wife.

Now, we didn't, you know, we were going to eat that night. We weren't going to be, we weren't, you know, struggling.

[47 : 24] That chicken was like probably one of the most valuable things that woman had in her house. But she wanted me to have it and she said, you bring us the most valuable thing you have when you come and you tell us about Jesus.

And she said, I just wanted you to have this as a little gift. I drove the 17, 18 miles back up the road with a chicken clucking away in the back of the car.

But it has stuck with me because there was someone who saw how important it was when people came for the sake of the name.

And it encouraged my heart so much. We began to see fruit in that community. That lady, an incredible evangelist amongst other women in that community.

missionaries matter. And supporting them matters. And finding missionaries that we share the same passion for the gospel for.

[48 : 52] We believe the same things about what the mission of God is and about the importance of the church. And we believe these things together and we partner together and we become fellow workers together for the truth.

It's a good thing. And this letter, is one that encourages us to remember that God's mission matters. Every single one of us have a role to play.

Whether it's the guy doing the 17, 18 mile journey out to our community that doesn't know the Lord. Or whether it's the woman who just gives a chicken to encourage his heart.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, Father, we do thank you so much for your gospel.

And we thank you for your son who has died and who has risen again and who is the only name under heaven and earth that anyone can be saved.

[49 : 58] And Father, we long to see your gospel spread in this town. Lord, we long to see it spread beyond this town, throughout our nation, throughout Europe, and to the ends of the earth.

And Heavenly Father, sometimes when we think about your gospel going to the ends of the earth, we can feel as if this task is too great for us, this job is too much.

And Father, that is true. But it is not too much for your son, Jesus, who sits at your right hand and who continues to make sure that your mission goes forth and that his name is heard by people of every tribe and tongue and nation.

And Father, we recognize that you have placed us here. We ask, Father God, that you would lead us to be those who are fellow workers, fellow workers in making your gospel known here in Bells Hill, fellow workers who are partnering with others to make your gospel known in other places around our country and around the world.

Father, help us all to see that whatever we bring, if we are passionate about your name and if we are passionate about people coming to know you, that we can all play our part.

[51 : 52] to make Christ known, to see the lost saved, to see your church built up. Father, we thank you for the amazing privilege that it is that you partner with us.

You are a sovereign God who to you salvation belongs, but you have a great commission for us to proclaim the excellencies of your Son, that all might hear of him and that as we proclaim him, you do your work, which is to draw people to yourself.

We ask, Father, that you would partner with us in our endeavors and that we would begin, Lord, to see fruit in this community as we proclaim Jesus and as you draw people to yourself.

we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.