

The 4 Point Gospel - Let's Make it Happen

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[0 : 00] In our lead up to this week, you will have seen and you will have hopefully read and responded to a leaflet we've had and it's called Let's Make It Happen.

And make it happen. And I thought, what is that it? What is that it to make it happen? I'm reading this morning, Jesus had been baptised. He'd been baptised and then immediately he goes from there into the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights.

In the power of the Holy Spirit, he knows that things are going to happen. He knows this exciting and dynamic phase of his ministry that he's been called to is about to start.

It's about to accelerate. And here this morning in Matthew chapter 4 verse 11, we see the privilege of seeing that move of God commence.

That exciting moment where we read this morning, this move of God that links us and inspires us and encourages us today as Jesus assembles the crew for an audacious and amazing adventure that they're all about to set out on for three years.

[1 : 23] Nobody knew what they were signing up for.

Most unlikely crew ever.

Most likely, they're all about to make it happen.

Maybe you've heard it maybe years back. Maybe you're waiting for it afresh. Whatever that call is, have you heard that call?

Where Jesus says to you, will you come and follow me? Will you do this? Will you join in this adventure? That Jesus call, that Jesus call, leave whatever it might be and follow me.

[3 : 18] Now I just want to clarify something here. Jesus isn't maybe saying to us when he asks us to leave our careers, to leave our houses, leave our families and do all that.

It's a follow me. It's a follow me for whatever that means for us in our own setting. For us listening on the podcast, whether we're driving today or whatever. Whatever that might be that Jesus is asking of us, but we are called to trust in him and step into an adventure that not only will transform our life here, but also will transform our lives in eternity and those that we will reach, but it will reach those that are around us if we choose to truly follow.

They dropped their nets and immediately followed Jesus. What a line. Everything that's gone into life.

I've done all this training. This is my life. This is my security. This is what I do. This is my significance. I always get this thing, you know, with guys, you know, the conversation starts off, how are you doing?

And then it normally gets around very quickly. So to what do you do for a job? We just need to get into that pecking order, don't we? We need to know what our significance is in this thing. He's asking them to leave everything that is their significance and follow him.

[4 : 51] Now, as they drop their nets, I don't know what your net is that you are being asked to leave and follow Jesus.

Because I think there's a bit of a myth around Christians that if we say yes to Jesus, that's the end of it. We can sit in the back of the boat and allow somebody else to row us into eternity.

It doesn't quite work like that. And this thing that Jesus calls us into a relationship to walk with him into the adventure and show us and be part of what he's doing.

And these, to become a follower of Jesus, a disciple, we come into that relationship with a living Lord.

These disciples were going to be carriers of messages to see others becoming followers and disciples. These disciples would disciple disciples who would disciple disciples and go down the thing where many of us this morning will have pictures and be giving thanks of those people that

brought us and discipled us into a living relationship with the Lord.

[6 : 00] I'm sure many of us can think of those people. Mine is a lady. She was lovely. She used to, she always wore a coat, even in the summer. And she would come into our little Baptist tin chapel on my council estate, where we were shoved out in the afternoon so our parents could have some time on their own.

And we would go in there and she would sit down in a lovely, lovely northern accent. She would cook us cookies. I'd never heard of cookies before. But she gave us cookies that she had baked. And she opened my eyes to the stories and the love of Jesus. I can't wait to see her on that great day. She was part of a significant part of my discipleship journey.

We have all people who have done that. The question is, who are we a part of somebody else's discipleship journey? Where is that for us? And these disciples were disciple, disciples, and on it goes.

And on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came, just as Jesus had promised, the Spirit came for all people. This wasn't a select club.

[7 : 09] The disciples would see thousands added to their number. Whoa! Because people discipled, discipled, discipled. And that's what they would do. They were carriers of a message.

A message to make it happen. To show the love of God. People who know the grace of God, the power of the presence and the purpose of God. And my impression is, as I meet with people who have become disciples, that all have had to leave something in their story in order to move into that new place to follow Jesus.

A sense of sacrifice in order to serve. We get the story all the way through the Bible. The rich young ruler. Lord, I would do anything. What do I do to follow you? What do I do to follow you? I would do anything.

And Jesus presses the button because he knows the net that he personally has to drop. Which for him is about his significance and his wealth and everything that was in it.

That's not the same for all of us. But it was for him. And he walked away a sad young man.

Because that was the one thing that he just couldn't drop in order to follow Jesus.

[8 : 15] And we all know that the power of the Holy Spirit to sustain us. To sustain us when the evil one comes knocking.

Because he will. You know, my impression is, when I was a nominal Christian, I didn't have to bother about the evil one at all because he wasn't interested in me.

Because I wasn't making any significant impact. I was just coasting along in life. My goodness, when you step up and give you, whoa, bring it on.

And that's when you need the power of the Holy Spirit moving in your life. In saying that you know the power of the Spirit and you know that power. In my own calling.

And I don't, this is in no way. This is for me personally. This is for me as part of my calling. And my net that I had to drop was to sell my house.

[9 : 17] When this collar came along, everything that I'd had, you notice I, and that was for ordained ministry. And you notice I don't say full-time ministry.

Because we were all. And let's get this really clear. We are all in full-time ministry. This just happens to be a collar which is part of all of our ministries.

Yeah. But for me personally, when this came along, we sensed the Lord said, you've got to sell your house. Now, if you knew what my house meant to me, it was everything.

It was my significance. It was my security. It was everything that I had worked for. It was everything that I had done. And yet the Lord knew at that time that the house had to go.

My goodness, did I kick and scream. I kicked and screamed, but I knew it had to go. I didn't know the reason for it at the time. It wasn't the best financial thing that you do in earthly terms.

[10 : 24] But I knew that it had to go. I didn't know why that he'd asked me to make this huge sacrifice. And it was a huge sacrifice in human terms.

But I will tell you why that the Lord asks you to drop a net sometimes for whatever that might be to follow him. 18 months later, as a newly ordained curate, I'd quickly realised that the Church of England wasn't necessarily full of people who loved the Lord like I did.

It wasn't sometimes a good experience. And I'd found myself on this particular Tuesday morning. I was in Wales. I was at lunch, going to lunch, when I was suddenly aware of somebody next to me.

And next to me was a friend that I had worked with for many, many years when I was in the place. And there he is, just queued up next to me, getting lunch. I said, my goodness. I said, what are you doing here? He said, I'm just passing through. I said, what a load of rubbish. I said, nobody passes through Wales. [11:33] I said, if I didn't know you better, you were here to bump me for a job. And he said, I am. And in that moment, he offered me a rollback in a service that I'm not allowed to mention because I signed a form.

But Stella Remington's allowed to write a book about it. So what happens is he offers me this phenomenal package. And it says in the Bible that the devil chooses an opportune time. He's like a roaring lion. And in a split second, I suddenly realised, if I'm tempted by this, I haven't got a house to live in.

I knew in that moment why I had to sell the house. Because so easily, when you drop a net, it's so easy to go back to it.

Back to the way we were living. Back to the way things were. Back to the old life. And it is so easy to do that. You know, I'm stood there.

[12:44] And in some ways, I'm so thankful in that moment that I had to do that. Maybe this morning. Actually, we're still in contact.

He phoned me the other day. He still admires me because he was really upset. Because he said, nobody turns me down when I pitch them. He still thinks I'm crazy.

But that's part of the discipleship adventure. Maybe this morning you realised that there is something you have to drop in order to be free to follow Jesus.

That'll be different for all of us in our discipleship journey. What is that net? Perhaps for some of us, it's doubt. Perhaps for some of us, it's cynicism.

You know, why are we doing all this giving? How is the church spending our money? It's not our money. It's the Lord's money. You know, you just got to trust your brothers and sisters as to how they do it. You know?

[13:41] Perhaps there is something in your heart that struggles with grace. Maybe there is something issues over trust. A lack of trust.

Maybe recurring character issues in us that so easily we go back to. Maybe it's a long-standing grudge and an issue of forgiveness.

Maybe it's an issue with a person or a group of people. And that's your net. I can't go there, Lord, because that's an issue. Drop the net and move on.

And believe you me, nets will tangle you and any fisherman will tell you they will drown you if you're not careful.

Sometimes it's good to drop the net and move on. You see, we have two distinct calls here. One to respond, one to follow. The other follows on from that is to serve.

[14:51] And Jesus modeled that to the disciples over those three years. Follow me and I will show you. I will show you how to serve. I will show you what the marks of relationship are between me and you.

I will show you what it is to disciple people. I will show you if this church didn't exist, ask his people. Think of the ministries in the everyday that would fail to thrive and grow.

Jesus says, I will show you what this adventure looks like. You see, I was thinking with this giving thing.

You know, if I give, I want people to know it comes from the heart of God. It doesn't come from my magnanimous generosity.

It comes from the heart of God. And, you know, we give to other charities outside and it challenged me. You know, if I give to the Dogs Trust or similar charity, all worthy as they are, do they know that I'm a disciple of Jesus?

[16:00] That why I'm giving is because out of my love of God. Maybe they ought to have a tick box on there for us to say, I am giving because I am a Christian and this is out of my love of God that I am giving to this.

If you serve maybe in a choir, maybe wherever that is, that isn't linked to the church. Do people know that you are a disciple of Christ? Do you share that?

Are you able to do that? You know, if you give to a charity, and I'm not saying that you shouldn't, but you may have noticed that we are a charity as well. Christ Church is a charity.

It has its own number, you know. Maybe others would like to encourage you to do that in order to serve and make the gospel known. That is why we exist.

That is the it there. And that's what we're going to explore over the next four weeks in Lent. Because if you've noticed around, you've noticed some symbols, you've noticed the banner that's outside, and there's a table over here.

[17:07] And what we're going to do is encourage each one of us in Lent to take one of these, which is a band, and one of these, which will explain what the four symbols are.

Because the thing is, is if we are struggling to actually tell people about our faith, and why we exist, what the it is, this really helps.

Because people will say, what are those symbols outside your church? What are those symbols on your website? What are the symbols that you've put on your desk? What are the symbols that is on your wristband, which I'm going to invite everybody to take as they leave?

You may even like to take a balloon and hang it in your window, and give to a friend. See, in the four-point gospel, if we're a disciple, a follower of Jesus, this morning we not only pledge ourselves in our sharing and our giving, but we know that God has chosen us.

God has chosen us to ask us to lay down something and follow him, whatever that something is. God has chosen you and me to change lives, to be an agent of change, and this Lent will be like no other, because brothers and sisters, we are going to go out into the everyday, and we are going to tell people about the gospel of Christ.

[18:31] On the screen, here's the symbols. You see, in the heart, it says, I, God loves me. It's a trite line that comes out, but four points is a very simple overview to let people know that God loves them, and we show that in the way in which we respond.

So the first one is the heart, that God loves us, that God loves you, and can love you no matter whatever, that he is there for you, that he is part of you.

People need to know that so much. I'm looking at a thing at the moment about loneliness, how people need to know that they are loved and acknowledged by God, that they are loved.

The second is this X. And the second is this X is about, I have sinned. I acknowledge that I want to just be, as we said, things are good with my soul.

I want to get rid of the stuff that's holding me back. Please, Lord, I know that I'm going to mess up, probably going to mess up by the time I even get down. If somebody cuts me up later on in the car, I'll have probably had to confess again.

[19:43] But there will be that time we need to keep clearing, keep the doorway open, that we have sinned, we acknowledge that. And the Bible says that sin ultimately brings death, which the good news is, is next, is because it's the cross.

And we can say to people that the third point is probably one of the most well-known facts, yet is probably one of the most misunderstood. And the key for us is to realise, if you've been here at Fact this morning, you would have loved this so much.

They, to me, it all came alive. There was two wheelie chairs here, one with God and one with us. In one wheelie chair, both together, God and us in partnership.

And one wheelie chair weighs over here with our back to God. And God says that's not enough. So what I'll do is through the cross, through Jesus, I will come and come and I will meet you.

And I will be where you are so that you will know my peace and my presence. So many people need to know that. The saving power of the cross, which leads us into the next one, which is the question mark, is will you decide to turn around and meet with him?

[20:56] Will you accept that sacrifice that he made? It's the four-point gospel. It is the it, that Jesus died for us and we need to make a decision.

Each of the next four Sundays, we will explore each of these areas as a church to encourage us and empower us to go out and make a difference in the everyday.

It's not for our own self-gratification. It's to go out and make a difference, to make the it known. Will we make the change? And we're going to send you out this morning with one of these cards, one of these bands with balloons and pray as you wake each morning for an opportunity that somebody will ask you and say, what on earth is that on your wrist?

What does that all mean? And you'll say, do you know what? Maybe you want to take some spare ones of these. Maybe you even want to put one in your pocket to share with people.

But this is what it means. This is what is important, not just to me, but it's important to you in your life again. As Jesus was walking, would the band like to come up? That would be great.

[22 : 07] As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, called Peter, and his brother Andrew, and they were casting a net into the lake for they were fishermen.

Come, come and follow me. At once, they left their nets and followed him. I don't know about you people, I think there's a sense of urgency around at the moment, that we come, that people gather in churches, but we don't go out and we share the gospel.

This, for our Lent, is an opportunity. You know, I was thinking, I don't know what you've given up for Lent, all this, oh, I've given up, I've given up chocolates and sweets.

If you ever see me with a bag of wine gums in a meeting, you'll know it's the most boring meeting ever. Yeah? Because it keeps me up. But, it's more than giving that up. It's giving out.

What I'm asking of us as a church and I believe what the Lord is asking of us is to give out this Lent. To give out in our sharing and our giving. To give out of ourselves as we leave ourselves free to share the gospel.

[23 : 20] He chooses, Jesus did not call the qualified, he qualified the called. Just want to make that really clear. Jesus did not call the qualified.

Rather, he qualifies the called. Once we say yes, the adventure starts afresh. I was really encouraged this week that there was one of the groups that meets here, a women's group, came and asked us how the overflow of their group could make a difference in our outreach in our community.

I was so excited by that. Maybe if you belong to a growth group, a small group, a home group, a men's group, a women's group, maybe you would like to do that. And I was given a book some time ago, it's called Love Does by Bob Goff.

I'll just read you this before we move into a time of prayer. Bob says, I'm going to go to the Bible and I'm going to go to the Bible and I'm going to go to the Bible and I'm going to go to the Bible and I'm going to go to the Bible.

We've been at it now for 15 years and I've found there's a big difference between the two. In our Bible doing, we read what God has to say and then focus all of our attention on what we are going to do about it.

[24 : 44] Just agreeing isn't enough. I can't think of a single time where Jesus asked his friends to just agree with him. God has chosen you to be his own.

He's chosen each one of us. May God grant to each one of us his modern day disciples the compassion, power, courage, strength and joy to make it happen.

Here in Clevedon and the places where we spend our days each day. Would you pray with me? Holy Spirit, would you come?

Just had a picture this morning of somebody fishing and when you see fishermen they often have a wristband around their net so that the net just sense maybe taking that wristband off and putting on this wristband afresh.

Whatever that is I pray if the Lord has shown you a net that you have to drop Holy Spirit would you come in power and give us the courage to drop that net in order to follow you.

[26 : 03] Holy Spirit, would you free us from any sense of obligation to a denomination to a denomination but focus our whole self on you.

That it's about you and us and us as a church family. and us sense for some this morning it is the peace and power of the Holy Spirit to drop our fears and concerns and whatever that is for us in order to encounter the richness of what is waiting for us in the adventure.

Holy Spirit, would you come now? Would you give us that peace which the world cannot give in order that we can be courageous for you.

Maybe if you're listening to this on a podcast or you're listening to this in your car or maybe listening that today if today is the day that you have decided to drop the net that he is asking you to drop and follow him oh happy day.

Hallelujah. A new beginning. A new beginning. A new beginning. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[27 : 36] Thanks, man.