

# Refresh Women 7th September 2025

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Preacher: Kate Dommett

[ 0 : 00 ] Oh, it's so lovely to be here and it's a real privilege to be asked to bring a message.! And I'll pray in just a moment.

But I guess I just wanted to, as Catherine read, say that we're hearing there from Paul writing to the Romans.

And he's writing to a really diverse group of believers. And in that, we hear him encouraging them to notice one another, to be Jesus to one another, to depend on God in order to be able to do this.

And then notice the beauty of the community that plays out if we choose to live this way. And so the first thing that occurred to me was, wow, this is literally what Refresh is all about.

Growing in intimacy with Jesus and friendship with one another. So let's just pray. As we come into this space, just breathe deep of the Holy Spirit.

[ 1 : 33 ] Your presence is here, Lord, and I pray that your Spirit would enable us to notice and be prompted. And as Bethan encouraged us, to be expectant of what you have for us.

Amen. So we're going to read through it. We're going to have the words up on the slides. And we're going to go a bit at a time and see what we notice.

Does that sound okay? Good. So those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter and not just do what's most convenient for us.

Hold my hands up. That's kind of my choice quite a lot of the time. I'm going to just do that. That's quite easy. Strength is for service, not status. Each one of us needs to look after the good people around us, asking ourselves, how can I help?

Well, I had a little look around the room and I checked and we are all human, for sure. No assumptions there.

[ 2 : 49 ] I just see it. And we falter. And we all face seasons of challenge. Challenge. Helen has talked to us about that in her messages before.

And here we have a clear message to us all to notice those around us. Build each other up. Be patient when needed.

Support one other. Walk alongside those who face struggles. Walk alongside those who face struggles. And I really love the directness of this challenge to ask ourselves, how can I help?

To encourage ourselves to say to others, how can I help? And in 2 Corinthians, it says this.

All praise to God the Father. All praise to God the Father. Our Master Jesus the Messiah. Father of all mercy. God of all healing counsel. He comes alongside us when we go through hard times.

[ 3 : 51 ] And before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who's going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us.

So straight away, as I started kind of exploring this idea of this call on our lives to ask others, how can I help? How can I be there for you?

There's reminders peppered through the Bible, through stories and through God's word. A reminder that God is always there walking with us and also calling us in his strength, in the faith, to notice those around us and walk with them.

But let's not assume that I'm reading these words over you this evening and we're all in that place of, yes, Kate, I am there.

I am strong and able in the faith right now. Get me to the person who needs me to ask, can I help? Perhaps you hear this.

[ 5 : 00 ] And actually the question you kind of find in your spirit is, how can I possibly help anyone else at the moment with everything that's going on in my life? Or kind of that feeling of, I don't think I could be that helpful anyway.

I haven't really got much to give at the moment. Perhaps that's more of your noticing. And when life throws challenges, it's our way.

And doesn't life throw challenges our way? It's part of the human condition. It can be so hard to be vulnerable, hard to be honest and say, actually, I need some help.

But isn't it the most incredible blessing? If actually while you're struggling, plowing on in your own strength, doing the best you can, just like maybe to get through each day, someone notices.

Somebody sees you. And somebody says, how can I help? Just going to describe a few years ago, not the circumstance, but it's a few years ago now.

[ 6 : 17 ] And as a family, we were going through such a difficult time. And actually, we needed help. And for a while, you do kind of plow on, don't you?

But I was just so overwhelmed with the love and the care of those around us who noticed and asked, how can I help?

And people brought us meals. Oh, my goodness, what a gift when you're a mum to not have to cook when there's something actually else that you really need to be giving your attention to.

And a lovely friend. Oh, my goodness, this was the best thing I've ever experienced, just for a short time. She doesn't live anywhere near here.

She asked, how can I help? And I said, I don't really know. You know, you're not here. She paid for us to have our laundry done for a couple of months. It's crazy. I mean, I never iron a thing.

[ 7 : 15 ] All my life, all this stuff just kind of arrived back. I got picked up and it arrived back at our eyes. I earned unbelievable. But it was such a silly little thing, really.

I mean, who cares if your clothes is creased, right? But it was just someone just showing some love and care. It really helped. We had help at school for the children.

We had help through friends, through church, and through prayer. And it made a difference. But why? Why should we be offering to help?

Well, it says next, very clearly, because that's exactly what Jesus did. He didn't make it easy for himself by avoiding people's troubles, but waded right in and helped out.

I took on the troubles of the troubled, is the way scripture puts it. Our faith is a call to do what Jesus did, to do what Jesus does.

[ 8 : 13 ] And he commissioned us. Love God, but love one another. Love our neighbours. And I really love that this call, this call to be Jesus, is followed by another call.

Terry, just if you bring that up. To be alert and attuned and engaged with God's word. His living word, full of the power of the Holy Spirit. It says, even if it was written in scripture long ago, you can be sure it was written for us.

That's as true today as it was the day it was written. This scripture, this holy word of God is alive to us through the Holy Spirit.

And it's as true today as it has ever been. And it was written for us. Each of us. But how do we do this?

In the way God calls us to be Jesus. Follow Jesus' example. And I think there is absolute gold in these next words.

[ 9 : 22 ] And we're just going to pause on these for a moment. God wants the combination of his steady, constant calling.

And warm personal counsel in scripture. To come to characterize us. Keeping us alert for whatever he will do next.

I'm just going to read that again. God wants the combination of his steady, constant calling.

And warm personal counsel in scripture. To come to characterize us. Keeping us alert for whatever he will do next.

I love that there's lots of nodding in the room. It's like a yes and amen, yes. Here, there's this sense of us growing our character.

[ 10 : 26 ] From his constant, warm, personal counsel that we get in scripture. And a sense of us living with the expectation that we get to join in with God at work in the world.

To be his hands and feet. Being alert. So, this was the scripture. What was God going to give me?

Well, as I wondered, God pointed me to this pot. I don't know what to call it. Is it a vase? Is it a jug? I've managed to get it here without breaking it. Hey.

So, this is a pot made by a beautiful friend of ours called Peter. When I say ours, Helen introduced me to Peter and Sarah.

And we were down in Cornwall in the summer. And I went into Peter and Sarah's house. I'm going to have to put it down because it's so heavy. We went into Peter and Sarah's house.

[11:25] And this was on the floor lined up with about four others, I think. And it had been in an exhibition. And I just said, oh my goodness, Peter. I love, I love that jug.

And I wasn't meaning, I love that jug. Please, could you give it to me? But he gave it to me. He gave it to me. It's like worth, I don't even know how much it would be worth, but a lot.

Oh, so generous. But he gave it to me and I brought it home. And as I read these words, I felt like God was saying, get that jug and do a bit of unpacking here using the jug.

So, Peter explained to me that he had to make this from two parts. So, he made like this bottom on a potter's wheel section first.

And then he made another part like that and then stuck them together. I'm sure that's not how he described it. But I just thought, it's the most perfect reminder of this is who we are.

[12:33] I love that. I love that.

About the vine and the branches remain in me as I remain in you. I love that. 2 Timothy 2 says, I love this translation.

In a well-furnished kitchen, there are not only crystal goblets and silver platters. Anyone got those? But also waste cans and compost bins.

Anyone got those? Yes. Some containers are used to serve fine meals, others to take out the garbage. Become the kind of container God can use to present any and every kind of gift to his guests for their blessing.

Become the kind of container that God can use to bless others.

[13:53] That's my translation. Here's an invitation to become a certain kind of container. And I truly believe that God can use me at any point in any time and use any of you at any point in any time.

But I also, as I go on in the faith, feel in my spirit the challenge to be living with the rhythms and the practices that mean I am a bit more in shape.

And I am a bit more alert to his kingdom work. Those rhythms and practices, I love what you read at the beginning, Helen.

You prayed over us and right at the beginning it talks about becoming attuned to God's rhythms. So I wonder, how are we doing?

How are we doing with our rhythms of prayer? Time with God? Worshipping God? Fellowship with other Christians? Hey, we're doing great tonight.

[15:03] That's what we're doing. How are we with our loving acts of service? With our rest and Sabbath time with God? Well, I'm asking you that question, but I'm not asking you to answer it out loud.

Because this is between us and God. It's between us and the Lord. But I'm asking myself the question as much as I'm asking everyone here. How are we doing?

It can be really important to be really helpful just to be supported by friends in this. Have some accountability maybe with a home group or prayer partners, spiritual mentors, faith-filled friends, church community.

But to grow in intimacy with God. But to grow in intimacy with Jesus. Grow closer with God. I think we do have to be intentional about our relationship with him.

Seeking his presence. Making time to be still and seek his presence in our daily lives. Listening to his voice. Listening to his voice. Maybe it's through scripture.

[16:15] Through prayer. Through the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Obeying his commands. Following the way of Jesus.

Living our lives according to his will. And cultivating a heart of gratitude. Thankfulness for his blessings and his faithfulness in our lives.

And I think that this is always on offer to all of us. There's an invitation to go and be filled. But the picture I had was instead of us going and kind of getting our jug ourselves.

And getting just topped up to the brim. And then kind of pouring out and being a bit more empty. The picture I had was us actually standing kind of in a river.

That's got like you know sort of rapid-y things. Waterfalls. And being constantly filled by the flow of his spirit. So rather than it be a go get filled, get emptied out.

[ 17 : 32 ] Go get filled. Empty, filled, empty, filled. Just a recognition that the invitation from God is to be in the flow of his spirit at all times.

And I think in these final verses when it talks about maturity. Maybe there is this sense of us growing in these practices and rhythms.

And becoming the vessel God is shaping us, molding us to be. So that we can be filled. is a mark of maturity.

It says, may our dependably steady and warmly personal God, that's who he is, dependably steady, warmly personal God, develop maturity in you so that you get along with each other as well as Jesus gets along with us all.

And then we'll be a choir, not our voices only, but our very lives singing in harmony in a stunning anthem to the God and Father of our Master Jesus.

[ 18 : 43 ] Love that, what a picture of God's goodness. So we've thought about this idea of becoming this vessel, being shaped and moulded by the practices and rhythms that we have in our life, the invitation to stand in that place of being filled.

Because ultimately this is about what's in the jug. And you've got on your tables, and we're going to look now, at this verse which is from just a little bit further on in Romans 15.

And I love that on this jug, and you've got it on your picture, there's like this sense that this part of the glaze is kind of over, it's like Peter filled it, and it's just overflowed, and it's dribbling down.

And the words from verse 13 say, And we noticed as we were praying earlier, there's a banner up on the wall that says this verse, Think of the river being constantly filled with the Holy Spirit.

So that then what flows out of us is his spirit, his love. If you were here this morning, you would have heard these words from John 16, But when he, the spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.

[ 20 : 38 ] And when the spirit of truth is flowing in our lives, it looks like fruit. And I, this probably is, I don't know if you're supposed to have like favorite Bible verses, probably not.

It's like all incredible, all at different times, and I guess it's seasons, isn't it, where God draws our attention. But I guess I would say this has been a constant for me since I first got my message Bible.

Because the fruit of the spirit is described like this in the message. It's in Galatians 5, if anyone wants to find it at another time. What happens when we live God's way?

So my translation of that this evening, my image of that this evening, is what happens when we've got ourselves as these vessels inviting and asking God to fill us with his spirit?

It says that he brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard. Things like, and then these things I see as the things that flow from us, that pour out of us by God's grace, by his spirit.

[ 21 : 52 ] Affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people.

We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to direct and marshal our energies wisely.

That's kind of my, I'll just share with you, my phrase of the season is direct my energies wisely.

Asking God, what does it look like to do that, to direct my energies wisely?

And this vase is beautiful. And as I was just chatting to my husband Pete about this yesterday and reading in the verses, he said, oh, I've forgotten that it's got a handle on it.

And you, I'm jumping around, I'm describing it as a vase, then I'm describing it as a pot, then a jug, I don't really know what it is. But I thought, my goodness, that makes a difference. Because a vase is shaped and moulded and it can be filled with things and it looks amazing.

[ 23 : 16 ] And it will, if you pour into it, it will overflow. But put a handle on it and suddenly there can be direction and purpose and it can be poured and directed in a certain way.

And I guess I felt like that's God's invitation to us this evening. To ask, where's he calling us to direct our energies wisely in this season?

To pour out who we are? To love others and ask, can I help? So as we come to the end, I wonder what God is calling you to notice and wonder this evening.

Remember, that's only going to come from a place of safety and love and goodness. If you're not sure what you're noticing and you're wondering, then chat to us afterwards.

Test it. He is gentle and kind and there is no condemnation in Christ. but I wanted to just leave us with one final thought and I can't share like this, like, I can't share this part of my story fully because it's not fully mine to tell but I can describe how over sort of a prolonged season of extreme difficulty fairly recently I ended up kind of feeling I could probably only describe it as empty.

[ 25 : 00 ] Just I could recognise I was sort of ploughing on in my own strength struggling really to find God in the circumstances and I guess catching glimpses like really moments of I know God is with us I see it but kind of that always like shooting a prayer to God and kind of hoping that he would calm the next storm but ending up feeling pretty empty but what I realised was what had fallen by the wayside were many of my rhythms and my patterns the ones that had been in the season previously just weren't working they weren't fitting I wasn't really spending time with God in the way that I could and I wasn't reading my Bible as I maybe felt the call to I wasn't connecting with church so much and I felt the challenge to change and to choose differently and so from that emptiness

I began a slow journey of coming back and asking God to be filled with his spirit and I can honestly hand on heart say that what that ended up looking like was just an incredible new sense of hope in him his ongoing a renewed sense of remembering who he is and I realised how much I'd been ploughing on in my own strength needing to sort of control and just kind of direct things in the way I thought they should be going that I'd forgotten to leave any room for God there actually wasn't really space for him I realised I was just taking up way too much room in my own life and I've got a daughter and she's 25 now and we

I just quite often say to her or kind of like remind her to take up space especially as a woman Emma's nodding God has created us uniquely and beautifully to be who we are called to be he has moulded us into a shape and we are on a journey of being constantly moulded but what I'm saying to Martha when I'm saying take up space I'm encouraging her to take up space being filled with the Holy Spirit so that in her the space she takes up is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and she's got her own story and journey of faith to tell in that so my message to leave us with is we can only be filled constantly if we recognise constantly the need to be empty to be empty of ourselves and full of the Holy Spirit so as we pour out and as he pours out his spirit from us and it looks like all those beautiful things what we fill back up with is the Holy Spirit through the rhythms and practices and just a quick check in we are human we are not going to get this right all the time this is not about trying to be some perfect Christian person this is about a living relationship with our Father God who forgives us has grace and loves us and he wants more than anything for us to ensure there's room enough for him in our lives less of us more of him and it says at the end of the bit in Galatians in the message

I've got to get a big print Bible I literally can't see anything it says since this is the kind of life we have chosen the life of the spirit let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads as a sentiment in our hearts but work out its implications in every detail of our lives that means ladies we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one were better and another worse we have far more interesting things to be doing with our lives each of us is an original less of us and more of him in Jesus name amen