

REV. AARON EIME

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

Date: 05 October 2014

Preacher: Aaron Eime

[0 : 00] Father in heaven, may your presence, which rests around us and in us, amongst us, Lord, open our hearts and our ears as we look to see in your word what you have to say to us.

Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening. Amen. Please be seated. These lights are quite bright. Shalom from Jerusalem. It is my privilege and pleasure to come and speak and to look at this text from the scriptures.

Now I want to start by saying that the Gospels are finely crafted texts. That we have four Gospels and we have lots of stories about Jesus and we have lots of stories that have been put into these texts in certain orders.

They are there for reasons. Now we may have, some people might know, that there's a theory that says that there were four Gospels and they all can be redacted down to this one common source.

[1 : 17] That Matthew and Luke are borrowing from Mark and Mark's borrowing from this mysterious document called Q and John is just way out there onto the side. If you have heard of this theory, please take it, roll it up in a little ball and throw it away.

In the Middle East, which is where the Bible comes from, our Bible is a Jewish text, it is a Middle Eastern text, in the Middle East there were probably lots of Gospels.

There were lots of stories of Jesus and the Jesus event. What happens is Matthew, Luke, Mark, John, by the guidance of God, by His Spirit, they decide and choose what stories to include.

And they even tell us there are so many stories that we're not going to include everything. There's too much. This, this is enough. And so they choose the stories that they feel under guidance that they're important and they put them into a certain order.

And so some stories, like Jesus cleansing the temple, occur early in John and late in Matthew because of the way that they're structuring their story.

[2 : 40] And so you have these stories that are packed with meaning, even as to why they're in their order, they have a meaning. So when we read this text, we've got to put it into context.

We should ask ourselves two questions whenever we read the Gospels. Two questions. What does this tell me about Jesus? And how do I become a better disciple?

So we'll study this text and we'll wrestle with it. God will speak to us and we'll come, we'll look for those answers. What does this tell me about Jesus? And how do I become a better disciple?

So let's have a look at our text. This is the parable of the tenants in the vineyard. And it is placed by Matthew in here at the, as Jesus has entered Jerusalem.

Now, does Jesus just say this parable when he's in Jerusalem? He's probably said this parable lots of times. Like any itinerant preacher has their top ten favorite sermons, and you would go from village to village to village, and you would preach this sermon in the same village here, in the same village there, in the same village there.

[3 : 55] So Jesus, Yeshua as we call him in Hebrew, he's probably preached this a few times. But Matthew's deliberately putting it here. So Jesus has come into Jerusalem.

This is his final time. The big showdown is coming with the temple. He enters the temple. There's the adulation of the crowds as they welcome him as the Messiah.

And it's wonderfully seen in movies, palm branches, donkeys, coats, and things. He gets out his bullwhip, and he does his Indiana Jones, and he cleanses the temple.

And he tips over the money changers, and he challenges them. He challenges their authority. And he gets away with it. Because by this stage, the temple's quite corrupt.

And this occurred a couple of hundred years prior to Jesus, during the Maccabean period, when the Jewish people overthrew the Greeks, who had been ruling them.

[4 : 58] We get a wonderful holiday in Israel called Hanukkah, because of it, which we're about to celebrate after Sukkot. And the Jewish people, the Maccabees, they cleanse the temple, they rededicate the temple, and they reestablish the worship of God.

It's wonderful. But then they also begin to expand the borders of Israel. They begin to invade other people. And they go across the Jordan, and they capture some of the lands that the old Philistines used to have, drive the Greeks out.

And they begin to think that they're actually in the Messianic age. They begin to believe that we are part of the Messianic ideal. And we don't actually need a person as a Messiah.

We are the Messias. And they change the temple. They take away the natural priests, and they put in false priests. Instead of priests being the descendants of Levi and Cohen, as they are supposed to be, according to the Bible, the B'nai Tzadok, we find priests from Benjamin, and from Asher, and from Naphtali.

Not all of them. And instead of having one high priest, we have multiple priests, chief priests, and they're illegitimate.

[6 : 16] And everybody knows this. And yet, people still go to the temple, because this is where God lived. Jesus himself goes. But he's going to challenge their authority.

And he knows they're corrupt. So when he spills over the money changers, the people, they're very excited by this. Yes, we understand what you're doing. You're challenging the authority.

And this little portion of Matthew talks a lot about Jesus' authority. He already has authority over death. He's raised people from the dead.

He's raised his friend, Lazarus. He has fought back the demons. He has authority over the demons. He has authority over sickness. He heals wherever he goes.

Nothing can stop him. He has authority over nature. He can command the wind and the waters to stop. And now he has authority to teach.

[7 : 15] Then, Matthew puts this image of the fig tree that withers. Jesus, just after he's cleansed the temple, he sees a fig tree.

And figs, in Jewish tradition, are loaded with meaning. A lot of these images are, he goes up to this tree and he's looking for fruit. He doesn't find any.

So then he curses the tree and the tree just dies. You go, wow, that's really special. How, how, Lord, did you do that? Well, it's not about the fig tree not having fruit.

Because the gospel of Mark deliberately tells us that the, the fig tree, it wasn't the season for figs. So Jesus was never going to find fruit there anyway. So why is he cursing a tree that was never allowed to have fruit in that season?

That doesn't seem very fair. Well, in, in Jewish tradition, the idea of a fig tree was, was the covering.

[8 : 23] The first time figs are ever mentioned in the Bible is where? Genesis. That's right. And that's because we've got to cover our nakedness. And, and so Adam and Eve, they make a disastrous decision.

They, they eat of the forbidden fruit. They discover that they're naked. And they started to cover themselves with, with figs. Which is a rather embarrassing thing to do. Because figs have a special sap in their leaves, which actually makes your skin red and itchy.

Okay. So I'm sure that God, when he comes out and sees Adam, probably goes, I bet that's uncomfortable. Okay. And, and that's, that's a good, good effort, but I'm going to do my best.

And he, he actually makes real clothing. For them. So the idea that, that figs represent the covering of a person, then went through, uh, into Jewish, uh, preaching tradition, into their thinking, that you would sit under a fig tree.

And that would be, not a literal one, but the, the covering for us, was the Torah. That was what, what covered us and protected us, as we waited for the Messiah.

[9 : 33] Now the Torah in Hebrew, comes from the verb, leherot, which means to teach, or to guide, to instruct. It doesn't mean law, which a lot of our texts actually, uh, translate.

The word law in Hebrew is, chok. So if anyone can see the difference between, chok and Torah, that's good. There are laws inside the Torah, but the Torah itself, is teaching, guidance, and instruction.

And according to Jewish tradition, and also the Bible, uh, when do you receive the Torah? You receive the Torah, after you've been saved.

So the, the, the Jewish people, are in Egypt, and they're taken out of Egypt, and saved. Then they are taken to Mount Sinai, and then they receive the Torah.

The Torah, as Jewish people should know, doesn't save you. It is, a covering. What does it cover? Lots of good stuff.

[10:41] When God says, thou shalt not steal, why does he say that? Because he doesn't like stealing. So if God doesn't like stealing, what are you going to do?

Not steal. And so these, these teachings, and the guidance, and the instructions, are good for us. Thou shalt not commit adultery. It's a good one. It's good for us.

Why? Because it stops these, when we try and have freedom, of, of, of sexual expression, all we end up doing, is chaining ourselves, with these really weird, and strange relationships. Instead of having, our wives, and being faithful to them.

These are good. It's a good covering for us. And it's one of the reasons, why, in the Gospel of John, Nathanael is sitting, under a fig tree, and Jesus says, I saw you, when you were under the fig tree. Because he says that, Nathanael says, oh, you are the king of Israel, the son of God. Nathanael gets that, within 10 seconds, of meeting Jesus, and it takes Peter, three and a half years, to finally get that right, in Caesarea.

[11:50] Because, Nathanael's probably, not sitting, under a literal fig tree. He's been sitting, under the covering, of the Torah. He's been looking, through the scriptures, for the Messiah. And Jesus says, you know what, I know, you were looking for me, because I was looking, straight back.

And I know who you are. You're a true Israelite. And there's no deceit in you. And he gets it. Nathanael gets it, right up front. But here, it's in the context, of the temple.

And the authority, of the temple, and the temple teachers. And Jesus has looked, for fruit. He has looked, that the Torah, the teaching, the guidance, and the instruction, that should have been, coming from the temple, to the people, and producing fruit, didn't produce fruit.

It wasn't there. And so he curses the tree. He says, I'm going to be giving, the teaching to somebody else. And then, the teachers, in Matthew, the teachers in the temple, they deliberately attack Jesus.

How do you do this? Where do you get your authority from? And Jesus asks them a question, straight back. That's the way you work, in the Middle East. If you ask me a question, my answer is, another question.

[13:02] It's incredibly infuriating, to us in the West. Because you never, actually get an answer. Okay? There's never a dot, at the end of the sentence.

It just keeps going. In fact, there's a great little parable, from a rabbi, what's his name, Avraham Herschel, who once said, you're closer to God, when you're asking questions, than when you think, you have answers.

Because once you think, you understand God, that's when you truly, don't understand God. And it's in the, in the idea of asking questions, and the search, you're constantly learning, about him, who he is, who he is character, and how to, to behave, in the world, and vis-a-vis also, each other.

So Jesus is asked, where do you get your, your authority from? So he says, what about John the Baptist? Where did he come from? Is he from heaven, or is he from, from somewhere else?

And they choose not to answer, so Jesus doesn't have to give them, an answer. He outfoxes them. Then he begins to teach, in parables. and he talks about this thing called the kingdom of heaven.

[14:13] Now parables, as a teaching tool of the Second Temple period, are not unique to Jesus. He uses that vehicle. There is over 5,000 parables in the Hebrew commentaries and some of them are even in our New Testament.

And the point about parables is as part of the story, which everyone should be familiar with, they have a shock to them. Something that wakes you up. Something that makes you start to question, what is he talking about and why?

So he says, listen, I have a parable for you. We want to talk about authority. I would like to share a parable. There is a landowner. He has a vineyard. It is his.

It is a good vineyard. He has guarded it with a watchtower. He has surrounded and protected it with his walls. He has prepared a place to produce fruit and to get the juice from this fruit.

And we will make wine. And wine is a symbol of joy. It will be a good thing. So I have some tenants. Please work in my vineyard. And when it is time for fruit, because our God is a fruit inspector, when it is time for some fruit, he sends some of his servants.

[15:28] And they're beaten. And in some cases they're killed. Nasty. And they throw stones. And the master does something very special. He sends his son.

And the shock that the hearers are about to hear is that, okay, they've already killed the guys previously, so they'll probably kill the son too. We get it. But what is it that these tenants think is going to happen?

If we kill the son, we will get his inheritance. On what planet does that ever happen?

You don't ever go to a lawyer and say, listen, I know we're about to read the will, but I've actually just offed the guy, okay? So I'll take his place. Is that all right? It will never happen.

It won't happen in Jewish tradition. It's not going to happen in, even in corrupt societies that doesn't happen. Well, maybe it does. But it shouldn't. But in the Jewish world, there is no way that would happen.

[16:30] It's a shock. Who are these people? And what do they think is going on in their brain? How have they so twisted reality that they would even think they could fool the master?

I'm working in his field. I'll kill his son. He won't bother us. He'll give it to me now. What madness have these people got? That's the shock.

Now, the Pharisees and the chief priests, the leaders of the temple, they know that Yeshua is talking about them. They know that he is talking about them and their interpretation of the Torah and the way that they should be caring for the people.

He is not talking about the people. People love him. They've just had the triumphal entry. Some of them really do believe he is the Messiah. They've shouted it out.

You are the son of David. We know who you are. It's fantastic. Bring on the Redeemer. But for the leaders, they don't like this.

[17:34] They want redemption to come from another way, in their way. And so Jesus, he even gives them his proof text. When he's ready to challenge and fight, discuss with the Pharisees, what verse does he bring?

It's not Micah 5.2. By the way, I was born in Bethlehem, just so you know. Okay? I am the Messiah. And by the way, if you don't notice, I'm riding on a donkey, so I've just done Zechariah. Okay?

You can call me Emmanuel if you like, if anyone wants to read the book of Isaiah. No, he goes to a psalm. The psalms are the prayer life of the Jewish people. If we were Jewish people, we would gather in our synagogues or in the temple, and we would pray the psalms.

You think having a lectionary is a new invention? No. The Jewish people had it at the time of Jesus. They read the Bible in three years. Today, Jewish people read the Bible in one year, but they changed that in the Middle Ages.

But at the time of Jesus, you would read the whole Bible. It would take you three years. And oddly enough, some churches still do that today. And that's where they get that tradition from. Okay? The roots of our faith, anybody who reads the text would know that the roots of our faith are steeped in Jewish, in the Jewish people and in the way that they did things.

[18:55] So here, we would, in the second table period, we would pray the psalms. They would be our prayers. We would pray these. Every month, we would go through the entire psalms. And there's commentaries to the psalms.

So when we pray, we can actually sit down and have a Bible discussion about what it is we've prayed and what it is we mean. And he says, the stone that the builders rejected has become the capstone.

Okay? Some translations will say the cornerstone. But that's not quite literal. The literal thing is the capstone. And the capstone is the part of the supporting arch which has no mortar in it.

Each brick is just put side by side and is the force of one brick against another that actually holds the whole structure together. And the capstone is the last bit you put in. It is the most important stone in the entire building.

Take that out and the whole thing collapses. Okay? How many cornerstones do you have in a building? Four. Okay? How many Jesuses do we have? Okay? One.

[19:54] Okay? So he's the one up top. And they have a little parable that goes along with this psalm that while they were building the temple, because this parable is in connection to Jesus challenging the temple authorities.

There's a parable that when they were building the temple, they were putting one stone upon another and in large parts of the temple, they weren't meant to actually cut the stone. It was meant

to be a stone.

They just found a natural stone. They find the stone and they're trying to put it over here. No, it doesn't fit. So put it over here. No, it doesn't fit. Put it back over that way.

Turn it around. Twist it. No, it just doesn't fit. So we throw it away. It's a useless stone. And they keep building the temple. And then when they get to the final stone to put it all in place, the force of one stone on another will actually hold it.

They couldn't find a stone that would fit. They could see, oh, look, there's this stone, the one that we didn't want. Let's try that one. That one fits. So when we talk about the stone that the builders rejected, they understand, again, this is a temple, a parable, and I know he's talking about us.

[21 : 12] I tell you that the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, will be taken away and given to somebody else. The term, the kingdom of God, is a very Jewish term.

when Jesus always starts all of his parables, the kingdom of heaven is like this. The kingdom of heaven is like that. This is what it's like to live in the kingdom when I'm the king. And the disciples never stick their hands up and say, Lord, what's the kingdom of heaven because I don't understand. The term, the kingdom of heaven, isn't in the Hebrew Bible. It's not in the Old Testament. It's in the New Testament. It appears in Jewish literature, Jewish writings, Jewish preaching traditions, when we come back from Babylon.

And they start asking themselves, God is our king. When did he become a king? When did the kingdom of heaven start?

So when do you think? When did God become a king? At birth? Well, God wasn't born, but yes. Some people will say, okay, at Pentecost.

[22 : 21] Jesus starts the kingdom of heaven at Pentecost. Okay, that's not bad. Some people will say, at creation, when God made the world, he became king. You can't have a king without people in it.

Right? So you can't have a king of nothing. Somebody's got to be there, so he makes the world and God becomes a king. It's also not bad. That's actually one of the Jewish prayers that we pray every day. blessed are you, the Lord our God, king of the universe.

He's the king of the universe. It's always linked to creation. But in Jewish tradition, the kingdom of heaven starts when God himself gets a people, when he actually has people who acknowledge his kingship, and that's at Mount Sinai.

So, the children of Israel are in Egypt. And the purpose of the Exodus is not to get a bunch of Hebrews to the promised land.

Because if that was true, then God would have given Moses better directions. He would have said, okay, Moses, you get these people out of Egypt, and then you turn left.

[23 : 28] And then when you get to the Mediterranean, you turn right. You can't miss it. Left, right, you're there. But that was not the purpose of the Exodus.

What do the children of Israel know about God when they're in Egypt? They've been in Egypt 400 years. What do they know about God?

What do you think? It's a very Jewish thing to ask people questions. Okay, he's got promises to Abraham.

We know something about a wandering nomad. We don't have a Bible. For 400 years, we've been slaves in Egypt. We don't have a Bible.

We don't have a prophet. There's no one here telling us stories about what's going to happen. Don't worry. One day, there'll be a Redeemer and we'll get out of Egypt.

[24 : 30] We don't have a temple. We don't have a focal point where we can say, God is here. That's one of the unique distinctives of the nation of Israel.

When God chose the Jewish people, he chose the smallest. Yes? The most insignificant. Yes?

Not the most powerful. But the unique thing about Jewish people is not that they had funny dietary laws. That they couldn't go to McDonald's and have a hamburger with cheese on it.

That wasn't special. It's not that they had to wear these special funny clothes and put things on their heads. Or they had to stop one day of the week and not work.

What was distinctive about the people of Israel is that their God lived with them. Everybody else's God lived somewhere else.

[25 : 26] Lived on a mountain in Olympus. Lived across the Rainbow Bridge in Asgard. Was put with oracles and you had to go so far away to actually encounter your God.

Israel's God lived with them. That's what made them so special. God has always been wanting to come and live with them. As soon as he got his people out of Egypt he says, you build me a tabernacle.

Build me something and I want to come and dwell with you. It's not that you have to come up here. I want to come down there. I want to live with you. We don't have a temple so we have no focal point. We don't have prophets or priests. So what do we know about God? We have the campfire stories. We have the story about that God made the world and it didn't work out so well.

So then there was a guy with a boat and a rainbow. Then there's this wandering nomad thing and suddenly we're here. We don't know anything about God. And then God whom we didn't know while we were in the land of darkness with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm reached down and took his people out of Egypt.

[26 : 39] And then what does he do? He takes them to Mount Sinai. He brings them to a mountain and he comes down and he says I am the God that took you out of Egypt.

He introduces himself. Redemption always leads to revelation. What do we have in the New Testament? Exactly the same thing.

While I was a sinner Christ died for me. When I was in the land of darkness the Redeemer died for me and set me free and he revealed himself.

I have my own personal and you do too your own personal Mount Sinai experiences. But for the Jewish people we were in darkness we didn't know God and then he saved us and he brought us to Mount Sinai and then he gave us the Torah.

Then he revealed himself. Then he became a king. So God becomes king at Mount Sinai. We accept his authority. We don't have land.

[27 : 41] That's not the issue. The issue is the kingdom of heaven. That God is ruling and reigning in your life and in your heart. Because when you read the Hebrew Bible it's all about the heart.

Moses says Deuteronomy 6.6 Write these laws where? On your heart. Not on stone. Not in a book. Write it on your heart.

And in the Psalms Create in me Lord a clean hands and clean heart. Circumcise your heart the prophets say. I'll take out your heart of stone and I'll put in a heart of flesh.

It's always been about the intention of the heart. And here the king the king is ruling and reigning in your heart. Where is the kingdom of heaven?

Where is it? As Jesus says it's near. Jesus says it's within you. Jesus says it's here. It's not the earth. The earth isn't the kingdom of heaven.

[28 : 43] We are the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven in Matthew Matthew 11 since the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven is forcefully advancing.

Some translations I think we're using the ESV here right? They'll say the kingdom of heaven is suffering violence. But the NIV says no we're forcefully advancing.

That's because the Greek the word is *biastes* and it can either be read passive or active you get to pick. And most translations chose the passive but the NIV went a bit more aggressive and the kingdom of heaven is forcefully advancing that even the gates of hell won't withstand it.

And the kingdom of heaven is slowly but surely building. You and I are members of the biggest gang in history. There are over two billion people right who call Jesus Lord.

And in Israel that is attractive. Even though the Torah of the current rabbis forbid Jewish people from going into a church guess what happens every day at Christchurch?

[29 : 59] They come. And at Christmas Eve they come in huge numbers. So a couple of months ago there was an Orthodox group that was inside the church.

Orthodox. Can you believe that? With the payot and the tzitzit. And we were having a discussion and we were trying to discern some passages from the book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 48. And then in walked a group of secular Jews. So Jews who don't believe in anything. Atheists. And the first thing they did when they saw some Orthodox Jews sitting inside a church they didn't have any clue of talking to me at all.

They looked at the Orthodox and said what are you doing here? You're not allowed to be here. I'm allowed to be here. You're not allowed to be here. And so what do the Orthodox do? They started arguing back with the secular people.

Don't you tell me what I can't do. If I want to be inside a church, I can be inside a church. If I want to take his Bible, I can do that. And I'm just watching this argument happen and thinking, wow, this is

great. Awesome. People are getting really excited.

[31 : 10] Israelis often ignore or currently the Torah of their current rabbis. Even though they are told, don't do this. It's forbidden. Sometimes that becomes attractive.

You tell people, don't do something, they often go and do it. So at Christmas Eve, you would think, why do Jewish people want to come and see what we do at Christmas? You know, this pagan festival of tree worship and all this kind of stuff.

Oh, man, Israelis love it. So what do we do at Christ Church? We get the biggest tree we can find. We decorate it up with lights and everything.

We put presents everywhere. We get Christmas cookies and mulled wine, which is an excellent missionary tool, by the way. And you give people a little bit of a drink.

And then Israelis would gather in groups of 50 and 60. We'll have 2,500 of them in that one night.

We'll say, guys, what do you want? Do you want the Maccabees or do you want the donuts?

[32 : 10] Do you want the fluff or do you want the real story? And so, no, you tell us the real story. You're great. And I'm going to tell you a Jewish story. I'm not going to tell you a Christian story. I'm going to tell you a Jewish story about a Jewish boy born to Jewish parents in a Jewish town as the promised Jewish Messiah.

And 2 billion people are going to read this story in the next 24 hours. You don't want to miss out, do you? No, good, here's the gospel of Luke in Hebrew. It's fantastic.

The kingdom of heaven is growing and building. When you look at the Middle East, it sometimes looks pretty bad. And that's because it's true, because it is pretty bad. And people are being killed for their faith.

And even if they don't believe, they're just being killed anyway, because they're not like me. And there seems to be lots of darkness and confusion, death and destruction and hatred and rage. But in other parts of the Middle East, like Israel, there are more and more people coming to faith in the Messiah.

Messiah. And that is good news. And that includes Arabs as well as Jews. For Muslims, often, when their communities are so closed, Jesus is still reaching down to them into their dreams.

[33 : 22] And they come to Christ's church dressed in the hijab, and they say, somebody came to me last night and told me I had to come and talk to you. What have you got to say? So we see that the kingdom of God is being given not to temple authority, but back to the followers of Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles.

And it is a marvelous thing in our eyes. So what does this tell me about Jesus? He has authority. He is the one sitting on the throne.

He can fight back the demons. He has the power over death. He can take charge of nature. And he can actually interpret the Bible correctly for us. He is the one that has authority to teach and to preach.

And we should listen to him. When we have the wise and foolish builders story, you all know it, yes?

The wise man built his house upon the rock and the foolish man built his house upon the sand.

And we all forget the very first line of that story. Jesus says, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and don't do what I say? And so we have a master.

[34 : 45] He is our king. And if the king says to do something, you should do it. Not because that gets you in or out of the kingdom, because you're already saved.

You were in darkness. You were in the land of Egypt. But with a mighty hand, Jesus has redeemed us. He has become our covering. He has become our protection.

He is the Torah made flesh. You should do what he says. And what should I do as a follower of the Messiah?

Well, I should certainly take pride away. That pride of inheritance. Because I'm a believer in Jesus, he'll do whatever I say. And he'll just give me whatever I want.

It's the other way around. The Messiah has given us his kingdom. He's invited us into this eternal life. And there might be bad news out there.

[35 : 47] And there probably is. When the prophets say, arise, shine, for your light has come, the very next sentence is, and darkness covers the earth.

But the light always fights back the darkness. And so as followers of the Messiah, as a teaching parable from the Messiah, let's take away that pride of inheritance and submit to the king.

Because his kingship is good covering. His kingship leads to good fruit. And what is the fruit? Describe some of what the fruit looks like. Peace.

patience. Joy. Self-control. Imagine what the Middle East would look like if we had more of that. Those are the things we want.

Not the hatred. Not the rage. Not people trying to dominate the earth. But instead, having the fruit that the king wants to inspect in his tree.

[36 : 51] And it can and does and is happening. every day. And for us in the Middle East, when we were having rocket attacks and bus bombings and things, you might think that's pretty dark.

But there's a saying, there's no atheists in foxholes. Have you heard of that? Yeah, everybody talking about God. You want to know how you witness for Jesus?

Just open the door and start walking on the street. And they say, why are you still here? Why didn't you run away, back to Australia? Because my master told me I couldn't leave.

Because I'm supposed to be here. Because there's something that we have. It's called hope. When you pull down all of the Christian faith into three words.

It's a very Jewish thing to do, by the way. Paul says, three words. Faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is? Yeah, not faith. For whatever reason.

[37 : 55] Hope is there. And hope is something we can all share with the world that is hopeless.

When we go outside, there's a world out there that if you don't believe in God, if this is all that there is, it's pretty bad.

It's pretty dark. Because when the lights go out, that's it. You take nothing with you. You leave nothing behind. That's hopeless.

But in your eyes, people can see hope. In your eyes, they can see the fire of the kingdom of heaven. In your eyes, they can see why are you different? Because you know that the Messiah is sitting on the throne.

You know that God is in control. And you know that the fruit of the spirit is a beautiful thing of peace, love, patience, joy, and self-control. And God's kingdom doesn't shrink.

He gets bigger and bigger and bigger. And that is good news coming out of the Middle East.

Shalom from Jerusalem.