

Acts 4:1-22: No Other Name

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[0 : 0 0] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah. It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself? The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Let's just bow our heads in prayer, just before we open God's Word. Father, we are Canadian Christians, and sometimes, Father, we're very Canadian, and sometimes, Father, we're very Christian, and we often get them confused. Father, the text before us is good news from you, but it is good news that troubles many Canadians. We ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would work a work of healing in our hearts, that we might love this good news, that we might trust it, that we might be willing to share it, and that you would use us, Father, so that many would come to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So, Father, we ask that you would do this gentle but powerful work in our lives today, and we ask this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.

Please be seated. Just setting my timer, not checking Instagram or anything like that, just setting the timer.

So I know that some people will be watching this service downstream, and they didn't hear any of the other service, and so what I'd like to do is I want to read that the passage that we're going to be looking at today is very un-Canadian and makes Canadians squirm. What Victor read just earlier, at sort of the very center of the text, is we read, Now, as I said, this is a very un-Canadian text, and if you're here and you're maybe outside of the Christian faith or you're trying to figure out whether you'll stay within the Christian faith, or if you're watching this and you're just trying to figure things out, a lot of Christians feel a little bit uncomfortable with a text like this. So let's walk towards it.

We're going to look at the text. It's in the Bible, but we're going to look at it sort of in the whole context. And by the way, just so you know, the context doesn't mean that we can undermine the text. The context is going to make the text even more precious and even more important. So we're not looking at the context so we can go,

Oh, okay, we don't have to care about. No, no, no, no. When you look at the context, the verse becomes even more important and even more precious. So let's look. It begins Acts chapter 4, verse 1. And what we're doing is the book of Acts is an ancient eyewitness-based history of the early Jesus movement.

[3 : 5 1] It was probably written in the mid-60s. If you go on Wikipedia and Google when Luke was written, they're going to tell you that it was written like 80s or 90s. There's actually no evidence at all that the text was written that late. All of the evidence is that the text was written sort of when I'm describing it, which is in the mid-60s. So it's been written. It's describing the first 30 years or so of the Jesus movement. And Luke, as a historian, is telling you true stories. But he's, of course, selecting. He can't tell everything that happened throughout the Mediterranean over 30 years.

And so in the flow of the book, we don't have a precise time marker here. But it's probably, I don't know, a couple of weeks, maybe a month or so after Pentecost. And so the other way to look at it is it's maybe somewhere between three to four months after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Jesus. And the story is taking place in Jerusalem. And what we just looked at last week, the part just before this, is that Peter and James go to the temple to pray. And on their way, they see a regular beggar, a beggar who's sort of a local, a guy who begs there all the time. And he's been crippled from birth. And they heal him. In the name of Jesus, he gets healed. He stands up. He walks around and draws a huge crowd. And then Peter gives an impromptu speech. He's filled with the Holy Spirit, gives an impromptu speech. And now the story takes place immediately as the speech is coming to an end.

And here's what happens. Chapter 4, verse 1. And as they, that's Peter and John, were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. But note this. But many of those who had heard the word believed. And the number of the men came to about 5,000. We don't really know why he only counts men in this case. It could just be that in the ancient world, it's a bit of a mark of strength, either in terms of religious strength to set up synagogues or military strength.

But that means if there's 5,000 men, if you include then children and women, there's well over 10,000 people who've become Christians, who've come to believe that Jesus actually did rise from the dead, and he is the Savior. And this is in Jerusalem, and this is in the city where that entire thing, as we're going to see in a moment, could have been put to death if they just showed the body.

[6 : 30] You know, one of the things I'll say time and time and time again, and it's because it's true, is that most Canadians don't look at the evidence for the resurrection. If they did, they would be shocked at how the best explanation for how the Jesus movement gets going and is underway is found in this text. Now, many Canadians will say, you know, well, those people were a bit primitive. They didn't understand science and stuff like that. It's actually, unlike us, the Jewish people had two reasons why they didn't think the resurrection happened. We only have one. So the ancient people back then, they would have had the same reason that we do. They would have had unbroken human experience. We would try to mistakenly call it things like scientific laws. Scientific laws just express regularities. That's actually basically just what they do. These things regularly happen.

And so we would just have, they would say in the ancient world that they had unbroken human experience that what happens after death is decomposition of the body, not resurrection. They have unbroken human experience, and they have face-to-face experience with this. We often don't see death because, you know, funeral homes handle it and all of that type of stuff. But the Jewish people in the day had two, another reason why they didn't believe that the resurrection of Jesus was possible. It depends on which denomination you're part of. If you were part of the Sadducees, you would say, well, not only do we have unbroken human experience that Jesus didn't rise from the dead, that dead people don't rise. The second thing is that the Bible teaches us that there is no such thing as resurrection. That's the Sadducees. If you were in a different denomination, they have a different few, and they would just say, the Bible teaches that when the resurrection happens, everybody gets resurrected at the same time. So why would people have been uncurious about the fact that the grave was empty? They would just say, hey, listen, you say that Jesus rose from the dead and you see him, but if that's the case, then why is it that two weeks ago your Aunt Sarah, she died? Why is it that a month ago, you know, your Uncle Moishe, he died? He didn't come back to life. So therefore, the resurrection is impossible. The Bible tells us that. That's what they would think.

And that's one of the things why, if you'll notice, if you now go back and you read the book of Acts, you'll see that when Peter and others talk about the resurrection of Jewish people, they'll always bring in Bible texts to help show them that they've misread the Bible, that in fact the Bible points to the fact that the Messiah would die and rise from the dead. But a bit of an aside. What happened in this story here right now? Remember the whole thing begins, a man's healed, there's a speech, Peter and John say it's because of Jesus that the man is healed, and now they're arrested. So what we actually see here, it's a very helpful thing to remember. What that Peter and John are experiencing is what most of the world experiences today, and what most human beings have experienced throughout history, which is, you get arrested if you annoy the powerful. Like, just be very honest, if you were in Gaza under Hamas, they don't care about what's legal. I mean, if they have laws, the laws are completely and utterly empty. If you annoy Hamas, you get arrested. It's as

simple as that. And that's how it's been throughout most of human history, and it's still true for most of the world cultures today. It's still basically true in Canada that you can't get arrested just because you annoy powerful people. But some of us have come from countries where we know that's just what happens. You annoy the powerful people, you get arrested. So Peter and John haven't done anything wrong, but they've annoyed the powerful people. And so even though there's this wonderful miracle, they get arrested, and they spend the night in jail. So what happens next? Well, verse 5.

[10:33] On the next day, their rulers, their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem with Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high priestly family. And when they had set them, that is Peter and John, in their midst, they inquired, by what power or by what name did you do this? Now, I just sort of have to pause for a second.

Peter and John are two lower working class, uneducated guys. I mean, they might have known how to read. They probably did know how to read. But they were basically fundamentally uneducated. Most people in the ancient world at that time were not educated. And the language that he has used is to describe what we now know of as the Sanhedrin. And so there were 71 people. So Peter and John are crammed into a relatively small room. There's 71 people made up of the educational and wealth elite of the country. And the Sanhedrin met in a semicircle. So literally, Peter and John are in the middle of this semicircle, 71 people plus guards and secretaries and scribes. And Peter and John are in the middle.

They've just spent a night in jail. And one of the things which they would have been very, very conscious of is that these are the very same men who three or four months earlier sentenced Jesus to death.

And that's where they are. They're surrounded by the powerful. And these are the same guys that's charged, had Jesus put to death. And Jesus was innocent. He was not guilty of any crime.

[12:20] Now, so one of the things that's very helpful for you when you're reading a biblical narrative is to ask yourself a question. For those of you who are watching and you're maybe not familiar with the Bible, you don't know that this is a bit of a problem that Christians who know the Bible very well can start to have.

And the problem is this. We're so familiar with the story, some of us, that we just assume that everything that happens is necessary, but it's not necessary. Imagine for a moment, not knowing what's going to happen next, we got to go back in time. We were able to speak Aramaic and speak to Peter and John. What advice would we give them?

Like, what advice would we give them? Let's say it was me. A similar type of situation. Probably some of you would be shaking your head and saying, you know that Sinclair, he should have known that if he said that in the temple, they're going to arrest him.

Like, that was a bit foolish on George's part, don't you think? And probably many of you would have said, yeah, it's a little bit foolish. You know, he should have had a lawyer with him. And so if you got a chance to be with me just before I went out, you might say, you know, George, don't lie, but why don't you put a little bit of, figure out if there's a way to have some oil on troubled waters, like, you know, to maybe just dampen the fire, like, don't get people excited.

You wouldn't say this to me because I'm ancient of days. You know, John was probably only about 15, and Peter was maybe 30-ish. And so you might say to them, you know, John, listen, you have years ahead of you.

[13:51] Peter, you have years ahead of you. Peter, you have a wife and kids. John, you'd like to have a wife and kids. Like, this isn't a time to do something that's going to get you into further trouble. That's probably what we'd say.

Maybe not, but my guess is that's what we tell them to do. That would be our advice. So what do Peter and John do? Well, let's look. Verse 8. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, and by what means this man has been healed, let it be known but to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well.

This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. It's an Old Testament reference. 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.

In other words, we would have counseled them to do something and they would have ignored us. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and they were very, very, very bold. Now, I'm going to talk about this text, but what I want to do is I want to look at what happens after it, because actually what happens after it helps us to understand the text better and helps us to understand why we have problems.

Some Christians have problems with this text. When I say that, I mean, no well-trained Christian is going to publicly say they have problems with it. The problems come when we live it in Canada.

[15 : 45] Not what we'd say in church, but when we're outside of church. That's when we start to have problems with texts like this. If we're honest with ourselves, we can have problems with it. So let's see what happens, because actually what happens next helps us to understand the text.

And one of the things which is so brilliant about what goes on in the text is we all know that in Canada there's a very growing number of nuns, not like nuns in a religious order, but nuns, N-O-N-E.

They'd say that they have no religious affiliation whatsoever. And it's very commonplace to critique religion. And what you're seeing in this story is a very profound critique of religion that would outstory whatever a nun would tell you about why they don't believe in any type of religion or spirituality.

There's a very profound critique of religion in this text. So see how it works. Verse 13. Now when they saw the... Actually it already comes the mere fact that they've arrested them.

Because you see, if you think about it, like... And this would probably be what the average Canadian would say about religion. They'd say they're just hypocrites.

[16 : 58] They're just giving you their opinions. It's just about power. It's just about trying to get other people to do what you want. They give themselves a pass. It makes them feel better about themselves than other people.

And in this story, you'd think that the Jewish leaders would like God to show up. Like you'd think they'd like that.

Like they're in the God showing up business. And now God shows up. Like you'd think that if this was in modern day and age, they'd be hoping that hopefully they'd say, going around saying, I hope a couple of you got this on camera.

On video. So we can put it on our webpage. And so we can put it on X. Used to be called Twitter. And we can put it on Instagram and TikTok. And hopefully it'll go viral. And everybody will want to come. That's what they'd be hoping.

But instead, they want to shut them up. Right? Well, look what happens. Verse 13. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated common men, they were astonished.

[18 : 03] And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. But by the way, you know, one of the reasons many people in our culture dismiss the evidence of the apostles and Luke is because we think they're uneducated common men.

I mean, good grief, they didn't even have flush toilets. Definitely didn't have an iPhone. We all know that flush toilets and iPhones are a sign of profound intelligence and wisdom. And, but we dismiss them because we think they're uneducated in common.

They don't know science. Verse 14. But seeing the man who had been healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, saying, what shall we do with these men?

For that a notable sign has been performed through them as evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.

So they called them together. They called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. And just sort of pause there for a second. Now, as I said, you know, to many, I mean, it might very well be that a person who would describe themselves as a nun who's given up on religion and spirituality, who's articulated why religion and spirituality isn't good and valid.

[19 : 33] They might look at this story and go, that's actually pretty surprising, although it sort of contradicts there's no other name under Jesus to be saved. But here's the thing. What this Bible text reveals to us is a profound human problem.

And the profound human problem is this, that you and I often confuse calculating how something affects our power or prestige. and we confuse that with thinking about whether it's true or right or just. It's a very common human problem.

So we get some information and we start to calculate how this situation or this information or this idea, how this will affect my power, my prestige, my reputation, my place.

I calculate that. But I think I'm thinking about whether it's true or right. It's a very, very common human problem. We don't recognize that we actually aren't thinking, we're just calculating.

[20 : 46] And that's a human problem. It happens to Christians. Why do Christians get uncomfortable with the statement, 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?

We get uncomfortable with it, not because we think about the text, whether it's true or false, but because we calculate how that text being revealed will affect our power, our prestige, our influence, our place in work and in our community.

We don't sort of think about it and say, well, actually, that's true, isn't it? You know, I guess it's really true and it's right and it's good news so I should do something about it. No, we think about what would it be like if our neighbors found this out? What would it be like if our coworkers found this out? Like, what would it be like if our parents found out that this is what we believe and think? And then we do the calculation and it's not going to help our power, it's not going to help our prestige, it's not going to help us in society, so we are silent.

We've engaged in calculation, not thinking. It's a human problem. It's a human problem.

[22 : 10] See, one of the reasons, there's lots of reasons why I, the more I learn about Christianity, the more I learn about the Bible, the more I learn about Jesus, the more I love it and the more I believe it's true and the more I believe it's good news.

And you know one of the things which is so brilliantly illustrated in this short story? No religion, no philosophy, no spirituality, no system of human thought is able to capture the wretchedness and the glory of human beings like Christianity does.

And this story brilliantly captures that. You see, that's the fact the matter is, is that the fact the matter is that there's something wretched about human beings and there's also something very glorious about human beings.

And Christianity doesn't say that human beings are only wretched and it doesn't say that human beings are only glorious. It says, it has this profound message that there's something that human beings are this mixture of wretchedness and glory.

This, by the way, was discovered, this idea was discovered in the lining of Blaise Pascal's coat after he died. And it goes back to the 1600s. So what do I mean?

[23 : 25] Well, surely, isn't it part of the wretchedness of human beings that we can't even recognize that we don't think sometimes that all we're doing is calculating our own advantage and we don't even recognize that we're not thinking about whether something is true or good or just or beautiful or moral?

Like, that surely shows something wretched about human beings that we can't even see that about ourselves. We can maybe often see it in other people, but we can't see it in ourselves.

And we would all want to say that if we went back in time, we wouldn't be like Caiaphas and these guys, that we would want to celebrate the miracle, but the fact of the matter is is that there is something in human beings which is broken, which is wretched, which causes all sorts of trouble. What goes on in the world that causes trouble all of the time? So why is it that people don't want to say in Canada something strong about Hamas? They're doing electoral politics. They're thinking about how it's going to affect their electoral chances.

And they think that thinking about that, calculating what's going to help them is thinking. But it's not. There's something wretched about human beings. On the other hand, there's something glorious about human beings.

[24 : 38] And it's perfectly seen in the text. A 15-year-old, working-class, uneducated kid and a 30-something, uneducated, working-class guy stand in front of the intellectual and religious and cultural and political and financial elite.

And they give a clear, unambiguous testimony to the truth. And that's glorious. I mean, we'd all say, make me more and more like Peter and John, not just about this, but about everything.

And make me less and less like them. And we see both of these things about human beings in the same story with the gospel in the center. You see, because only the gospel helps us to see that and only the gospel.

It's only if you've grasped that there is salvation in no one else. There's no salvation in me. There's no salvation in my accomplishments.

There's no salvation in me because of my economic status or my class or my culture or because I'm a victim or because I'm able to beat other people up. There is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

[26 : 02] I'm saved by what Jesus has done for me. And God has vindicated this by raising Jesus from the dead. What could be a more electrifying sign that there is a God that does exist who loves you than the resurrection from the dead?

what's a more electrifying sign than that? And we need that salvation.

Why? Because there's something wretched about me. There's something wretched about me and broken and crooked and in every human being.

And it's only as I start to have the security of knowing that I actually can be made right with the living God my creator my sustainer the one who is sovereign over all of history and the entire universe who will bring all things to the end that he determines when that end should be in such a way and who will judge the living and the dead.

And it's only as I have the security that I have been made right with him not because of anything that I have done but because of what Jesus has done for me. And he does that for me knowing my wretchedness and still he does it for me and when I put my faith and trust in Christ I am made right with God that I start to have the type of security as that truth becomes more real to me that I start to have the security that I can look and say you know what that thing that was going on in my denomination that thing that was going on in my church that thing that's going on with my family that way that I'm thinking about my kids that way that I'm thinking about my wife that way that I'm thinking about my neighbors that way that I'm thinking about politics you know really what I'm doing is I'm not actually trying to think what's right and what's good and what's beautiful and true and trust really I'm just calculating whether it's going to make me look good or give me more power or help me to keep my position and I don't trust that if these things happen that I'll God can have some other good thing for me and you know it's only as the gospel becomes more real to our heart that we can start to look at these things and it's only as the stories like this the stories like this form us see the fact of the matter is is in the story

[28 : 17] I am both Caiaphas and those guys and I am Peter and John it's not been that I've always had my life just calculating see that's what's so wrong about most philosophies and it's not like I've always been like Peter and John no I've done both in my life so have you only the gospel makes it clear that you have a glory about you because you are made in the image of God you're not a result of accident God designed you and he made you something to be something glorious and there's something about human beings that can be so glorious that God the son of God could take human flesh into himself there is a profound glory about being a human being but there's also something deeply wretched because I want to be like God and there's something in me fundamentally crooked and bent and broken that I cannot fix myself and only the gospel makes that clear only the gospel is the key that fits that so let's look back there is no there is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved and we look at it and we say okay

George you've maybe convicted me that I look at texts like that and I don't want to live like this and talk like this and think like this and pray like this and spend our church's budget like this because I feel a bit uncomfortable about that and how it's going to make me feel but maybe I should look and see how it's true George you do realize that a text like this most Canadians find it deeply offensive they think it's foolish they think it's arrogant they think it shows that you're uneducated they think it encourages violence violence and we go on and on and on well I mean the first thing about it is Peter and John knew there were lots of other religions and gods I mean they saw the Romans all the time they weren't ignorant of that and when they're saying to the Sanhedrin and there is salvation in no one else for there's no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved they were challenging them and their authority well you see the problem we have with it is that our culture has formed us to believe that statements like this aren't real they're not true they're a statement of personal preference they're a statement of a taste and so it's alright if we

have a preference for something or a taste for something or something that gives us peace or security but as long as we keep that very private then people will maybe be alright with us but as soon as it becomes public in such a way that our faith is going to affect how we think about medically assisted dying how it affects how we think about abortion how we think about sexuality how we think about the transgender issue at that point in time our culture gets very very very uncomfortable and in fact increasingly wants to persecute us because we our personal type of thing we think is not just personal but is leading us to these ways that Canadians think well in fact actually most Canadians haven't actually thought whether their positions on these things are true or false they've done a calculation and so that's a problematic thing for us but you see what Peter and John are saying is we all saw Jesus die by crucifixion on the cross and every single one of you all of you who are out out there you know that Jesus said he was going to die a particular way and he said he was going to rise from the dead and Peter and John can say listen we didn't think Jesus was going to rise from the dead either we thought it was all over when he died on the cross and we were hiding and in fear and there was no one more surprised than us when on the third day we went to the grave and found out that the grave was empty and that the grave clothes were still there there was no one more surprised than us and we can tell you we've seen Jesus alive and we've eaten with him and we've touched him and we've smelt him we know he's alive and listen for you guys you want to disagree with it well show us the body and you can't find the body you can't find the body because it really happened see the fact of the matter is that if we think that statements like there's salvation and if we think that there is salvation and no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved if we just think that that's a type of statement about our preference our aesthetics something that just gives me personal hope if that's all we think it is then of course it's arrogant and foolish but Paul is saying this is just as real as the Rockies it's as real as the Atlantic Ocean or the Pacific Ocean it's as real as the Grand Canyon it's as real as income tax and as your bank balance it's as real as all of that that's what they're claiming and now if you're claiming that then you've got to think about it

because if we think about it for a second if for instance it was announced today that some group of some group of doctors doctors in Kenya have found a cure for Alzheimer's and for a variety of reasons you can't get that cure anywhere else but it's now been documented you can get a cure from Alzheimer's you can't get it in Manhattan you can't get it in Singapore you can't get it in Ottawa you can only get it if you go to Nairobi and you can only get that's the only treatment that saves it we wouldn't think that was arrogant if it worked if it's real it's not arrogant doesn't matter you can't say well it can't possibly be true because I have my own cures for Alzheimer's you do?

no you don't that's ridiculous if it was to be announced today that there was a place in Sri Lanka where cancer can be cured and it's the only place you can go and if it's real and if it's real news it would be understood as good news because it's true and you wouldn't say well it can't be a cure there because I don't know because it's from Sri Lanka because it didn't come from Oxford or Cambridge or from the University of Toronto or because the Supreme Court of Canada doesn't agree with it that would all be viewed as being completely and utterly ridiculous and nonsense if it's true and the claim of Peter and John is that Jesus really did rise from the dead and he did it because God sent him so that you could have salvation and be made right with him and he proved that this is not just a fantasy by raising him from the dead and it's real it's as real as the Rockies as the Atlantic as the Pacific as the moon and the sun and the stars and it's good news it's news to you that today you can be made right with God and you can live your life from the rest of your life on today and into eternity made right with God

God knows every single thing about you and still he loved you and loves you and sent his son to die for you and you receive that empty handed by faith and when you receive it empty handed by faith he really comes in and he really saves you you know the end of your story the end of your story isn't had Alzheimer's or died poor or died friendless or died without children the end of your story is made right with God and come in to live with him for eternity and it can begin today if you put your faith and trust in Christ that's unbelievably good news for us we need to live we need to do some honest work with God and ask that God would help us to live as if this matters and pray as if this matters that's what we need to learn how to do I want to encourage you just as I bring this to a close I'll be up front with you and you guys know this

[36 : 30] I don't have the gift of an evangelist I tell people the gospel but I'm not you know Bishop Charlie used to be the diocesan bishop he was that guy who could sit go on a plane and by the end of the plane lead somebody to Christ like he was that guy but God doesn't tell everybody give that

gift to everybody but he does give to everybody that we have an obligation to pray for our loved ones why?

because it's true there is salvation in no other name other than Christ there's no other salvation other than in Christ no other salvation but there is the wonderful news is there is salvation and we need to pray about it and pray for our loved ones and our family and our friend and pray for opportunities to bear witness to Jesus and don't worry about being an evangelist what we just need to think about is the fact that God has called us to plant seeds and to place pebbles in people's shoes that's what he's called us to do you know as I think back to how I became a Christian there's different seeds that came into my life that began to make me think that maybe Christianity was true and there began to be it's as if almost there was like a you know how you get a pebble in your shoe and you can't you maybe try to walk on it a little bit because it's sort of irritating and then you maybe hope it moves out of the way and then eventually you have to try to take the pebble out of your shoe well that's what happened to me I started to have these little pebbles in my shoe about Christianity that made me think about it and we're just called to bear witness to Jesus in simple ways it might be something just as simple as when people ask you on Monday what you did on Sunday you said well I did what I normally do

I go to church on Sunday morning and then you know I did this and that and people might go after like you went to church like people still do that like in Canada in Ottawa people go to church and then they might say to each other he seems normal like that's really weird like that's a weird thing to do but you know what that's putting a seed or a stone a pebble that they have to think about in their shoe it might just be that you have some opportunity I'll just share one thing in closing I was sharing on Monday there's a fellow that I know he knows I'm a pastor and he was complaining about the fact that the woman he's going to be marrying and this man is a very very very hard working man he's become a very successful business person and the woman he's going to marry she has a teenage son and the teenage son doesn't care about working and the teenage son had said to this fellow who's going to become his stepdad what's the point of working you just work and you work and you work and you work and then you die like what's the point of working and so I almost said his name so this fellow we'll call him Bob he said you know

I don't know I don't know what to say to him like I sort of know what to say to him but I don't know what to say to him what do you say to him I'd say two things to him and unlike you one of those things I think would be something you would say as well but unlike you you don't have the second thing to say and by the way this is somebody was praying for me at this time because I'm not that clever I had had my second cup of coffee which means I had sort of three quarters of my brain working but and he said well what do you say to him and I'd say well I'd say to him that I'd say to him that especially for men work matters that you get your dignity and self-worth and a sense of accomplishment from working and that it matters it matters just to how you understand yourself as a person it gives you dignity and and I said you'd probably say something like that and he said yeah actually I would say that I agree with what Ronald Reagan said the best welfare treatment the best welfare program in the world is a job and that there is something about it the dignity of work and I said but you see what I'd also say that you can't say is this that he's right that you die and you lose everything and unless there's a meaning to your life and a meaning to work that goes beyond death it all just comes crashing down and it's like it's worth nothing and he said well I was hoping you'd give me better advice but he said it with a big smile he said yeah you know yeah yeah you know he sort of knows because we've talked about some of those things before now did I convert him no I didn't convert him hopefully I planted a bit of a seed maybe a bit of a stone that you know because I also know that he does think a little bit about the meaning of his life and having all that money anyway friends

I just want to really encourage you yes it can be very difficult and awkward to reveal to people that you that you're a Christian I'm very Canadian I know it but God has placed you in your situation God has placed you in your job he's placed you in your neighborhood he's placed you to be a regular at that Tim Hortons or that Starbucks or that restaurant he's placed you there for a reason and part of that reason is that you will pray that people come to a saving faith in Jesus and he's placed you there with a purpose that maybe at some point in time an opportunity will come that you can just bear witness to Jesus in some very simple way or maybe invite them to church or invite them to look at the Bible together or something and God is the one who's in control and he uses ordinary people like you and me but one of the things which is so important is we need to know at a very we

need to know that it's true it's good news it's unembarrassed news to know to know that there is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved but the important thing is to know there is a name you can be saved there is a name just one not 53 not 175 just one but there is one one way to be made right with your creator and to begin to be made right on this side of the grave and made right in a way that goes into all of eternity [42 : 39] I invite you to stand please stand bow our heads father if there are any here or watching who have not yet come to know Jesus I ask father your holy spirit would move in their minds and their hearts and even at this moment lead them to call out to Jesus that Jesus would become their savior and their lord and I ask father that you would do that work in their hearts to move them to call out to Jesus to be their savior and lord and father for us help us father to to know that you love us and care for us and that the good news is good and it's good news and put it on our hearts father to pray for our friends and our neighbors and family members who do not yet know Jesus as savior and lord and help us to pray for them and father in your kindness help us to recognize those opportunities those open doors that you will give us to bear witness to Jesus and help us father to have the courage to do that and we ask these things in the name of Jesus your son and our savior amen