

Ambassadors representing the persecuted King

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Preacher: Matt Hann

[0 : 00] So this morning we're reading from Matthew chapter 5 verses 1 to 16. Matthew 5. Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Blessed are the pure in spirit, for they shall be called sons of the king of heaven.

[1 : 09] For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth. But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Morning, everyone.

Let's give the kids a second. Okay, I'm going to show you some slides in a second, some pictures. Now, I want you to do a couple of things for me.

The first thing is, I want you to try and guess who the people are in each slide. So, Koo will bring them up in a second. So, you're going to tell me who are the people in each slide, and then I want you to try and guess the relationship between these people.

[2 : 18] So, Koo just put up the first slide there. We'll bring it up. Who can tell me who are these people in this slide? I can hear Jacinda Ardern, I think is what people are saying.

Yep. Anyone for the other one? Okay. Mum. Okay. No. All right. That's Annette King. We'll see how we go with the next one.

How about these two? Who are these two? Boris Johnson. Yep. That's the Prime Minister of the UK. Anyone else for the other lady on the left there? Ann Jenkins.

Yep. Thanks, Liz Cameron. It's not Ann Jenkins. Okay. No one. Interesting. Okay. The next one. How about these two?

Yes. I can hear it. It's Yixing Ping. I probably said his name not very well. Apologies for those who know how it should be pronounced. Anyone else for the one on the left? Grace Evangelical.

[3 : 14] All right. That is Chong Chong Yi. Okay. And we've got one more. Anyone for these two? Joe Biden.

Thank you. Anyone for the guy on the left? Okay. Well, that's Graham Fletcher. Sorry, that's not Graham Fletcher. That's Michael Goldman. I'm getting myself mixed up.

How could I forget who that is? No, look. Clearly, I never expected anyone to get the people on the left. The people on the left are ambassadors to Australia for the respective person on the right.

So, in this case, Joe Biden is the world leader. America, of course, is the country. And Michael Goldman is his ambassador to Australia. And now, if you think about ambassadors, what is the purpose of an ambassador?

What do they do? Like, they go out, they talk to people in the country and they're in. They represent the leader that they're for. So, Joe Biden, for example, he'll say something.

[4 : 13] You know, I want you to tell Australia this. Michael Goldman will go out and he'll convey the message. They try and convince people in the country that they're in about the message and the purpose that they want to get across for their country.

They stick up for their country. They represent their leader. That's the whole purpose of what an ambassador does. So, why am I talking about ambassadors?

I think you'll probably know it's not to try and get involved in world politics. Today, we're talking about being ambassadors for God. You see, we here at Grace, if you're a Christian, you are God's ambassador.

And just as every ambassador has a leader, as we saw on the slides there, so do we. We have a leader. And our leader is Jesus Christ. You see, we follow him.

We represent him. And it's not because we're in the same geographical area, clearly, like those guys on the screen. We follow Jesus because of who he is and what he has done for us.

[5 : 19] You see, Jesus is the king of the world. We know that here at Grace. It's something that we're very used to hearing. He is the king of the world. You see, without Jesus, we know there is no hope for this world.

We, if we are not followers of Jesus, we rebel against God. We, before we became Christians, rebel against God. We did not want to turn back to him. Sin, it's what we know sin as.

We said we want nothing to do with you. And we did not have any inclination of coming back. Now, what's the consequence of that? We all know is that we're cut off from God. We're cut off from God who gives us life.

And the consequence of that is eternal death. We are cut off from the creator of this world. And so in Romans 6, verse 23, it says the wages of sin is death.

Basically, the payment and the consequence for rebelling against God is death. And so Jesus comes in at that point in our relationship with God and restores the relationship.

[6 : 24] Jesus gives his life. He goes through that suffering and that pain that we hear about every week here when we come to church. Crucified on a cross. The ripping apart of that relationship between a perfect father and a perfect son.

He goes through all of that for the glory of God and the consequences that we can be saved. Something that we know well if you're a Christian.

You would have heard this many times. Romans 6, verse 23, the wages of sin is death. But it doesn't stop there, does it? It keeps going if you know this verse well. But the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

And this is the Jesus that is talking to the disciples on the mount in this story. This is the Jesus who the disciples follow.

He is our king and that's who we are called to represent. We are Jesus' ambassadors to this world. If you've got your Bible there, and hopefully you've already been following along a bit, as Brie read, chapter 5, verses 13 to 16, we're going to kind of do it a little bit in reverse, this section.

[7 : 33] But let's start at 13. You are the salt of the earth. But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand. And it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

You see, Israel was originally God's people. God intended for Israel to be his light to the world. He said to them, I'm choosing you, I'm saving you, and you are going to be the way that the world knows who I am.

It's what he said to them. That was their purpose for being chosen. But we know the story. The Old Testament is all about this. It's basically this cycle of God saves them.

[8 : 40] They're really grateful initially. Then they rebel and they reject him. They want nothing to do with him. And then they get into trouble and then they go, oh, no, we're in trouble. Why have you deserted us? And then God saves them again. And then that cycle just keeps continuing.

But that's the purpose of what he called them to do. But here Jesus says to his disciples, you are now my ambassadors to the world. You are the way that the world will know who I am.

We are Jesus' ambassadors. It's who we are. It's our status. That's what we are in Jesus. We are his ambassadors. You see that bit at the start of 13 and the same at the start of 14.

You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. He's not saying if you choose to be and, you know, it's something you can do if you want. You can follow me and if you want to be the salt of the world, then go for it.

He's saying you are these things. It's who you are. It's your status. It's your very being as someone who follows Jesus. And so the salt and the light metaphors, they are two metaphors, but essentially they say the same thing.

[9 : 51] If you think about salt, I'm sure everyone here has salt in their home somewhere. I'm hoping. If you don't, then my wife will be very disappointed in you because salt is great. I'll be disappointed in you.

Salt's amazing. But what's it for? Like, why do you put it in food? Because you want to make stuff taste better generally. Yes, you can preserve it, but we're not going to talk about that for a second. It doesn't, you know, it's another use. But basically put it in food to make it taste better. Now, if the salt just stayed in a little rock and didn't do anything and didn't spread to the food around it, it would be pointless. There'd be no point.

You'd basically be eating grit and so you'd take it out. But salt spreads to the food around it. It changes the food around it. It makes it better. In a similar way, and Don talked about this in his kids' talk, Jesus says, we are light.

And what does light do? It impacts the area around it. It gets rid of darkness. It's so that, you know, we can see it changes the space around it. If we put it, you know, under a basket, well, what's the point?

[10 : 53] Like, the whole point of the light is that it changes the area around it. If it's bright in the day, for example, we don't need to change the brightness so we turn off the light. It's not needed.

That's the whole point. And Jesus says here, you are the salt of the world. You are the light of the world. The whole point is that the way that you live will make the world know who I am.

We are people who represent God. And for what reason? In verse 16. So that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Now, Koo, I'm hoping you can bring up the next slide for me.

If we think about Vicky from the UK again, Vicky Trudell. Now, what does she do in her day-to-day job? She's the ambassador for the UK to Australia. What does she do?

Well, she doesn't stay in her embassy. She goes out. She goes into the country, Australia. She meets with people. She's trying to be like, yes, Britain's the best to get everyone on board with the cause. She's really keen for people to hear what her country is saying.

[12 : 04] She represents her leader, says what her leader wants her to say. And we are the same. We are ambassadors for God. It's just that the message that Vicky is spreading is she's trying to be salt and light, saying that Britain is great to Australia.

But we are God's ambassadors, representing Jesus and spreading his gospel. Thanks, Koo. If you're a Christian, do you live each day remembering who you are in Christ?

You are an ambassador for him. You are salt and light for him. Do you live a life reflective of those verses that we heard at the start, the Beatitude verses, verses 2 to 10?

You know, with humility, relying on our king. Because you are an ambassador at every point in your life. It's not a Sunday morning thing.

It's not when you're at Bible study thing. It's not when you're in a youth group thing. At every point, in every time, in every situation, whether you are by yourself, whether you're with other people, whether you're with family, friends, colleagues, you are an ambassador for Jesus.

[13 : 22] It is who you are. So when you think about the things that you watch on TV, do you think about and make those decisions based on who you are as an ambassador for Jesus?

In what you let your kids watch, in the jokes that you laugh at, in the way that you engage with your non-Christian friends. Is this how you think about that relationship?

That at all times, to those people, you are an ambassador for Jesus. You know, responding to bad situations, the way you might get frustrated when things go wrong, things that annoy you, how you react, how you spend your money, how you prioritize things in your life.

Do you make decisions that reflect your status? We are ambassadors for Jesus. Now, for me, I think I have a generally good relationship with my non-Christian friends and colleagues.

I don't hide the fact that I'm a Christian. Like, all of them know that I'm a Christian. I don't, you know, they say, what are you doing on the weekend? It's not like I go, Sunday morning, I'm going to a cafe and like pretend like I don't go to church or something.

[14:38] They all know. So I'm not hiding the fact that I'm an ambassador. But I think about some of the areas in my life. And I think for me, a big one is probably my school friends. They're not Christian.

None of them are Christian, actually. And I think about the relationships I have with them. And I think that although they know I'm a Christian, I reflect on the way that I relate to them.

And I have to conclude that in many respects, I don't think I live a life that reflects my status. I don't live a life that says I am an ambassador for Jesus and this is who I represent and this is what he stands for.

See, Jesus here says to me and to you, we are the salt of the earth. We are the light of the world. Put your light on a stand so that it can impact others. That is your whole, that is what you do as an ambassador for me. See, we are, you are, I am, Jesus' kingdom ambassadors.

[15:52] But there are consequences for being an ambassador, aren't there? Matthew chapter 5, verses 10 to 12. Start at verse 10.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. See, Jesus here says that if you live your status of being an ambassador for him, if you live a life that reflects Jesus, if you tell people about Jesus, well, at some point, people are going to hate you for it.

You see, the kingdom of heaven and earth don't mix fundamentally. What we believe in and what we care about do not match. And Dave mentioned it last week.

Who values meekness? I mean, seriously, who, like, I don't go to work going, today, I'm going to be the meekest person I can be. I'm just going to be out there, you know, people are going to say stuff, and I'm just going to be real meek.

[17:13] No one. No one does that in our world. Who values being poor in spirit? What kind of self-help person on YouTube says, you need to be more poor in spirit?

Fantastic. Think of yourself lesser. Think of Jesus more. No non-Christian self-help person talks that way. Be hungry and thirsty.

Who says, oh, you know, hate water. Two and a half days, I'm going to push it just so I can feel that experience of not having water in me. No one says that. You see, the kingdom life, and I guess what those, the crux of those verses is saying is that we are to be dependent on Jesus.

Of course, it's not really about water and being hungry or thirsty, but it's about being dependent on Jesus, relying on him for strength, relying on him for being our comfort.

See, the Australian dream is not to be dependent on someone else, is it? The Australian dream is that I would be, you know, my self-made man or self-made woman. I'm out there.

[18:18] We respect people, in fact, I think, who do this themselves, who are able to go from nothing to everything, and they've done it all their way. That's who we respect. That's the leaders that we look up to.

But if we are ambassadors for Jesus, representing this way of life, living a life that is reflective of Jesus, then we can expect pushback for it.

You can expect persecution for living the life that Jesus calls us to. Because the world does not accept Jesus.

Now, Dave mentioned here between verses 10 and 11, if you were here last week, you might remember this, he said that up until verse 10, it's kind of saying a lot of those and these.

So, you know, the blessed, those who are, et cetera. And then in verse 11, it swaps to you. He uses the word you. And Dave said that this is kind of reflective of the fact that he starts addressing the disciples directly.

[19:25] And although I think a lot of this stuff that he's talking about here applies to us, I think there are points at which it is helpful to remember that distinction in the passage. Because what Jesus says in these verses, I think actually does mean something different to the disciples than what it means to us here in Australia.

Now, I shouldn't say that it means something different. The meaning is actually the same, but I think the consequences are different. Sorry, there's a better way of saying it. You see, as Jesus is talking to his disciples, he knows that for them in their immediate future is persecution, is suffering. Just read the book of Acts. You can see it. It's plain as day. And I think that they, by and large, went through persecution that we probably, I don't think in our day-to-day lives, will experience, I think, for most of us.

Probably most of us, not even for a day, will we have that level of persecution. You see, to the disciples, Jesus says, blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

And it does mean something different to the apostles than what it means to us here in Australia. Look, if I was giving this talk in another country, some countries around the world, it would be a like-for-like comparison.

[20 : 51] In some ways, we're fortunate in Australia not to have that. But if we just talk about the death of the 12 apostles for a second. Now, a lot of this comes from, there are some that come from the Bible.

There's one or two that come from the Bible. A lot of it comes from Christian tradition and early Christian writers. So take it as a flavour of what the apostles went through, not as a historical narrative.

But this is largely how people kind of generally think that a lot of the apostles died. Now, my wife said at this point, if you have young kids in here, it might be a good time to just, I don't know, run them out or something.

It's not going to be gruesome or anything. But this is how the apostles died. So I think let's start with James, who we do know because he's in Acts 12. It's recorded how he died. He died because he was killed with a sword for being an ambassador for Jesus.

Peter, the apostle Peter, for being an ambassador for Jesus is supposed to have been crucified upside down. He didn't think it was good enough to be crucified in the way Jesus was.

[21 : 55] So he asked to be crucified upside down. Andrew, for being an ambassador for Jesus, was supposedly crucified on an X-shaped cross. So two points in the ground instead of one.

The most common way Bartholomew is thought to have died was being flayed, which is basically I whip you until all the skin comes off your back. And then they beheaded him for being an ambassador for Jesus.

Thomas, for being an ambassador for Jesus, was stabbed with spears. Other apostles are stoned. We know that Stephen is stoned, although he's not strictly an apostle. Now, others are beheaded, boiled in oil, beaten.

All of this persecution that the apostles went through, all for living as who they were, their status as an ambassador for Jesus. See, by being salt to the world around them, by being light, they brought many to Jesus' cause, but they outraged a huge amount more.

They were joyous in persecution. They were joyous representing their king because it's who they were, but it didn't come without consequence. See, the reward is great for them in heaven.

[23 : 14] They lived the life that they were called to. They lived as ambassadors for Jesus. And look, as I've said, even though clearly what they went through is probably something we'll never experience, in some ways, the principle is the same.

If we are ambassadors for Jesus, if we live the way that we know Jesus has called us to, and I think if you're a Christian here, you probably have a general idea, then there will be many who do not like it.

They will see your life and they will not like the way that you live. Just like when the apostles did it and just like when the prophets did it, as it says in verse 12.

You see, persecution is what it means to be an ambassador for Jesus. It comes with the territory. To help illustrate this, Koo's going to bring up another slide for us.

We're going to move away from using Vicky as an illustration. So let's go to the next one. And we're going to use these two. Now, I'm not trying to get political, so I've used both.

[24 : 20] That'll come back up in a second. But these are the ambassadors to Australia and China for their respective countries. So the one on the left is China's ambassador to Australia.

The one on the right is Australia's to China. Now, I think it's fair to say, and not getting political, but I think we can all agree here that the relationship between our two countries at the moment, is not in

a very good space.

I don't think anyone here would argue with me on that one. Now, being an ambassador for China in Australia or Australia and China at the moment is not going to be winning you many friends in the place that you're in.

You know, for example, I don't think that there's many people in these countries who are going to be inviting their ambassador to have state dinners. No, Australia's definitely not doing that for the Chinese ambassador.

China's not doing that for Australia. I don't think, I don't even think that the leaders of China are talking to Australian leaders at all at the moment. You know, by being who they are, by being an ambassador, they, you know, you can imagine that all the words that they say, whether in the embassy or outside or in a, you know, a group of people, they're all being monitored.

[25 : 34] Australia does it as well, I guarantee. We listen in on the conversations through radio devices and tech that I don't understand. But the problem is when you're talking about groups who just fundamentally disagree on so much stuff, this is the consequence.

But as ambassadors, they're tasked with saying unpopular things to the country that they're in. We don't like a lot of the stuff that Chung says to us. And I'm sure that they don't like a lot of the stuff that our ambassador says to them.

It's really, you know, it's not a good relationship at the moment. I'm sure that they're heavily monitored wherever they go. I guarantee that there's no way that they can just walk down the street and, you know, have no kind of attention.

I'm sure that does not happen. And now I think, you know, it's hard to think that either of these two would be killed for being ambassadors. You know, the outrage would be ridiculous. But the fact is that they are ambassadors.

And for that, they receive some level of persecution. They receive pushback for being who they are. If we are Christians, it's the same thing.

[26 : 49] You see, being an ambassador for God brings persecution with it. Now, at this point, I want to take you through some reflecting I've been doing on my life, brought on by this passage, which I think is a common experience for people who prepare talks.

But there's one question that comes up for me more than any other when I was going through this. And that is when it seems here, like Jesus is saying, that persecution and pushback and people disliking his message comes with the territory of being an ambassador.

When that seems to be the given of the way that things work in this world. And why do I find myself experiencing so little of it? Why is it that I don't experience this in my everyday life?

Now, I think some of it can be answered by the fact that I live in Australia. We're a safe country. I think that's the reason no one's, you know, busting down the door to try and kill me. Strong rule of law, strong police presence.

We're a Christian nation, at least from Christian heritage, I should say. We have freedom of religion. I think that can explain some of the, you know, death and torture end of the spectrum.

[28 : 11] But I don't think it can explain the lack of lower grade persecution in my life. And I think like people not wanting to invite me to stuff because I'm always trying to bring up Jesus in a conversation.

I just don't want to hear that type of thing. You know, people giving me weird looks in the street because I'm trying to engage them with the gospel in Cole's shopping centre out the front of Glendale.

You have friends and family being annoyed at the way that I live my life. You're wasting your life. Like, why do you care about this stuff? You're just wasting your life. You're giving all your money to other things. It's stupid.

Colleagues not thinking about me for a promotion because I'm always trying to bring up Jesus in a conversation. Like, I'm just an annoying person to be around. You know, I don't want to receive a negative comment on my Facebook page because I've posted some Christian gospel message.

I don't want to have to get into some argument with someone about the fact that they think I'm wrong. You know, people making jokes about my faith, like, you're a Christian. Good luck with that.

[29 : 20] You know, mocking me, thinking I'm a loser. You know, even if I don't say it, I can see it on their face. Now, I'm not trying to compare the levels of persecution between us and the apostles.

Clearly, this is on a spectrum where you've got death on one end and, I don't know, hurt feelings or something on the other end of the spectrum. But I think that the thing is still the same.

If you put your light on a stand, if you are salt to this earth, if you are light to the world, then you will receive pushback. In fact, I think I've come to the conclusion that I don't think you can be a true ambassador for God and not receive some level of persecution at some point in your life.

I look at our world and I just don't think it's possible. Now, when we're representing him well to our non-Christian friends, to our family, to society, we should expect to receive some level of pushback. And so I think I've concluded, at least for me, that a lack of persecution in my life over an extended period of time is probably due to one of two things.

[30 : 39] One, that I am hiding in my embassy too scared of what the consequences might be if I really make it known that I am an ambassador for Jesus.

or, number two, probably in some ways a little bit more insidious, I've started to like the way of life of the people I'm representing too.

And the fact that I don't receive persecution is because my life does not look any different. And I think I can see some of this in our church.

And I say this as someone who I think I would say I'm a core member of this church. I've been here for about eight years. But it's a very comfortable place to be, isn't it, as Gracie Evangelical, to be an insular church.

We all are here, generally, by and large, ambassadors for Jesus. You all believe the same thing that I believe. You know, I'm not going to receive persecution for getting up here and saying that I think Jesus is the way we should live our life.

[31 : 48] In fact, probably the exact opposite. You're probably going to be encouraging and supportive of me living life this way. You see, it's safe to stay in our embassy.

It's safe to live that way. And I must wonder how much do we as a church really want to engage with our community?

How much do we want to be a light on the stand to Glendale and Cardiff and Edgeworth and Argentine, Ellemore Vale? You know, we have a building in the area. I think we're happy for people to come to us.

I think we love having visitors. We're welcoming visitors. We have a website. You know, we keep it updated. We make sure that people can find us on the website. We have a logo out the front. We have a Facebook page. But how often do we meet the community where they are at? Because a good ambassador for Jesus doesn't stay in the church confined to other ambassadors.

[32 : 56] See, there are consequences for being God's kingdom ambassador. And are we willing to accept those consequences? are we willing to have people misrepresent grace?

That church, they just spread hate. They hate homosexuals. They're just telling everyone how they, you know, they live in life the wrong way. Are we willing for that type of persecution? Are we willing to potentially have negative media attention because we have a group of people out the front of Coles in Glendale telling people the gospel?

Imagine for a second that we own the BCF building next door. Suspend your imagination for a second. Sorry, suspend reality for a second. Use your imagination.

Would we be willing on the side of that building to create a giant billboard? Jesus equals life. All else equals death. Now, you believe that message, don't you?

That's something that we all believe here. But imagine the reaction we would get if we put that on the side of the building. Are we willing to accept the consequence that, you know, the council will be on to us, that we could have people picketing in the car park?

[34 : 18] Are we willing to stand out in a way that will draw people to Jesus, even if it means that many others will hate us for it? Now, I'm not saying that persecution is the goal here.

Persecution for persecution's sake is pointless. We shouldn't be trying to do these things so that we, you know, suffer. It's not, that's not the point. We're not sadists or anything. I think that if we are representing Jesus, if we are being ambassadors, if we are being salt and light in this world, then persecution comes with the territory.

as verse 11 says, you are blessed when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Are we okay with being treated differently? With being known as people who go to that church? Because Jesus' gospel ruffles feathers.

There is no way the gospel in this world can go together without there being some type of pushback. See, we are known as a nice church of grace.

[35 : 50] God and sometimes I wonder if we are too concerned with keeping it that way at the expense of being a light in our area.

See, we need to remember who we represent. We represent Jesus who valued our lives so much that he went through a level of suffering that we will never understand.

Without Jesus, every single person that you know, without Jesus, friends, colleagues, people that you do sport with, people you see in your community, have a mums group with, go to school with, all of them have an eternal death if they do not know Jesus.

remember who we represent. Jesus Christ is the one who we are ambassadors for. And the other point that I mentioned before talking about that was, and I guess I'm coming back to, is that perhaps the reason is that we actually don't stand out.

We like the way of life of the people that we're representing to. You see, in our society, relying on Jesus is 100% optional.

[37 : 23] I think by and large, you know, we're rarely in want. I don't think there's maybe occasionally and for some people more than others. But, you know, we've got great government support. Generally, we've got great services.

We, at least here, we have a lot of people that we can rely on if we get into trouble. But we don't have to look different if we don't want to. In fact, it's easier to not look different.

I think that's very clear. Why be meek when I can be respected? Why be merciful when I can get what's mine and I can make things better for myself?

Why be poor in spirit when I can be self-reliant and self-confident? See, I don't need Jesus to be successful in this world. In fact, it's probably the opposite.

If I don't have Jesus in this world, I'll be more successful. You think about school amongst your friends, you know, your workplace. Maybe it's a social club that you're involved in.

[38 : 27] If you want to become popular, just do what they do. It's not rocket science. That's how people get popular. Make the same jokes. Care about the same frivolous things that they care about.

Make them the centre of your life. See, being an ambassador is not an easy thing. It requires us to run counter-cultural.

It requires us at some points, I think, to perhaps not give up, to give up things that we might otherwise wish we could have. Living the life of someone who doesn't follow Jesus can be very attractive.

You know, for example, I get half of my Sunday back. I don't have to be here with you guys. I can be doing whatever I want to be doing. I can be out there, I can be going to the shops, I can be playing extra soccer on a Sunday.

You know, fantastic. I don't have to pay Dave Bott's wage. I don't want to give my money to Dave Bott. What am I doing? I could be giving it to my new car or something like that. Supporting charity, like, you know, maybe I'll do a little bit of it because I still, you know, get a bit of a kick, but I don't have to do that.

[39 : 35] I can, you know, keep it for myself, spend on something, maybe give it to family, I guess, which is not in and of itself a bad thing. I don't have to worry what I say.

I don't have the pressure of living this good Christian life. Very attractive, isn't it? I'm going to be selfish with my time.

I don't have to feel guilty about the fact I'm being selfish with my time. It's what I want to do, living my best life. Sometimes we wish we could throw off those responsibilities, I think.

But we have to remember who we represent. We represent Jesus. I think that type of thinking happens when we lose sight of who we represent.

We forget what he has done for us. We forget that we represent a king who at all times in every circumstance wants what's best for us.

[40 : 42] We forget that we represent the king of the universe. It's an illusion that it will be a better life.

death. Remember the destiny, if you do not have Jesus, is death. And there are some here, I think, who probably do suffer persecution for being an ambassador for Jesus.

Some people probably, I imagine, up until this point have been thinking, this doesn't really connect with me. For some of you, the struggle of running countercultural is real. And I think Luke offers a great and satisfying comfort here.

When we're tempted to give up, when we're sick of being made to feel like an idiot, when we're sick of losing friendships, family relationships, or maybe the relationships don't even get off the ground because of the way that we live our life.

I think Luke offers us comfort here in saying, remember who it is that you represent. Remember who you are an ambassador for. You are an ambassador for Jesus, who died on the cross, who was persecuted for you, who had his perfect relationship with his father torn apart for God's glory and as a consequence saving us from certain death.

[42 : 18] We represent a king who walked the walk. He went before us. See, the people we saw at the start on those slides, those ambassadors, they represent people who will in 30 years probably not even be on the face of the planet.

They're failing, they say stupid things, they make wrong decisions, they change their mind all the time. They're ambassadors for someone who really, you know, they'll be gone. But as Christians, we are ambassadors for the eternal king, a king who will never, ever make the wrong decision, who always wants what's best for us.

We are his ambassadors. Remember who you represent? I'm going to pray.

Dear God, thank you so much that you sent your son Jesus to this world, that he died and rose again for us to take our consequence, to take our punishment.

God, I just pray that we would recognize recognize that we are salt and we are light, that is who we are, regardless of how well we might live it day to day, that is the status that you have called us to.

[43 : 54] God, I pray that in our everyday life, we would remember that you, Jesus, are who we represent. You are the one that we make our lives known to those around us for.

I pray that we wouldn't take this as a moralistic challenge. I pray that we would remember that ultimately all of this is for your glory. All of this is for your name.

And we are people who are here to represent you. Amen.