

Mission Impossible?

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[0 : 00] Well, it really is a great pleasure to be in Melbourne and lovely to be here. And thank you for coming out this evening.

And it's a joy to be with you. Let's pray, shall we, as we start to look at this great passage. Thank you, our Father, that your word is more precious than gold, than much fine gold.

Thank you that it's sweeter than honey from the comb. Thank you that you make us wise through your word. And thank you that you give light to our paths through your word.

And we pray that you would enlighten our lives and strengthen us to live for you. In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, the subject I want us to take this evening is the mission of Christ.

And I want us to explore together what it is that Jesus came to do. And to explore together what it is that Jesus wants us to do. And if you like, I want to hold up for us a plumb line as one might against a building and say, are we building straight?

[1 : 22] All of us know that if we aim at nothing, that's exactly what we hit. And all of us know that if we aim at the wrong thing, we expend a huge amount of energy to no avail. I spent a short period of my life in the army and the very first kind of platoon attack I ever led in practice, not in real, was a live firing platoon attack.

Mechanized with artillery fire, smoke and I mean everything. And it all went smoothly and swimmingly and vast amounts of ammunition were expended.

And we got to the far end and we were in armored vehicles so we had periscopes as we advanced. And when we were debriefed, it was pointed out to me that it was a marvelous platoon attack, but that we missed the enemy by about 500 meters.

Now, it was embarrassing, but it didn't really matter. But what a shame if we would expend all our energy in the service of the Lord Jesus, but we were to be slightly off direction with what his mission is.

What is the mission of Jesus? And we will know that the question of the mission of Jesus is a matter of some debate. Ask one Christian and they will say one thing.

[2 : 41] Ask another Christian, they might say another. And ask a third and they might say something altogether different. Listen, if you will, to Billy Graham speaking in the 1970s at a major World Congress on evangelism.

We have one task. To proclaim the message of salvation in Jesus Christ, evangelism can mean nothing else than proclaiming Christ to persuade men and women to become his disciples and responsible members of his church.

And now listen to another friend at the same Congress, but 35 years later, the third Congress of its sort. It seemed to me that enthusiasm for many other things was so much in evidence that issues of the church's response to poverty, AIDS, social justice, child exploitation, global warming and so on tended to dominate the mission of the church to the quiet subordination of Billy Graham's initial absolute priority for disciple-making evangelism.

What is the mission of the church?

It's a key moment and a key commission. Because back in chapter 7, though we needn't turn to it now, Jesus described John the Baptist using the words of the prophet Malachi as a messenger sent before his face to prepare the way.

[4 : 37] The word Malachi means messenger. Malachi promised a messenger like Elijah to go before the face of God's king. And now Jesus describes John the Baptist as a messenger, one like Elijah to go before his face to prepare the way for him.

But John the Baptist's job at this stage of the gospel in chapter 9, verse 51 is finished. The disciples have already recognized that Jesus is the Christ. And so in verse 52 of chapter 9, at this new part of

Luke's gospel, Jesus commissions his disciples, now that they have seen who Jesus is, and he sends them before his face, just as John the Baptist had gone before his face, just as Malachi had promised that a messenger would go before his face, a messenger like Elijah.

In other words, Jesus' disciples are being sent with all the authority and the divine mandate of a Malachi, of an Elijah, of a John the Baptist.

Now that his identity has been made clear, you are the Christ, he sends his disciples before his face to prepare the way for him, like Old Testament prophets of old.

And it's as if, with John the Baptist having done his job, now the baton, the relay baton, if you like, has been handed over to the New Testament disciples of Jesus.

[6 : 09] And unlike the English, or should I say the British, relay sprints team, they are not to drop it. That is certainly the way they see themselves, and you can see that they see themselves like an Elijah, like a John the Baptist, like a Malachi of old, because in verse 53, when the Samaritans did not welcome Jesus, because he was heading to Jerusalem, the disciples James and John saw it, and they said, Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven upon them?

And those of you who are Bible beavers, which I suspect is many, will know that in 2 Kings chapter 1, the Samaritan king Ahaziah refused to accept the king of Jerusalem, because he was a Samaritan, and the Samaritans had declared unilateral independence.

They hated Jerusalem. They wanted their own king. And the Samaritan king Ahaziah refused to accept the king, and so he sent messengers to Elijah, and Elijah did what?

Rained down fire from heaven upon them. He sent 50 more, and exactly the same thing happened again. And the third group of 50 went in a slightly more cautious manner to approach Elijah as they came to the great prophet.

Now, I say that because that demonstrates that James and John, having been handed the baton of going before the face of Jesus to make preparation for him, see themselves like an Elijah of old, like a Malachi, a messenger, like a John the Baptist.

[7 : 44] But John the Baptist's job has been done. The baton has been handed over. And now these disciples of Jesus are commissioned to go before his face. Now look very closely at verse 56.

Verse 55, Now that's interesting, isn't it? For it tells us that the timing of the mission is now for Jesus' disciples to go before his face, commissioned with all his authority, but it is not now yet time for judgment upon those who reject the king.

Oh, judgment will certainly fall on those who reject the king. And so it should. And so it should. For if one rejects the king of kings and lord of lords, the creator, the God of heaven and earth, when he walks the earth, there can be nothing left for one but judgment.

But the time has not yet come for judgment. And so when the Samaritan villagers reject Jesus the king, and when the apostles and disciples of old want to call down judgment upon those who reject Jesus the king, Jesus' response is to turn and rebuke them.

It is not yet time for judgment. I wonder if you understand the timing of Jesus' mission. In other words, it is as if.

[9 : 08] It is as if, and I know this is not needed by God, so please afterwards, please don't come up to me and tell me, William, I know this, but it is as if God were to have a diary, and I know he doesn't need one.

And on page one, here is the creation of the universe. And on the final page, here is the final judgment and salvation. And here, and whatever section it is, is the arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ. And in between the first coming and the second coming of Jesus, it is not yet time for judgment. Jesus turned and rebuked them. It is time for salvation. A window is open, a window of opportunity, a window when it is possible to turn back to God and to be saved.

It is not yet time for judgment. Personally, I find it's very easy to forget the time, rather like James and John did here. About three months ago, I wrote to a number of business people in the city and told them that I'd set aside a Wednesday and a Friday lunchtime, I think I set aside about ten of them, so that I could come to their office and they could gather a little group of unbelieving friends. And I would introduce the gospel of the Lord Jesus to their friends in a five, seven-minute presentation. And then we would take questions. And we had a fine time. Seven of them took me up on it.

[10 : 37] And we've been in the upstairs room of a pub with 20 friends of a couple of Christians there. We've been in a wine bar with five friends of another Christian. And we've been in a boardroom with 15 colleagues.

Somebody had summoned together in the boardroom. I did my five-minute introduction. And then we had questions to and fro. But on one occasion, well, on two occasions, actually, one person, we got to the end.

I finished my talk. We went round. And one person in the question time said, well, if that is what you think, then you are a dot, dot, dot, dot, dot. And the Lord Jesus is a dot, dot, dot, dot.

And what he's got to say to us is absolute dot, dot, dot, dot. And on the second occasion, a similar group from the same office but not the same person gathered.

And we had 20 minutes of very heated discussion. I mean, I simply presented the Christian message to them. And they then went back to the office, surrounded a girl's table, threw down a gospel on the table, and started swearing and shouting at her.

[11:44] And it is easy in that situation, isn't it, as we see the hostility of the world and as we see the disinterest of those around us to react like a James and John.

Oh, Lord, why don't you just rain down judgment on them, be done with it, a plague on their houses. And Jesus says it is not yet time for judgment. There is a window of salvation opened, and he sends his disciples before his face with all the authority and all the divine mandate of an Elijah of a Malachi, of a John the Baptist, to make preparation for him, the timing, the terms.

Verse 57 to 62. Here we find three would-be disciples. The first and third offer to follow Jesus. The first one promises too much too soon.

And the third one, too little too late, will leave the second till last. Let's look at them. Number one, verse 57 and 58. As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, I will follow you wherever you go.

Jesus replied, foxes have dens, birds of the air have nests, but the son of man has no place to lay his head. Well, we go to the Ideal Home exhibition in England.

[13:04] I don't know if you have a similar. We read house and garden. Perhaps here it's house and beach. We speak of retirement homes and holiday homes.

We have human rights and animal rights and creature comforts. Verse 58. Foxes have dens. Birds have nests.

The son of man, that is God's Lord and King, God's universal ruler to whom all authority and power will be given, who will be given rule over people from every tribe, language, and nation.

When he comes to earth, when the Lord Jesus walks the earth and sets his face for Jerusalem, he has no place to lay his head. No human rights.

No animal rights. No creature comforts. And this man promised too much too soon. I'll follow you wherever you go. He hadn't begun to see yet that Jesus, when he came to the earth, set his face for Jerusalem in a hostile world in order to save the world in this time where there is a window of opportunity.

[14:12] The son of man had nowhere to lay his head and discipleship will be costly. Personally, I love this because there is no small print with Jesus.

There's no sudden shock. There's no little thing in the contract which you don't discover till later. Chapter 9, verse 23. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow.

The first, too much too soon. The third, too little too late. Verse 61. Another said, I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.

And Jesus replied, no one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God. Now, we won't be able to understand this if we are modern farmers because, I am told, modern farmers have sat navs and tom-toms in their tractors.

In England, in a five-acre field. I wonder, how does one need to find directions in a five-acre field? I don't think it has to do with the inadequacies of English farmers.

[15:18] I think it has to do with spray and not wasting stuff. But in the first century, there were no sat navs on your ox or whatever it was. You just had a horse or an ox, the plough, and yourself.

And you picked your point on the horizon, you set your eye on it, and you walked behind and woe betide you if you looked to left or right, because you would go off course.

Some of you will have known John Chapman, who sadly died two weeks ago. I was so glad to be able to be at his Thanksgiving service in the cathedral two Saturdays ago, having known him for many years.

And we owed so much under God to the ministry of the wonderful John Chapman. You will remember Chapo's great maxim. When asked, what's it like being a Christian?

Oh, brother, nobody ever told me how wonderful it was. But nobody ever told me how difficult it was. Don't worry, the first 50 years are the hardest. I think sometimes the Christian life is like a marathon.

[16:26] And I wonder whether those who are approaching their later years are like the runners who've entered the stadium. The finishing line is just in sight.

But I wonder if those who are in their 40s and 50s are like those doing the hard yards, hitting the wall. Jesus says, no one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom.

It's a costly, persistent discipleship. Do you know the well-known Christian chorus? Go on, go on, go on, go on, go on.

Go on, go on, go on, go on. Go on, go on, go on, go on. Go on, go on, go on. There are, I'm told, 55 verses.

There was once an English bishop, J.C. Ryle, a very good man. Many a man begins a Christian life full of warmth and zeal.

[17:30] By and by he loses his first love and turns back again to the world. He liked the new uniform, the bounty money, the name of a Christian soldier. He never considered the watching, the warning, the wounds, the conflict which Christian soldiers must endure.

He who looks back wants to go back. Don't look back. Costly, persistent, but it's the man in the middle, under these terms of the mission of Christ, who we must consider next.

For he is commanded by Jesus to follow. Verse 59. Jesus said to another man, you follow me. But he replied, Lord, first let me go and bury my father.

And Jesus said to him, let the dead bury their own dead. But you go and proclaim the kingdom of God. So this isn't a man who promises too much too soon or too little too late.

He is ordered by the Lord to follow. And immediately he makes an excuse. Oh, Lord, I will follow, but first my career. Oh, Lord, I will follow, but first let me educate the children.

[18:37] I will follow, Lord, but let me get that starred first. Lord, yes, of course I'll follow. But all the experiences of the world, I'd love to enjoy them first. And the retirement.

And the constant holidays and so on. Lord, first let me bury my father. Jesus said, let the dead bury their own dead. Go and proclaim the kingdom.

This cannot mean that we are to ignore our responsibilities to our parents. For in Mark's gospel, Jesus specifically castigates the Pharisees for not honoring father and mother.

Is it what's known as rabbinic hyperbole, exaggeration to make the point? What is the greatest adult responsibility? Or at least amongst the greatest adult responsibilities a man or woman might know.

Is it not the appropriate fitting final farewell for their parents? And now, says Jesus, even in that setting, even a setting such as that, there is a priority that supersedes, that overarches it all.

[19:46] So that even as you're engaged in that, there is a priority to be proclaiming the gospel. There then is the timing. There then are the terms, costly, persevering and urgent.

Ahead of the next deal, before the career, in front of the holiday plans or the study goals and beyond the social life. So that even as I'm engaging in life in this world, in every priority I see, there is an overarching priority for the proclamation of the kingdom.

The territory. The timing, the terms, the territory, chapter 10, verse 1. After this, the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them two by two before his face, ahead of him, to every town and place where he was about to go.

Interesting that, isn't it? For if the first two are apostles, here we have 72 disciples and they are others. That is, others like this man who has been commissioned to follow and to proclaim.

So now he broadens the field beyond the specific apostles of those who have authority to go before his face, like an Elijah, with all the authority of Amalekite, as a John the Baptist, to declare the gospel.

[21:01] He sends 72 others to go before him. And there are 72, just as there were 72 nations in Genesis 10, or from the footnote, 70 nations in the Hebrew version of Genesis 10.

So here we see an indication, don't we? A first indication of the global territory of the mission of Christ. We've gone to the Samaritan villages, but now he appoints 72 others, a very symbolic number, which in due course will become go to all the nations in chapter 24 and in Acts chapter 1 to

be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

The territory is global. I flew out, as Mark was saying, from Heathrow, I think two weeks ago, around about now, and we climbed up over London.

Do you know how it is in the aeroplane? You have one of those little screens that tell you how far you're going and where you've been and when you're going to arrive. And I tell you, when you're coming to Australia, you don't inch across the map.

You millimeter across the map, hour after hour after hour. And you head up over Europe. My geography is a little hazy. I only have a degree in geography.

[22 : 20] But you look down over Europe and there is France, the territory of the global mission of Christ. And you pass on down through Germany, the territory of the global mission of Christ.

And then you doze off a little while and then you open the window. You don't open the window. Sorry, you lift up the little. Don't open the window. You lift up the little flap and you peep out. And there is India and way, way, way down there's some tiny speck of a village and a hamlet and a house, the territory of the mission of Christ.

He's king of kings, lord of lords. You are the Christ of God. He is the son of man heading to his death in Jerusalem as the savior of the world, the territory of the mission of Christ.

He sent 72 others. And then there is Singapore, a blaze of light with millions of people crammed onto that little island, the territory of the mission of Christ.

And then down into Sydney and on into Adelaide and up into Melbourne and into your street and your house and your family and your friends and your office.

[23 : 26] And he commissions them to go before his face with all the authority of a John the Baptist or an Elijah.

For they know that Jesus is the Christ and to herald his arrival as lord, king, ruler and savior of the world. In this moment, this window, this period where the door is open and salvation is available. Timing, terms, territory and now tactics. And we'll move swiftly through verses 1 to 16. But and some of it is not directly applicable to us because Jesus is physically present and therefore all the physical benefits of his kingdom are available.

Whereas Jesus is spiritually present today, not physically. And they are told not to carry a money bag. But later in the gospel, they're told to carry money bags and they are told to wipe off the dust from their feet.

But in the acts of the apostles, they settle down and set up churches in towns. There is much, however, that is applicable. Verse 2, the tactics, prayerful.

[24 : 43] The harvest is plentiful. The workers are few. Ask the lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. It's a shame it doesn't say pray earnestly, which you have in some of the versions.

In 2010, we had a bumper harvest in England. And I've never experienced trees groaning.

I don't know if you've ever been in an orchard when there's a bumper harvest and you can actually hear the trees groaning. I remember going down into my parents' orchard on their farm and shutting my eyes.

I can't think why I shut my eyes. You didn't need to shut your eyes, but I did in order to hear. And you could actually hear the trees groaning. What do you need when you have a bumper harvest? Laborers. The harvest is plentiful, says the Lord Jesus. Not necessarily in my little neck of town, but there is a plentiful global harvest. So pray earnestly to the lord of the harvest.

[25 : 44] And the word is outthrow, to thrust out. And the word laborer is a hard task laborer. Laborer stripped to the waist with sweat pouring down their back.

Pray to the Lord of the harvest earnestly to thrust out laborers into the harvest field. Prayerful. Dangerous.

The image of verse 3 is very striking, isn't it? Go, I'm sending you out like lambs amongst wolves. The good shepherd sending out his sheep like lambs into the teeth of wolves.

I wonder sometimes if we are less bold than we might be because we don't realize that the commission is to go into danger. And we are sent out like lambs in the midst of wolves.

But the verse I want us to focus on is number 5. For here we have the verbal content of our mission. Prayerful. Dangerous. Verbal.

[26 : 46] When you enter a house, first say peace to this house. If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them. If not, it will return to you. Peace in Luke's gospel is

shorthand for peace with God.

And I've jotted down on your handout references that will show you categorically that peace in Luke's gospel is shorthand for forgiveness and friendship with God.

So at the beginning of the gospel, John the Baptist is told that he will give knowledge of salvation in the forgiveness of sins, which is peace with God.

So peace with God is forgiveness of sins, salvation, friendship with God. And in the beginning of the gospel, in the carol services, you will notice in a couple of weeks time that the angels announce peace on earth.

Glory to God in the highest. And at the end of the gospel, as Jesus heads to the cross, you will remember that the crowds shout peace in heaven.

[27 : 56] Glory to God in the highest. So as Jesus comes into the world as savior, peace on earth. As Jesus goes out of the world as savior, peace in heaven.

And right in the middle of the gospel to the sinful woman, your faith has saved you. Your sins have been forgiven. Go in peace. So that peace in Luke's gospel is not international global peace.

No, Jesus promises there will be wars and rumors of war. It's not kind of peace and cuddly feelings in the home. No, Jesus promises he's come to bring division, not peace.

Peace in Luke's gospel is peace with God, friendship with God. As the Lord Jesus breaks into the world, glory to God in the highest. Peace on earth on whom his favor rests.

And as Jesus goes out of the world via the cross where he dies on the cross for the forgiveness of sin. Glory to God in heaven. And peace in heaven.

[28 : 59] Glory to God in the highest. So then the tactic is prayerful. And it is dangerous. And it is verbal declaration of the gospel.

Verse five. When you enter a house, first say peace to this house. Speak the gospel. The mission, so far as Luke is concerned in his gospel, is not so much social as verbal.

Here then is the verbal content of the mission. And it seems that Billy Graham was right. We have one task. To proclaim the message of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Evangelism can mean nothing else than proclaiming Jesus Christ to persuade men and women to become his disciples and responsible members of his church.

They are sent to speak. And to speak the gospel. And to herald it verbally. Which ties in with the word evangelism.

[30 : 05] Which is a big Bible word. Which only ever is used to speak of a verbal announcement of news. First, actually, it's used by the Philistines in 1 Samuel 31.

When they announced the news of Saul's beheading. Bad news for Saul. Good news for the Philistines. And therefore the mission of the church is to evangelize, to speak.

Mission is evangelism. And if spoken word is not used in mission, it is not Christian mission. We sent some people out to a university in England to be involved in their mission.

And part of the mission, one of the activities, was cooking cheese toasties to give to students as they came back from the nightclub at 3 o'clock in the morning.

No verbal announcement. I'm not altogether sure what a cheese toasty is. You can probably help me afterwards. I believe it's toast and cheese. Toasted.

[31 : 11] I think that's something like that. But when they came back, we decided together that cooking cheese toasties as part of a mission to give out to students when they return from being at the nightclub is not Christian mission.

It's cooking. Christian mission would be to speak verbally. I don't know how you can speak any other way. The mission of Christ is verbal.

The mission of Christ is verbal. Now, don't misunderstand me.

God, your faith has saved you. Your sins have been forgiven. Go in peace. The mission of Christ is verbal. Now, don't misunderstand me.

It doesn't mean that we as Christians should totally ignore the needs of the socially and economically disadvantaged. Oh, no. Of course not. As men and women come to Jesus and are put into a right relationship with God, inevitably they become, in the words of Billy Graham, responsible disciples.

[32 : 23] And wherever the gospel is preached, Christian politicians, Christian social workers, Christian doctors and nurses, Christian welfare and community workers, and so on, engage in godly Christian work.

That is a simple step of godliness. Responsible discipleship. And anyone who knows anything about the history of Christian movements will know that as the gospel has been proclaimed and people have come to peace, relationship with the living God, so they have become responsible disciples and engaged in godly living.

In our country, in the 19th century, it was the Christians who opposed slavery, the Christians who brought in the factory acts, the Christians who brought care for destitute women, the Christians who abolished gambling, the Christians who abolished gambling, the Christians who brought in the Children's Act, the Christians who raised the age of consent.

But to confuse these acts of responsible discipleship with mission is to confuse mission with godliness. Mission, if it is to be Christian, must have at its cutting edge the verbal announcement of peace with God through the death of Jesus.

May I hold up the plumb line? The timing, the terms, the territory, the tactics.

[33 : 55] I like to do it at St. Helens and indeed at any other church. Is what we are engaged in Christian mission? I was part of a church once where we had a huge lunch club.

We used to cook lunch for, I think must have been hundreds of people who came in. And it transpired that actually there was no attempt to announce the good news of Jesus Christ to the hundreds and huge energy expended by the church.

Let's hold up the plumb line. Is the gospel being proclaimed? Is it Christian mission? It was lovely godly activity. We loved our neighbor.

But were we engaged in verbal announcement? And do you see the wonderful point in verse 16? That as we engage in this mission, so the results are eternal.

Look at verse 16. Whoever receives you, receives me. Whoever rejects you, rejects me. Whoever rejects me, rejects him who sent me.

[35 : 05] I want you to imagine for a moment that this in my hand is a check from Holy Trinity Doncaster, signed by Andrew Price for the sum of five million dollars.

And it is written out to Adam over here. And I offer it to you, Adam. Will you take a check from Holy Trinity Doncaster for five? No, you won't.

So as you reject me, you don't just reject me, you reject Andrew Price. And as you reject Andrew Price, so you reject the bulging bank account of Holy Trinity Doncaster, which might have lavished upon you five million dollars.

But as you accept me, so you accept Andrew. And as you accept Andrew, so you accept Holy Trinity to your immeasurable benefit.

Now, do you see the nature of the tactics of this mission? Prayerful. Prayerful. Praying earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to thrust out laborers.

[36 : 12] Dangerous. Verbal. Speaking the gospel wherever I find myself. In the school. In the home. In the home. Amongst the family at Christmas. In the neighborhood.

With the friends. At work. In the office. Organizing the dialogue. Bringing them to the carol service. Learning to read one-to-one so that I can explain the gospel to them.

The nature of the mission. Prayerful. Dangerous. Verbal. Eternal. And Eternal. As they receive you. So they receive Jesus. As they receive Jesus. So they receive our Father in heaven.

As they reject you. So they reject Jesus. As they reject Jesus. So they reject the Father in heaven. To their eternal. Eternal cost.

Woe to you, Chorazin. Woe to you, Bethsaida. For if the miracles that were performed in you. Had been performed in Sire and Sidon. They would have repented long ago. Finally, the triumph.

[37 : 14] I just mention it. Because verse 18 through to verse 20. Speak of the triumph of the mission of Christ. That as we proclaim the kingship of Christ. So the. If you like the kingdom.

The realm. Of Satan. Is driven back. For as we announce the gospel of Jesus. So we announce the defeat of Satan. As you speak of Jesus in your office.

So you speak of the conquest of Satan. And evil is driven back. As people are rescued from the grip of Satan. Released from his grip. And brought into the glorious kingdom.

Of the son Jesus. The triumph. Of the mission. Well we must draw to a close. And I believe there will be time for questions. But the timing.

The terms. Costly. Persevering. Urgent. The territory. Global. All over the world. 219. Graduates. From SMBC. Going to the ends of the earth.

[38 : 11] One of them was even going to Devon. In England. Can you believe it? Africa. Asia. Thailand. I mean all over India. They were going all over.

And Devon. In the west country of England. And Adelaide. And Melbourne. And Canberra. And your street. And your family.

And your office. And your friends. With all the authority. Of an Old Testament prophet. Possessing. The gospel. Of King Jesus.

And able to announce peace. To this house. Do you remember the first day at work? I wonder if you remember your first day at work. The tie. The new suit.

The tool kit. Setting off out of the house. Full of pride. And joy. I remember when I was first.

[39 : 09] Do you remember the time you were first left in charge. By the boss. Remember the time I was first left in charge of the farm. By my father. I was over 40. And it wasn't until after I was married.

You can draw your own conclusions. But I remember the sense of. This is it. I'm in charge. What a commission. There was a program on the cadets. At the Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst recently.

And you saw them march. Pass out. And march up the steps. To receive the Queen's Commission. Well Jesus commissions his disciples. Seventy-two others.

With all the authority. Now that they have the gospel. Of an Old Testament prophet. Did you ever see a disciple. As an Elijah.

But we have what Elijah longed for. The gospel of Jesus Christ. And we are sent. To the ends of the earth. To proclaim it.

[40 : 05] Let's pause there. I shall lead us in prayer. And then I believe Mark. You may have a question or two. Or we'll take questions.

Let's pray. Peace to this house. Our Father. We praise you for this glorious. Glorious truth.

Peace. On earth. Peace in heaven. Your sins have been forgiven you. Your faith has saved you.

Go in peace. Thank you that we can have peace with you. The living God. That you've opened a window of opportunity.

In this world. When peace is available with our creator. Thank you that as we receive the gospel. So we receive you the Lord Jesus.

[41 : 00] And you our Father in heaven. And we pray that you would thrust out laborers. Into the harvest field. From our churches. Here in Melbourne.

We pray that you would thrust out laborers. Not only here in this city. But far afield. And that we might see many, many people.

Receiving Christ. And Satan's wicked work. Driven back. And people entering the kingdom. Of your son. And we ask it in Jesus name.

Amen.