

Called to be Content

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- [0 : 0 0] Well good evening brothers, sisters and friends, a joy again to worship and gather together, praising our Lord. Just the same announcements as the morning, but just to remind ourselves, first of all of course we do remember Neil and family.
- I ask once more you keep them in prayer over the next few weeks and next few months. As I said in the morning, it's solemn how much can change in a week, even for myself looking out into the congregation and seeing that gap, which wasn't empty even this time last week.
- Of course this week I hope to have a correct session in Deacons Court, God willing. We hope to have our annual leave, that's on the 10th to 23rd of October.
- I'll have the details next week as to who is doing what and when, but at 10th to 23rd. And of course finally we hope to have, and we're thankful to have, our fellowship in the hall this evening.
- Everyone very much invited, please do come along. In the hall, straight after the service, a type of informal fellowship. Our own Donnie is giving just a short bit of his story as to how the Lord has, what he's done for him, and how the Lord has taken him from darkness to light.
- [1 : 1 7] Everyone invited, please do come along as we kickstart again our fellowships together. We're here to worship God. We can continue our public worship of God by singing to his praise, first of all, in Sing Psalms and Psalm 51.
- Sing Psalms and Psalm 51. That's on page 67 of the psalm books. Sing Psalms, Psalm 51 on page 67.
- We can sing verses 1 down to verse 6 of the psalm. Psalm 51. Oh my God, have mercy on me. In your steadfast love I pray, in your infinite compassion, my transgressions wipe away, cleanse me from iniquity, wash my sin away from me.
- For I know my own transgressions. I can see my sinful plight. Psalm 51 verses 1 to 6. To God's praise. Psalm 51.
- Psalm 51. Who I put a mercy on me, when you set up the light in me.
- [2 : 3 9] May you hear, in infinite compassion, my transgressions wipe away.
- Cleanse me from iniquity. Cleanse me from iniquity. Watch my sin away from me.
- Oh, I know my own transgressions. I can see my sinful plight.
- You, you, you, you, own me, I hope in me. And I leave a pain in your sight.
- So you were sub■■■■ And your day just in high From my birth I have been sinfully such the nature I receive.
- [4 : 1 2] Set forth from my first beginning and my mother's hope unseen.
- Through good thought in my heart wisdom to be given heart.

Let's join together in a word of prayer. Let's pray. Lord God, we come before you this evening and we bow ourselves once more down before you. We are aware that we come to this place with our hearts and our minds perhaps pulled in so many directions.

We ask that even as we have sung just now from your word you would steady and even out our hearts and steady our minds. Help us, we ask, for this short time together to understand that we come just now before a holy God, a sovereign God.

We come just now before you the only true and living God. And as we confess that week after week as we acknowledge that week after week help it never to grow tiresome to us.

[5 : 35] Help us to understand that every time that we seek to acknowledge who you are help us to do so with the awe with the majesty that you deserve that eternal glory that eternal majesty.

We feel ourselves so small even again this evening so small as we come to appear before your presence as we come to join together in this time of worship together as brothers and sisters as sons and daughters we come before you and we feel in ourselves at times perhaps even this evening we feel in ourselves just how small we are just how undeserving we are of the least of your mercies of the least of your goodness towards us.

Help us to have that right spirit this evening to conduct ourselves privately within our own spirits even just now to conduct ourselves in a way that truly bring honour to you.

We confess that we so often outwardly display our conduct we outwardly at times easily show ourselves to be your people but at times our hearts grow so cold at times we find ourselves so distant and so far away from you.

Help us Lord to match these two realities together that our walk and our witness would spill forth from our hearts itself. Help us to be people of genuine faith people of integrity in our faith.

[7 : 06] Help our first love to be true love for our Saviour. We come into this place this evening and we confess that as we have been reminded today from your word and later on reminded once more as to the importance of our evangelism the importance of our reaching out to our lost friends our lost family our wider community.

Lord we ask that you would first of all revive us before we ask for the revival of our village before we ask for the revival of our homes and of those we care for.

Lord revive us revive our spirits. Yes we know we are alive because of our Saviour but at times we confess our love and our liveliness that grows so cold that grows so dead.

Revive us Lord return to us that sense of worship that sense of awe bring to the fore once more that desire to be zealous for your cause in this place.

help us to understand we are here this evening as one family as we heard and read this morning one family of many parts each one of us as your children fulfilling the purposes you have placed us here to fulfil those who are brought from darkness to light from death to life that you have then given us a role you have given us purpose within this body all of us with different purposes all of us with different functions different talents different giftings but you make use of every single one for your glory we ask you to keep us united together as a congregation we thank you for the unity that we enjoy just now we give you praise for it for we know that naturally we seek our own good that naturally we seek to be at times disunited that naturally we put ourselves first and that church unity and unity amongst brothers and sisters is a gift truly from you help us then to strive to maintain that unity to set our saviour above all of our things even well above ourselves remember just now as we think of ourselves as a congregation we think just now of the one who is now missing from our number

[9 : 31] Lord the one who sat here for many years who listened to many sermons and many services over the years we pray just now Lord for the mourning family we pray especially Lord for Neil and for the children we pray also for those close and those who remember and those who love the one who is now gone from our midst we pray also Lord as we remember ourselves we remember our friends next door our brothers and sisters next door as they also have lost one close to them Lord the voice of death has spoken to us so clearly this past week you have reminded us just how uncertain our times truly are of how little we know our future of how little we know what a day an hour even a few minutes might bring as we pray just now for our friends and brothers and sisters next door we pray for them once more just now this weekend as they take part in their communion services

Lord you would bless the word to them this evening bless the one who leads them we ask you to encourage them in their service to you in this place we pray once more a prayer that's beyond our doing but we leave it with your eternal eternal hands Lord we do ask we would see days of renewal and days of togetherness days of joint purpose days of singular mission in this area in this district we ask we would indeed see your people revived and enthused you would see us as zealous you would send us out from this place to point those around us to the risen Lord Jesus those who at this moment are heading to a lost eternity those at this moment who are heading towards hell Lord that you would work in their lives you would use us as witnesses use us as salt and light we ask forgive us as we heard this day forgive us for the times that we shy away from being bold witnesses forgive us for the times that we through embarrassment to our shame through worry to our shame through various other reasons the times we go away from sharing the glorious gospel of our risen saviour the one who has loved us and set his love upon us the one who has rescued us and transformed us and given us hope and given us life

Lord we would be vibrant in our sharing of that saviour to those around us we do pray just now for friends and family members for those who are heavy in our minds just now those who we love so dearly but to as of yet show no gospel interest Lord we ask you would bring them to a saving knowledge of yourself you would bring them from death to life as we pray Lord for them we give you thanks for our friends even those here this evening our friends who have joined in to this time of worship week after week perhaps for many years and some here for many decades we ask that even this evening through your word you would speak to their hearts you would show them that you are God that through you alone there is hope but only by coming to Jesus and him alone they have a way to the father but without him there is no hope and there is no help but with him there is eternal hope and eternal help we pray for ourselves as a congregation and all we seek to do in this place all our public efforts all our private efforts all the work that goes on as it were publicly and behind the scenes we pray for ourselves as a

Kirk session as a deacon's court as we plan and hope and we plan to meet this week and to discuss various things that you bless these discussions that all that we decide and all that we work through would be for your namesake for the good of your people here and for the good of your gospel cause in this place pray even for our fellowship this evening we thank you for it we thank you our God who has given us informal times together that we are truly one family of brothers and sisters help us to enjoy our time this evening as we gathered together we pray Lord especially that you bless Donnie we thank you for him we pray for him we pray for his family too we thank you Lord you have truly saved him we thank you Lord that he is a witness for you that all who know him and all who see him know that he loves his saviour Lord we ask you give him peace and help him to relax as he shares his story this evening which is truly your story as you work through him we come this evening confessing sin for all the good gifts you give us for all the things we are thankful for we know that these things are all tainted by our sin by our waywardness by our near constant desire to move away from you

Lord we ask you would bring us back once more to yourself forgive us these sins these sins that we feel so shameful over but forgive us also for the sins which we feel no shame over the sins perhaps we are all too happy to carry out Lord you bring these things to our minds you would show us our darkness and show us our need for saviour we bring all these things to our risen saviour the living saviour the eternal saviour as we hold on to him as we at times cling on to him he holds eternally on to us it's in his name and it's for his sake we ask all these many things Amen let's turn to read in God's word later on we'll be looking at the chapter we had this morning we're carrying on that section but turning just now to the book of Isaiah this well known chapter Isaiah chapter 55 chapter we have read plenty of times together but let's not get lost in our familiarity of it

[15 : 53] Isaiah 55 Isaiah 55 let's hear and read the word of God come everyone who thirsts come to the waters and he who has no money come buy and eat come buy wine and milk without money and without price why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labour for that which does not satisfy listen diligently to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food and incline your ear and come to me hear that your soul may live and I will make with you an everlasting covenant my steadfast sure love for David behold I made him a witness to the peoples a leader and commander for the peoples behold you shall call a nation that you do not know and a nation that did not know you shall run to you because of the

Lord your God of the Holy One of Israel for he has glorified you seek the Lord while he may be found call upon him while he is near let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts let him return to the Lord that he may have compassion on him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon for my thoughts are not your thoughts neither are your ways my ways declares the Lord for as the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts for as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth making it bring forth and sprout giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth it shall not return to me empty but it shall accomplish that which

I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it for you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace the mountains and hills before you shall break forth into singing and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle and it shall make a name for the Lord an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off Amen and good praise to God for his holy and his perfect word let's again sing this time from sing psalms but this time from psalm 87 sing psalms psalm 87 this psalm which speaks of God's people God's church but even the most unlikely of nations that God the final day will find his people and will call his people from there there is no one and nowhere too far or too difficult for the gospel to reach to psalm 87 on

Jerusalem holy mountain he has founded his abode more than all of Jacob's dwelling Zion's gates are dear to God glorious things of you are spoken Zion city of the Lord many drawn from all the nations as your people I record psalm 87 and sing psalms to God's praise R qualcosa Amen.

image on said from all the nations that surely will I regard.

[20 : 34] I will make us more to know thee in truth I have left alone.

This time I've gone with you, I will come to us, I am on.

Yes, it will be said of Zion, this time I've gone here beyond.

And your heart, the highest blessing, will be sent on me, our soul.

For in Zion, God will enter, in the people's grandest love.

[21 : 42] It will stay as daily music, for my clungest had in power.

Turning back to the chapter we had this morning, Mark chapter 6, we can read again the verses we had from verse 7 down to verse 13.

Mark 6, verse 7 down to verse 13. And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.

He charged them to take nothing for their journey, except a staff, no bread, no bag, no money in their belts, but to wear sandals, and not put on two tunics.

And he said to them, whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. And if any place will not receive you, and they will not listen to you when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.

[22 : 58] So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed of oil many who were sick, and healed them.

There were some who weren't perhaps here in the morning. I know we're going through usually a series on the judges in the evening. But our morning sermon had overran, and rather than rush things, or rather than leave it, we said we finish off this evening.

Just as a quick summary for us, we come to this section carrying on in our study in Mark. And up to this point, the disciples, we could say, have been training.

They've been following Jesus. They've seen at least most of what he has done. But now, finally, it is their turn. It is their opportunity as he sends them out.

This is the first time he sends them out on their own. Of course, he sends them out two by two. We'll cover that, and we covered it in the morning. But he is sending them out without him going with them, at least not physically going with them.

[24 : 05] We got halfway through this section this morning, but just to remind ourselves, we're looking at five or six principles we find for evangelism, or five or six principles we find for mission from this section.

Now, just to remind ourselves, and it's important to do so, just because we see specific instructions given to them here about their tunics and about what to take with them, we have to use our God-given common sense to see where God has given information to us or where God is giving us principles.

We touched on the morning that there are, and there certainly have been, and not too long ago, there are some missionary groups, and there are some well-meaning people who go out on mission, and they follow instructions similar to this, and they go on mission and take nothing with them.

And of course, quite often that mission ends in disaster, because they've applied not the principle, they've applied the exact wording. This was specific to the disciples being sent out, but also, as we said, there is lessons for us here.

We had three this morning. We saw that these disciples were called to do the work of God. They were called to do it. They were set apart by Christ.

[25 : 34] They were commissioned by him. They were chosen by him. It wasn't just some random grouping of people. No, he sent out those who had been with him for up to, we can't say for certain, but around a year at this point, perhaps.

And he sends these men out to go, and to go out with the gospel. There are men who were called, and we said, and we asked the question, well, who is called?

Who is called in Tulsa? Who is called to do this work? Is it just me? Is it just your elders? And the answer was, of course, if we know Christ, if we love Christ, regardless of our abilities, and so on and so on, we are called to be salt and to be light.

We are called to be his witnesses in our homes, places of work in our district here. We then saw that when he calls them, he also enables them.

He gives them the authority to do what it is he is calling them to do. He gave them authority over the unclean spirits. We touched on that briefly. But we made the point that when he calls us, he equips us, does he not?

[26 : 51] He sends us out. And we say, well, I don't have good speech. I have low understanding. I have low ability to share the gospel. I get my words jumbled up so easily.

I'm a nervous person. I'm a shy person. I'm a quiet person. I get it wrong so often, and so on and so on and so on. We all have our reasons. We all have our excuses, myself very much included.

But we are reminded that those he calls, he enables. As Christ gave authority over to his disciples, over the demons, and over the evil they would face, over the opposition they would face, we see the same is true for us.

And we asked a question, a solemn question, but the one that needed to be asked and answered is, when we go out in Tolstair, surely we aren't facing demons today.

Surely we aren't facing unclean spirits today. And we saw that scripture tells us, whenever we share the gospel with those who as of yet don't know Christ, who as of yet can't confess him as Lord and Saviour, we are sharing the gospel with those who are still under the power of the prince of the air.

[28 : 05] They are still under the power of Satan. And we say that solemnly. And we say that with broken hearts, because we say that about our own family, those who we love, those who we care for, those we long desperately to see come into the kingdom, but nonetheless, until they come in, they are still under the power, under the work of the devil.

Ephesians gives us that. We are enabled to give out the gospel message. And we speak to those who are still under the power of the spirit of the air.

And finally we saw, as we get sent out, we are supplied in verse 8. We saw that Jesus commanded his disciples to take nothing with them, nothing at all, just a staff, just the very basics of clothing and a staff, no money, no amount of food.

We compared that in the morning to the travelling rabbis, the travelling teachers who would go miles across all the towns and expect a warm welcome, and we would be invited up to preach to the synagogue congregation of all their finery, all their robes, and all their wisdom displayed.

And we saw that that is not the way of those who belong to Christ. Even ourselves, we said that we often can look to ourselves, we get so comfortable. We said that we touched on the fact that all that we do, even the way we gather together, even our church buildings, all this means nothing.

[29 : 43] It's all human-made, literally, bricks and stone. We're sent out to do the job we're sent out to do. We're not here to preserve tradition.

We're not here to preserve a dead gospel passed down. No, we are here to proclaim the living gospel given to us. That brings us up to speed now of where we are this evening.

Just for a short time, a short time just to finish off these thoughts. Because this is not just here for us to grow this evening, although that's a good reason.

But this is going forward as a session, going forward as a congregation, going forward in the weeks and months and God willing, the years ahead if the Lord gives it to us here.

We hope to apply these principles in this place. We hope to apply these principles in our own homes, our own families. As we go forward as one congregation, as one body, we hope to apply these principles and to see the Lord bless his work in this place.

[30 : 54] Called, enabled, supplied. Now we get to the fact that they are to be contented. Verse 10. If we're called to mission, and we all are, we're called to be contented or content.

Verse 10. And he said to them, whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. What, on the outset, looks quite, quite an odd, perhaps, quite a strange rule to follow.

When you enter a house, you stay in the same house until you leave the town, until your work there is done. Whoever invites you in, wherever you find to stay, that's where you stay until your work's over.

It's a very practical rule, but you think, well, what's the purpose there? What's the, what's the meaning there? Quite often, what you start off with in life is good in any area of life until you become more proficient or become more accustomed to it.

And all of a sudden, you want bigger, you want better, you want more exciting. We all know that. That's how we all exist. Whether that's technology, whether it's our own homes, our own cars, whatever, we're never quite happy with what we have.

[32 : 15] When it comes to mission, sadly, the same principle rings through. We're never quite happy, really, with what we have. We are where we are.

When the disciples would go to the town of a village, whoever invited them in, and think about it, these, they're fishermen, they're crofters. Yes, there's some among them who are perhaps more educated, but three quarters of them are fishermen, they're crofters of the day.

They are the normal people. And they go to these towns, these villages, and they find a place to stay, or they're invited to stay. It would not be top luxury.

It would not be the most comfortable of stays they would ever have in their lives. And as perhaps their fame grows, as they heal, and as they cast out demons, you can imagine the fame would grow for the disciples.

Did you hear there are men here who are casting out demons? There are men here preaching this new gospel. There are men here who claim to be sent from the Messiah. There are men here casting out demons and healing people.

[33 : 24] Well, their fame grows. You can imagine that there's folks happy to have them in their homes now. But no, their disciples are to be content with where they are, content with what they have, both in a practical sense, but also in a wider sense.

Well, how do we apply that then to ourselves? In Tolstah, this feels like a very specific instruction to a very specific situation, doesn't it? Let's apply it to ourselves.

Ask the simple, but perhaps searching question. Brothers and sisters, are you, are we happy with our situation just now in this community?

If you ask that honestly to yourselves, are we happy with what the church is like just now in this community? are we happy with the time we are serving in with all the worries and pains and struggles around us?

Are we happy with the size of our congregation? Are we happy with the reach of our congregation? Are we happy perhaps even with the, who knows, the reputation of our congregation?

[34 : 40] And so on, and so on, and so on. The reality is we are called to be content with what we have and with where we are right now.

We're called to serve in this time. We know that there's times of old, even times in living memory where the gospel had so much more of a, a, a, a living presence perhaps in our village and in the island as a whole.

There was a time of course when these pews were far more full than they are today. It was a time when you think of the Christians around us, you think, well, I remember a time when, or at least I heard of a time when Christians seemed more lively and seemed more alive and seemed more kind and seemed more full of a spirit and seemed more willing to, to serve and so on and so on and so on.

There's a time when every home in this community would have some gospel connection, some connection at least to one of the two churches here. It's okay to acknowledge these things but brothers and sisters we are where we are.

This is a time we are called to serve in whether we want to or not, whether we like it or not. This is the congregation size that we're starting off with, whether we like it or not, whether we want it or not.

[36 : 10] This is the demographic, this is the culture of our age we live in, whether we want it or not, whether we like it or not. We are called to be content with where we are and to use what the Lord has given us.

This is, as it were, our starting point. There's one thing remembering the days of old. That's fine. We see that often in Scripture, especially in the Psalms, we see often that the Psalmist calling to mind the days of old to encourage them.

But they never stay there, do they? When they think back to the days of old, they do so to remind themselves that God who blessed his people and his cause then, he has not changed.

He is still the same God we worship this evening. The one who brought his people to life then, who brought the gospel to this island then, who caused the gospel to flourish then, is the same God we worship this evening.

Reduced in hope, perhaps, reduced in number, certainly, reduced also to our own shame and expectation. We'll see that more in a second. But we're still called to be content.

[37 : 23] Now, not saying that we aren't wanting to see change in our situation. We pray for that, we work towards that, we strive towards that with the Lord's help and the Lord's guidance.

At the same time, we are where we are. We are who we are. We're growing, we're learning, we're seeking to see a revival, we're seeking to see new life in our village, new life in our homes.

We water, we plant, we water, we plant, we water, we plant. The Lord alone gives the increase, as we heard again and again over the last few weeks.

This is our time, this is our place, we're called to be content with it. not to move around, as it were, not to find our home somewhere else.

This is what we have, this is who we are, and we praise the Lord for it. I think perspective is often key for us. I know we often are worried, and perhaps for good reason, as to the gospel cause in this community.

[38 : 33] But brothers and sisters, we all know that there are many places in this world this evening. We watch what we say here, because we know everything's recorded and everything goes out eventually, but there are places and there are churches, I think you know what churches right now, church gatherings, church families in northern India, who are still having, as of last week anyway, still having their church buildings burnt to the ground, their villages burnt to the ground, their homes destroyed.

There's a pastor in India who even last week, church burnt to the ground on Sunday, his home, his manse, burnt on a Monday, his family's house was burnt on a Tuesday, and he's on a run just now for his life.

There's 50 of us on a good day, 40 perhaps on average, give or take. We praise the Lord for that number. We are where we are, we are who we are. Let's look now to the Lord to move forward from where we are.

We're called to be content, but also we're called to be bold. verse 11. And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.

It's not easy, is it? It's not easy. In fact, at times it feels almost impossible as we seek to share the gospel, as we face rejection perhaps, as we face ridicule perhaps, more often than not as we face silence.

[40 : 14] Just complete apathy often is what we face, isn't it? And here we see the reality that we must, as it were, do the hard work.

We must go to the hard places. Again, no word in Scripture is wasted, no phrase in Scripture is wasted. Look at the wording. Of course, when we read verse 11, our minds go to the shaking the dust of our feet, but long before that takes place for something else taking place, if any place will not have you, will not receive you, and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet.

When you leave, you still stay there. You still do what you can with the situation that you have. You still strive. The disciples are still to strive.

We're still to give out the gospel. We're still to preach the gospel. Now, the people we're preaching to will not listen to him, will not receive him, will not care about the gospel, but they're still to stay there at least for a time and do the work that is required of them.

They're still there to serve the Lord in hard places. In short, brothers and sisters, as we go forward with the gospel in our community, in our homes, we should very much expect rejection.

[41 : 35] rejection. Now, it's saying rejection of ourselves, but rejection at least of the gospel message. And for those of us, and I know it's many of us here, most of us here who know the Lord, as we've shared and tried to share the gospel, rejection of that message, is that not the most common reception that we have?

It's apathy, but apathy itself is still rejection. People not caring is still rejection. And you lovingly, you carefully share the gospel, and you can see the person you're sharing with either not caring in the slightest or at least seem not to care.

You can see them not receiving it. You can see them not listening to it. Now, the truth is, it is our duty and indeed our calling as Christians. We keep on serving.

We keep on striving. We keep on sharing the gospel. The call is not that we, as it were, abandon Tolstah. Well, we tried here the last five years, ten years.

This church has been here for the last 50, 60 odd years, almost 70 odd years, 80 odd years. We've tried our best. It's time to go now. No. What it is saying to us is that it removes from us the guilt, we could say.

[42 : 55] It removes from us the heaviness, perhaps, that could be on our conscience. But, brothers and sisters, we're called to strive, called to share the gospel, called to follow all the other points we've heard so far from these verses.

We come and we bring the gospel, we share the good news, we do what it is we can humanly do up to our abilities with the Lord helping us, the Lord leading us, the Lord guiding us.

If we can say we have done that faithfully and done that truthfully and done that to the best of our actual ability, and we have faithfully given out the gospel, we have faithfully explained the gospel as best we can.

And our conscience needs to be clear. The disciples cannot make any village or any group within the village, we cannot make them listen, we cannot force them to be saved.

All they can do is preach the gospel, share the good news, point them towards a saviour, and then move on. Brothers and sisters, keep on striving, keep on witnessing, keep on sharing the good, glorious gospel news, and know that it is not on your conscience that those you share the gospel to never come to Christ.

[44 : 18] It's unbearable. We saw that last week, didn't we, with Jesus being rejected in Nazareth. We said in the morning, just to say it again this evening, what does Jesus do?

How does Jesus react? What does Jesus show himself? How does he control, how does he go against those who show such hatred towards him?

Does he remind them as to who he is? Does he show them a display of his sovereign, eternal power? When he is ignored and despised, when he is hated by his own townspeople, when they are literally repugnant towards them, when they want to fight him off, he lets them be.

He lets them want to get on with it. In the face of opposition, in the face of their hatred towards them, he lets them be.

He marvelled at their unbelief and he went about among the villages teaching. He lets them sit there in their arrogance, sit there in their rebellion and he goes off.

[45 : 35] Brothers and sisters, share the gospel. Do it every chance you can get. In your life, we strive to share and to look in our hearts and in our minds and all that we are and all that we do to reflect our saviour, to be a good witness for him.

By the end of the day, we cannot save anyone. The disciples, as I were, they could shake the dust off their feet.

Now, they're on a transient mission. They've got a set time frame. They come, they go, they're coming back to the villages and coming back to Jesus. Our time frame might be a year, might be here ten years, might be here for the rest of our life on earth.

Your time frame to share the gospel of your family, it isn't, it isn't passing through. You aren't going to give up any point on them. But so to speak, the day will come when the dust will be shaken off your feet and you've done all you can do.

You have done all you can do to be a gospel witness to that family member. Usually that's done by death, isn't it? You've spent your whole life seeking to be a gospel witness. The Lord takes you away.

[46 : 55] You can do and go with a clear conscience, knowing you have served your Lord well, even if you never saw any transformation in that person's life. I know we're careful about being too personal in the pulpit, but just to encourage us and share a story, I'm sure for many here, I think of my own grandmother.

She went to eternity having prayed for so many people in her family and having seen none of these people in her lifetime come to faith.

In the 12, 13 years since then, at least three of those who I know she's prayed for in her time have come to faith. She never saw it.

She went to glory praising our Lord, leaving behind a clear conscience that she's done her work. she did the best she could with her life and the time she had.

She never saw the results of her efforts. Brothers and sisters, we share the gospel. We plant the seed, we water the seed.

[48 : 05] The result of that belongs to the Lord and Him alone. We live a life worthy of our Saviour. We live a life of good witness, of good repute. We live a life that glorifies Him in our mind, in our bodies, in our actions.

And we either leave this place physically or leave it in death, leaving behind, we hope, a good witness. We must be emboldened.

We are bold as we share the gospel. We share His gospel. It's His work. And we do what we can do. But He brings the life. He alone brings the increase.

And finally, the disciples were sent out and we see that they have real results. It's a very loose term to use, but we see there is real results through the gospel that goes out.

Verse 12, So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent, and they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them. The principle here is that we should be expectant, perhaps.

[49 : 12] We should be positive. A few weeks ago in a prayer meeting, we covered this. Very briefly, we asked a question, and we pointed out the fact that perhaps we're not optimistic enough.

As Christians, we should be the most optimistic people in creation, should we not? Brothers and sisters, we should be optimistic.

The question is, how optimistic actually are we? Well, not very. Again, we look to ourselves, we look to our community, we look to our church, we look to numbers, we look to our culture, our society, our nation, and we find ourselves at times so pessimistic, so negative.

But the truth is, we have been sent to go out with the glorious, good news of the gospel. every day we live in this village, every new morning, every time we go out and serve our Lord and work around the village at home and study, we are doing what we're commanded to do.

We're living lives, at least seeking to live lives that glorify him. As we do that, he works out his saving purposes through means, and he has chosen to use his people as least part of those means.

[50 : 35] We should be expectant, we should be optimistic. Not because of our great efforts, no. Optimistic because we worship our risen saviour who has the power of life, who has the power to forgive, the power to save.

That is who we worship this new week. That's whose strength we go out with and go out in this new week. You can see the vibrancy of the disciples.

They cast out, they're going and they're doing and they're preaching and they're proclaiming. And yes, they are being rejected, left, right and center, you can imagine.

There's plenty of people who are mocking them and rejecting the gospel. But for all the rejection, all the mockery, they still persevere. They still preach the simple gospel that people should repent.

repent and come to Jesus. The gospel hasn't changed from then to now. They go out and they cast out demons. They go out and they heal those who are sick.

[51 : 43] Demons and healing. Now of course, that's very much a time and place situation. It's quite simple to see that. But at the same time, we must be careful here. And again, our forefathers and those who came before us, even those in our own island, those who we look up to and those who we would ourselves perhaps revere as fathers, at times also mothers, of course, in the faith, they would be very careful and they would warn us, indeed they do warn us, but not jumping too much the other way.

We see, of course, there was healings and there was, as it were, demons being cast out. And we say, well, of course that was for then. And we believe that. We know that in time of Christ, the demonic activity was strong.

And of course, before Christ, we see that throughout Scripture the demonic activity is ongoing around the world. And when Christ comes, he crushes that. And the subduing work of our Saviour begins, it carries on to today.

That's a chat, a discussion for a different evening. But, safe to say, as she said this morning, if you have shared the Gospel for any amount of time, if you have followed Christ for any amount of time, brothers and sisters, I am sure you have experienced the reality of spiritual oppression.

You have seen the reality of evil in this world. And you come face to face with those who hate Jesus and who are personable and friendly and kind people.

[53 : 11] The second you bring them to the Gospel, the second you bring Christ before them, they become almost different people. We are still, as it were, battling with those under the power of evil.

And we still, do we not, we still pray that those with us and those around us would be healed. It's in God's hands, it's in God's power. But let's not fully cast away the work of God.

They are expectant. They go out, they follow their Saviour's instructions, and they see, as it were, results. They see him blessing their work in the place.

As we come to a conclusion to our study, our day-long study in this small section, this is how we end it. We're asking the simple question, brothers and sisters, are we optimistic for the work of the Gospel in Tolstain?

Not the work of Donald from Graver. Not the work of anyone else who's come after me, God willing. No. Are we expectant? Are we positive?

[54 : 20] Are we optimistic that Christ has his people here? He will bring his people in. Are we optimistic, as we go out of the Gospel, that he will change hearts and minds?

Hearts of stone to hearts of flesh, hearts which are darkened and dead, to hearts which are now full of life and fully alive. Are we optimistic for that? If we're not, perhaps we should be, take this week and take this evening even as a chance for us to remind ourselves that we worship a living Saviour who has not changed, who has saved his people, who has gathered his people in.

And we can say with confidence that his work in Tolstain is not yet done. Well, how do we say that? How can we possibly even assume that knowledge? knowledge because we're still here.

He still has his people here. He still has his church locally in this place. We still are alive. The world has not ended yet, day by day.

As long as we are here, as long as morning and night continues, we are to keep serving him as he brings his own people in, bit by bit.

[55 : 37] As his kingdom expands in Tolstain gradually. All in his time, all in his power, but he uses us to do that. Let's be optimistic as we remind ourselves as to the principles of our evangelism, the principles of our witness.

Let's be optimistic as we go out this new week to serve our Saviour, where we serve him at home, at work, in our village. We go out as servants, as witnesses.

We go out as his precious people, set apart, called, enabled, supplied, who should be content, who should be emboldened, and who should also be expectant.

Let's bow our heads now, a word of prayer. Lord, we come before you once more. We give you praise for your word. We thank you for it. And in it, we have such words of encouragement, such words of hope.

We confess this evening, we often are so burdened with the worries and the burdens and the stress and the strain of this world that we lose sight as to the beauty and the wonder of our calling.

[56 : 47] We are called as those to make your name known. As we face rejection and opposition, as we face hatred, as we face silence, as we face apathy, we do so knowing we worship you, a Saviour who face the hatred and rejection of man long before us, who has walked that path before us.

We worship also a Saviour and your full deity. You have the full power to bring to life those who are dead. We ask that it would be the case even this new week.

We'd hear the good news of some even coming to faith or coming to love and serve you for the first time. Help us, Lord, to put it into practice this week the principles we heard today from your word.

Help us not to leave this place having just grown in our knowledge but having grown also in our love and our desire for service. Help us, we come just now, to sing from your word.

We give you praise for that privilege that each week we sing from your word and we know the words we sing are true and are right because they come from you. We praise you, Lord, for those who are willing and those you have put into place to lead the public sung worship.

[58 : 04] We ask you to bless them week by week as you give them the tunes to sing, as you encourage them as they lead us together in worship, as you receive that worship from us through the person and work of our risen Savior.

It's in his name and it's for his sake we ask these many things. Amen. Let's bring our time to conclusion this evening by singing to his praise. Again from Sing Psalms, this time Psalm 146.

Psalm 146. It's on page 191 of the psalm books. Psalm 146 on page 191.

We can sing verses 1 down to verse 6 of the psalm. Psalm 146 verses 1 down to verse 6. Praise the Lord my soul, O praise him.

I'll extol him all my days while I live to God my Savior. From my heart I will sing praise. Do not put your trust in princes, mortal men who cannot save.

[59 : 15] All their plans will come to nothing when they perish in the grave. Psalm 146 verses 1 to 6. To God's praise. Praise the Lord my soul, O praise the Lord, I have so good all my days.

While I live to you, from my Savior, from my heart I will sing praise.

Do not put your trust in princes, mortal men who cannot save.

All their plans will come to nothing when they perish in the grave.

Bless the wisdom, wonderfully, works for help to give up us all come.

[60 : 41] Bless the distant oh, Interesting.

We give thanks for what we will receive next door.

And also then close of course with the benediction. Lord we thank you for your good gifts to us. Through the God who blesses us. And gives us all for your abundance. We ask you to bless our time next door this evening.

All will be done for your name's sake. And help us to enjoy the time as a family together. And as friends gathering with us. We ask these things now asking also. In the name of our Saviour.

The Lord Jesus Christ. We ask these things for his glorious name. The one who gives us from his abundance. Full salvation.

[62 : 03] In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The love of God the Father. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Both for you now and forever more. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. ■■■.

Amen. Amen.