

Proclaiming the Gospel

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[0 : 0 0] As the boys and girls leave Sunday school, we can turn to God's Word, and we can read two readings in God's Word. Two short readings. First of all, turning to the chapter we had in Mark, carrying on, working through Mark.

So Mark, chapter 1. Mark, chapter 1. Reading from verse 14 of the chapter.

Mark, chapter 1, verse 14. Let's hear the Word of God.

Now, after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the Gospel of God and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe in the Gospel. And passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

[1 : 0 9] And Jesus said to them, Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men. And immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going a little further, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who were in the boat, mending the nets.

And immediately he called them. And they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and followed him. And they went into Capernaum.

And immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. And they were astonished at his teaching. For he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.

And immediately there was in the synagogue a man of an unclean spirit. And he cried out, What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?

I know who you are, the Holy One of God. But Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be silent, and come out of him. And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out of a loud voice, came out of him.

[2 : 1 6] And they were all amazed. So they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.

And once his fame spread everywhere, throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee. Now turning to the Gospel of Luke. Gospel of Luke and chapter 5.

Gospel of Luke and chapter 5. Luke chapter 5.

That's on page 808 of the church's books. Luke chapter 5 on page 808. Just reading verses 1 down to verse 11 of the chapter.

Luke chapter 5. On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him, to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. And he saw two boats by the lake.

[3 : 2 3] But the fishermen had gone out of them, and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch. And Simon answered, Master, we toiled all night and took nothing.

But at your word, I will let down the nets. And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them.

And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he said, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken. And so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

[4 : 27] And Jesus said to Simon, Do not be afraid. From now on you will be catching men. And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Amen. And we give praise to God for his holy and his perfect word. Let's again sing to God's praise. Again from Sing Psalms and Psalm 46.

Sing Psalms and Psalm 46 and 46a. Page 59. Page 59 of the Blue Psalm books. Sing Psalms, Psalm 46a.

Sing verses 1 down to verse 5. God is our refuge and our strength, our ever-present aid. And therefore, though the earth gives way, we will not be afraid.

Though mountains fall into the sea, though waters foam and roar, we will not fear, though mountains quake as waves engulf the shore. Psalm 46, verses 1 to 5.

[5 : 33] To God's praise. Psalm 46, verse 2 in 1 to 6. Amen. Father Jesus, let the have■'s■, our heaven t Christ, our Lord, and our això.

Tag and opposing that we will not be afraid.sl ben juga 9 or 5 x 2 in 1 to 6. Amen. wat deizers so oai, And then far, though he is with me, we will not be afraid.

O mountains, fall into the sea, slow waters on and on.

We will not hear, though mountains quay, as we stand out the shore.

A river, those histories denied the city of the God.

[6 : 58] The holy place with which the Lord most high has been aboard.

God is with him, bless holy place, that city will not be.

O God, welcome, I pray, come to thee, to thee, I have been shielded.

Let's turn back for a short time to the chapter we had in Mark. Mark chapter 1. Mark 1 and back to verse 14 of the chapter.

Mark 1 and verse 14 down to verse 20. We're carrying on, of course, our series in the book of Mark. So far, we've met John the Baptist, and then we saw the baptism of Jesus.

[8 : 22] The commissioning and the start of his public ministry. Or here we begin that journey following Jesus on his first acts of his public ministry.

We're looking at verses 14 down to verse 20. For the sake of a text, we can just take the words of verses 14 and verse 15. Now, after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe the gospel. As we said before, Mark moves so quickly on in his book. Mark's interest is in getting as much in as possible in a short time as possible.

So we see that he's just seen Jesus baptized. And now, all of a sudden, we find Jesus. And now in verse 14, he's preaching, he's proclaiming.

But as verse 14 starts, we see just this very brief phrase. Now, after John was arrested. Mark just says that so briefly and just moves on with the account.

[9 : 35] But this, we'll see this, God willing, in the future in other gospel accounts with the Lord's help. But the arrest of John was a pivotal moment in the ministry of Jesus.

Why? Well, as we said last time we were together, John's job, John's role, John's whole life was to be the messenger who was going to prepare the way of the coming Savior.

We saw that last time, didn't we? John's own words in verse 7. As John preached, he said, After me comes one who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.

John's work is done. John came to proclaim the gospel of one who was coming, who would do the final salvation work of God.

And because Jesus has come, because we saw last time Jesus being baptized, Jesus now identified with his suffering people. John's role in this account, John's job, John's purpose, is now over.

[10 : 52] And John is arrested. As we move past this first phrase, as we spend time today looking at the call to service that Jesus gives these men later on, our first point we must understand is that Jesus always takes the preeminence.

Jesus must always be first and foremost. John knew that his time was over. John knew as aware his time was up. And John knew that Jesus had to take over.

As Christians, we'll see this more in a second. As Christians, and this is to the Christians just now, to the brothers and sisters here, how often and how difficult it is for us to let ourselves be second.

When it comes to talking about the gospel, or sharing about Jesus, when you share to that family member, that friend, and you try and maybe invite them to church, or tell them about who Jesus is, you think, oh, what do I say?

Or, what do you think of me in a different way? Or, what do they think? I'm just some, just crazy person, and so on, and so on, and so on. And in doing, and having these thoughts, and thinking that way, we're putting ourselves first.

[12 : 16] We're making ourselves more important than Jesus. Now, it is difficult. I assure you, and I'm with you, as a fellow worker in these things, it is difficult to share the gospel.

It's even more difficult to share the gospel to those at times who we love, and who we're closest to. But let's learn from John the Baptist here. His time is over, and he has given Jesus the preeminence.

Jesus has come first. So Jesus comes, and he proclaims the gospel. As we spend some time, as we see the first men who respond to the gospel of Jesus, our question today is, first of all, for those here who know Jesus, the brothers and sisters here, the question for ourselves is, as we spend time looking at Jesus' call to these men to serve him, have we forgotten that call in our lives?

Yes, you know him. Yes, you love him. Yes, he is your saviour and my saviour, but have we forgotten the urgency, the beauty of the call that Christ has given us to follow?

And for any here today, who as of yet, and I know we always say that, but I keep saying it, who as of yet, who as of yet can't say that Jesus is your saviour, who as of yet you can't say that you know him, perhaps you're interested, and we praise the Lord if you are interested.

[13 : 40] As you hear, just one more time, as to the simple gospel message, the simple gospel call that Jesus gives you to follow him today, one more time, my simple question will be, as I go through these verses, are you going to ignore that call one more time?

Or are you going to listen today, listen to the call of Jesus as he calls you to follow him? Is he calling you today? Is today perhaps the day you will hear that call, respond to that call, and come to know him and love him as your saviour.

Perhaps today is the day that you will follow him. So looking very briefly, first of all, looking at verses 14 to verse 15, we see the call of Jesus. The call, then in verses 16 and verse 19 to verse 20, we see those who Jesus calls, and then in verse 17, we see the calling.

So the call itself, those who are called, and finally, the calling. First of all, the call of verse 14 to verse 15.

After John's arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.

[15 : 04] Repent and believe in the gospel. Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming, proclaiming the gospel. As Jesus begins to proclaim the gospel, a few things take place.

As Jesus proclaims the gospel, he is validating, he is proving everything John the Baptist said was true. John the Baptist spent his years preaching the message that a saviour would come, that a saviour would come and preach the good news to those who are lost.

And Jesus comes, and he is proclaiming, he is preaching, he is sharing the gospel of God. John the Baptist, everything he said, his whole life's work, has now been proved to be true, and to be from God.

And that's important, because if John the Baptist's words are true, it also means his warnings are true. The warnings he said to those who came to him, that if they didn't believe in this coming saviour, if they didn't trust in this coming saviour, they would have no hope, and no help.

The words of John the Baptist have been proved right. The whole life of John the Baptist has been proved right, the very very start of Jesus publicly proclaiming the gospel.

[16 : 26] What does Jesus proclaim? Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God. From start to the end of his earthly ministry, our Lord, our saviour, he proclaims, as it were, of a simple gospel.

Now, of course, there's parts of the gospel which are deep, and reality is, all of it is deep. But the gospel itself is simple. The gospel itself is simple.

And we all have heard it before. We can hear that again today. The gospel is simple. See that at verse 17, at the final part of our time together. The gospel is simple.

The gospel call is simple. And Jesus has come now as the final gospel word. All the prophets from the start, all the messengers God sent from the start, have now been completed.

All the messages are now finished. It is now Jesus. Jesus alone. The Son of God who has come. The one all the prophets pointed towards.

[17 : 34] He has now come. And he is now preaching the gospel himself. This is, as it were, the final chance. There's no more prophets to come.

There's no more gospel to come. It ends with Jesus. He is the final word. He is the one we must go to, to find our hope, our help, and our salvation.

The gospel of God. And that gospel, it's proclaimed. And when the gospel is proclaimed, Jesus fulfills all the prophecy. We see that in verse 15.

As Jesus proclaims the good news, proclaims the gospel, he said, the time is fulfilled. The time is fulfilled. As Jesus comes and proclaims the gospel, prophecy is being fulfilled.

And we'll see this as we go on through this, a gospel account of Mark. Everything Jesus said, and he did, it's all prophesied, hundreds and hundreds of years beforehand, through all the prophets, through the very start of creation, as we heard in the hall a few weeks ago.

[18 : 47] Through the very start of creation, God has laid out the plan. That a saviour would come. Born in this place, born in this way, saying these exact words, when Jesus comes and fulfills prophecy, after prophecy, after prophecy.

Assuring us that he is the one from God. He is not a fake. Now at this time, there were plenty of other so-called messiahs. It was quite a popular time for messiahs.

There's plenty of men, and women also, who proclaimed that they were truly from God. That they were the messiah come to save God's people. We have that today too.

There's plenty of folks today, who will say the same thing, if not in different ways. But Jesus, by fulfilling every single prophecy, as we see here, by saying that the time is fulfilled, that he is the finished perfection, of the father's plan of redemption, it gives us hope.

We're not here today, wasting our time. We're not here today, telling ourselves some nice stories from an old book. We're here proclaiming the gospel of one who came to save his people.

[19 : 57] One whose coming and whose work was predicted from the very start. And he came. As he came, he preached the gospel of God.

Time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. It is at hand. As he preached that word, those who listened to Jesus, and those who saw Jesus, before them was the one who was sent from God himself, God's son.

As Jesus says, the kingdom of God is at hand. In a literal sense, it's true. The kingdom of God had come to earth, and Jesus was there, proclaiming the gospel.

We touched on the kingdom of God before, a good few months ago now, and there's perhaps not as much time to go into it today, but we'll come around to it again, with the Lord's help, in this study in later chapters.

But just to say shortly, that the kingdom of God had come. Where is God's kingdom? God's kingdom is where God is. And now God had come to earth, and all who believed in Jesus, and all here who trust in Jesus, we become part of the kingdom of God.

[21 : 13] Yes, we spend our lives working and living in this world, but we also are citizens, are we not, of God's kingdom, living and working in his kingdom, for his kingdom.

As Christians, our citizenship is with him in glory. It's with him where he is. Yes, we live here, we serve here, and we must do so, but our place, our home, it's not here.

The kingdom of God is at hand. And note the urgency of the message. Repent, and believe in the gospel. The kingdom of God is at hand. It's now, it's here, and you must repent, and believe in the gospel.

The gospel is urgent. The gospel is pressing. And you sat here so many times, I'm sure, and we've all heard the same text being preached, by faithful preachers over many, many years.

And if you listen carefully, you'll see one thing. We're all saying the exact same thing. Every Christian here, we all say the exact same thing at the end of the day.

[22 : 24] You, without Jesus, have no hope, have no help. Jesus has come to save all who come to him. And with Jesus as Lord and Savior, you have hope.

You have full assurance of glory. You have full assurance of an eternity spent with him. But also, it's pressing. The gospel is simple.

Repent and believe in the gospel. Repent and believe in the good news. Turn away from sin and turn to Jesus. Turn away from yourself and turn to Jesus.

Find no hope in yourself. Find all your hope in Jesus. Repent. Do a 180. It's literally the most base translation you can do here. Do a complete turnaround and turn to Jesus.

And believe in the good news. He has come to save those who need saving. And that's all of us. That's the call of Jesus. Believe.

[23 : 23] Repent. So who does Jesus call first? Who did Jesus come to save first? See that in verses 16 and then verses 19 down to verse 20.

Verse 16. Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. Jesus finds these men.

He finds them. And again and again, and we'll see this more, this sense of passing alongside the Sea of Galilee. It sounds quite relaxed.

It sounds quite just nonchalant. But the reality is, and we know it's reality, that Jesus, as we saw before, the woman at the well, Jesus saw her, he knew her, and he planned at that day, at that time, to come and to save her.

Same for these men. These four men we're about to meet, these men who were just going about their daily business. Passing by in verse 16, verse 16, passing alongside the Sea, and then again, down in verse 19, going on a little further.

[24 : 37] Jesus had planned eternally, of course he had, to meet these men. Again, these are men who are ordinary people. And Jesus saves ordinary people.

people. He saves ordinary people in ordinary ways, in a sense, and on ordinary days. How many people have wasted their whole life waiting for Jesus to come and to save them in some amazing way?

If the Lord's going to save me, he'll do it this way or that way. He'll speak to me from the heavens. He'll give me a vision one night. And so on and so on.

How does Jesus, more often than not, how does Jesus save his people? Yes, there's some extraordinary stories. Yes, but a normal sense. How does Jesus save his people?

He saves us where we are at a normal time. These men were mending their nets. The most normal thing for these fishermen to be doing for that quiet few days of work.

[25 : 44] We see that there wasn't much fish as we read in Luke and we're mending their nets. We're just keeping themselves busy for a while. In that place, at that time, Jesus calls these normal men.

Who is the gospel for? Who is the gospel for in these verses? It's for Simon and Andrew. It's for James and John.

It's for the stinking busy fishermen who's been a whole day working hard and caught nothing the night before. The tired out men who are trying their best to earn a living for their families. It's for them.

Who is the gospel for? Is it for just those who are educated and those who are somehow proficient in something? No. The gospel is for all who will come to Jesus.

All who will come to Jesus. what's the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian? What's the difference? Is it our attempt to look more holy, to sound more holy, to act more holy?

[26 : 55] If it is, we've gone wrong as Christians. What's the difference, first and foremost, what's the main difference between those who are Christians and those who are not? Is it Bible knowledge?

Is it church knowledge? Is it our family connections? It's Jesus. The Christian and the non-Christian.

There's other differences, perhaps, yes, the main difference that matters, the one that really matters is the Christians for all our faults and all our failures and there are many of them and we'll confess that to you is we've got plenty of faults and failures as Christians and we get wrong so often and mess up so often but yet we know Jesus, we love Jesus and he is ours.

These were normal men. normal men doing their normal work on a normal day and all of a sudden, in a matter of moments, their whole lives are transformed and changed as Jesus intervenes.

Don't look out for the miraculous, friends. Don't wait and say, well, if God's going to save me, he'll save me this way or that way at this time or in this way. It's not for us to dictate that to God.

[28 : 15] He meets us in his word. He meets us in the fellowship of his people. He meets us as we come around his word. He meets you where you are. He meets you where you are.

And just one that important point to note here. I'm only saying it because we know it's a real problem we have and we've always had the problem for centuries. Going right back to the start.

Note what happens here. Note the exact wording. Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net into the sea for a fisherman.

Verse 17. And Jesus said to them, clean up your act, clean up your act and follow me. Jesus said to them, try your hardest first, live a good life, then follow me.

Jesus said to them, try and sound good, look good, act good, then follow me. Follow me. Follow me.

[29 : 21] There is nothing you bring to your salvation. Nothing. The Christians here, there's nothing we brought to our salvation. Nothing. Was it Owen, John Owen, and thankfully I had a few short quotes.

One of John Owen's quotes was that there's nothing we bring to our salvation, but the sin that makes it necessary. There's nothing you or I bring to our salvation apart from the sin that makes it necessary.

The gospel is not clean up your act and follow Jesus or try and prove your public image, your public act. No. It's follow him. And he does the work.

That slow work of making us more like him. That's his work. But come to Jesus. Whatever's stopping you today from coming to Jesus, whether it's your own thoughts and ideas, whether it's perhaps family pressure, I don't know, perhaps it's something else, you aren't feeling like you're good enough.

Perhaps you think, well, I'm a hypocrite. My life looks such a mess at times. I can never be a Christian because I will fail him and I will sin. Well, yes, you will.

[30 : 32] Yes, you will. Come alongside your brothers and sisters beside you. And his mercy is more than our ability to sin. His mercy is more than our ability to wander away.

Be like these men. Jesus calls them to follow him. And their response, it is immediate. It's immediate.

He changes lives instantly. We see that, don't we? These men in these verses, their lives change. In verse 18, immediately, they left their nets and followed him.

And again, in verse 20, the other two men, immediately he called them and they left their father in the boat, the hired servants and followed him. When Jesus calls us, our lives change immediately.

And sometimes, for many of us, that call takes a few years, perhaps, to understand. I'm not saying we have to have an instantaneous conversion. That's not my story.

[31 : 36] It's not the story of many here. But in a sense, when we are Christians, when we realize we've been saved, our lives are different. Our lives are different.

Now, these men were called to serve the Lord in extraordinary ways. But they leave behind where they're old life, the old business they had.

And for them, it was a literal sense. They literally left it behind. And we see from verse 20, it was obviously quite a good business. They had hired servants and they're working together, these four men, with their two boats that we saw.

And look, they had money, they were doing well for themselves. And Jesus calls them to follow him. Now, we're not saying if you become a Christian, you have to leave behind your business and your family.

That's not what's going on here. That's not what's being taught here. Some will preach that and they're wrong to do so. Very wrong. What we're seeing here is the reality that Jesus changes lives.

[32 : 37] Jesus changes lives. lives. What that means in your situation, it is for you to understand yourself. And the Lord will guide you in that when you come to him. But your life will not look the same.

And the question has to be asked, is it that fear that's stopping you from following Jesus? That fear of, if I believe in him, and I think I do, but if I trust in him, if I give my life to him, what will my life look like?

What will my life look like? Is the change too much? Will the change be too big a change for me? If you ask any Christian here, any Christian, was it worth it?

Or is it worth it? Is whatever perhaps you had to leave behind, whatever sins you had to leave behind, whatever X, Y, Z, whatever your situation was, and it's also individual, whatever you left behind to follow Jesus, you ask them, was it worth it?

Is it worth it? They'll say yes. And you know they'll say yes. But not because I'm telling them to. They'll say yes because they mean it. Because as Paul says, that everything is counted as what?

[33 : 52] Counted as loss and counted as nothing compared to the surpassing joy, surpassing love, the surpassing care of being known and kept and loved by Jesus.

These men, they are called and their lives are transformed. And to come to the conclusion, what does the calling look like? Just three very simple phrases in verse 17.

Jesus said to them, follow me and I will make you become fishers of men. Follow me. back to the gospel basics.

Back to the gospels where building blocks. If we follow anything else, anyone else, we are wrong. We must follow Jesus.

We must follow Jesus. Without any sort of attachments to him. Without any sort of alteration to who he is.

[34 : 57] we aren't, when we become Christians, we aren't following the free church. Our friends next door, our brothers and sisters next door, aren't following the FP church.

At times, on both sides, we might get that confused and we might make a mistake there. But you're following Jesus. And I am following Jesus. We often have that at the communion table, a reminder, this is not the free church's table.

This is the Lord's table. We follow him and follow him alone. And the question to those who know Jesus and who love Jesus and the question to myself with you is, are we still following him as we should be?

Are we still following him as we should be? Only you can answer this question for yourselves. I don't know your private lives. I don't know what's inside your heart and your soul. But a question to ask yourself, are you still, and am I with you, still following him as we should be?

Or have we perhaps, we're still going the right direction, of course we are, but we're a wee bit off track. We're following something and someone a wee bit off. Perhaps a pet sin, a private sin, a beloved sin is keeping you just that way instead.

[36 : 16] Are we following him? Are you still following him as you wish you were? If you have found yourself as a Christian, perhaps going a wee bit off track, the question and the answer to the question of how to get back to him is Jesus.

This day, this evening, this afternoon, whatever you can do, just come to him again. Ask that he would bring you back to himself. He would give you that first love once more, that he would take you back to himself.

And keep praying that, and he will. He will. If you have a question to ask there for those here who as of yet aren't Christians, will you respond to the simple call we have here?

We said at the start, I'll say it again, will you respond to the call of verse 17? Will you follow the one who has been called to follow just now? See, Jesus is passing alongside these men.

Jesus is beginning his journey. He's going to carry on and do many more things that we'll see in the next few weeks with the Lord's help. And in one sense, and you've heard this before, but it's true, in one sense, as we read these words together, as we read the word of God together, Jesus is, as it were, passing by here.

[37 : 36] Not passing by the Sea of Galilee, but he's passing by this congregation. He's passing by, as it were, this building. And as Jesus calls these men to follow him, and as these men follow him, they make the most of the chance they have to follow him whilst they still have it.

They don't let Jesus pass them by, and the chance is then gone. Whatever reason is holding you back from following him, I know it's easy to preach with my pulpit, it's much harder isn't it when it's yourself.

You think, well, I want to follow Jesus, I want to believe in Jesus, I want to be a Christian, but there's this, and there's this, and there's that, and all these things are real for you, I know they are, and all these things feel so hard, and I'm sure they are at times, some of these things are difficult, family pressures, and other situations that you're dealing with.

All these situations ultimately are nothing when it comes to following Jesus. We must follow Jesus, dear friends, we must follow him whilst we have the chance, and the time, and the opportunity to do it.

Today is your day, this is your chance, this is your time, this is our time together, around his word, this day is your chance, the Lord has given you this day, make the most of it.

[38 : 59] Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men, I will make you become, back to the Christians again, how do we share the gospel?

how do we share the gospel to our parents, our friends, our kids, our siblings, those who we love so much, but we find it so hard to share the gospel to?

How do we share the gospel to them? How do we share the gospel to that person out there who has questions and who looks as if they just hate the Lord we love?

how do we serve them well? I assure you it's not by doing four years of a degree in Edinburgh, it's not even through a lifetime of reading books, but here I am alongside you, totally and completely.

We're in this together, and we have the same fears together, the same worries together, the same inability at times together to put the words right, and you think, what do we do?

[40 : 06] These, we assume perhaps illiterate, maybe not, but definitely educated formerly fishermen, what hope do they have of sharing the glorious gospel?

Well, none really, not academically, not intellectually perhaps. So what does Jesus say to them? Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men. We find our strength in him.

How do I share the gospel to this person or that person? You pray for gospel opportunities, and you will find, and the Christians here who have done this, you will testify to the fact, that once we start praying for that person or that person, or praying for gospel opportunities, the Lord blesses.

The Lord blesses those prayers, and the Lord will give us these gospel chances. When he gives these gospel chances, if we're doing it in his strength and in his power, you will find the words to say, and not that you'll say things perfectly, because you won't.

We don't. We never do. I say this from up here, every minister who's been there before you, I assure you, and you've heard this before, that Monday mornings, and indeed most of Mondays, are hard days for ministers.

[41 : 18] You think, I should have said that, I didn't say that way right, and so on, so on. Together, as brothers and sisters, we will fail in how we say things, completely. But if we do it in his power, he will use even our faltering attempt at gospel sharing, and he will bless that for his own glory, for his own namesake.

That's our hope, that he makes us become, as it were, fishers of men. And dear Christian, he has called you to serve him in your home, in your workplace, in his community.

He has called you to live here, to serve here, and if he's called you to do that, he will equip you to do that. Those he calls, he equips. Called to be fishers of men.

Called for a life as aware of active service. Called to serve him, even on the bad days.

Again, as the fishermen here know, even in the bad days of small catches. Days like our own day here, where we see church attendance perhaps going down and down, where we see gospel interest going down and down, where we see, in our country at least, gospel cause seeming so weak and so small.

[42 : 34] The job's the same job. Serve him. Serve him. Serve him. Give the gospel. Share the gospel. Live the gospel. Talk about the gospel.

Invite those around us to know Jesus. Point them towards him again and again. Good days and bad days. As it were, good fishing seasons and bad fishing seasons. We're all called as Christians, who are Christians here today, to serve him in the same way.

Serve him in the exact same way, like a good fisherman. In all weather, in all conditions, we must do our job as it were, as the Lord enables us.

Fishers of men. So we're catching those from the depths of the sea. And as we see in Jonah, the image of the sea is an image of death, at least for the Israelites.

It was an image of darkness. It was an image of the grave. As you sink into the sea, you sink down into the darkness, you sink down into the grave. So the image here of being fisher of men, the image is beautiful.

[43 : 38] It's that of, as the Lord gives us help, that as his people, as we share the gospel, that through us he works through means, he brings people from the depths of the sea, from the depths of the depth itself, from the depths of death itself, and he brings them up to the surface, and he catches them and calls them his own.

That's the hope just now, as this gospel goes out. That's the hope as Christians, that he will use us in this place, use us in this community to become fishers of men for this place, that our neighbours, that our friends, that our family, that those who live in this area, would not come to praise us, not come to praise this church, would come to praise him and to know him, and our prayer going forward, and mine with you, all together as brothers and sisters, our prayer as a church family is that we would follow him well, that he would equip us and that we would become fishers of men in this place.

Come and follow him today. Dear friends, come and follow him today. This is one more gospel chance you've been given. Do not waste the chance. Do not waste the opportunity.

Let's bow our heads now, a word of prayer. Lord, we come before you once more, and we thank you for the gift of the gospel, the gift of even the simple gospel reminder we heard today, that all who come to you, all who come to you in spirit and truth, all who come to you seeking that forgiveness, Lord, that you will not cast them aside, and you will save all who come crying out for that salvation, that you care for them.

Lord, help us to be fishers of men in this place. Help us, Lord, to be wise, to share the gospel boldly, to share it in love, in all sincerity. Help us, we ask, to our lives would match our profession, that our conduct would be glorifying off you and would not distract those, Lord, away from the gospel.

[45 : 34] Help us as we come to sing our final item of praise, do so with hearts and minds full of joy and full of understanding. Lord, bless these words. We ask, Lord, you forgive anything that was said, not in accordance to your word.

We give you praise that the power is not in the preacher, but the power is in you as you work, Lord, through your living word. Let's call these things in and through and for Jesus, praise his name's sake.

Amen. Let's conclude by saying to God's praise from the Scottish Psalter. Scottish Psalter and Psalm 95. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 95.

It's got a Psalter, Psalm 95.

We can sing verses 1 down to verse 5 of the psalm. O come, let us sing to the Lord. Come, let us, everyone, a joyful noise make to the rock of our salvation.

[46 : 33] Let us before his presence come with praise and thankful voice. let us sing Psalms to him with grace and make a joyful noise. Psalm 95, verses 1 to 5.

God's praise. O come, let us sing to the Lord.

Come, let us, everyone, God's praise.

Let us, everyone, a joyful noise, sing to the rocks of our salvation. Let us, everyone, a joyful noise, let us, everyone, a joyful noise.

Let us, everyone, a joyful noise. Let us sing Psalms to him with peace and let us sing Psalms to him with peace and with peace and thankful noise.

[47 : 37] Let us, everyone, a joyful noise. Let us sing Psalms to him with peace and make a joyful noise.

Let us sing solar Extens Tokyo and Our God, thy King, the young King, have the world of God's years.

Exalt the earth, but in his hand, the strength of his sins.

To him the spacious sea belongs, for he that sinned me, where thine and also from his hands is warm and thirsty.

The love of God the Father, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, both of you now and forevermore. Amen.