

Purpose, Proof, and Plan

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Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

[0 : 0 0] Well evening, brothers, sisters and friends, a joy to worship the Lord. We also remember, especially this evening, those of our number who are mourning and will pray specifically for that later on.

Just to say, there should be hopefully some sheets left to the back door. Just to go through some of the intimations on the sheet. As always, it's seven o'clock on a Thursday prayer meeting.

Meets in the hall, everyone is very welcome to come. I keep saying it, but I keep saying it. So I'm here to say, everyone is welcome. I know in our culture, in our history, you go to the prayer meeting if you're a Christian or wanting to become or to go forward.

We know ourselves. The prayer meeting is for everyone to attend. It's an open public meeting. Everyone can come along to. So that's seven o'clock on Thursday. So thanks for the men who came yesterday to the men's breakfast.

Again, a good time. I assume it's had by all. We enjoyed ourselves. Good conversation. Good chat. Good chat. And plenty of food. The next men's breakfast is planned for the start of October, God willing.

[1 : 0 6] Of course, next month, September, it's our communes that week. So a few other things on the go. We're praying today. I should remember this morning. We'll pray this evening for Mern's Free Church.

We prayed for them recently. They joined the Free Church. A huge congregation. I think it's 250 odd. They joined the Free Church recently. We also prayed for Badenoch Free Church. They were involved helping out various youth camps around them the last few weeks.

And again, as I said, this morning, some early notice for Hope Explored. That three-week course we hope, with the Lord's help, to run in September.

The 7th, the 10th, and the 17th. It's all Tuesday evenings in the Tay-Kali. That's the plans as I stand. Again, we need volunteers for that.

Three or four friendly volunteers. Friendly faces. Men and women, ideally, it's good just to sit and to chat.

[2 : 0 7] Have a cup of tea, a cup of coffee. And just to be there as a point of contact. And if, during the discussions, which I'll be doing the majority of, during the discussions, if something comes up and it speaks to your story of how the Lord worked in your life, you can then share that with the group.

An informal three weeks. And again, so anyone who wants to know more about who Jesus is, or who wants to know more about why we think he's so important, then please invite them along to it.

There's invitations at the back door. Again, there's 50 there this morning. There's never 100 in the month, so please take as many as you want. Just advance notice.

I have more information next week. I'll be taking my annual leave the last two Sundays of August. But I'll have details next week in terms of supply for that.

We're here to worship the Lord this evening. All our worship is in the Scottish Psalter this evening. It's all in the Psalter. And first of all, the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 67. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 67, on page 300.

[3 : 16] Psalm 67, on page 300. Lord, bless and pity us. Shine on us with thy face. That the earth, thy way, and nations all may know thy saving grace.

Let people praise thee, Lord. Let people all thee praise. O let the nations be glad. And songs of our voices raise. Psalm 67. The whole psalm to God's praise.

Christ. Psalm 68. Death. Let us. Let the pity us, shine on us with thy face.

Not glorify me, our patience, all in, O, thy saving grace.

Give thou praise the Lord, and give thou all the grace.

[4 : 29] O, let the nations declare, and songs their hearts raise.

Just sleep in our church on our broke nations.

O, let the pity us, and our hearts raise.

O, let the grace of God. O, let the grace of God.

O, let the grace of God. O, let the grace of God.

[5 : 46] O, let the grace of God.

O, let the grace of God. Let the grace of God join together again in a word of prayer. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you once more for this time of worship.

We thank you that this day is a day you have given to us for our benefit. A day of rest. A day of rest away from the things of this world. A day of rest mentally and physically.

A day of rest where we can spend time talking about, thinking about, and praising the God who knows us, who made us. And the God who has shown his care and love towards us.

A day we can spend together as brothers and sisters in public worship. Coming around your word for a short time, once or twice a day. And just enjoying the fellowship.

[6 : 46] Encouraging one another. Seeking to build one another. Knowing as we come to do this just now, it is not pure routine. But we do this just now because we love you.

We gather to worship you because we love you. We gather to do all the things we do publicly for you. Because you are worthy of our worship. We are reminded of recent days as we considered the power and the glory of who you are.

As we considered the fact that in every single way you are altogether different than us. You are spirit, most pure, most holy, most incomprehensible, unapproachable light.

That in and of yourself you require nothing and no one else. But yet you have made yourself known to us. You made us.

You set your love upon us. In eternity past, before creation, you knew your people. You set your love on your people. Then in time and in space you met us in our life's journey.

[7 : 54] And you set us aside. And you showed your kindness towards us. Your grace and mercy towards us. In making the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Not just interesting to us or meaningful to us. But life changing to us. You showed us as we heard this morning from your word. That we are those who by ourselves have no hope and have no help.

But you then showed us that in Jesus we have eternal hope. Eternal help as we come to worship and know our eternal King, Saviour and Friend.

We thank you this evening we can call him our friend. We come to one who calls us his friends. Terms which for us seem so light and which seems far too, far too normal, far too easy.

We give you praise. We come this evening as those who we at times find the words hard to say. We at times struggle how to express our love for our Saviour.

[9 : 03] We come to a Saviour who your word shows us has no issue and no problem expressing his never-ending, undying love for his bride.

We are the one who he heard of in recent weeks. The one who he came to save. The one he sought out. The one he came to love.

The one he came to claim as his own. And the one he will have and hold forever. We prayed this morning for ourselves. And we all remember ourselves. We also prayed for the wider gospel work.

Remember especially this evening your people as they work and serve and witness. Especially those in the Middle East. We remember especially this evening your people in Pakistan.

That great nation of so much history. A nation where your word once did have its course. But now a nation where we see so much oppression and so much attack on the word.

[10 : 07] We pray for a special word this evening for Essan Masa. Our brother in the Lord. A man who faced and is indeed facing at this moment many issues.

Many burdens. A man who has refused to relent. Who has refused to back down. In the face of his own culture and community.

And the local authorities. Attacking him financially and physically and mentally. He refuses to back down and proclaims still Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

Pray hard for him and his family just now especially. As at this very moment he awaits to hear. If that death sentence will be carried out or not. But at this moment as he sits in his home.

Awaiting to hear if he will be taken back to prison or not. We pray for him. We pray for him perhaps he is already in prison. Lord we cannot enter into a situation.

[11 : 10] But we can enter the throne room of heaven. We trust that he is also. And we bring him before you. You comfort him. Come alongside him. If it's your will Lord. He would escape what seems to be a.

A near sure punishment just now Lord. You would bless your work and his word and his life. Pray for his family as they. May soon lose one they love and care for.

Therefore. Simply for daring to share the good news. There is hope and life found in Jesus. To pray Lord. For the worldwide church and those who are suffering. We give you thanks as we see your gospel blessing in our own nation.

And especially Lord. Especially this evening. The gospel blessing we've seen in recent days. In some congregations of our own denomination. Remember especially this evening. Myrne's free church.

As they now enter their second. Month of being a free church. We thank you for their faithfulness. As they left one denomination. Without building.

[12 : 09] Without money. But as they left both minister and congregation. As these 250 odd souls. Prayed and sought out your will.

We give you praise that you led them to becoming part of the free church. And that now they are experiencing the full freedom. Of being able to enjoy gospel preaching. Being able to have no restrictions on what is said.

Or how they say it. They are now part of a presbytery that seeks the good. Of the gospel in that area. And not following the ways or thoughts of this world or of man.

We thank you Lord for them. We pray for them especially. Pray also Lord just for their elders this evening. These men who have recently have been voted in by the congregation.

And who are learning what it is to be one of your servants. Who are learning what it is to be the face of the full burden. Of having spiritual authority.

[13 : 08] But also spiritual burden. Over a congregation. We ask you bless your word. We thank you for them. Thank you of recent weeks for their willingness to give their building.

And their hall. Their resources. And their people. Their time. And their energy. Over to assisting several free church youth camps in the area. Thank you Lord for that small congregation.

That seeks to worship you. And serve you. In that spread out area of this nation. Where there are many homes. Many miles apart. Many small communities.

Without a gospel witness. Lord we ask you bless them in all of their work. We give you praise as we remind ourselves this morning. That we are part of your church. We here in North Tolstah. Join in praying for our brothers and sisters in India.

In Pakistan. Right now our brothers and sisters in parts of Central Africa. Lord you know the details of the issues going on there. Our brothers and sisters in China.

[14 : 08] And together we pray. Your will will be done. Would you have your people across this world. Help us then to relax this evening. To relax into the thought.

And into the mindset. That we have a saviour. Who wins. And we know that is true. Because he has already won. He has crushed the serpent's head.

And he reigns. And rules supreme at your right hand. To pray Lord for these distant nations. And brothers and sisters. We will never meet this side of glory. We pray Lord once more for our own locality.

We pray once more for North Tolstah. We pray especially this evening. For the broken and breaking hearts in our village. Those who have lost one close and loved and dear to them.

Lord we ask for comfort. We ask you use us as comfort. Use us as good neighbours. We pray especially where our words fall so short.

[15 : 10] And feel at times so useless. We pray Lord the ultimate comforter of the Holy Spirit. That he would comfort the breaking hearts this evening. That he would comfort those who are at a loss of themselves.

An end of themselves. We know that the voice of death is bound to speak in all our lives. When it does speak we find ourselves so often speechless.

We thank you Lord that we come to a saviour who is not distant. A saviour who is not far away. We come just now to a saviour who is close to all who are broken hearted.

Who cares and who sees and who stands beside. Who embraces those of his people. Those who are going through times which are dark and heavy.

Those who are mourning. Those who are broken hearted. We have a saviour who is close. One who walks alongside us every single step and minute of life's journey.

[16 : 12] We thank you Lord for the public witness of your people in North Tulsa. We pray for ourselves. We also remember as always our brothers and sisters next door. We also remember our brothers and sisters who worship in various congregations and our denominations across our island.

Who leave this village to go worship in our places. Lord we give you praise that you have your people here. We may be different on various secondary or other matters. But together we have one heart for North Tulsa.

We desire to see every man, woman and child. Every home from the Glen to Gary come to know and love and serve Jesus as saviour.

This evening we also remember especially our brother and elder, Dolan MacKinnon, as he preaches two different congregations today. We thank you for him. Thank you indeed for every willing servant.

Every willing lay preacher so called who is willingly giving up their time week after week. Those of our employments and those who have had long times of employment.

[17 : 19] But who still take time to study your word. To write sermons. To preach these sermons. At times doing so on such short notice. And in congregations where the need at times is very great.

So we thank you Lord for these lay preachers. We thank you again for Donald specifically. For his willingness to help not just our congregations. But also to preach in this congregation in times of holiday. And indeed previously in times of vacancy.

Thank you Lord for everyone here of your people. The skills and the gifts and the talents you've given us. Help us Lord we ask as we carry on serving you in Tulsa.

To pray and to seek out what gifts you've given us. And to make full use of these gifts to your service. For your glory in this place. I'm praying especially for the upcoming event of the video sessions of Hope Explored.

I pray just now you would give us wisdom. Who we might approach and how we might invite them. I pray just now you would work in some hearts of some individuals in our village. Those who are seeking.

[18 : 25] Those who are wondering is there more to life than this. Those who have plenty of big questions and as of yet have found no answers. Those who are wondering what it's all about.

Who Jesus is and why we worship him. Lord they would find the invite. They would receive the invite. And they'd feel welcome to come and to sit. To sit and listen or to sit and ask questions.

Or to sit and discuss. We ask that you be glorified in everything we seek to do. All the plans we have. Ideas we have. We understand. If you're not in it. If you will not prosper.

If you're not as it were building up the wall of this church. It's all in vain. We give you praise as we seek just now once more. You be glorified in everything we do.

All our actions. All our plans and ideas and hopes. We have many hopes for North Tulsa. Many plans and ideas. Many desires for the work of the gospel here.

[19 : 21] But it is your work. We are simply those you have used in mighty ways to serve you. We give you praise Lord. Every one of us have been called to serve this evening.

Everyone who know and who love Jesus. Called to serve in our prayer lives. In our daily interactions in this village. Help us then to be salt and light to this place.

Give us wisdom in what we say. And indeed how we say it. Be with us Lord we ask this evening. Forgive us for our sins. We come confessing unrighteousness. We come confessing sin.

Saying plainly and clearly. In many ways and in many times this past week. We have acted in ways against your holy nature. We have thought things and said things against your holy nature.

And in and of ourselves we deserve nothing from you. But you have shown your love to us. That you have not and you promise to never abandon those. Who call on Jesus as saviour.

[20 : 21] In his name and for his sake we ask these many things. Amen. Let's turn now to read in God's word. We have a few short passages to read. So two short passages first of all in Luke.

Then one short passage in Acts. First of all very short in Luke chapter 1. Luke chapter 1. It's reading the first four verses.

Luke chapter 1. In the first four verses. It's page 803 of the church Bibles. Luke chapter 1.

Page 803. It's the first four verses. Let's together hear God's word. In as much as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us.

Just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us. It seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write and order the account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

[21 : 35] Turning to the last chapter now in Luke. Luke chapter 24. Luke chapter 24.

I'm reading from verse 36. Luke chapter 24 and verse 36.

Luke chapter 25.

Luke chapter 15. Luke chapter 26. Luke chapter 26. Luke chapter 26. Luke Luke. Luke Luke. Luke Luke. Luke. Luke Luke. Luke Luke. Luke Luke.

Luke Luke. Luke Luke. Luke Luke. Luke Luke. Luke Luke Bridge. Luke Luke. Luke Luke Luke. Luke Luke Luke.

[22 : 35] Luke Luke Luke Luke. Luke Luke. Luke Luke Luke. Luke Luke Luke. Luke Luke Luke Luke. Luke Luke Luke Luke Luke Luke Luke. took it and ate it before them. Then he said to them, These are my words that I spoke to you whilst I was still with you, and everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures and said to them, Thus it is written, The Christ should suffer on the third day rise from the dead, and that for repentance, for forgiveness of sins, should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things, and behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you, but stay in the city till you are clothed with power from on high. And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, were continually in the temple, blessing God. Finally now turning to Acts, the Acts of the Apostles, that's on page 800 and 55. Acts chapter 1, page 855.

This will be our text later on this evening. Acts chapter 1. It's reading again verses 1 down to verse 4.

In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking about the kingdom of God. While sataying with them, he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, you heard from me. For John baptized of water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit, not many days from now. Amen.

We give praise to God for his holy word. Let's again sing, this time from Psalm 34. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 34. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 34.

Sing verses 1 down to verse 7. Psalm 34 verses 1 down to verse 7.

[25 : 24] It's page 246. Psalm 34. God will I bless all times. His praise my mouth shall still express. My soul shall boast in God.

The meek shall hear with joyfulness. Extol the Lord with me. Let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord. He heard and did me from all fears deliver.

Psalm 34 verses 1 to 7. To God's praise. God will I bless all times.

My soul shall boast in God. God will I bless all times. My soul shall boast in God. My soul shall boast in God.

The meek shall hear his joyful hands. God will I bless all times.

[26 : 30] The meek shall With meek shall Independence jotted now.

Who shall cast Wouldn't jsem viu. My soul reveals the heart of joyANK YOU S difficile praising the temple, my name is John, I will sing please, you are answered Sam like can you

Yeah And in God's invitation Of course he will Thout round to give him And he will live Amen.

We'll see the Lord's help how we get on. Starting very simply this evening, verses 1 roughly down to verse 8.

It's often said one of the saddest things a minister can do is to make the Bible boring in its preaching. If we're honest, every single preacher, every single minister will admit there are times where our sermons are less than interesting.

[29 : 19] God's word is always exciting. God's word is always interesting. It's God's word. But sometimes our presentation of God's word is what is lacking. When it comes to the book of Acts, to make Acts boring, as Spurgeon himself said in talking to his students, to make the book of Acts less interesting should disqualify you from ministry and from ever showing your face again.

Now Spurgeon had a humorous side to him, but what he was saying is quite serious. When we come to the book of Acts, we see the start of the church as we know it.

The start, at least, of the New Testament church. This is the very first early days of what took place. We see the start, at least, of the time. We see the state spying and the state trying to capture Christians.

Ship bricks. Espionage. We see bold stands for the gospel. And behind it all, we see God in his incredible way, leading and gently at times, forcefully other times, leading his people and guiding his word.

And really, the book of Acts, we'll get there one day, it ends really quite simply. It ends kind of halfway through the story. In one sense, you think, well, what happens next?

[30 : 48] Well, really, the book of Acts never ends. If we're saying this is the start of the church as we know it, the book of Acts, the story, the narrative, the journey, it carries on.

Apart from Jerusalem, it carries on to parts of the Roman Empire. It carries on then, outside of Scripture, to Africa for many years. Then from Africa, missionaries are sent to Europe, to the UK.

Missionaries then, Roman believers at times also, come to ourselves. Not to Scotland, not to Tolstah, but they arrive in the UK. And eventually, as Christianity spreads into Ireland, as missionaries then go from Ireland into the newly conquered parts of Scotland, as they land on our own shores here.

As a grabber boy, as a South Lochs boy, very proud of the fact that, as we like to think, and historians are backing up just about, that one of the first churches, earliest churches, could well be in Cromore, in Cromore, just beside Cromore.

As all these thousands of miles and journeys and steps took place, Christianity to first land here. For us to be here this evening, we're still part of this incredible journey of God building his church.

- [32 : 16] Before this evening, we join this church in Acts. The first Christians, as they begin. And just for this evening, just three very simple headings for us.

Looking at verse 1 down to verse 8. First of all, seeing the purpose. Why did Luke write this book? Then seeing the proof that Luke talks about.

Then seeing the plan that Jesus has. So the purpose, why did Luke write it? The proof that Luke mentions. And then seeing the plan that Jesus teaches his disciples about.

First of all then, the purpose. Why do we have a book of Acts? Why is it in our Bibles? We see that then in verse 1 down to verse 2. In the first book, O Philophilus, Dr. Luke, of course, is a man who wrote the Acts.

Dr. Luke, the same man we know who wrote the book of Luke. And we might think, of course, as two separate books. But reality is, we should think of it really as one set.

- [33 : 38] It's a two-volume set that Luke wrote. To and for this man, Theophilus. First of all, Luke wrote the first thing. The thing that we would call the Gospel of Luke.

That's part one of the set. That's the first volume. Where Luke, as he says here in verse 1, where he's trying to tell this man everything Jesus did. In an orderly way.

In a carefully, again, Luke, the academic. Luke, the doctor. We would dread. We would dread in ETS. Well, some of us would. I certainly would dread in ETS. The days we had to do Luke for our Greek lessons.

Because Luke's Greek is so perfect. So precise. It's so complicated to understand it and read it. Because he's so just right in everything he says. He has the most perfect grammar.

Luke is orderly. Everything he says is orderly. And we'll see that when we come to study Luke one day. We see it also in Acts. Everything is organized carefully. Following a good timeline.

- [34 : 42] So volume one of the set. Is what we would call the gospel of Luke. And this is volume two. As he says here. I now write to you, O Philophilus. To give you this next segment.

This is the second part of the book. Where he tells this man. Or he informs this man. Of what has happened since Jesus ascended. Of the start of the church.

Of Christ's people serving him. What's amazing is. And perhaps we forget this. That Luke was himself. What you might call a primary witness.

He wasn't just collating facts and figures from a distance. Luke. We know. Was with Paul. At various parts of his journey. He's mentioned in Acts 27.

And Acts 28. We'll see that one day. And also near the end. We know of Paul's ministry. As Paul was writing to Timothy. He says just in passing.

- [35 : 42] As Paul thinks about what's happened to his own friends. And ministry associates who have since left him. He says only Luke is now with me. Only Luke is now with me.

So Luke is a clear writer. But also Luke is with Paul. Through it seems shipwrecks. Imprisonments. Luke is there. As part of this early church.

So not just a doctor. Not just a smart man. But also Luke is a faithful man. We can trust what he wrote. Because what he wrote was written well. The Greek is well.

The grammar is well. The logic. The historical work is good. But also Luke is a man who saw this himself. Who spoke to Paul himself. We assume he spoke to the apostles himself.

A man who saw parts of it. Who knows it for himself. A man who cared. And who loved his Lord and Saviour. And much like his gospel account.

[36 : 45] He said this is written to this individual. Theophilus. Now some will say. And there's no right answer perhaps. I wouldn't agree with this.

But some will say Theophilus was a code word. That Luke used to describe broadly. Brothers and sisters he's writing to.

It's a code word to the wider church. Others. And this is my own understanding. That this was a real man. In Luke. And in Acts. In Acts he says.

O Theophilus. In Luke. I believe he calls him. A title like Great Theophilus. In the Greek. The same wording you'd use. Talking to a Roman consul.

Or a Roman leader. In terms of politics. Or the army. It's clear what's happened here. Luke is writing to this man. Who seems to be involved.

[37 : 40] With Rome somehow. And he's writing this to prove. Or to offer support. For the fact. That Jesus is real. And that Jesus' people. Believed he was real.

So much so. That look what they did. And look how the Lord. Has prospered. His people. And his church. So his account begins.

We know. Here in Jerusalem. Jesus has told his people. Not to leave him. Until the Holy Spirit comes. We'll see that God willing. Next week. So his account begins. In Jerusalem.

As we gather. In North Tulsa this evening. We are here. Two thousand plus years later. And according to my own map book. Two thousand five hundred and sixty seven miles away.

As the crow flies. Thousands of years later. Thousands of miles away. And yet. We. Like Luke. Can say. And believe the same thing.

[38 : 40] That we love our saviour. As he loved him. And we wish to serve him. As the early church here. Wished. To serve him. So that's the purpose. That's the offer. We've met Luke now.

We know now why he wrote it. What then is said. In these early. Few verses. Was Luke begins. His account. He goes back. To summarise.

The last interaction. We see. And we read. In the end. Of Luke's gospel. Where Jesus speaks. With. With the disciples. And actually. Here. He gives a bit more detail.

Of what the Lord said. To his people. More than he gives us. Actually. Really. In Luke itself. In the gospel. Of Luke itself. We have that now. As we come to verse. Three.

Where Luke says. Quite simply. Speaking about Jesus. He presented himself. Alive to them. After his suffering. By many proofs. Appearing to them.

[39 : 33] During forty days. And speaking about the kingdom. Of. God. Many. If you interact.

With anyone today. A lot of people. Are under the impression. That Christians. Have. What we might call. Or we might call. Blind faith. If you find me.

Blind faith. Reference. Anywhere in scripture. I'll happily say. I'm wrong. People must quote. And what we've not yet seen. That's not blind faith.

The apostles. Did not exercise. Blind faith. Paul. Luke. Did not exercise. Blind faith.

Luke. The doctor. Luke. The intellectual man. Did not believe. In blind faith. He states clearly. That he. Believes. And worships. A savior. Of which. There are. What?

[40 : 28] Many. Proofs. Many proofs. Many evidences. Yes. We have faith. But faith.

Is not some vague. Hope we have. That things might be right. Christianity. Our belief. Of Jesus. As Lord. And Savior. It is. Intellectually.

Provable. Intellectually. Rigorous. It can withstand. The prodding. And poking. That it has. Through century. After century. Every generation. Our own included.

We think. We are the pinnacle. Of brain power. The pinnacle. Of philosophy. Every century does. When it comes after us. We will think. The same thing. Christianity has withstood.

Cultural changes. Whole societal changes. But yet. The people. Of our Savior. We are still here. Worshipping. And proclaiming him. As a risen Savior.

[41 : 23] Not because. We are blind sheep. Blindly following. Our blind faith. But because. We believe. That he was real. But as evidence. We can prove it.

From God's word. From history. From our own experience. We can prove it. To be real. Our faith. Is based on our experience. But also.

Let's not forget. Faith is also based. On the real. Historical. And theological. Evidences. And realities. Of who our Savior is.

We can prove. He lived. He was crucified. He rose again. Never be sold the lie.

By the world. That there is no proof for this. The Lord's help. And it's one of the things. We. If you remember. Way back. We did that vision plan. Of what we hope. To do and talk about.

[42 : 18] And we hope. On a Thursday. We'll do a series. Eventually. Looking. At the. Answering. The biggest. Questions. Our. That people.

Posted. To us. As Christians. Answering. The biggest. Doubts. People have. Or seeking. To answer. The biggest. Doubts. I should say. Don't think. For a second. There's no evidence. Don't think. For a second. You're required.

To have blind faith. Luke. Quite simply. Says. There are many. Proofs. Of the resurrection. And the reality. Of Jesus. I've been reading.

Recently. Unrelated to this. But just so. In God's providence. Some of the. Very. Very. Early. Church. Fathers. Some of these. Church. Fathers. Were those.

Who the disciples. Themselves. Taught. So we're talking. Those who are very. Very. Close. To the time. These are men. Some of whom. Again. Were taught. Some of whom.

[43 : 13] Knew the disciples. And even. At the very start. You'd be surprised. I'm shocked. Really. How much. Space. The church. Fathers. These first.

Really. Christian. Preachers. And teachers. After the apostles. After this. Church age. How much. Time. They spend. To defending. The validity. And the proof.

That Jesus. Was real. That he existed. Even right. At the start. The world. Was saying. He wasn't real. But some. Were teaching. He was just. Spiritual. Ours. Were saying. He was just.

A mirage. An image. In your head. Outers. Are saying. It's all a lie. And these poor Christians. Right from the start. Are saying. No. He's true. He's real. This is why. This is why. And this is why.

Right from the start. Our faith. Has been one. That has. Clear. Logical. Historical. Theologically. Based. Faith. Faith.

[44 : 08] Is not blind. Faith. Is not blind. God. And Luke. Is clear. As he writes. To this man.

Perhaps a Roman governor. Perhaps a Roman leader. Of some sorts. He's quite clear. That Jesus. Presented himself. Alive. To them. After his suffering.

By many proofs. We worship. Our risen savior. Who worship. One who is alive. Of the right hand. Of the father. One who truly died.

One who truly rose again. One who truly existed. One who was truly savior. And don't for a second. Begin to imbibe. Or take in. The world's opinion.

That all this. Isn't real. Again. Brothers and sisters. The church. Before us. Has heard it all before. And survived it all before.

[45 : 04] The wording. Perhaps has changed. But the intent. Has not. That Christians. Are too. Dependent.

On a make believe Jesus. They're too. Just dense. To understand. The world. That Christians. Are like ostriches. Who bury their heads. That Christians. Have no understanding. Of the world.

Christians are enslaved. To this ancient book. And so on. And so on. And so on. Take your pick. Of what people. Might oppose us with. And in love.

And in gentleness. With respect. With care. We say to those. Oppose us. Our friends. You are wrong. You are wrong. Come and read for yourself.

Come and see for yourself. It's one of the differences. That we. Personally. We are thankful to the Lord. I am thankful to the Lord. For. That separates.

[45 : 59] Perhaps us. Out from. Christian. Or cults. That have the name. Of Christ. A cult. Will say. Do not prod. Do not poke. Do ask questions.

Listen to us. Believe us. Look at our material only. And don't look outside of us. Don't dare. Look apart from us. Just believe what we are saying to you. We promise. We are telling the truth.

We say no. God's word is strong enough. We deported it. Poke at it. Research it yourself. Pray to Jesus yourself. Come and.

Seek out. Him yourself. Because he is real. And all this is real. And we trust the Lord enough. That he is able.

To answer. The biggest objections. That people might have. Often you'll find. Those who have strong objections. Those who are genuine. In their objections. There are many who aren't genuine.

[46 : 53] But those who are genuine. In their objections. Often these objections. Come from a place. That is deeper. Just to bear it in mind. Always be gentle. If you're in discussion. With non-Christians.

Always be mindful. And gentle. As you discuss them. Even as they perhaps. Get it heated. Keep yourselves. Gentle and careful. Think of one example. You speak to someone. I speak.

A few years ago. And it's off the island. So I can say. Talking to someone. Who's getting very. Very heated. As to why God. Could allow. Bad things to happen.

Which is a standard question. And it makes sense to ask it. And it turns out. Though. That he had recently. Lost. A very close. Loved one to himself. And really.

The question he was asking. Is not why does God. Allow bad things. I'm the good people. The question was. Why did God. Allow this person. I love to die. We're in a hurting world. We have big questions.

[47 : 50] To ask. But we trust. Our Lord. That he is eternal enough. And powerful enough. And he is good enough. We point people. Towards Jesus.

Again. And again. And again. He is able. To take. These big questions. And his way. To answer them. Plenty of proof.

We're not. Those. Who believe. In blind faith. And finally. The plan. As is presented to us. Verses 4. Down. To verse 6.

Here's where Luke. Gives a bit more information. As to the conversation. The interaction. That took place. Before Jesus. Ascended away. From the disciples. Verse 4. And in verse 6. While staying with him.

He ordered them. Not to depart from Jerusalem. But to wait. The promise. Of the father. Then. Down. To verse 6. So when they had come together.

[48 : 43] They asked him. Lord. Will you at this time. Restore the kingdom to Israel. He said to them. It is not for you. To know times. Or seasons. That the father has fixed.

By his own authority. But you will receive power. When the Holy Spirit. Has come upon you. And you will be my witness. In Jerusalem. And in all Judea. And Samaria. And to the ends.

Of the earth. There's two plans. Going on here. First of all. We're shown. The disciples plan. Then we see. Jesus' plan.

You see. Their plan. In verse 6. They've just met. A saviour. Who's back from the dead. One. Who has done. All he's promised to do. You can imagine.

The disciples. They're now. Fully believe. All that was said. About their saviour. All that was said. It's all true. He is the messiah. He is king. He is the son of God. All the power.

[49 : 40] He said he had. It's all true. Lord. Then. Will you not. At this time. Restore. The kingdom. To Israel.

They were wanting. And needing. Desperately. Their nation. To be freed. From Rome. They were wanting. They were wanting. The power of God. To come down. And destroy.

Their enemies. Now. They are fully assured. That Jesus is. Who he said he was. He's rose again. From the dead. He's appeared to them. For these 40 odd days.

They are now. Fully assured. With full belief. It's all true. And the first thing. And the biggest priority. Seems to be. To say to Jesus. Will you not now. Come. And reign.

And rule. And destroy our enemies. For us. Clear the way. For us. And give us. This kingdom. Back. They wanted. The resurrected Messiah.

[50 : 35] To fully. And finally. Destroy. The enemy. Not just Satan. But also. The enemy. As we said. Of Rome. They wanted.

The world. To be one. For them. In a way. That they were. Dictating. To Jesus. A very human way. Brothers and sisters.

Are we not. The exact. Same way. Today. Perhaps. We wouldn't be. As bold. Or as brash. As the disciples. Were talking to Jesus. But we think. And we act. In the exact. Same way.

We know. Exactly. How we want. The Lord. To work. In our lives. In our families. In North Tolstada. We know. Exactly. What we want. The Lord. To do. And how we want. Him. To do it. And like.

The disciples. We talk to him. At times. And say. Lord. We not do it now. The way we want you. To do it. Exactly. We not save. This person. Who needs saving. And this family.

[51 : 35] Who needs saving. And this part. Of the village. Where there's no church goes. Lord save people there. And this person. And that person. And we perhaps. Pray that way. And there's no harm.

In praying. We do pray. For every single person. Of Tolstada. As we do. Week after week. From Glen to Gary. We pray for everyone. But whilst we pray for North Tolstada. Let's be careful. We don't tell the Lord.

How to do his work. In North Tolstada. In our lives. In our family. In our situations. See how the Lord answers. The disciples.

He said to them. Verse 7. It is not for you. To know the times. Or seasons. The Father has fixed. By his own authority. Holy Spirit.

Is promised to them. After Holy Spirit. Is promised to them. He says. Happy to. Verse 8. You will be my witnesses. In Jerusalem. All Judea. And Samaria. And to the ends.

[52 : 30] Of the earth. See. Unlike the way. Of the disciples. The way of Jesus. Is not one of. Passive distance. They want Jesus. To come.

And in his power. By his way. To do everything. Jesus says. Well. I am going to work. I will do things. But I'm going to do it. Through you.

Again. Brothers and sisters. What's changed. For us. They say to Jesus. Lord. Will you not restore Israel. And that is then.

Changed by Jesus. To say. You will go. And you will be my witnesses. They want to see the Lord work. And how they want him to work.

Our Lord says. I will work. I will spread my word. I will establish my kingdom. But I will do it in my way. The way of Jesus. Is not our way.

[53 : 28] We praise him. For that. Brothers and sisters. This statement. From the Lord. Is really the. The core. Of what we see unfolding. In the rest of this book.

If there's one verse. That summarizes. All that's about to take place. In the next few weeks. And months. Of our study. It's quite simply. The simple phrase. Where Jesus says to them.

You will be. My witnesses. You will be my witnesses. The disciples. You can imagine. Were. They wanted something.

And they didn't get it. They wanted something grand. And glorious. And exciting. And powerful. And in one sense. Forget that. As the Holy Spirit. Descends upon them. We'll see that later on.

But in reality. How did the Lord. Use the disciples. We'll see. As time goes on. The disciples. The apostles. The first believers.

[54 : 25] Prison cells. Torture. Horrific death. Stoning. Again. Not in scripture. But we know from history. I'm pretty sure from history. The list of how.

These early Christians died. These disciples died. Skinned alive. Boiled alive. Trees. Put into a hollow tree. And cut into bits. Crucified upside down.

Just. The full gambit. Of just gore. And horror. And the Lord says. I will use you. And your life. I will use you.

And your story. I will send you out. To the world. And you will be my people. What glorious says. We said this before. Our situation.

In the prayer meeting. Like it was. The Lord uses. The most unlikely of people. The most unlikely of times. And likely ways. To share his word. We may be saying tonight.

[55 : 23] Lord. Will you not restore. North Tulsa. Lord. Will you not come. And power here. And blast away. The unbelief. And disbelief. And ignorance.

Of this village. Lord. Will you not work. In my family situation. That person. Who just doesn't believe. Will you not blast away. And change them. In the one sense.

That is what happens. If the Lord is not in it. Nothing will happen. But it's not. We say. Lord. We'll do this. And we step back. No. Let's learn.

From this interaction. It's quite the opposite. We pray. Lord. Save my family members. Save North Tulsa. At the same time. Then we're sent. We'll get ourselves.

To go. And be witnesses. To this place. The disciples had great faith. At times. Great disbelief. At other times. But one thing.

- [56 : 18] Is consistent. Through all the chapters. Of this account. Of the start of the church. The Lord. Builds. His church. It's the Lord's work. He will accomplish.
- His will. He will accomplish. As aware of the goal. That he has. Of building up a kingdom. In this world. But he does it. Through means.
- He does it. Through means. And brothers and sisters. We are the means. The Lord uses. Simple as that. And you think. Well surely.
- There's a better way. Of doing it. Surely there's. Better people. The Lord could use. Well brothers and sisters. Here we are. We're born. In this congregation. Or we've moved here. At this point of time.
- We're part of North Tolstice. This is our mission field. And some of us. Have other mission fields. Of course. Family members. And workplaces. But here is our home. This is our mission field.
- [57 : 16] Like the disciples. We should be reminded. That we are being sent out. To serve here. To be witnesses. In this place. To be salt.
- And light. The question is then. It's in question of the disciples. How then will the Lord. Reach the people of North Tolstice. How will they. Hear the gospel.
- How will our friends. And neighbours. And family members here. How will they hear. The good news of Jesus. It's one thing. To pray. That our hearts be open.
- And we keep praying that. But at the same time. If we're not willing. To go and speak with them. Then what are we doing. Or willing. To even invite them. With a simple card.
- To come to a course. Where we hear God's word. Expounded and explored. Then what's the point. We're called. To be. His.
- [58 : 11] Witnesses. How. Did the Lord. Reach the people. Of Jerusalem. And Judea. And Samaria. And the ends of the world.
- He did so. By sending his people. Again. And again. By sending them out. Further. And further. By leading them. By guiding them. By showing that in their weakness.
- He is still strong. How does God. Work in North Tulsa. How will God bring in. The people of North Tulsa. By his word. He sends us out.
- Weak as we are. Poor as we are. As witnesses. To say. Like the first Christians did. We are poor. And needy. But he is not. We are poor.
- Examples. And poor witnesses. Of a saviour. Who is beautiful. And who is glorious. Who is deserving. Of all worship. Who is glorious. In all he has done. Who has lived.
- [59 : 05] And died. And rose again. To save you. The gospel is beautiful. And brothers and sisters. As we go through the book of Acts. I hope we are encouraged to see.
- That the Lord uses people. Who have at times. Little ability. Little skills. A little understanding. Even at times. The Lord will accomplish his work.
- In his way. In his time. We are just called to be faithful. With the resources. With the time. With the life. He has given us.
- You are. My. Witnesses. Let's bow our heads now. A word of prayer. Lord we thank you for the. Once more of the gift. Of your word. And we pray especially this evening.
- For the gift. As we. Remind. Ourselves. As to the start. Of the church. The start of the. The great expansion. Of your word. And of your people.
- [60 : 03] As we see these early believers. As we see them grapple with. What lies ahead of them. As we see these. Small handful. Of your people.

And a world against them. We give you praise. That we know. And. What we did not know. So that one day soon. Where number would spread. And would increase. And increase.

The gospel would spread. Across. The area. Across. The nations around them. And one day reach. Even as far away. As north. Tulsa. A place they didn't even.

Would imagine existed. In their day. Yet here we are today. Worshipping. And praising your holy name. Help us then. To learn from the. Example of these disciples. And to be willing to say.

And to ask the question. Lord how. How will north also be reached. And to be willing. To give ourselves over. As your people.

[60 : 57] To the fact that you have called us. To serve you here. To be salt and light. To be witnesses. To be ambassadors. To give us a way. Our time and our lives over.

To seeing. Your name glorified. Your name praised. In this place. Until we see these days of blessing. Help us to be faithful. In our service. Help us to be faithful.

In our prayer. For north Tulsa. Faithful in our witnessing. Help us Lord. Both by action. By prayer. By thought. And by word. To share faithfully.

And to engage well. In all the gospel work. Encourage us Lord. Then this evening. Strengthen us by your word. Ask all these things. In and through. And for Jesus. His precious name's sake.

Amen. Amen. We can conclude by reading and singing. Some more verses from Psalm 34. Scottish Psalter.

[61 : 54] Psalm 34. And verse 8. Scottish Psalter. Psalm 34. And verse 8. We can sing. Verse 8. Down to verse 13.

Psalm 34. Verse 8. Down to verse 13. O taste and see that God is good. Who trusts and him is blessed. Fear God his saints. None that in fear shall be with want oppressed.

The lions young may hungry be. And they may lack their food. But they that truly seek the Lord. Shall not lack any good. Psalm 34. Verses 8 to 13.

To God's praise. To patience. To patience. That God is good.

Who trust and him is blessed. In God his sins.

[62 : 55] Namth that heKayn-Fill shall beeron loss of■■■■.

Christ. O Bib is blessed. Why? Tolem there. And we'll shall be on the ark. Give me the Lord. ZANG EN MUZIEK O children, I will be here, and I will be here.

I shall get it to the highest crown, I will be here, and I will be here.

One man will save a life beside, to the sacred world alone.

Thy lips, they've been from speaking, and from the words, thy tongue.

[65 : 04] Amen.