

Called, Sent, and Equipped.

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[0 : 0 0] As the boys and girls go off to Sunday school, let's join together in a word of prayer. Let's pray. God, we come before you tonight and we thank you for the privilege we have of this time together.

We give you praise that we gather here today as a gathering of your people. We gather here today as brothers and sisters and sons and daughters. We gather also here today some here as friends.

Help us to understand that we come just now before a holy and a living God. We draw before your presence. That you are here with us just now.

You are here with us not because of a building or anything man-made like that. No, you are here because your word tells us that you have made your home in and with your people.

And where your people are worshipping you together, there you are in the midst of them. That understanding we come afresh before you today. Confessing that we are so aware as we come before you, our holy and living God.

[1 : 0 9] We are so aware at times of our smallness. So very aware as to the undeserving nature of all that you've given us. You give us so much.

You give us life day by day. You give us all the good things we have in this life. And we find ourselves not praising you for any of it. We find ourselves taking for granted all the good gifts you give us.

All the good things you offer us. And we give you praise for these things. Lord, for the very life itself. For the gift of friendship. For the gift of family.

For the gift of even having this time to gather together today. Help us, we ask, if we come just now around your word. Help us to have hearts and minds ready to listen to you.

We confess that we often come to this place, even perhaps today. Our minds are so distracted. There are so many things weighing down and weighing heavy on us. We come to this place with so many other things on our minds.

[2 : 1 2] We bring these things to you just now. We bring all the burdens, all the worries, all the anxieties of this coming week. And we lay them just now before you.

We bring also to you all the pains and sadness. All the distractions. All the disappointments of this previous week. We bring these things before you too.

Lord, we cannot handle these things by ourselves. We know in our bodies and we know in our minds and our spirits. That we fall so short. But we often exist in a world where there is too much for us to handle.

We can't handle the pressure of it. At times the pain of it. The worry of it. The anxiety of it. We bring all these things to you just now. To a God who sees and who knows.

To a God who is not distant. Who is not far away. Yes, you are sovereign. Yes, you are all powerful. Yes, you have the full universe as it were in the palm of your hand.

- [3 : 11] Yes, all things belong to you. All time and all space. Yes, all creation is yours. Yes, you are sovereign over it all. But you are not far away.
- In fact, you are close even at this moment. Again, you have made your home inside and with your precious people. You are so close that whoever calls out to you just now for salvation, you hear them.
- You do not hide your face from them. You do not stay away from them forever. But you draw close to all who cry out to you. Lord, that we may experience perhaps even of some here today, we ask.
- As we spend time in your word. Both singing it and reading it. And later on, spending a short time studying it. We ask that you would bring even some here today to understand.
- Even for the first time. What it is to know. And to love. And to call you God. And to call you their father.
- [4 : 09] And to know what it is for themselves to be your son or your daughter. We know, Lord, that's only possible because of the finished work of our glorious Saviour.
- Who ascended on high at your right hand at this moment. Making constant intercession. Constantly praying on behalf of his people. Bringing our names to you.
- Who knows us. Who loves us. Who is with us. As we reminded the boys and the girls just now. You are a God who knows your people. Who cares eternally for your people.
- Who never lets us go. Lord, help us to understand that. Help us to apply that. Help us as your people to live lives that reflect that. We find the worries and burdens and anxiety of this life press up against us.
- Help us take all these things to the throne of grace. Where your word reminds us. We have mercy and grace to help in time of need. It's to that throne we come today.
- [5 : 11] It's to that throne we come and we gather around. As we as one people today. Expect from ourselves so little. As we see our own failures and shortcomings.
- But we come expectantly. To a God who gives of yourself such good gifts. We come just now as a congregation. Very mindful of the sadness of recent days.
- Lord, this time last week there was one with us. Who is now no longer with us. There is one now, Lord. Who is no longer part of this church gathering.
- We pray for Neil especially just now. We bring him before you. We bring the children before you. We bring the grandchildren. The nieces and nephews who made it home.
- The wider family who made it home. We pray just now also especially for the family and friends. Who didn't give a chance perhaps to attend in person. Lord, we ask you bless them also.
- [6 : 16] You would encourage them today. As they think back over many years of memories. Help us, Lord, as a people. To mourn with those who mourn. Help us to be a beneficial support to him and the family over the next few weeks and few months.
- Help us to come alongside as friends. Help us to show the love of our Saviour. As we show love to those who need it at this time. As the voice of death speaks so suddenly and so clearly to us.
- Lord, we ask it would speak to each one of us. Speak to each one of us. Remind us just to how uncertain our days truly are. To how uncertain our weeks are.
- To how uncertain our whole life is. And how much can change in a week. In a day and an hour. Lord, we do not know it. And we come just now to you.
- We know nothing. We know nothing of who we are. We know nothing of our future. But you know it all. All our days are written, as it were, in your book.

- [7 : 24] You number every single one of them. As we pray for ourselves just now as a congregation. We also pray for the brothers and sisters next door. And friends who are also mourning the loss of one who was known to them too.
- As two congregations are united together in remembering one who is now gone. We pray for them just now in their communion time. We thank you Lord for that time of gathering.
- We pray Lord for those who are leading the services today. That you bless your word as it goes out next door. We once again pray for something we know is beyond our power.
- Lord, we ask we would again see days of unity. Days of togetherness. Days of gospel single-mindedness for this community. We do pray Lord for those in this community who as of yet have no gospel care.
- Those who do never and indeed who will never. It seems to us pray for themselves. We pray for them just now. Those who have no care or concern for their souls. But as we perhaps many of us once were.
- [8 : 29] They are still in the same way. We ask you would speak to them today. You bring them to a saving knowledge of yourself. Lord, we ask you to make use of us. Help us as your people to serve you well in this place.
- Help us to be faithful servants. Help us to day by day. Be willing to face the scorn. Embarrassment. To face the opposition of sharing the good news.
- But to do so and to do it willingly. Help us Lord to be faithful servants. Help us to be salt and to be light in this place. We ask all these things.
- In and through and for Christ and his precious name's sake.
- Amen. Let's turn to read in God's word. We're carrying on our study in Mark. But we can read first of all in Ephesians chapter 4.
- [9 : 42] Ephesians chapter 4. Ephesians chapter 4.
- Let's hear the word of God. Amen. Amen. I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.
- With all humility and gentleness. With patience. Bearing one another in love. Eager to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.
- There is one body and one spirit. Just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call. One Lord. One faith. One baptism.
- One God and Father of all. Who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.
- [10 : 45] Therefore it says, When he ascended on high, he led a host of captives. And he gave gifts to men. In saying he ascended, what does it mean that he also descended into the lower regions of the earth?
- He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens. That he might fill all things. And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers.
- To equip the saints for the work of ministry. For building up the body of Christ. Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.
- To mature manhood. To the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. So that we may no longer be children. Tossed to and through by the waves.
- And carried about by every wind of doctrine. By human cunning. By craftiness and deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love. We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head.

- [11 : 50] Into Christ. From whom the whole body. Joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped. When each part is working properly. Makes the body grow.
- So that it builds itself up in love. Now this I say and testify in the Lord. That you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do. In the futility of their minds.
- They are darkened in their understanding. Alienated from the life of God. Because of the ignorance that is in them. Due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous.
- And have given themselves up to sensuality. Greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ.
- Assuming that you have heard about him. And were taught in him. As the truth is in Jesus. To put off your old self. Which belongs to your former manner of life.
- [12 : 47] And is corrupt. Through deceitful desires. And to be renewed. In the spirit of your minds. And to put on the new self. Created after the likeness of God.
- In true righteousness and holiness. Therefore having put away falsehood. Let each one of you speak the truth of his neighbour. For we are members one of another.
- Be angry. And do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger. And give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal. But rather let him labour.
- Doing honest work with his own hands. So that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths. But only such as is good for building up.
- As fits the occasion. That it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. By whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
- [13 : 45] Let all bitterness and wrath. And anger and clamour. And slander. Be put away from you. Along with all malice. Be kind to one another.
- Tender hearted. Forgiving one another. As God in Christ forgave you. Amen. Good praise to God for his holy and his perfect word.
- Let's again sing. Again from the Scottish Psalter. This time from Psalm 66. Scottish Psalter. Psalm 66.
- Let's sing verses 1 down to verse 7. Off the psalm. Psalm 66 verses 1 down to verse 7. All of your voices raise.
- Sing forth the honour of his name. And glorious make his praise. Psalm 66 verses 1 to 7. To God's praise. De corporation.
- [14 : 52] Paul sing. He is among the humble ostens. Out of your voices, Jesus, To pour beyond the love is near And glorious make this peace To and to the Lord have said Then all my hearts are done Through thy good hour Thy hope to live
- Shall be constant to God For all the earth shall worship be They shall thy praise from Him And my sons this hand She's here for me And to thy holy name Come on the words that Lord have come With our patience see
- And sparkly to the sons of the Lord Most heaven will see And to thy love The sea return And to thy holy name And to thy holy name And to thy holy name And to thy holy name And to thy holy name Thank you.
- Thank you.
- Down to verse 13. 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.
- [19 : 29] 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. Okay, we're carrying on our study here.

Just as a summary, of course, last week we saw the solemn reality of Jesus being rejected in his own hometown. We saw that as he returned home, the warm welcome we perhaps would have expected for Jesus.

He received quite the opposite, didn't he? He received scorn. He received anger. He received hatred. In fact, the word we saw was they were repulsed by him.

Repugnance. They wanted almost to fight him away. They wanted anything and everything apart from him. And Jesus leaves his hometown because of their hatred towards him.

Because of their unwillingness to actually listen to him. He leaves them to it. And we noted last week that's the most solemn thing you can hear, isn't it?

[20 : 34] Not that God fights back against you, as it were. Not that God somehow argues back against you. The most solemn, most terrifying thing is that God says to you, You want nothing to do with me?

Well, fine. Have your way. Do your thing. Go about your life. And I'll leave you to it. And Jesus, as it were, leaves them to it.

He heals those who are sick. He shows grace. He shows mercy. But apart from that, he leaves them to it. They don't want him. They reject him. He goes elsewhere.

That solemn reality that our chance, our opportunity of salvation isn't guaranteed. Every time you hear the gospel, we're not guaranteed in our opportunity to hear it.

Well, we join Jesus and the disciples now. They've left Nazareth. They've gone around the village. Our village is teaching. And we now join them.

[21 : 38] A brand new stage in ministry. We've been following them for about a year now. Up to a year in their time. Almost a year they've been with Jesus.

They've seen all the miracles. Countless miracles. And just to remind ourselves, as John tells us, what's recorded in scripture, it's a snapshot for us.

Jesus did, as John says, many more miracles. Many other miracles. We just get enough for us to believe who he is.

Jesus, every day, it seems, is teaching and doing miracles. He's living a life of constant evidence of who he is. So we get a snapshot. But the disciples, they're traveling with him every single day.

And every single day they're seeing miracles. They're hearing the gospel being taught. And I'm sure you can imagine yourselves. They're quite happy to be following this incredible teacher.

[22 : 36] As they slowly realize that who he is. It takes them a while. But it takes us a while too sometimes. They slowly realize who he is. He's the Messiah with all the power of God.

Sent from God. That he himself maybe, just maybe, he is God. And they're developing slowly. Their understanding grows slowly.

And they're seeing great wonders. And you can imagine they're quite happy to follow after him. Quite happy to spend time with him. But suddenly, suddenly the situation is changing for them.

This is the first time we see them now fully being involved in the mission of Jesus. For the first time, he is now sending out the disciples.

They've followed him at this point. They've been involved in some way. And we're sure, of course, they're helping out. They're there. But now for the first time, they are being sent out by themselves.

[23 : 38] At least in two. But by themselves, I mean they're being sent out without Jesus with them. Before, they've got Jesus with them. He can help them. He is there to support them. Now they are truly out there on their own.

They've seen it all. They've learned it all. And now, as aware, the rubber meets the road. And they have to actually do what it is they've been called to do. They're disciples, yes.

But also, we see here, they are missionaries. They're sent out on mission with a clear gospel purpose. Now, this, I'll be clear here.

This is the record, verses 7 down to verse 13. This is the record and the description of this specific mission. And sometimes in church history and even ourselves, we read things and we assume we have to follow them exactly as they were done.

And in history, this has happened. There are missions in history that have gone out and tried to follow these verses exactly. And they go out as missionaries with literally no money, with literally one change of clothes, with no bag, literally.

[24 : 55] And what happens? Well, often these missions end in disaster. Because that's just foolish. That's just not using the intelligence God has given us. This is a very specific mission.

The exact instructions are to the disciples at this time in this place. But that's not saying that there's no lesson for us here to learn.

It's in Scripture. It's inspired. Therefore, it's there. Not just for them, but it's there for us to learn from. We're not here looking at the specifics. We're here seeing what principles does this passage teach us today.

If we had a title for our sermon, it would be the basic principles for evangelism. The basic principles for mission. What does this teach us about who we are as missionaries, as evangelists in our homes in Tulsa?

The training becomes practical. And that same panic you can imagine the disciples had at points, we can relate, can't we? Sitting in church is one thing.

[26 : 10] Hearing sermons is one thing. Preparing sermons is one thing. But actually going out there and telling your spouses, perhaps, your parents, perhaps, your loved ones, those nearest and dearest to us, actually articulating the gospel promise, actually telling them that they have to come to Jesus.

That's where the rubber meets the road. And the theory, once it becomes practice, becomes so much more difficult, doesn't it? It's one thing learning it all.

It's quite another putting it into real practice. Now there's six or seven principles we have here. We'll cover what we can today.

I don't want to rush any of it. This is important for us to really dig down into. So as we spend our time here week by week, we're commenting just in the session room just now how quickly this year has gone.

We're into October. We're pretty much three quarters, if not more, of way through the year. Again, as I've already commented, the nights will be drawing in soon enough.

[27 : 18] This year is almost gone. As we sit as Christians and think, what this year have we done? How many times have we shared the gospel? How many times have we given the gospel out?

How many times have we engaged in gospel conversations? Perhaps we are embarrassed, if not ashamed, just how little gospel work we've done. Whilst it's good for us to sit and take stock of that, it's also essential for us.

But just because perhaps this year has been a slow year for us in terms of our gospel work, in terms of our sharing the gospel. With God's goodness, the beauty is every new morning is a new start.

Every new morning is a new start, a new chance to begin a new day with the gospel at the very forefront of who we are and what we do. The question is, we're saying we're missionaries as brothers and sisters here today.

Well, where is our mission field? And we know it. Our homes. Our homes. And very often, brothers and sisters, I am with you on this 100%.

[28 : 26] Those who are closest to us and those who we love the most in this world who aren't saved. They are the hardest to share the gospel with.

Often it's not because of them being hard. Often it's because of us. When there's a parent or a child or a sibling who you love so much and who shows no gospel interest.

How difficult it is to begin these conversations. So actually say to them, I would love you to come to know Jesus for yourself. It's so hard. So hard. But our mission field is our homes, our village, this whole area, our places of work, our places of study.

That is where we're called to serve the Lord. And who here today are the missionaries? Who here are being called and equipped and sent out to serve God's mission?

Well, brothers and sisters, it's every one of us. It's not just your minister. Not just your elders. Every one of us. If you know and if you love Jesus, the mission is yours and mine to engage in.

[29 : 35] There's a difference, of course, in how we can do it and how much time we have and how much energy we can give into it. But regardless of all these caveats, we are all called to serve the Lord in mission.

We're all called to be salt and light. Let's begin looking at some of these basic principles of mission.

First of all, we can see to be a missionary, you must be called and you must be sent. Verse 7, the first half of verse 7.

And he, Jesus, called the twelve and began to send them out two by two. It is not just a random group of people who Jesus sends out.

It's the ones he has called to serve him and to serve him specifically. But who has he called here? Who's following him?

[30 : 41] Fish are men, crofters, the most normal bunch of people you met in your life. Yes, there's some rich. Yes, there's some among them who have money and some who have wisdom.

But they're a mixed bunch. If you were to meet the disciples and line them up, you would think, what use are these twelve men going to do? Look at them. Half of them can't write, probably.

The other half think they're better than a rest. What a mess. What a useless bunch. But we're called by Jesus. Brothers and sisters, we are called by Jesus to serve him today.

We're called to serve him this new week. Now the truth is, because he calls us, we have the hope and the sure hope that he calls us to things and to serve him in ways and in places that he prepares ahead of us for us to serve him in.

We'll see it more in a second. But we're called by Jesus. We're not called by a church. We're not called by even our brothers and sisters in the church.

[31 : 52] When you apply first to ministry, yes, it's important you have an internal call, for example. Yes, it's important that the wider church sees that you're called to ministry.

That's the two elements of being a minister, at least in a free church. There's the internal call that you feel the call to ministry. There's the external affirmation of the call that the wider church sees at least a small glimmer of giftings or a small glimmer of the reality as a person could well be called to be a minister.

But the church doesn't call us. Even today as I preach this sermon, I am not calling you to mission. I am not here as a leader calling you to go and do your duty this week.

Brothers and sisters, we're together in this mission. Each one of us, we are called by Jesus to do this mission. We're called by Jesus.

And all of us are called. There were disciples, rich and poor, disciples, educated and uneducated. They were all called together.

[33 : 02] You think, I don't have the words to say. I don't have the intelligence. I don't have the theological training. I don't have the ability. I don't have the time. I don't have X, Y and Z.

Brothers and sisters, we're all called to the mission of North Tulsa. We're all called to the mission of our homes, the mission of our workplaces.

We're all called. But also note, we're also all sent. He calls us together and he sends us. But he sends the disciples two by two.

Again, a glorious image here that God knows us. It's scary on your own. It's terrifying on your own.

And God sends two by two. He sends them together. He sends them in terms of friendship.

[34 : 01] He sends them to support one another. Here we see the sending of the church. We're not saying today, go out into Tulsa on your own and do what you can.

We're saying together. Together as disciples, serving together. Together as the church, seeking to build up our faith and to see Tulsa transformed by God's word together, we go out.

We live in a world that is so individual, so me-centered, we forget the gospel, it is always for community.

All the promises of God, the tiniest percentage of them are to individuals. The vast majority of God's promises to his people are all in the plural.

They're all spoken to his people at large. Spoken to the church. Brothers and sisters, we go out of the gospel, we do it together. Yes, we serve individually in our own homes, but we do it supported by one another.

[35 : 09] We read in Ephesians 4, we go out together as one church family. Different parts of a body, different abilities, different uses, different ways of serving, but together we serve our Savior.

I can't do X, I can't do Y. Fair enough, you can't. But you can do the other things that I can't do, that they can't do.

It's all about saying, how can I serve? How can I help the gospel cause? What can I do? Brothers and sisters, it is a church-wide call.

It's not just for myself and the elders to organise it. That is our job and we will try our best to do that. But if there's anything you see, opportunities you see, potential you see, let us know.

And let's work together at seeing that transformed and see the gospel go out in that area, in that way. We're called and we are sent.

[36 : 17] We're also enabled, the second half of verse 7. And this is essential for us. And he gave them authority over the unclean spirits.

Brothers and sisters, we go by his power and by his power alone. We, to be honest, we often forget this.

It's an obvious point, but we forget it. You're sharing the gospel to your, say a sibling, a child, a parent, someone close to you.

And you think, I can't do this. I can't do this. You start talking perhaps about your need for Jesus. You think, I'm mixing my words up here.

I'm going to make a mess of this. You start telling them that in him that you have all your hope and all your peace. You think, oh man, but this past week, you know, I asked in a way that didn't show that.

[37 : 15] This past year, I've been an awful example of Jesus. I haven't got the right words. I haven't got the right attitude. My life doesn't reflect it. We're going to think what kind of saviour do they follow.

I'm on the right track. Have these thoughts entered your mind? And as you try and share the gospel, you think, wow, who am I to share the gospel? What am I doing here? Even beginning to hope to share the glorious gospel of Jesus.

I haven't got the words. I haven't got the life. I haven't got the personality. I haven't got the ability. Are we on the right track again still? Brothers and sisters, you and I together have the exact same thoughts.

Don't think for a second there's a single minister, at least a single honest minister of the gospel, who stands up here, who doesn't think, what are we doing? What are we doing? What does two bits of paper and a few words, how is that going to do anything?

What am I doing? How can I over breakfast? How can I over my work lunch? How can I in half a conversation do anything? We can't. And that's the whole point.

[38 : 20] He works through us. The power comes from him. He enables us. He gave them authority over the unclean spirits. Brothers and sisters, we go out in his power.

We're called to go. And as we go, he goes with us, leading the way, preparing the way. And how often, when you do engage in giving the gospel, you pray in the morning, Lord, give me some gospel opportunities.

When you pray that prayer genuinely, how often do you find that actually happening? So often. So often. You pray that prayer and some conversation gets started in the shop or at work or in the village somewhere, even at home.

The chance is given for you then to talk somehow, some way about your hope, about your saviour. He goes before us. He enables us.

Excuses about intelligence. Excuses about theological understanding. Excuses about personality. They are real feelings.

[39 : 23] But they're no excuse. He goes before us. He leads the way. Now at the same time, there is training involved. He trained the disciples for quite some time before he sends them out.

That's what we're seeking to do, isn't it? Every Sunday, we're growing in our understanding, we hope, of God's word. We're being trained up. And going forward, at the end of this year and next year, God willing, we'll engage in more of that kind of practical training for us, how we actually engage in our community.

But for all the training courses in the world, it all means nothing. If we are not understanding the very base of all that we do, all that we are, he gives us the words to say.

He gives us the power. If the disciples are given the power over the unclean spirits, we think, well, surely that doesn't apply for us in Tulsa. There's no demons in Tulsa. There's no unclean spirits in Tulsa.

Brothers and sisters, again, here's where the rubber meets the road. These things are not just metaphorical. They're not just for them. The heartbreaking and the solemnizing truth is, when you share the gospel to someone who is of yet not a believer in Christ, when you share the gospel to someone who as of yet doesn't love or know Jesus, what are you doing?

[40 : 46] You're sharing the gospel to someone who is still under the power of the Prince of the Year. Ephesians tells us that. We are, every time you share the gospel, every time we preach the gospel, you and I, we are engaging in real spiritual warfare.

And if you've engaged in that, you'll know it. Every time you share the gospel, you'll see at times, perhaps, people who are usually so friendly, they become so vehemently opposed to the gospel.

Folks whose personality is quite chirpy usually, when they hear about Jesus and they hear about the gospel, they become so bitter and so against it.

Folks are usually so happy to sit and listen and so happy to engage in conversation. You mention Jesus and they just shut down. We're engaged in constant spiritual warfare.

It's not just your words and my words. We're engaging with the forces beyond our understanding. He sent them out with authority over the unclean spirits.

[41 : 58] And yes, they cast spirits out, but also they go out and they preach repentance. They go out preaching the gospel. Also, our lack of understanding, perhaps our lack of willingness to understand that we engage daily in spiritual warfare, it is a major weakness for us as a culture.

Our forefathers, they understood it. Those that have gone before us, they understood it. Those not that long ago, they talked quite openly and quite happily about the reality of the spiritual world and the oppression and the attack and the opposition they faced in doing the gospel work.

We've become so materialistic, so influenced by our modern world, we get so just nervous discussing it. Brothers and sisters, and I'm sure many here know this, but the second you begin to engage in gospel work, do not be surprised that you find and you face severe spiritual oppression.

You will. And many of you here know that, and I had plenty of discussions to know that many here have experienced that. Personal oppression, family-wide oppression.

You see the gospel go out, and you see the vitriol, you see the attack, both physically and spiritually, against it. We're sent out in his power.

[43 : 22] And we need his power because we're dealing with things beyond our power. We also are sent out in his authority, in his power.

And every time you and I share the gospel, we are sharing the gospel to those who as of yet are under the power of the evil one. That's solemn saying that. And there's no joy in saying that.

But it helps our understanding. When you share the gospel, you think, why are they not responding? Why are they not giving the due love and the due respect that Jesus deserves?

They're blinded by the evil one. Their eyes are closed. Their mind is closed. Those we love, those we care for, those in our minds just now who would long to see saved.

Those we shared the gospel with countless times. Like, how are they not saved yet? They've heard the gospel. They know all about Jesus. Brothers, dear sisters, we're dealing with spiritual forces.

[44 : 23] Their eyes and their minds are darkened and blinded by the spirit of this age. That's what God's word tells us. But yet, we go out with the gospel. Yet, we keep on battling on.

He sends them out with full authority over the unclean spirits. But it's authority based on him. It's not based on their holiness or their work.

It's through him they do all they're about to do. And he sends them out supplied. Interesting to say this.

Verse 8 and the first half of verse 9. Again, in one sense, this is of course very specific to the people here.

Very specific to this one mission. That's clear. The question is, what then do we learn? You wouldn't send, if we were going to send a missionary from our congregation out to somewhere else in the world on mission.

[45 : 33] We would send them with a rucksack, I'm sure, full of clothes, full of money, full of everything we can give them. We wouldn't send them out with nothing. That's foolish. But what's the principle being taught here?

What is Jesus sending them out this way? Why is he depriving them of so much? When the rabbis would go about teaching.

And there's often quite a lot of travelling teaching rabbis. They would go about in all their finery, in all their fortune. They would go about showing off God's goodness to them by all he's given them.

They would go off around in their finest garments, waiting to be accepted into the synagogue to preach a gloriously crafted sermon. As Jesus sends his people out, they have none of that nonsense.

There's no fancy food. There's no fancy clothing. He sends them out as they are. Brothers and sisters, there is no trick.

[46 : 40] There is no trick to sharing the gospel. There is no specific wording of things. I say this, and I see the irony as I say it.

There is no specific garb. There is no specific costume to wear to share the gospel. This is cultural. This is cultural. This didn't exist before 1750, 1760.

It's all cultural. Our suits in church, it's cultural. It's what we're used to. It's fine. It doesn't damage anything. Let's carry on doing it if we have to. It's fine. But all this, our pattern of worship, how we do things, what we wear to church buildings, and all these things, if they stop us actually sharing the gospel, we should stop and take a long, hard look at ourselves.

We are here to be witnesses. Here to be salt and light. We are here to go out with the gospel, to share the gospel. We have to stop and have a mindset like the disciples.

It's not about what we have or who we are. It's not about, as it were, our baggage. It's about what we're called to do.

[47 : 54] We're not like the rabbis of the day. We're not relying on our own efforts. We're not relying on our history. We're not relying on our own intelligence. We're not relying on our own finery. We're relying on Christ and on him alone.

We rely on his strength as we go out sharing the gospel in this place. I'm seeing time as God. I'd rather not rush this. Rather even push it off.

We can finish this off, God willing, even this evening. We can push poor Samson off until next week. I think one more week out of the judges is perhaps good for us anyway. We can finish this now just to summarize for us.

We're all called. We're all enabled. We're all supplied. My friends, of course, this is all speaking to the Christians today. And every so often we have to have sermons, of course, that are just for the people of God here to encourage us and to build us up.

But that doesn't mean that there's nothing for you in this. The truth is, we're doing all this and we're learning all this for you.

[49 : 07] Why are we here? We're here, first of all, primarily to worship God, to praise God, to be built up on our hope, to be built up on our faith, to be built up on our love and our service towards God.

But second to that, it's a very close second, we are here to give the gospel. We're called to be missionaries, to be salt and light.

And the Christians here today, we are here seeking to learn these things, to grow in understanding these things, because we love you. And because we love you, because we love this area, this village, this district, because we love our people God has placed with us and beside us, we want to be able to share the gospel with you.

Our ultimate goal is to see you come and know Jesus. And the truth is, for all our evangelism, for all our teaching, for all our efforts, we can't bring you into the kingdom.

We can't bag you in. If we could, we would. We can't. All we're called to do is to point you to Jesus. Again and again, and we point you to Jesus.

[50 : 21] We try different ways to do that. Yes, different methods, different ideas. At the end of the day, they all boil down to one thing. You have to know Jesus for yourself.

All the tricks and all the ideas and all the plans all mean nothing. Our only goal, our only desire, our only hope is you'd come to know Jesus for yourself.

We can't make that happen for you. I can't make that happen for you. You must come yourself and see your need for him. That he has sent his people out for you, so that you'd come and know him as king, as saviour.

To serve him, worship him, love him, having him as king, as saviour, as big brother, as elder brother over you, to love you and care for you and be with you all the days of your life.

That is our prayer. That's our hope today. Let's bow our heads in that word of prayer. We bring that hope, Lord, to you just now. That you would enable us to grow in our evangelism, enable us to grow in our ability to share the gospel.

[51 : 28] Remove from us all the worry, all the shame. Remove from us, at times, to our shame, all the embarrassment we have of sharing the gospel. Give us, Lord, that optimism, that gospel-based optimism, as we go out with the gospel, as we share the good news, that you are doing your work, that your word is applied by you, that your word never returns to you void.

It always accomplishes the work you have planned for it to do. Help us, Lord, to go out, then, this new week in that strength, as brothers and sisters, as evangelists together, as missionaries to this dark place, this dark part of this island, where there are so many people who have no gospel understanding.

Lord, we go out in this place and proclaim the glorious gospel. Pray once more for our friends here today, those who as of yet don't understand what it is to love Jesus, who as of yet don't know him and cannot say that they love him.

We ask that they will be transformed, even this day, through the reading and preaching of your word. We come to know him and come to love him. As we hear as to the efforts we are willing to go on for them to come, even to know and see Jesus for the first time.

Help us to come to sing our item of praise, to do so of hearts and minds set on you. It's got all these things in and through and for Christ. His precious name's sake. Amen. We can close with the encouraging words of Psalm 16 and sing Psalms.

[53 : 05] Sing Psalms in Psalm 16. Psalm 16 and sing Psalms.

We can sing verses 1 down to verse 6. Protect me, O my God. You are my refuge through. I said you are my Lord. I have no good apart from you.

The godly in the land, for holiness renowned. They are the glorious ones in whom all my delight is found. Psalm 16, verses 1 to 6.

To God's praise. Protect me, O my God.

You are my refuge through. I say to God. I say to God, my Lord, I have no good apart from you.

[54 : 08] I say to God, my Lord, I have no good apart from you. The glory in the land.

God's praise. I say to God, my Lord, I have no good apart from you. For holiness, I say to God, my Lord, I have no good apart from you. God's praise. He is my God. For holiness, I say to God, my God. He is my God. For holiness, I say to God, my God.

Tell him, to have no good apart from you. Love you, Lord, must I say to God.

Oh, my delight is found. Father, I will love you.

They are the glorious ones in whom all my delight is found. To all false gods rely.

[55 : 11] I will not stop if I to end.

That worship I deny. For all you are to me.

My cup and portion should. Next flap bop was high in me.

You can saymez khu. The Lamb has ordered me, listener, thou personal sound.

I'm sure in my dividend, us to be inside the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit both of you now and forevermore.
Amen.