

The Essential of Mission

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[0 : 00] Let's turn together now as we wait on the Lord. Matthew 28 at verse 18. And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Now this is the next in our series of essentials.

We looked at various types of topics that we've called essentials. And tonight we're looking at the essential of mission. Different names for what happens in mission.

Sometimes we call it evangelism. Sometimes we use the word mission. They really amount to pretty much the same thing. Using the word mission reminds us that we are sent by God into the world, that Christians have a mandate to go into the world for Jesus, that he has sent them, and therefore they are a people with a mission.

[1 : 13] Whereas the word evangelism, while it is in fact carrying out pretty much the same mission, the same work, it's nevertheless a reminder that the message that we bring in our mission is the gospel.

Evangelism comes from the word for gospel, *evangel*, which describes the actual message itself, the good news, the salvation that is in Christ as good news to all sinners.

So mission and evangelism are very much interlinked. They really are descriptive of the same activity of the church's responsibility and privilege in the name of Christ to declare the gospel, to bring the gospel to the world, to engage in mission where the good news of the *evangel* is set forth, where the claims of Jesus Christ are actually laid before all people, whatever background, wherever they live, whatever their circumstances.

And a church that's not doing that, or indeed even a congregation that's not doing that, is really showing signs of serious illness. It may indeed be a terminal thing, because if we're not engaging in mission, in evangelism, whatever word we use, it shows that there is a spiritual blight, that there is a spiritual deathliness about us, that we are really not engaging in that which will bring people into the kingdom of God, as God himself requires of us, in this passage and other similar passages.

The church that does not evangelize is really facing serious decline, and even death, or the removal of God's gospel witness from the area in which they're placed altogether.

[3 : 15] So it's unessential, it's unessential on two fronts, it's unessential because the world in which we live needs the *evangel*, needs to be evangelized, needs to receive the mission of the church where the gospel is presented, but it's also unessential not just from the needs of the world, but from the demands of Christ himself, from the command of Christ under his authority.

This is a command to his people to go. It's an imperative. And as we'll see, it's not left up to ourselves to make up our minds whether to evangelize or not.

It is a must. It's something that Christ requires of us as he is the head of the church. So first of all, let's look at the onus for mission, the onus to do mission, responsibility.

Where does it come from? Where does the onus actually come from? What is it that moves us especially to engage in mission? Well, the passage tells us that it actually derives its energy from the fact that God, that Christ especially, has been given all authority.

The onus for mission comes from the authority of Christ himself. Secondly, we'll look at the aim of mission, because these verses set out the aim or the purpose of mission, which is essentially to make disciples for Christ.

[4 : 44] And we'll see that that involves two things there that he mentions specifically, baptizing them and also teaching them. These two things are inside the whole issue of making disciples for

Christ as the aim of mission.

And finally, very briefly at the end, we will look at something very precious. That's our assurance in doing mission. We have an assurance from Christ that as we engage in mission for him and under his authority, he is with us.

And he is with us and with his church as they evangelize right through to the end of the age and with us always. Three things then.

Firstly, the onus for mission. Now look at the way that Jesus came here and said to them, as he had brought them here to this mountain and gallery, to meet him after his resurrection.

This is what he said. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore. They are to go because of the authority that has been given to him, on the basis of the authority that has been given to him.

[6 : 00] The fact that it's mentioned as given to him, we could spend some time on that. There's a lot of things in this passage that we could really spend a lot of time on. We want to look at it as it's brought together and keep it in its entirety as a package, if you like.

The fact that it's authority that's given to him is itself an indication that this is the authority he has as the savior. It's something that's given in consequence of the work that he came to do in the world. That he accomplished. Because he finished that work. Because he finished it successfully. Because he died the death he died. And because he rose from the dead. He is there as the Jesus risen from the dead.

Who did indeed die the death of the cross. That atoning death. That death that had success for the benefit of his people. This authority has been given to him.

It was promised to the Messiah. It was promised to the coming savior before he came. That he would be exalted. That he would be given this dominion.

[7 : 04] That he would be given authority. And he says here, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. It's not something that he has taken to himself without warrant.

Without any right to it. It's something that he has merited. That he has earned. That is his rightly. So the authority he's talking about here.

Is not just the total authority that Jesus has as the king over all the universe. But the authority that he has earned. That has been given to him as the savior.

As the head of the church. As the one who presides over salvation. That's he says, mine. It's been given to me. And of course, that means you can never look at this Jesus and think that in any way he is small.

That is anything other than what the Bible tells us about him now in his exalted status. That he is this great figure. This gigantic figure.

[8 : 05] This immense figure. So immense that he has in his own hand. The very unfolding of history.

As we'll see in a minute. As he came to exercise this authority. So it's a specific authority that's given to him. But you see, it's all authority in heaven and on earth.

There's something remarkable. All authority in heaven and on earth. No, he's not saying by that. That he has an authority greater than God the Father. Or greater than God the Spirit.

What he's really saying from this. Is that he has the authority to administer salvation. That he has the authority to preside over the things. For which he is sending these disciples as missionaries. He's the one who has the authority to dispense salvation. And to unfold all the events of history. To fit in with the needs of his church.

[9 : 08] And the needs of his people. And the advancement of his kingdom. If you think of the words in the book of Revelation. Chapter 5.

And you remember chapter 4 in the book of Revelation. Revelation is really all about the greatness of the throne of heaven. And how the throne that John saw in heaven.

Was one before whom all these holy beings in heaven fell down before. And exclaimed the holiness and the holiness of God. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.

Who was and is and is to come. And they cast their crowns before the throne. And saying worthy are you our Lord and our God. Then you go into chapter 5.

Following on from that picture of the greatness of this throne of God. The majesty of it.

[10 : 08] The wonderful indescribable immensity of it. Then I saw on the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.

A scroll written. And on the back sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice. Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals.

Now it becomes apparent as you read the book of Revelation. That that scroll is really the history of the world. The things that will happen right through. To the end of time. All the way through to eternity.

The scroll contains the contents. Of all that will take place. And indeed you could say it includes everything that took place before as well.

But John has been told that the revelation he's been given. The very beginning of the book of Revelation. To show his servants the things that must soon take place.

[11:06] And that's what John has given. The things that are in the future as it unfolds to the end of the world. Well there's the scroll. And then this angel says with a loud voice.

Who's worthy to open it? No one in heaven or on earth. Or under the earth was able to open the scroll. Or to look into it. And I began to weep loudly.

Because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. And one of the elders said to me. Weep no more. Behold the lion of the tribe of Judah. The root of David has conquered.

So that he can open the scroll. And its seven seals. And I looked. And between the throne. And the four living creatures. And among the elders I saw.

A lamb standing. As though it had been slain. With seven horns. And with seven eyes. See there. Is the one who has the authority.

[12:06] The right. The power. The ability. The worthiness. To open this book. To actually take a grasp of the things of history. And determine them.

And unfold them. And be in charge of them. Who is he? He is Jesus. The Jesus who died. And rose again. The one who's here talking with the disciples.

On this mountain in Galilee. All authority. In heaven and on earth. Has been given to me. And isn't that amazing?

And isn't that wonderful? When you think of Jesus sending missionaries. And making his people missionaries. To go out with the gospel. That he actually says to them here.

All authority on earth. Has been given to me. In heaven and on earth. It's been given to me. All authority. In other words. That's the authority.

[13:06] That's going before you. As you witness for Christ. Who's going to open doors for us. Into communities that are closed to the gospel.

Minds that are closed to the gospel. Who's got the ability to actually. Go before us. To prepare that way for us. Who's got the ability to change people's lives.

Through the message that we bring in the gospel. This is the one. What a great encouragement. To go forth in mission for Jesus. That you're on a mission.

For the one who has all authority. It's not the people you're going to meet with. That have authority. When you come to them with the gospel. It's not the reluctance they have to believe.

That has authority. To actually win the day. As it were. Against what you're trying to do for Jesus. The authority lies with the one. Whose message you're carrying.

[14:02] And all authority. Is actually his. Now he says. Therefore. Go and make disciples.

That word therefore. Is so important. There's the link. Between the authority. And the action. That he wants them to take. In going. To make disciples.

Therefore. Go and make disciples. What does he mean. Therefore. Well he means. Because this is the case. Seeing it is. A fact. That I have all authority.

In earth. And on heaven. And on earth. That I have been given. All this authority. Seeing that is a fact. Now. Therefore. Go. Just imagine.

If you were asked to go. To engage in mission. For Christ. And you didn't really know. Whether or not. This was true. And you're perhaps. Somewhat vague. In your mind.

[14:59] As to who really. Has final authority. Is it the world. Is it sin. Is it sinners. Is it those who resist Jesus. Is it the movements. In the world.

That are so opposed. To the gospel. Does final authority. Lie with them. Are they ultimately. Really able. To take charge. Of the situation. No. It's his authority.

That's what's going. Before you. Therefore. Go. And make disciples. And. We should never. Doubt. The fact.

Of that authority. We should never. Doubt it. When we are liable. At times. To query it. Or even to call it. Into question. When you see. Terrible things.

Happening in the world. When atheistic forces. Tell you. Where now is your God? Where's this God. That you speak of. Where's this Jesus. That's supposedly.

[15:57] Risen from the dead. And ascended to glory. You believe. All of these things. In the Bible. And atheists. Will tell you. Well. The world tells you. These things are just. Fairy tales. Don't.

Doubt. For one moment. For one second. Don't. Let your mind. Even entertain. The possibility. That the Bible. Is not true. About this. That Jesus word. Is not true.

That this is false. All authority. In heaven. And on earth. Has been given. To me. We have been. Worshipping. Tonight. We've been. Worshipping. This Jesus. We've been. Worshipping. This God. Of whom. Jesus. Is one person. But one. Person. Whom we worship. In himself. As well. We worship. This Jesus. As we worship. God. He is worthy.

Of our worship. That's what they did. Here. When they caved him. They saw him. And they worshipped him. And we worship him. Who has all authority. In heaven and earth. Given to him.

[16:53] He's worthy. Of our worship. Because he's no less. Than who he says he is. We're not worshipping. A small figure. A pathetic invention. Of human beings.

We're not worshipping. A great human being. Who has formed. A great movement. In the world. That has many followers. Such as you find. In Islam. We're not following.

That sort of figure. We're following. Jesus Christ. The son of God. We're worshipping. This great. Glorious. Immense. Sovereign. Sovereign. Lord. All authority. In heaven and on earth. Has been given.

To me. As a Christian. Don't take your eye off that. Don't doubt that. Don't think that there's any other authority. Anywhere that can challenge that successfully.

[17:50] And go therefore. And make disciples. And the word go. Of course. Is also important. It's a word of action. It's an imperative.

It's a command. But it. Carries with it. The whole idea. Of. Activity. Of action. And as we said. At the beginning. To engage in mission.

Is not. Optional. For God's church. It's. It's not optional. It's not something. That's left to ourselves. Whether or not.

To do it. Whether to evangelize. Or not. Whether this is something. Really we should engage in. We don't have an option. Our minds. Made up for us. Because the mind.

Of Christ. Demands it. The authority. Of Christ. Requires it. As well as. The world. Actually. Needing it. Therefore.

[18:49] Go. It's a movement. It implies. Movement. And action. In other words. There are things. That you do. In order. To do. Mission.

In order. To be engaged. In mission. It's not simply. Coming to church. And worshipping. God. Twice. On a Sunday. Or once. On a Sunday. Whatever. And coming to.

Pray meetings. These are great things. These are wonderful things. They're necessary things. But mission work. Is engaging. In all. The activity. That under.

God's direction. We can actually. Take part. In. In order. To present. The gospel. And the love. Of Christ. To the world. The truth. Of God.

Whatever way. A congregation. Can present that. That's not. As long as. It's not. Contrary to scripture. As long as. You're not engaging. In things. Which are. Entirely wrong. In themselves.

[19:43] Then do it. That's why we have. Such things. As Sunday school. As WFM meetings. As point to life meetings. As parent and toddler meetings. What are all these things about?

Are they just. Adjuncts of the congregation. So that. In some way. People can engage. In them. But detach them. Really from the main business. Of the congregation. No they're not.

That's why we appeal. So often. For people to help out. With these things. Because they're not. Just loosely attached. Adjuncts to the congregation. They're part of the congregation's mission.

We're engaged in a mission. To the world. And being engaged. In a mission. To the world. The Lord. Is directing us. In ways. And means. That can be utilized.

So that's to bring. The evangel. The message. Of the gospel. To the world. You remember.

[20:42] Perhaps. We've looked at it. Quite a long time ago. But I remember. I was looking at the passage. In Proverbs. It's not. Necessarily the book. You go to. In the Bible. When you're thinking.

Of evangelism. Or. Or. Or mission. But Proverbs. Is. Such a superbly. Practical book. And a book. That's so filled. With wisdom.

As well. The two things combined. And. But. There you have. A picture. Or an image. There. In chapter. 24. Of Proverbs. And verse 11.

Where. The writer. Is saying. Rescue. Those who are being. Taken away. To death. Hold. Back. Those who are stumbling.

To the slaughter. If you say. Behold. We did not know this. Does not he. Who weighs. The heart. Perceive it. Does not he.

[21 : 35] Who keeps watch. Over your soul. Know it. Now you can use. These words. As we've tried. To do previously. As words. That really. Set out the essence.

Of what mission. Is about God. By conversion. By what we saw. This morning. Makes his people. Into rest. Rescuers. And the world. Needs rescue.

Just like we needed. Rescue. Before God. Rescued us. From our. State and sin. And in deadness. And rescuers. From that. Makes us.

Rescuers. For God. Missionaries. Are in a sense. Rescuers. That the emergency. Services. Of the world. Or for the world. Of the church. For the world. And just like you have.

Emergency services. That are called upon. In the ordinary sense. In the natural sense. To actually engage. In rescue work. So. Mission work. Is rescue work.

[22 : 30] Mission work. If you like. Is recovery. I was thinking of. Just the other day. As. What will we put. Before ourselves. For this coming year.

2015. God willing. As a focus. For our work. As a congregation. And my mind went to. The things you find. With. The automobile.

Association. Or the RAC. Or Green Flag. Or these kind of organizations. That help with. With motoring problems. Rescue. Recovery. Regular maintenance.

Are these not. The three things. That are spiritually. That are spiritually. Vital. For your own life. And mind. And do they not. Really summarize. For us. Quite well. What is meant.

By mission. And evangelism. You are set. On rescuing. People who are in peril. People who are facing. Eternity. And are lost. And you're facing.

[23 : 29] Also people. Who need recovery. Who once used. To attend the gospel. But don't anymore. Who've fallen away. Who need recovery. Just like a car.

That needs to be. Rescued. From a crumbling state. Or a car. That needs to recovery. When it's broken down. And needs to be brought back. Into operating condition.

And what then. When you've done the rescuing. And when the recovery. Has been carried out. You bring about. Regular maintenance. The gospel. And the teaching. Of the bible.

As we receive it. By such. Things as attending. Church services. Or other meetings. Or courses. Whatever. Regular maintenance. Is what our soul needs. Not now and again.

You know what happens. To your car. If you don't look after it. If you don't maintain it. Regularly. You have to enter it. Into the log book. If you really want to show. That you've cared for that car.

[24 : 25] If you're passing it on. To somebody. The first thing. You're going to do. Is look at your log book. And see. How it's been maintained. If it's been maintained. Regularly. And if it hasn't been. Then it shows. On the car anyway.

So does. So. So is it. With people's lives. And with. With Christians lives. As well. A Christian. Who's not. Being regularly.

Maintained. Well. Our life is not. As it should be. Needs cleaned up. Needs servicing.

Needs to be brought. Under maintenance. Needs to come under. The word of Christ. The word of God. The care of God. The Holy Spirit. And that's what we're engaged in.

That's what we're doing. In engaging in mission. It's rescue work. It's recovery work. It's bringing people. To regular. Maintenance. Maybe many ways.

[25 : 20] In which that needs to be done. You don't necessarily. Bring people straight away. To church services. If they've never been. Inside a church before. That's the aim.

And that's. As we'll see. The aim of mission. In making disciples. But there's the action. There's the activity. There's the go. Element of Christ's command. Go.

Therefore. Under my authority. From my authority. Here's the onus. For mission. Secondly. The aim of mission.

Let's look at it briefly. To make disciples. Go. Therefore. And make disciples. Of all nations. Baptizing them. Teaching them. Disciples. Of course. Are followers. Of Jesus. It's very important. That we note there. That. Jesus did not say. Go. Therefore. And convert. All nations. Our aim.

[26:17] Is to see people. Converted. But mission. Is not about. Converting people. Mission. Is making disciples. Bringing them.

Under the word. Through which they will come. To be converted. Bringing them. Leading them. To the Christ. Who alone. Can convert them. It's making disciples.

Bringing people. To be followers. Of Jesus. Pupils of Jesus. And. What is involved. In that. He specifies. In two things. Making disciples.

Of them. Baptizing them. First of all. In the name. Of the Father. And of the Son. And of the Holy Spirit. Now we're going. Not going to go into. The theology. Of baptism. Or the theology.

Of the Trinity. All of which is in. This verse. But. Notice what it's saying. Go and make disciples. Of all nations. Nations. And by that. Jesus meant.

[27:12] Those nations. Out with. Israel. At the time. That he was speaking. Nations that had never. Received the gospel. Pagan nations. The Gentiles. As they were referred to.

In his day. Go and make disciples. Of them. Baptizing them. In other words. Their baptism. As you see.

In the book of Acts. Baptism. Is. An initiating act. It's. Something. By which. People are. Visibly. Received. Into. The church. Of God. Visibly. As you see it. I know. There's a lot more. To baptism. Than that. But. It is. In itself.

The sacrament. That has to do. With admission. To the church. Something. That you see.

Happening. When a person. Is baptized. You look. At the book of Acts.

[28:06] Of course. It's mostly. Adults. That are mentioned. Because. The nations. Were coming. Into the church. People from. Their pagan. Backgrounds. Were coming. To be. Brought into.

The church. Of Christ. To be Christians. And therefore. Were baptized. As they came. To join. The church. To be part. Of. The church. Acts.

Chapter 16. For example. Verse 33. The. The family. Of the Philippian. Jailer. You can see. The reference. There. To the way. Which they were. Admitted. Into.

The church. By the apostle. By being. Baptized. That's just. By the way. Or rather. Just focusing. On that. Part of it. As being initiation.

Or entrance. But. What I want to focus on. Is this. Christ. Is actually. Telling us. Here. That we need. In mission. To think.

[29:02] About those. Who've never. Been baptized. Who've never. Been inside. A church. Who don't. Know. The gospel. Who have. Absolutely. No idea. Or no. Hardly. Any idea.

Of what's. In the bible. Who maybe. Don't have a bible. In their homes. Where are they? They're all around us. And as they're all around us.

Here are we. Tonight. Looking at this. Essential. Of mission. Giving. Brief attention. To. What Jesus. Is here. Saying. Go therefore. And make disciples.

Of all nations. And what he's saying. To us is. Yes. There is. An evangelism. In terms of those. Who already know. The gospel. Who perhaps. Fallen away. From coming.

To church. Those who have a family. Connection. With the congregation. By all means. Go to them. And seek to make disciples. Of them. But mission. Really extends. Itself. Much.

[29:56] Much. Beyond that. And if we're just. Going to confine. Our mission. To those. That belong. To our own. Families. Or. Have some connection.

Already. With the congregation. Or have. Some idea. Of what it is. To be a Christian. Or the gospel. Then really. We're not engaging. In mission. The way Jesus. Brings.

Such an extensive. Thing. As mission. Before us. Go to all nations. He was talking. Here. About places. Like Athens. And Ephesus. And Corinth. Steeped.

In paganism. Steeped. In immorality. Steep. In practices. That were abhorrent. To God. Go and make disciples. Of them. He said. Bring them.

The only message. That is going to change. Their lives. That is going to put them. Back on their feet. Morally. And spiritually. That's a.

[30:50] Great privilege. God has given us. The message. We're convinced. That this message. This gospel. This Jesus. Of this gospel. Is the answer. To the world's needs.

That this is exactly. What the people. Of our communities. Need. To come to know. That this Jesus. Has been prepared.

For them. By God. If you like. As a savior. And that he matches. Exactly. The need. Of these people. Who surround us. In our communities.

And many of whom. Have never. Heard the gospel. In their lives. Or if so. Very rarely. And have all too little. Understanding of it.

And don't really realize. What it is. To be lost. Who don't believe. In eternity. Who think. That when you die. That's the end of it. Who believe.

[31 : 46] All the voices. Of atheism. That in our day. Are so vociferous. And so persuasive. And that persuade people. Oh don't listen. To these people. In the church.

Especially those. Headbangers. Who believe the bible. And take it literally. Don't be afraid. Just live your life. As you think best. And when you come to die.

That'll be it. You'll have had a good time. And no regrets. That's what people believe. And the onus is on you.

And on me. As the people of the gospel. To counteract. What they believe. With what they should believe. With what God wants them.

To believe. And to confront. The reality of sin. Of eternity. Of judgment. Of Jesus.

[32 : 47] And his righteousness. Of the love of God. In Christ. Of the mercy of God. Of the forgiveness of God. The greatness of God.

And it raises a question. We want. I'm sure. All kinds of people. To be saved. We would not argue. With the fact. That we need to take.

The gospel. And look. For God's direction. As to how. To take the gospel. To these people. That are unsaved. That are around us. That are a mission field.

On our doorstep. But are we prepared. To receive them. If these empty pews.

Began to be filled up. With people covered in tattoos. And steal things. And steal things. Sticking out of their eyebrows. And very different clothes.

[33 : 47] To what you and I wear. And hairstyles. That are way out. And perhaps. Of some addictions. Or are used to smoking cannabis. Or worse things.

What would our reaction be. What would we think. What would we say. What would go in our minds. As we see them with a bible.

And no clue as to where to find. The gospel of Matthew. Would we look down on them. Would we say that's pathetic. What a sight that is.

Well that's what the early church. Had to face. To go into the likes of Corinth. And Athens.

And Ephesus. And meet the people there. As they were. And bring the gospel to them. It was a completely different world. To the world of discipleship.

[34 : 48] But these were the people. Who came into the church. Who came to be disciples. Who were received. And welcomed into the church. We believe in mission friends.

We have to be ready to receive. Those that we engage with. In mission. We have to be ready. To welcome them into the church. To be patient with them.

To understand that. They're not going to know things. The way we know them. When we've known the gospel. For all these years. To be ready to get down. Alongside them. And teach them.

And practically help them. So that they will come to be. Integrated into the church. And under the gospel. Baptizing them.

Receiving them into. Welcoming them into the church of God. And the second thing. Teaching them. Kind of mentioned that. Along the way.

[35 : 46] It's very crucial as well. And it's not just teaching them. But teaching them. To observe all that I have commanded you. In other words.

The church's business. In evangelism. Or mission. Is not just receiving people. Into the church. Making disciples of them. For them to come to be followers.

Of Christ in that sense. But also to teach them. What Christ has commanded. It's not just teaching them. What to believe. But how to behave. Teach them about lifestyles.

What is it that God. Except. Expects. And. And is looking for. And demands of us. What sort of behavior. What sort of lifestyle. What sort of relationships.

Does God. Denounce. And does God approve of. Teaching them. To observe. That is to obey. To fall into line with.

[36 : 44] All that I have commanded you. We ourselves need. And those people.

That we want to. Go to with the gospel. Also need. Obedience to Christ. They don't become. A convert.

Or a disciple. Without thinking of obedience. He's the master. We're the pupils. We're the students. We're the followers. He's the one in charge.

So let's take this seriously. We. Let's look ahead. Into this year. As God enables us. Let's be active. In the work. Of rescue. And recovery. And regular maintenance. Let us put it to ourselves. This is our duty. This is our privilege. All of us. In this congregation.

[37 : 42] Whatever. Position. We have tonight. We need to do something. We must do something. For Christ. There's something. You can do for him. Whatever it is. Seek God's guidance.

Ask him to show you. What does he want you to do? Say with Isaiah. Lord here am I. Send me. Give me something. To do for you. And let's put it to ourselves.

That we will indeed. Seek God's guidance. And that we will go further. And just know about mission. And know what mission is. But that we will engage in mission. We will do mission.

We will go to the world. We will take the gospel. And seek God's blessing. On following his command. Because the third and final thing he says is.

Lo. Behold. I am with you. Always to the end of the age. When you come across the word. Lo. Or behold. There's in the Bible. What we often call the spotlight.

[38 : 43] It's a word that alerts your attention. Because whenever you come to it. You know that it's about to tell you something very important. And what is it?

Well it's this. I am with you always. To the end of the age. It's a wonderful way that Matthew begins his gospel.

And ends it. He begins it and ends it with. Emmanuel. Christ with us. God with us. He quotes from the Old Testament.

As he explains. Or sets out the incarnation. The birth of Christ. He closes the gospel. When Christ has risen from the dead. And that's the same emphasis.

Lo. I am with you. I am Emmanuel. God with you. And how precious it is. When you think about what Christ.

[39 : 37] Is calling on them to do for him. Because it's the same person who said. All authority in heaven and earth. Has been given to me. That's now saying. I am with you.

And I am with you always. Even when it seems. Your evangelism is being absolutely fruitless. When it seems to yourself.

That you're facing. Nothing but disappointment. When you go home. And you say. After. Either preaching the gospel. Or witnessing to Christ.

Or speaking to someone. And there doesn't seem to be really. Any meaningful positive response. Well this doesn't change.

Remember. He is with you. And remember. Who is saying. I am with you. I am with you. Always.

[40 : 38] To the end of the age. The onus for mission. And the aim of mission. And the assurance to us.

In doing mission. It's all about Christ. It's all about being his people. It's all about wanting others too. To become his.

Also. Let's then be. Missionaries. For Jesus. Let's pray. Lord of God.

We pray that. Your word will indeed. Move us inwardly. At all times. And no less so Lord. When we think of. What you say to us.

In regard to. The mission that you call us. To engage in. For your namesake. We give thanks for your authority. For the promise of your presence.

[41 : 36] For the assurance that you will be with your people. At all times. We give thanks Lord. For the call. That you give to us. To engage in mission.

For the way in which we are to receive others. Into your church. For the way that we are commanded. To teach them. The ways of the Lord. Grant us obedience. We pray.

To this as to all your commands. Go before us now we pray. Pardon our sin. For Jesus sake. Amen.