

Evangelism And Our Mission

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Preacher: Harry Robinson

- [0 : 00] That we ask your presence with us, that as we turn to your word, you might open it to us and open us to it. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.
- Amen.
- Amen. I have an imaginary uncle, Everett, and he can fix anything.
- And if you sit down and talk to him, he's very wise, but he's a little bit loud, and he cries quite easily. And when he laughs, he just roars.
- He gets along very well with children, and he's the best house guest you could ever have, as long as you don't have to introduce him to your friends. Then he gets embarrassing.
- [1 : 17] He tells the wildest kind of stories. He asks the most embarrassing kind of questions. And he seems to know exactly what people don't want to talk about, and he talks about it.
- Well, my Uncle Everett is really just a personification of the work of evangelism in the Anglican Church.
- The diocese went around and asked everybody, what should we be doing?
- And the absolute priority for everybody in every parish was we should be doing evangelism. And the diocese is embarrassed by it because you can't manufacture it.
- You can't import it. It's dangerous even to define what it is. All the bishops of the Anglican Church got together in Lambeth about a year ago and decided that the 1990s should be in the Anglican Church a year of evangelism, a decade of evangelism.
- [2 : 42] That that's the thing that we should primarily be doing. But it's difficult. Here we are. The 1990s have begun. And we as a parish have invited John Chapman, who is skilled, determined, articulate, very knowledgeable.
- One year ago, he led the Cambridge University mission with 700 to 1,000 students turning up every night of the week to hear him.
- He is honest. He is direct. He is articulate and knows his business. The difficulty, you see, is in us.
- You know, you are such nice people. And the danger of offending your sensibilities or doing anything that would upset you is something I stay awake at night and worry about.
- But then I get over it. And it's very difficult for us.
- [4 : 04] You know that parable about buying some land or buying a cow or marrying a wife? As the mission gets closer, there's a whole lot of commerce going on in cows, wives, and land now.
- And people are finding themselves very busy. And I think it's simply because we find it very difficult to share our faith with our friends.
- For fear of embarrassing them or for fear of being embarrassed ourselves. And nobody wants, really, in our kind of society to stand up and put yourself on the firing line and be asked to explain what the Crusades are all about.

And what about the Spanish Inquisition? And what about Jimmy Baker? And what about the rest of the TV evangelists? And what about Lebanon? And what about Ireland? And what about people, good people that don't believe in God?

And what about the people who have rejected Christ? And how do we know that God exists? And surely religion is just a crutch. And does it matter what you believe? And how does prayer work?

[5 : 17] And are you not just hiding from the reality of life in your religion? Nobody wants to answer those. And inevitably, you do have to answer them. You have to answer them over and over and over again.

The only advantage, really, is that there's only about a dozen of them. And once you've got through them, the conversation can go on to something worthwhile. But inevitably, you have to work through them all.

Now, the purpose of this week, which is called the time of your life, is described for us perfectly in a parallel passage to the one we read this morning, Luke chapter 8.

So if you turn to page 64, I'll show you what it says. Particularly, I'd like you to look at verse 15 of Luke chapter 8, the top left-hand corner of page 64.

The purpose of the week, then, is that seed, which is the word of God, will be planted in good soil, and that those hearing this word of God, will hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience.

[6 : 52] You can break that down. What we need to do, and it applies to each one of us, because this week is not for somebody other than you.

It's primarily for you, and through you, for your friends. And it's for you in terms of your own life, because in your own Christian life, there is always a certain amount of slippage takes place, a certain amount of drift sets in, a certain amount of wandering away, and all of us need to be brought back.

And the time of your life is a time to be brought back to the things most surely believed among us. So that it is that the seed of the word of God will be nourished as it grows in our lives, to strengthen us in our own understanding of the faith.

Secondly, to give us permission to ask the questions we want to ask, because we all need to ask questions, and we all have very profound questions, and we need somebody patient enough to sit down and work through these questions with us.

And we can do it in large part with one another. Third thing is to test our personal faith by deliberately seeking to share it with somebody else.

[8 : 26] most of you are the kind of people who could create in another person a kind of dependence upon you by being good to them consistently so that they gradually learn to depend on you.

But the sharing of your faith is to teach somebody to depend on Jesus Christ, independent of you. And that's what the woman of Samaria did that Jean Begg told us about this morning.

They came and said to her, we believe now, not because you told us, but because we've heard for ourselves. And so that's the thing that we're trying, that's the third thing that we're trying to do, strengthen our own faith, to create a climate in which we can ask the questions that need to be asked, and to test our personal faith by deliberately seeking to share it with someone else.

The method outlined in the bulletin in the program of the week, the time of your life week is there. The program is to use our homes for dessert and coffee parties, to invite our business friends to lunch at the Four Seasons.

Church is not really a very good place. It's a pretty foreboding place for a lot of people to go and listen, and they find it hard to hear. And we hope they might hear if they came to a place that they're more familiar with.

[9 : 52] And so there's a luncheon at the Four Seasons Hotel, and there's another lunch, a ladies' lunch, at the Shaughnessy Golf Club. And that's simply because we want people simply to hear what the essential content of the Christian faith is.

Most people in our society who are not Christians also lack any understanding of what this faith they don't believe in is all about.

You remember I told you about the Australian gentleman who moved into a new house, and the man, hearing that he was a minister, went to him and said, I want you to know right now from the beginning that I don't believe in God.

And the minister came back to him and said, well, tell me about the God you don't believe in. You know, and that's one of the things that needs to be done. People need to be asked to do that. We need to invite our friends to hear John at the services, which the meetings, which will be held at the church, and to help people try and hear the gospel without all the prejudices.

You see, lots of people come to church, and the last time they were here was when they buried a loved one. And so the foreboding and the gloom and the sorrow that attaches to this place is quite overwhelming for them.

[11 : 24] Or they may have come here for a marriage that didn't work, and that doesn't make it a very happy place to be either. So there's lots of people who have all sorts of strange feelings about coming to a church.

And that's why they have to be helped to do it, and encouraged and loved into doing it. If you want to know what really summarizes what we're trying to do, turn to page 44 in your prayer book, in the little maroon prayer book.

There's the statement of it. We could perhaps read it together. It's the prayer. Let's just read it together. O God, our Heavenly Father, we humbly pray Thee to bless abundantly the efforts that are now being made to turn Thy people in this parish to sincere repentance and a more lively faith.

Prepare all hearts to receive the seed of Thy Word. Grant that it may take deep root and bring forth fruit. Okay, well, that's what it's all about.

If anybody wants to know what it's all about, there it is in a sentence. Efforts are being made to prepare people in this parish to bring them to sincere repentance and a more lively faith.

[12 : 58] Well, Jesus answers that question in this passage in Luke 8, 11 to the end when he says, when he describes how this process works forth, this parable, how this process works out.

This parable, which appears in all four of the Gospels, says simply that the function is to hear the Word of God and the Word is the ultimate source of our life.

Man doesn't live by bread alone, but he lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. The most important form of sustenance on which each of us depends at the most basic level of our life is hearing and receiving the Word of God.

That's what our life is based on. And so that's the central thing. And the Word of God comes to us through the prophets, it comes to us in the Scriptures, it comes to us in the person of Jesus, it comes to us by the Holy Spirit working among us in our groups and study groups.

So it's to hear it and then to hold it fast. Most of our lives are so, most of our hearts are so hardened by the excess of information which is hammered at us every day, that instead of being open and receptive like this so that if we hear something that's of value we can grab it, we are already like this.

[14 : 30] And there is no way that the seed is going to come into our lives or that we can take hold of it because our hearts are already closed. And it's only as you begin, somebody begins to help you to open up your heart a little to receive this word that there's any possibility that this could take place.

And it was beautiful to hear Bruce describe how a friend came alongside of him when he was like that and over a period of time so encouraged and nurtured him that a point came where he was like that so that when hearing the word of God he could say, yes, that's what I want to take and hold fast to.

Well, that's, we're to hear it, we're to hold it fast, not lose our grip, not suffer from heart failure.

There is essentially an offense to the gospel, a deep offense to the gospel because it attacks the citadel of your self-centeredness.

And the resistance to the gospel is not in the questions which I've listed. The ultimate resistance to the gospel is in the hardness of our own hearts, the unwillingness to give way in the citadel of our lives to someone else as Lord.

[15 : 57] That's why we find it difficult. But in an honest and good heart, we are to hold fast and then we are to bring forth fruit with patience.

God has an eternal plan for your life. That is, it's not a matter of God is going to zap you and you're going to stop drinking or stop misbehaving or stop doing whatever you shouldn't be doing that you think you ought to be doing and that you feel guilty about doing.

That may happen, but the process is a process whereby the word of God takes deep root in your life and brings forth fruit with patience.

God's work is going to take all your time, seven days a week and every day of every year and every year of your life and God is going to do that work in bringing forth fruit from your life in accordance with the word of God which has been planted in your life.

well, that's what this week is all about. You all know and I don't need to repeat what comes before in verse 11.

[17 : 10] I'm going to repeat it but just briefly that the three things that can happen otherwise are first that the devil is so strong that when the seed is in your heart that he snatches it away right away.

It just doesn't, it's just like water off a duck's back or seed on a concrete sidewalk. It just doesn't, it just doesn't hold. It doesn't, there's no way it can take root in your life and more work needs to be done and you need to be loved a lot till there's some good soil there that that seed can take hold in.

The second thing that happens is that you, you turn out to be one of these religious types who responds with great excitement and great joy and everything changes and all the world is turned upside down for you and then you have to take your faith to work with you and you can't do it.

And under the test what you thought was the new beginning breaks down and crumbles. And Jesus says that happens. The third thing he says is that there's the seed, the seed is good, it gets into your life, you get hold of it.

But then, and he gives that lovely catalog of things that go wrong which sounds terribly, terribly contemporary when he says, the cares and riches and pleasures of life are such that that seed, though it's there and though it takes root, it only brings forth hard little green apples because nothing comes to maturity spiritually in your life.

[18 : 40] You suffer from permanent immaturity spiritually. And he says those are the three things that can go wrong. So what the mission is, is what the week, the time of your life is all about, is simply that you will receive that word of God and that you will hold it fast in a good and honest heart and that your life, the whole of your life, will be bringing forth fruit with patience on the basis of what God has done in nourishing you and bringing you to life through his word.

Bruce described how for him it was at the Billy Graham crusade and I have found in my experience and Bruce's word was a help to me again that most people need a point in their life where the decision is made where they actually do it.

And one of the functions of a mission week is to provide a point in our lives, a point that we can say yes, that was the time when by God's grace I was able to open my heart to receive the word of God, the healing and the forgiveness which comes through Christ.

That was the point. and when you're praying the prayer on page 44 just pray for one another that for people who have never come to that point in their lives that this week may provide the opportunity for them to come to that point.

So, we need to pray. We need to pray just this simple prayer that's in the prayer book and that prayer should be that our hearts will be prepared and the hearts of those to whom with whom we seek to share this faith that their hearts may be prepared as well.

[20 : 54] Following the service today there's an epilogue in the chapel in which Steve is going to share with you the simple steps by which God works in our lives to bring us to faith and trust in him.

It may be a help to you to stay for that it may not but if it is that will begin ten minutes after the service is over. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We are going to finish our intercessions this morning by praying together the prayer on the last page of the prayer book so perhaps you could get it ready now please.

Let us pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Let us first pray for all the nations of the world.

[22 : 12] O Lord, who embraces the whole earth with favor and mercy, and who desires that none of your children should perish, we ask your blessing this morning upon all who are working towards the making of a better world.

We pray, O God, especially for all who are working for purer and juster laws, for all who are working for peace between nations, for all who are engaged in healing disease, for all who are engaged in the relief of poverty, and for all who bear witness to Christ in foreign lands.

Cast down, O Lord, all the forces of cruelty and wrong, and prosper all that is conceived in the Spirit of Christ and carried out to the honor of his blessed name.

O Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. O Lord, today we pray for the parish of St. John's.

We thank you for it, and for the freedom we have to come here without fear of persecution. Help us to never take it for granted.

[23 : 43] We thank you for the many and varied gifts of our clergy, and we pray for your blessing on them as they use their gifts to lead and to teach and to worship.

We pray for the upcoming mission. Be with John Chapman, O Lord, as he is preparing for his time here.

Guide and direct him, so that his time here will be used to your honor and glory.

We know, O Lord, that your deep desire is that all the peoples of the earth should acknowledge you as Lord. Hasten the day when your presence and the strong hand of your purpose shall be found throughout the world, in our nation and in our city, in our homes and in the marketplace.

And we ask that, as individuals, our hearts be open and fertile for the seed of your word. and whatever each one of us can do to help bring this about for ourselves and for others, O Lord, please give us the courage and grace to begin today.

[25 : 23] O Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. let us pray for all who are sick and suffering. O Lord, comfort the sick, the hungry, the lonely, and the depressed.

Help them to be aware of your Holy Spirit and your presence with them. use us, we pray, to help them in a practical way.

Give us strength, tact, and compassion. Teach us how to share in their distress and give us courage to suffer with them.

We pray especially for Harold, for the midwinter family and their bereavement, and we give thanks for the health, the renewed health of Stan.

Let us take a moment of silence so that we, as individuals, can bring to the Lord those people for whom we have a special concern. O Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

[26 : 49] Now let us conclude by praying together the thanksgiving found on the last page of the prayer book. O merciful Father, we humbly thank Thee for all Thy gifts so freely bestowed upon us, for life and health and safety, for power to work and leisure to rest, for all that is beautiful in creation and in the lives of men.

We praise and magnify Thy holy name. But above all, we thank Thee for the Holy Spirit. and Christ Jesus, you are Lord, for the means of grace and for the hope of glory.

Fill our hearts with all joy and peace in believing through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. Turn to our blue hymn books and sing hymn 362, 362.

■mos■iyest anti- veulent Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[29 : 51] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Our service continues on page 76 of your prayer letter.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Vvarious Ruby.

Amen. Amen.

[33 : 19] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. All-mighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all men, we acknowledge that such a man of existence and wickedness between the time and time of what Jesus may have committed by thought for her indeed, against thy divine majesty.

We do earnestly repent, and our heart be sorry for these non-unciliers. Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for the life of Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ's sake.

Forgive us all that has passed, and grant that we may ever prepare after to serve and be easy in goodness of life. Give you honor and glory behind in me, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who of His great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins, to all men I would part in repentance, and true faith turn unto Him.

Have mercy upon you, part and deliver you for all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life, and bring you to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[34 : 44] Amen. Hear my comfortable words, our Savior Christ's hand, and all that truly turn to Him. Come unto me all that labor and art heavy weight, and I will refresh you.

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, to the end that all that believed in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

The Lord be with you. And with us, sir. Lift up your hearts. Hear the crown of the Lord. Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

It is mean and right so to you. It is very mean, right in our bound and beauty, that we should of all kinds and in all places give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, almighty, everlasting God, creator and preserver of all things.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who in substance of our mortal flesh manifested forth His glory, that He might bring us through the darkness into His own marvelous life.

[35 : 51] therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we love and magnify Thy glorious day, evermore praising day of singing.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.

Amen. Amen. Blessing and glory and thanksgiving be unto the Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, for thy tender mercy is given by only Son, Jesus Christ, to take our nature upon him and to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption.

[37 : 04] He may verify his well oblation of himself once offered a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation of satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and did institute, and in his holy gospel, command us to continue a perpetual memorial of that his precious death until his coming again.

Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly be seized thee, and grant that we be received these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion.

They be partakers of his most blessed body and blood, who in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he breaketh, gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is thy body, which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. And together, wherefore, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, we die among the servants, with all the life of the church, remembering the precious death of thy beloved Son, his mighty resurrection, and glorious ascension, and the kingdom of our God is coming again, O Lord, who may be part of this sacrament of the holy bread, the eternal life, and the power of your lasting salvation, the memorial which he hath commanded.

And he entirely desired by all of the goodness, for mercy to accept this, our sacrifice, pray with his thanksgiving. Most humbly beseeching me to pray, that by the merits of the death of thy Son, Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we all, thy full church, and we have taken admission of our sins, and all the benefits of his passion.

[39 : 26] And we pray, that by our Father, Holy Spirit, all we who are partakers of this holy communion, may be fulfilled with thy grace, heavenly and image, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, by and of the good, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory be unto thee, O Father, all my King, world without man, Amen.

Amen. Amen. The peace of the Lord be always with you, and with our spirit. We do not presume to come to this high table over to the Lord, because in our own conscience, but in your hand hold it against it.

We are not worthy so much as to gather us from some of thy table, and that our hearts and name, Lord, whose property is always on that mercy, grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so that we, the flesh, and life, the Son of Jesus Christ, and the tree of his blood, that our sinful bodies may make the lean by his body, and our souls watch through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, in he and us. Amen.

Amen. levees, levees,low, intrane, gelees, alleine, SARAH, coy,shaped,■ senhor, Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[43 : 11] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.