

Go And Tell The World About Jesus

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Preacher: Harry Robinson

[0 : 00] Our God and Father, we thank you that you sent the Lord Jesus Christ to stand among us in his risen power and to confirm and establish your word and your love.

And we ask that as we gather this morning, as we have gathered, that we may be very much concerned to exalt the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and that he being lifted up amongst us, we will be drawn to him.

In whose name we pray. Amen. The reading which was taken from Philippians chapter 3, Paul says, I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

And another translation is that I may lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. And that is just a kind of picture of one's life.

The whole of one's relationship to Jesus Christ is a consciousness of having been laid hold of by him in a strong and sure grip and trying to grasp sometimes with the, not very strong hands, trying to grasp him who in his strong hands has laid hold of us.

[2 : 03] And I have spent the week with the story of the Gadarene demoniac simply to become as aware as I could of how Jesus lays claim to people.

And you are the people that I want him to establish his claim on and forth. And I would long that you would go from this place, no matter how you may arrive, no matter how you may feel tortured by it, that you may be aware that the strong Son of God, even Jesus Christ, has laid unmistakably hold of you.

And that all your life means from that moment on is how you may lay hold of that for which he has laid hold of you.

Now, Jesus was teaching his disciples. They didn't know who he was.

And Jesus has the wonderful way of getting people to follow him even before they're committed to him. And that was the case of the disciples at this point in the Gospel of Mark. They were following him, but they didn't know who he was.

[3 : 27] And so when he was moving through a crowd and some woman reached out and touched the hem of his garment and was healed, he said, who touched me?

They didn't understand. He said, how can you ask such a question? Look at the crowd. Jesus is able to single the individual out of the crowd.

And he knew someone had touched him. And that person who had touched him knew because she had been healed. And when he took the disciples through the miracle of the loaves and fishes, and he fed 5,000 and 7,000, all those people, and Jesus said to them, do you not yet understand?

And it was obvious they didn't. Long days and weeks and months of commitment and following him, but they didn't yet understand who he was. There was a miracle which he performed on a blind man to illustrate to the disciples what their problem was.

He took the blind man and he healed him and touched his eyes and then said to him, can you see? And the blind man said, I see, but I see as trees walking.

[4 : 54] Jesus touched him and said to him, he can see. The lost disciples are in that position. They don't really see clearly who Jesus is and what his authority is.

And even when he brought them to the wonderful pinnacle in the gospel of Mark and said to them, do you know who I am? And they said, thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.

And immediately they said that. There was a confession in that, but there was confusion that followed. And Jesus said, the son of man must suffer and die.

They couldn't understand. So you see, it took those disciples whom Jesus was taking through a series of miracles in the gospel of Mark, where he stilled a storm at sea, where he raised the life of the young girl, where he took the terrible storm and affliction that raged in the life of this one man.

He healed him. All that the disciples might know to follow him. It's a wonderful story.

[6 : 17] It's full of the ranting and raging of a madman crying out in the night, travelers being terrified, wounding himself so that he was bleeding, smashing the manacles by which his wrists were held, smashing the irons that were on his legs, living among the tombs.

All those things were a powerful, powerful picture. And every incident would be worthy of a headline in the province. to attract your attention.

The only difference is that having attracted the attention of people, Mark's gospel goes on to tell him something wonderful that sometimes the province doesn't. Jesus healed this man.

The man came running to meet him and fell at his feet. You see, that's the kind of ambivalence that afflicts us so much of the time.

We want to worship him in one way. In another way, we can't. Because we're afraid that he's coming to torture and harm us. He condemns as he rightfully can.

[7 : 35] We're afraid of that. So, when the man came and fell at his feet and Jesus said, what is your name? The man had lost touch with who he was completely.

And it was only when Jesus identified him and revealed to him who he was as the object of Jesus' love that he began to see who he was as a person.

And our society and our lives are full of so many roles and so many postures and so many positions and ideas and people to please that we lose sight of who we are.

And only Jesus can reach through all that and touch you and tell you who you are. And you'll be delighted to find that out. That's the predicament I'm in today.

It's that I feel that I have successfully deceived you. But, that doesn't matter. that's your problem. My only concern and the thing that delights me in this story is there is one whom I haven't deceived and whose love I know and whose forgiveness I know.

[8 : 54] And that's the basis of what our life is all about. Jesus asks us to identify ourselves and when he spoke to this man and he became aware of the terrible affliction of the spirit of uncleanness that possessed him and he commanded that unclean spirit to come out with great authority and the unclean spirit begged that they might not be sent out of the country and they went into a herd of pigs and the herd of pigs rushed down the sea to the sea and were drowned.

Well, it's hard to deal with that part of the story, isn't it? But it's there. And I think it's there for lots of reasons.

But one of them is that you might see the supreme authority of Jesus Christ over the power of evil and that it's very great authority indeed and that this unclean spirit that afflicted this man and was driving him to self-destruction and putting himself in his bleeding and living among the tombs.

When you look at all of that, you see the terrible destructive force contained in one man and you see the terrible power of evil and you see the authority of Jesus over it and the power of evil demonstrated by what happened to the pigs.

well, once he'd done that, he had a whole stack of voluntary missionaries called the swineherds and they ran into all the country and told about this person who had come.

[10 : 45] So qualifications for being a missionary aren't too high. And all the people round about came to see what had happened and they saw Jesus and they saw his power and they saw his authority and they saw what he had done.

They saw he had there this man who had been totally alienated from them and they from him. This man whom they'd tried to chain this man who had been part of their community, this man who had been bent on self-destruction for so long.

They saw him and now they saw him chained in a way that he could never break out of with that love that would never let him go. That's the kind of chains he needed to restrain him just as it's the kind of chains we need to restrain us.

The love of the Lord Jesus Christ those are the only chains strong enough. Anything else you will smash and smash and smash in your determination, in our determination to destroy ourselves.

They saw him constrained by the love of Christ in his right mind clothed. He had left the community of death among the tombs where he had been living and now was ready to go back and join another community and when he did that when they saw that and they saw the power and authority of Jesus Christ you know what they said?

[12 : 37] Jesus got into the boat to go away but the demoniac the madman the crazy begged Jesus that he might go with him and Jesus said no you go back to these people who have rejected me in the same way that they rejected you you go back to them and you bear witness to them about the mercy that the Lord Jesus has shown to you you tell them about me and so he went back oh he went back to his own people and he told them the story and you know what you know this service that we've been going through this morning

I don't know how much you have participated in it I don't know how much your heart would thrill to singing holy holy holy Lord God almighty I don't know how your heart would respond to saying we've offended against your holy laws we've left undone those things which we ought to have done we've done those things which we have not not to have done and there is no health in us I don't know how you would respond to recalling that they tried him and tested his love and rejected the word he had spoken their hearts they had turned from his ways and his excellent law they had broken do you realize that the gadarene demoniac sat among you he would understand every one of those words he would understand the heart's worship that was involved in singing such hymns he would understand every word of this that speaks of the glory of God and the love of Jesus

Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit he would know what it is to be restored to be clothed to be in your right mind and to be commissioned by Jesus to bear witness to him those are the kind of people that bring a service to life because they understand who Jesus is they understand what these words are all about and it's they that would understand what it means what Paul meant when he said that I may lay hold of that for which Christ in his grace and in his mercy and in his love and his forgiveness has laid hold of me well there there's the story and I just find it so wonderfully encouraging to me and so wonderfully helpful when

I meet people who have discovered that Jesus knows who they are and to find people who like this gathering demoniac clothed in his right mind said to the Lord Jesus let me go with you people and Jesus said now go back to your own people and tell them the mercy that the Lord Jesus has shown to you what a wonderful place to be in one day you will go with him and one day you will be with him that's the hope that belongs to him in the meantime he by his Holy Spirit is present with us as we bear witness to the mercy that he has shown us in our lives we had the most wonderful hymn fest here last night

I wish you'd all been here for it but it was so wonderful in giving praise to and exalting the name of Jesus Christ sitting in his church in the evening and singing when I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Gloria where the whole realm of nature mine that were an offering far too small to be with Jesus to know that he has laid hold of you and to know that your life's business is to lay hold of him who has laid hold of you that's the highest possible call you can ever have and argue with you about the existence of God that can be done but it wasn't necessary for the demoniac to argue with that he knew it he said what have you to do with me

[18 : 48] Jesus son of the most high God he knew who Jesus was he fell down at his feet but he was desperately afraid that Jesus had come to torture him because he had spent most of his life torturing himself he discovered in the God who reviewed himself in Jesus Christ not one who had come to torture him with the agony of our existential being one who had come to reveal the love of God and I just want to finish by saying that I trust you know the love of God for you you know that he's laid hold of you if you don't

I'd like to stay another ten years to tell you about it but I that's not an option but I I'd like you to know that that's happening and I'd like you to know that the chief business of your life is to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of you a oh man heisst oh man Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[24 : 10] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Let us pray. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Can you take your wine-colored prayer book and turn to page 85?

I'd like to use this as a closing prayer together. So could you maybe find it now and have it ready to use? I would like to open our prayer time by reading a few verses from Jeremiah that the Lord gave me at a very dark time in my life, and it's meant a lot to me.

[26 : 30] Those of you who know me will already know what I'm going to read. So let's pray together. I know what plans I have in mind for you, saith the Lord.

Plans for peace, not for disaster. To give you a future and a hope. When you call to me and come and pray to me, I shall listen to you.

When you search for me, you will find me. When you search wholeheartedly for me, I shall let you find me. Heavenly Father, on this occasion, I want to tell you how grateful I am to you for who you have been to me in this place.

For who you have been to us gathered before your throne of grace this morning. Not for what you have done, but for who you are. We receive this day, and all it implies is the outworking of your plan for all of our lives and for this place.

Thank you for our future, which is ordered by you. Thank you for the gift of hope. Thank you for letting us find you. Give us the gift of courage to let go of where we have been in order to be free to take hold of what lies ahead.

[28 : 06] In a world which feels so dark and confused, thank you that you are unchanging. You are our stability and our security.

But as we sang last evening, thank you even more that we are being changed into his image from one degree of glory to another.

And that someday we will be like you because we're going to see you as you really are. In turning my thoughts to our world, a world in which you are a stranger, I find I don't really know how to pray.

I feel more often polluted by the media rather than challenged to pray. Until I remember that your spirit makes petitions for us.

And you who can see into all our hearts know what the spirit means. I'd like us to take a few minutes and to share this part of the intercession with you by having you pray silently with me that our prayers might be like incense.

[29 : 22] Maybe you'd like to pray for the person beside you or the person you greeted this morning. Or maybe you could find a dark place in the earth that God has laid on your heart to pray for.

But I'd like us to just spend a few minutes quietly praying together with whatever the Lord is saying to your heart. Look upon our needs and the needs of our world which we don't always know ourselves.

Teach us to pray. Pray thyself in me. Thank you, Heavenly Father, for the task which has been undertaken to restore our church buildings.

And I ask especially this morning for a new vision, a new commitment to prepare our children and young people to take on the ministry which we have begun.

Especially when I think of the world we are passing on today. Give to us a divine discontent until this is accomplished. Our God, in every age you have called out men and women and children to be your faithful servants.

[31 : 01] We believe you have now called us to join that great company who seek to follow you. Grant unto us today and always a clear vision of your call and strength to fulfill the ministry assigned to us.

We pray in the name of Christ. Amen. And as a prayer of recommitment, could we turn to page 85? The last paragraph, it'll be familiar to you, but we Anglicans sometimes get used to mouthing familiar prayers.

This morning I'd like us to speak from our hearts, if you mean this. It begins in here we offer. So let's do this as a corporate commitment to this new place.

And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls, and bodies to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee.

And although we are unworthy, yet we beseech thee to accept this our abounding duty and service, not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offenses, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honor and glory, world without end.

[32 : 31] Amen. The Lord has provided us a glorious sunny day for this occasion, and I'd like to extend to you a warm and special, warm and special welcome, excuse me, on this very special day.

Just judging by the numbers that are here, it's a testimony to the ministry that's gone on in this church in the last 15 years, and we're delighted to see you all.

It's, I'd like to just make a few announcements now. It's with great sadness that I advise you that Shirley Hodgins passed away this past week. She was a dear friend of many of us in this congregation, and her funeral service will be Monday, 2 p.m.

here at St. John's. We'd also, should know that Jeff Archer's sister died yesterday in the East, so we extend our condolences to Jeff.

A birth has taken place on September 25th, and this may, certainly is noteworthy. Julie Lane Gay produced a baby girl, and I think that if we went through our records, this is probably the first time that the chairman of the church committee has produced a baby while in office.

[34 : 06] So, we congratulate Julie and Jeff, and she is here, by the way. I just spotted her. Craig and Julie, we congratulate you.

We understand that Andrew's taking the news well. In the bulletin, there's a number of notices, and I encourage you to take them with you just to review them because there's still lots of activities.

I'll draw your attention to a few things. On Tuesday, the seniors communion and lunch, and the marriage preparation course at 7. On Wednesday, the first of the big benefits of small groups here in the Trendle Lounge, so please take note of that.

This coming Saturday, a special Thanksgiving decoration party, an annual affair where we get this church ready for our Thanksgiving festival led by Jamie and Claire Wright.

I hope that you will all come and participate, bring your greenery, bring flowers, whatever you can bring to help make this church a festive for the harvest festival.

[35 : 14] As always, coffee and muffins will be available for the decorators. That evening, by the way, there will be a coffee hour at Regent College, and that's also noted in the bulletin. Later on in October, and I'll just conclude with these announcements, later on in October, October 23rd and 24th, there's a Love is a Decision seminar that's planned, and if you want more information, please see Ron Nancy Lively.

That evening, there will be another concert at Regent College, an evening of song with Andrew Stillwell and friends, and there'll be more about that in the next month.

Now, immediately after the service, we would like you all to join us over in the gymnasium, means down Nanton and into the gym, for a presentation.

So, that will then be followed by lunch. So, what we would like you to do is catch up with your friends, exchange war stories, et cetera, over there and after the presentation.

So, please join us for lunch there. Now, I'd like to turn this over to Jim Packer. Thank you.

[36 : 50] Thank you.

When he visited me in Oxford and on a very wet day when he came in soaking, actually singed his trousers in front of my gas fire.

He remembers, you see. It's nearly a full quarter of a century, I think, since I was first in their home and met Fran and enjoyed their hospitality.

I don't know Fran if you remember that. In the providence of God, Kit and I came to St. John's about six months after Harry had arrived, and it's been our privilege to be part of the congregation during these years in which God has blessed the ministry of our friends in Richland.

I am glad that I have been asked to commend them now to God, and I ask you to join me in prayer as I seek to do this. Our gracious Heavenly Father, We bow before you in thanksgiving for what you have given us through these two precious servants of yours.

[38 : 35] We thank you for the word that has come to us through Harry. We thank you for the love that has come to us through friends.

We thank you for the love that has come to us through our hearts. We thank you for the love that has come to us through our hearts. We thank you for the way in which, as a partnership, they have labored among us to make Christ known.

And we thank you for the blessing you have poured out on their ministry, and for the difference between what they leave behind them as compared with what they found when they came.

Through them, we all of us, by your grace, know our Savior better than once we did.

And for that we thank you. And we see them as ever out in front of us, beckoning, encouraging, pointing, spurring us on to lay hold of the full implications of our high calling in Christ.

[39 : 51] Now, Lord, they leave us, and we commend them to you with thanksgiving for the new life that you are going to open in front of them in coming months and years.

Grant them, Lord, the blessing of the quietness they need to recharge their battles. Grant them, Lord, freshness of spirit as they wait on you and walk with you.

And open, we pray, new doors of usefulness to them in the service of Christ and his kingdom. for we know that neither of them can rest in heart and mind, save as they know you are leading them into service.

they are a team called to minister. And we ask you, Lord, to give them ministry for the fulfillment of the desire of their heart and the blessing of many more as we have been blessed through them over these past years.

So, Lord, in love, with gratitude, in hope, and with confidence, we commit them into your hand.

[41 : 15] bless them, keep them, make your face to shine on them, be gracious to them, use them to your glory and to the spread of the knowledge of Jesus Christ as you have been using them over so many years.

If it please you, grant them many years more of fruitful ministry in the glorious service of the kingdom and the Savior.

Hear us as thus we pray. Our hearts are united in expressing these desires before your throne. As you see us, Lord, agreed as to the things that we shall ask and have asked.

So, in your grace and mercy, answer our prayers, we pray, abundantly beyond what we have asked or conceived. And grant that as Harry and Fran go on with you, life may become richer for them and ministry yet more fruitful in those new spheres of service into which you are going to take them.

All this we pray. All this we ask. For your glory. For the glory of Jesus. And in his holy name.

[42 : 55] Amen. Amen. Whoo. pretendingHind you