

The Commission To Go

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Date: 01 September 2024

[0 : 00] We're going to begin our worship by singing to God's praise. We're going to sing in Psalm 130, in the Sing Psalms version, Psalm 130, page 173 of the psalm books.

We'll sing the whole of this psalm, Psalm 130. Lord, from the depths I call to you, Lord, hear me from on high, and give attention to my voice when I for mercy cry. Lord, in your presence who can stand if you our sins record?

But yet forgiveness is with you that we may fear you, Lord. So we'll sing the whole of this psalm to God's praise. We stand to sing. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. I quit my soul, wait for the Lord.

[2 : 06] My hope is in His word. For that the watch and wait for dawn, my soul is for the Lord.

Oh, it shall do your hope in God. Our mercy is within.

Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer.

Let us pray. Our gracious Father in heaven, we come anew before you this evening, thankful for these words that we have sung, thankful that we are able to approach you, that we are able to cry out to you as our Lord, our Lord, and as our God.

We thank you that as we sing from this psalm, we see the psalmist crying from the depths, and sometimes that is our experience, Lord. We feel that we are in the depths of life in so many different ways.

[3 : 51] Yet we thank you, too, that there are so many other occasions when we are reminded that a cry comes from on high, a cry comes from different circumstances. When it's high or low, Lord, we thank you that you are the God who hears and is able to deal with us according to all our different needs.

And we thank you that this psalm reminds us of one of our greatest needs, that we realize in these words, O Lord, the depth of your love towards us, that you are a God with whom there is rich forgiveness.

For forgiveness. We thank you, Lord, that we could not stand in your presence if you did record our sins. But forgiveness is with you, as the psalmist says.

And we thank you that we can wait upon you, that we can put our hope in your word, and that you are our hope, that you are the one with whom there is full redemption. These wonderful words, Lord, encourage our hearts and remind us of the need of coming back to you again and again. For prayer is not offered once or even twice, but daily, Lord, as we come to you, we come in prayer, we come in dependence upon you. We come thankful for the instructions to pray and how your word guides us in our prayers. Even the Lord's prayer itself, as we have said it together this morning, we thank you for the great instructions and truths that there are in that, how we are reminded that we begin looking to you as our Father in heaven, and the privilege that we have to call you by that name, the privilege that is ours to come and approach the creator of the heavens and the earth, and yet to come and call you our Father. And we thank you, Lord, that it's a prayer that reminds us, too, that our dependence is upon you for all things. Even when we feel that we can satisfy ourselves, that we are a people who provide for ourselves in so many different ways. Even today, as we have set our tables, as we have eaten our food, as we have enjoyed the comforts of our homes, as we have been gathered together around your word and peace and security here, as we have enjoyed fellowship,

Lord, we can think that these are all of our own making. But yet, Lord, they are all from you. They are all gifts from above, from the one who does not change. And so this evening, Lord, we come with so much to be thankful for. We come to praise your name for your blessings to us, rich and new each day. And we thank you for the blessings of this day as we have gathered in worship and as we continue to worship you, that you are with us, for that is your promise. You have reminded us

this morning, Lord, of how you are one who calls our people, that although we might put out invites to come, that you are the one who works, that apart from you we can do nothing. And so we pray and thank you for the encouragements that we had this morning of seeing so many gathered here, young and old alike.

[7 : 04] We thank you for all who came and pray, Lord, that the gospel will have borne fruit, even in the midst of it all and bear fruit in the days and weeks and months ahead. We thank you for the promise that you are building your church. And we pray, Lord, that we will see it in our midst here and throughout our lands.

And we thank you for the command that you give to us as a people. Even as we have come today and heard, we are to be a people who go and tell. And this evening, as we come to your word, may you encourage us in that. May you encourage us and strengthen us, Lord, as we seek to be salt and light in all the different places that you place us. And as we go into this week, oh Lord, may you help us to be courageous, to be bold, to be a people who bear your light to all around us. We pray and thank you for opportunities that you give us, whether it's in the home and among our own families, something that can be so difficult at times. And yet, Lord, we thank you that you promise to be with us in the workplace, in schools, in our communities as we go about our day-to-day lives. Lord, we thank you for all we come into contact with. And we pray, Lord, that as we talk about so many other things in life, that we would be a people who talk about the gospel, who talk about your goodness to us, who talk about the wonder of your truth, the wonder of your grace, your grace that we see all around us, that grace that we see in creation and in the sky and in the universe around us, Lord. We marvel at so many things. We marvel at the northern lights as we see them in the nighttime. We marvel at the beauty of the sunshine and the creation all around us. And yet help us to see you in it. We thank you for these grace, the grace that you give us in these things. But we pray too, Lord, that we would see your special grace to us, the wonder of the grace that is salvation in Jesus Christ, a gift from God.

And as with any gift, Lord, that we would rejoice in and share with others, we pray that the gospel would be something that we would share and share with all around us. We thank you for your spirit who is with us to that end to help us and to be with us. We thank you for your word, how powerful it is.

It is described as a sword that is, the word is sharper than any two-edged sword and how it cuts into the very core of our being. And we pray, Lord, that even tonight and each time we hear it, that your word would not just brush over us, that it would not just go in one ear and out another, but that it would resonate in our hearts and in our very being. That it would be a word that would give us assurance, give us confidence, give us grace for each day, give us that conviction of sin, as it speaks of.

If we are away from you, Lord, if we have not yet trusted in you, that the arrows of your word would pierce deeply, even this night, and to give us that conscience of our need of you and not put it off.

[10 : 24] And so we pray, Lord, that you will be with us, that you will bless us in our time together, bless us as a people, as a congregation here, as we commit one another into your hands. In all our different needs, Lord, comfort those who mourn, be with those who are going through these times of sorrow and sadness. Thankful for your promise as a great comfort to your people, that you would be that. Remembering those who are in hospital, both locally and away from here as well, we pray for your healing hand upon them, for your goodness to follow them. Thankful for recovery and mental health for some and praying for others who are maybe waiting surgery or treatment. Lord, we pray to surround each one in all their different needs. We commit our congregations to you as well. We thank you for this time of communion season, and we pray that where your people are gathered over this weekend and this evening hour, that you would have been pleased to be in their midst to bless. We think of the congregation of North Tolstown, Shabbos and North Uist, as they have gathered around your word this weekend and around the Lord's table. We pray for encouragement. We pray for strengthening. We pray for blessing in the midst of it. We thank you too, Lord, for the upcoming induction of the Reverend David Ferguson to North Uist. We pray for that coming in a fortnight's time.

We thank you for David and Catherine and the young Duncan. We pray for them, Lord, that they would settle in well to their new home and surroundings and congregation, and that together, Lord, with the congregation, you would use them, that you would bless them, that you would watch over them. We pray that, Lord, for our church near and far. We thank you that you are one who blesses

your church. We thank you that when your truth is proclaimed, that it is mighty and powerful. And so we pray that to all ends of the earth, even anew this night, that your word would go out with power, that we go out, Lord, to build up your people and challenge those who are in darkness, that they would call them into your wonderful light. And so we pray, Lord, for your kingdom to come with power. May you bless us as we continue in our worship this evening. May you guide us as a people in the week ahead as we think of all the different activities going on. We thank you for the Explorers Group as it resumes this week, both the young ones and the older ones. May you bless them as they start once more in a new term. We pray, Lord, that we will see a time of real encouragement among our young people. We thank you for the Big Questions Study Group to resume as well. We pray for invitations to go out and for many to come, to come and have fellowship with one another and to hear your word and to enjoy that time of growing in our knowledge and understanding of you.

So may you bless that. And may you bless the preaching of your word and our fellowship around it in all the different ways. May you go before us now, Lord, in this week ahead. May you guide us and keep us, draw us close to yourself, be our constant companion. And may you be the Lord who gives us courage and boldness to stand up for truth and to honour you and to serve you with all of our hearts.

So hear our prayers, Lord, and go before us now, pardoning all our sin as we ask it all in Jesus' name for the sake and glory. Amen. We're going to sing again to God's praise this time in Psalm 71 in the Scottish Psalter.

[14:18] Psalm 71. We'll sing from verse 14 down to verse 18. Psalm 71 at verse 14, page 311 of the psalm books.

Singing at verse 14 there, we see in these words that hope that is in the Lord, but I with expectation will hope continually, and yet with praises more and more I will thee magnify.

And then verse 16 speaks about going on constantly in the strength of the Lord, which is what we need. And then verse 18, as we even go into old age, that there is that hope and confidence that the Lord will not leave us.

So we sing from verse 14 to 18 to God's praise, and we stand to sing. Thank you.

Thank you.

[16:08] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

We'll turn together to reading God's Word in the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew chapter 28.

[18:19] I'm going to read the whole of this chapter. Matthew chapter 28. Find it around page 1006, the end of the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew 28 at the beginning. Now after the Sabbath, towards the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow.

And for fear of him, the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the woman, Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead.

[19:29] Behold, he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him. See, I have told you. So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples.

Behold, Jesus met them and said, Greetings. And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid.

Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me. While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place.

And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, Tell people, his disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.

And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble. So they took the money and did as they were directed.

[20 : 32] And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day. Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

And when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. 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. Amen. And may God bless that reading from his word. Before we come back to look at this passage, we're going to sing in Psalm 67.

In the Sing Psalms version, page 84 of the psalm book, Psalm 67, we'll sing the whole of this psalm. God be merciful and bless us. Shine upon us with your face, that the earth may know your actions and all lands your saving grace.

[21 : 41] A psalm that reminds us of the power of God's word going out into the midst of all the nations and bearing fruit. So we're going to sing the whole of this psalm, Psalm 67, page 84.

Stand to sing to God's praise. Amen. God be merciful and bless us, try not follow us with your grace, and the earth may know your actions and all lands your saving grace.

O God, may the people praise you, may all people sing your praise.

Are you just the nation's justly, who they know every grace?

May they sing with joy and gladness, may they all rejoice as one.

[23 : 08] O God, may the people praise you, as they all unite in song.

Then the land will yield its harvest, God will pour his gifts abroad.

God and God will surely bless us, all the earth will fear our God.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We can turn back together to our reading in Matthew 28. We're going to read again at verse 19 to the end there, just these last two verses.

But the whole chapter is connected together. You see it's split into three different sections in the Bibles. Here you have the section verse 1 to 10 called the resurrection.

[24 : 19] And then you have the report of the guard, verse 11 to 15. And then the last section, the great commission, verse 16 to verse 20.

But I want us to see that the whole chapter is connected because what we have here is actually not just one commission. We have the great commission at the end. But you have another commission that was given to the soldiers in verse 11 to 15.

15. They were given a message to tell the people. And the disciples, the church was given a message to tell the people. But they're opposing messages.

And the messages are linked to the resurrection. One message of the soldiers is telling people that his body was stolen away, that he is not risen.

And the other message of the great commission is that he is risen and that he is with us. So in verse 19, we read these words.

[25 : 20] 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. When you have been to maybe the cinema or to a show, when you've seen something that leaves you amazed and astonished, what do you do afterwards?

Do you just forget about it? And you go on in the wake and maybe say nothing to anybody about it? Or more likely, if you've seen something that's left you amazed and you think other people need to see this, they need to go and see this or they need to hear this, you are going to talk to others about it.

You're going to tell others about it. Go and see it for yourselves. That's what happens when something leaves you excited and amazed. Go and see it for yourselves.

What about when we think of what we have called today, back to church Sunday? Is that it? Are we done?

[26 : 34] Do we take the banner down that's up outside, put it away in the box and forget about it? That's it. We've done our duty. Maybe until the next time. Do we put the invitations away?

We don't have to give them out anymore for people to come to church. Do we forget about these kinds of things? Surely not.

And it shouldn't just be based around one Sunday that we're calling back to church Sunday. It should be based around every time we meet together in this way of coming to worship God. That we'll be astonished and amazed at what the word of God is saying to us. Astonished and amazed by the love of God towards us. Just like we saw with the prodigal son this morning. That even though he had gone away from home, even though he had squandered everything that his father had given to him. Yet still he was welcomed back.

[27 : 33] It's astonishing. It's astonishing to think of what God has done for us through Christ Jesus. As we sang in Psalm 130.

As we think of the forgiveness of our sin. Of the cost. Of the price that has been paid. Let us never lose our amazement and our wonder at that.

The wonder of having sat at the Lord's table last Sunday. Of having remembered the Lord's death. And the bread and the wine that we shared with one another. As we partook in the Lord's supper. Remembering his death. Do we lose our wonder and amazement at that? Every time we come and hear the gospel.

It should never leave us unmoved. And yet we know ourselves. Our hearts can be hard. Our hearts can be cold. But yet let us keep that fire in our hearts.

[28 : 31] The joy of salvation as the psalmist calls it. The one. The two on the road to Emmaus. Who say did not our hearts burn within us. As he walked on the way.

As he opened up the scriptures to us. They were amazed. They were in wonder of what they were hearing. And what it made them do was go and tell others. So this morning we were looking at that idea of the invitation to come.

To come and hear of the wonder of all that God has done for us in Christ. And we broke down the word come in each letter. Giving each letter a word of itself.

Come. Christ offers me everything. That's the invitation that we have in the gospel. Tonight we're looking at it in another way now.

We're thinking of the go part. We've come. We've heard. So what do we do with that now? We go. We are to go and tell others. To share with others the wonder of this news.

[29 : 32] And I want to break go into two words by itself as well. And take the letter G and the letter O. And it's great opportunities.

Great opportunities. We are to go because there are great opportunities around us. Because there are people all around us. And that's the wonder of what we see here in this closing chapter of Matthew's gospel.

We see the Lord Jesus giving this commission to the disciples, to the church. That we are to be a people who go.

And why do we go? We go because there's others who are going into the world and telling people lies. That's what we see in the report of the guard in verse 11 to verse 15.

And it says in verse 15, they took the money and did as they were directed. They told lies. They told a false story. And it says, and this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

[30 : 35] In the days of the gospel being written, maybe about 20 years after the event. But even to this day, this same story is still being spread among people.

But Jesus is not real. That he never rose from the dead. That the resurrection was just some kind of made up story. They're saying others are telling the lies. We have the truth.

The truth is they stole his body. But Jesus is risen. That's what we see in the account of the resurrection. And you can almost say that there's a commission already being given before these two.

In verse 7 of this chapter, when Jesus met with a woman at the tomb, he says, Go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead.

And behold, he is going before you to Galilee. So there's already been this commission given to them. You go and tell the disciples he has risen. He has risen from the dead.

[31 : 35] And he is going before you into Galilee. And then you come into the contrasting commissions as we see them in these next two sections. And so we're going to think about these things this evening together.

When Jesus spoke these words at the end of chapter 28 to the disciples, He was speaking directly to them, but also indirectly to us as we have it through his word.

He was giving the church our marching orders. Even though he was going away to be with the Father. He says at the end of this chapter, I am going to be with you always.

Through his spirit he is with us even to the end of the age. And that's what these disciples knew in their own ministry. And that's what we know with us today as well.

There is this powerful message. It's a message that the world needs to hear. It's a message that as you were to go into the book of Acts, which follows the gospel accounts, the acts of the apostles as the church began to go out and to be the witnesses of Jesus beginning in Jerusalem to Judea and to all the ends of the earth.

[32 : 58] There was this promise that he was with them. And it says in Acts chapter 17 verse 6, the effect of this message of this gospel was turning the world upside down.

There was a power in this message. And it's a power that is still there today because he has all authority on earth and in heaven has been given to our Lord Jesus.

He has all power. And so he gave this great commission. In the midst of the lies that were being spread, there is a commission to the church.

But it can easily turn into the great omission. The part that we forget about. The part that we neglect. The part that goes undone.

And so as we think of ourselves here today, as we have had this back to church Sunday, as we've come, we are to remember to not to neglect our commission going forward.

[34 : 03] It's not job done. That's not the end of the matter. Because there are still souls all around us who need to hear the gospel.

So we don't leave it neglected. We come and we go. Because there's great opportunities all around us.

Somebody once described it in this way, how the church has almost gone backwards over the generations. It said, instead of taking the gospel to all the ends of the earth as the Lord commanded, the modern church won't even take the gospel to the end of the street.

That's a sad reflection on us if that was true of us. That we wouldn't be a people who are reminded and remember that this is our commission.

That this is our duty, our command as a church to be a people who go. Salvation belongs to God. But God has entrusted his church, his people, with taking this message to all the ends of the earth.

[35 : 16] So just three things we want to take from this portion tonight. I want us to see, first of all, the contrasting commissions. There's a contrast between the guards and the disciples and what they are told to do.

And then there's the courage that's required. And then finally we'll see the confident trust that we need to have as well. So first of all, there's contrasting commissions.

We see this, as I say, between the guards and the disciples and what they were told to do. And it's a powerful reminder to us of the world that we still live in.

You see, when Jesus had risen from the grave, not everybody believed and even wanted to believe that this was true. And the soldiers, the guards and the chief priests who had heard of this, they assembled, it says in verse 12, with the elders and taking counsel and they gave sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, tell people.

His disciples came by night and stole them away while we were asleep. So they are given this commission. This is their commission given from their supervisors, their managers, if you like, the ones who are over them.

[36 : 41] tell people. And really, that's what this world does. The world is always telling us a message. The case is, who do we believe?

The soldiers, we're told, tell the people that the disciples came and stole his body away. In other words, he's not alive, he's dead.

And they stole the body. And that's what the world believes to this day, that Jesus may have been a man who lived in this world, but he's dead.

It's got no meaning for us now. So this is their commission. But the disciples have a very different commission.

And when they had gone to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them, they saw him. Not a body.

[37 : 40] They saw him. They saw Jesus. And they worshipped him. And Jesus came and said to them, spoke these words to them, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go, therefore. This is your message. Go and tell the people my message, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

What a contrast. A message that is meaningless and hopeless. Jesus is dead. Or the message of the power of the gospel and the wonder of a risen Savior.

When you look at the soldiers here who were given this message, tell the people that the disciples came and stole away his body. What hope is in that?

It's a bit like an army commander, one who was over an army, saying, go to battle. Go and fight. Follow my commands.

[38 : 44] So the order has been given from on high. And yet, instead of listening to that, the soldiers in this battalion, they listen to the cook. He says, I don't think that's a good idea.

I think we should just hold back. Just stay where we are. Don't want to listen to the one who's over us. Let's just do our own thing. Does that make sense? It doesn't.

It would never happen. It should never happen. And yet, that's what they are doing. They are listening to those who are over them in worldly things. And yet, if they had listened and seen to what they had seen and heard of the cross, which many of them would have observed, even seeing, perhaps, the risen Lord, they wouldn't have gone in this way.

But they're blinded. Just like the world in which we live, so much of the messages that we hear are just blind. They don't know what they're telling us.

They don't know what they're saying. And yet, so many will listen. There is this hopeless commission that they were given, this foolish commission.

[39 : 49] Tell the people that he's dead. It's just like what Paul speaks to the Romans. And it goes on down through every generation. It's the same thing.

They've exchanged the truth about God for a lie. And worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator. It's the ongoing battle.

It's a battle that we are in. As a church, as a people, we are in this same battle that people today have exchanged the truth of God for a lie. It's ongoing. They believe it to this day.

But yet, what a contrast we have in the truth. What a contrast there is in the fact that Jesus is risen. He has been crucified.

He was put in the grave, but he rose from the grave. That message the woman received in verse 6 of this chapter about the resurrection. He is not here for he has risen.

[40 : 54] And as he said, come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead. This brings excitement. This brings, yes, fear on one hand, but joy on the other.

As well, the Lord is risen. risen. And he says to them in verse 10 there, Jesus said, don't be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee and there they will see me.

There's this power in this message. He is risen. The truth is that he is risen. And that's what we need to hold onto.

And so this is what they are to go with. What a contrast in these messages. And so as Jesus is saying, go therefore into the world, making disciples of all nations.

He is saying, keep going. And as you go, share this message with others. There are plenty who will tell lies in this world, but you have a truth.

[42 : 02] We have a truth, a wonderful truth, that he is risen, that he is a savior, that he is able to forgive our sins and to give us hope of eternal life.

And we are to go into the world and tell the people all of these truths, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. All that I have commanded you.

The only way to salvation is through faith in him. So, we are to be a people who go. you think of the woman of Samaria in John chapter 4, who met Jesus at the well outside the town by herself.

Again, someone else who was far away from God in many ways and cast out by society in her day. And yet Jesus met with her. And she met with the Christ.

And what did she do? She went to the town. She went back to the people. People who had shunned her and neglected her and said, come, come see a man who knows everything about me.

[43 : 11] Could this be the Christ? She came to him and she went to tell others. There was an opportunity for her to go to them and she did.

And Jesus, as you read in this part through the Gospels, he so often discipling his people in this way of how we are to live. Someone has described the book of the Gospels as just Jesus discipling

his church, showing us how we are to live and how we are to behave in this world.

And he often gives us reminders about how we have a message to share and where we are to share it. Christ met unbelievers where they were.

And someone has gone through the Gospels and counted the number of places where Jesus met with individuals or with people.

And they counted 132 contacts Jesus had with people. And where were they? Where were the places that Jesus met with them? Well, they broke it down into this six were in the temple, four in the synagogues, and 122 were with people in just the ordinary place of life, in their homes, out in the countryside, down by the sea, in their workplaces, in all of these kinds of places.

[44 : 44] That is where he met. 122 of the 132 occasions recorded in the scriptures for us. He met with them in the ordinary places.

And there's a word in that for us, that as we have this commission to go and tell and to tell the truth, it's for everywhere that we go, in the ordinary places of life, so that as we go into this week ahead, that we are to go because there are great opportunities everywhere we go, in the homes, in our communities, in the workplaces, in the schools, wherever we go, that is our field, that is where we are, that's where God has put us, and we have this truth, and we're speaking this truth in the midst of a world that hears the lie that Jesus is dead.

So we have contrasting commissions. The second thing we see here is something we so often need as well as the courage that is required. When you look at the soldiers here as they were given this lie to tell, they were in fear for their lives.

They were afraid of what might happen to them if the truth got out. But they were calmed by their elders who said, don't worry, in verse 14, if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.

Yet there was still a fear. They were still afraid because they failed in their duties. And if they were found out, they would more than likely be put to death. So there was a fear in them.

[46 : 34] They had to be courageous to stand up for a lie. But what about the disciples? When you look at the disciples, they were afraid of failing their master.

What kept them going in all of this and as they would go on to minister for the Lord throughout their lives was obedience to the Lord. Their commission was dangerous.

Some would lose their lives in it, but yet they were obedient. They went on courageous in the Lord. And we need to be courageous too.

We need to be courageous ourselves. We need to remind ourselves of the wonder of God with us. So that as we go we have this promise behold I am with you always to the end of the age to the very end.

I will never leave you. The soldiers they couldn't have that confidence. They couldn't have that assurance that the Lord was over them over them.

[47 : 45] If news comes to the governor they said we will satisfy them. Well if the elders were in fear for their lives they wouldn't have protected the soldiers. They would have passed the buck and said no it's their fault they weren't doing their duties.

So the soldiers would always be in fear. But we have the Lord on our side. We have the Lord with us. That is the promise that he gives us.

If you look at verse 17 you see there though if you are of seven some worshipped him but some doubted. And you think but yeah look even the disciples here they weren't courageous they weren't bold doubted can also be translated hesitated and it's probably closer to the right word they hesitated they saw Jesus but it was almost unbelievable this is the one we have just seen crucified this is the one who hung on the tree this is the one whose body was taken down and placed in the tomb is it him they hesitated they were unsure but only for a time and who wouldn't be in many ways you think of Thomas how he would say well I will believe it when I see him when I am able to touch him and put my hand and my finger in the hole the mark on his hands and his side or the two on the road to

Amaze who were downcast they were just dismayed that the Lord was dead that he was gone that their hope was all but gone all kinds of different reactions and yet in them all Jesus gives the answer to Thomas he appears to him Thomas says my Lord and my God to the two on the road to Amaze he comes alongside them and opens up the scriptures and their hearts burn within them there is that assurance there is that confidence he is with them with the woman at the tomb here the angel appears to them and then the Lord himself appears to them in verse 9 he met them and said

greetings they came up and took hold of him and he said don't be afraid there is this wonderful assurance and Jesus is always giving instruction he is always giving guidance you read verse 16 there and it just seems like an insignificant little verse there now the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had directed them and yet you see the key here there was obedience they were listening all along in chapter 26 verse 32 it says to them there but after I am raised up I will go before you to Galilee so he's told them even before the crucifixion after I am raised up I will go before you to Galilee and then in verse 7 of chapter 28 he is going before you to Galilee there you will see him and then in verse 10 then Jesus said to them do not be afraid go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee oh you see it a few times go to Galilee there you went to Galilee to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them they were being obedient they were being obedient and so we are to be obedient too we are to be a people of faith who go in that promise that he is with us that he will always be with us even to the end of the age even into the places where it seems impossible

[51 : 50] George Muller a man of faith who so often saw the Lord work in amazing ways he said this faith does not operate in the realm of the possible there is no glory for God in that which is humanly possible faith begins where man's power ends and we cannot save we cannot go and make disciples by ourselves we cannot teach them to observe all that I have commanded you by ourselves but Jesus has authority all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me and he's saying go and at the end behold I am with you always to the end of the age courage is required but he gives courage he gives courage through that promise that he is always with us the third thing the final thing

I want us to see here is that confident trust what motivates us in our ministry what motivates us in our Christian lives in our witness for the Lord what is a contrast in the motivations that we see between the guards and the disciples here as well the guards they were the soldiers they were motivated by money money we will give you a sufficient sum of money to go and tell people this story tell them this lie they were motivated by money and it would be easy for us sometimes to have the wrong motivations and sometimes people can see our motivations as wrong as well when you think of the desire we have to see many coming into the congregation to see many coming in under the word people will say our numbers is what's driving their motives there that's what's behind it all just so they're able to say that there's large numbers of people that's what's motivating them or you can go into all kinds of ways that we think wrong motivations are seen they're just doing it to be seen for their own reputations they're just doing it to be spoken of by others but that's never what should drive us it's not what drives us our greatest concern should always be our love for Christ for the glory of his name and for the saving of souls when a minister is ordained you hear a minister taking vows and it's good as any minister to remind ourselves of the vows that we have taken and perhaps it's vows that maybe even every Christian should take as we become professing members of the church that our desires and commitments would be aligned in the same way and part of the vows that a minister takes is the seal for the honour of God love to Jesus Christ and desire for the saving of souls that's your chief inducement as it says chief motivation in the ordination into the ministry seal for the honour of God love to Jesus Christ and desire for saving of souls that's what the church is about not just the minister all of us together seal for the honour of God love to Jesus Christ and the desire of the saving of souls we don't do it of ourselves we look to him who is able and there are souls all around us there are souls everywhere that we look and it's our desire that they be saved back to church Sunday is not just for one day it's about coming to see a saviour the Christ who offers me everything come and see this man could he be the Christ was the invitation the woman of Samaria gave that's our invitation come see a man who knows everything about me could this be the Christ does that drive us does that motivate us Dwight Moody said he made a promise to God that he would witness to Christ to at least one person each day and so he did each day of his life and there was one time it was coming up to ten o'clock at night and he realised he hadn't spoken to anyone about Christ that day he hadn't witnessed and so he went out onto the street he went out looking for someone to talk to them about Christ and about their soul and he saw this man standing by a lamp and he went over asking him are you a Christian and the man went into a violent rage he was so angry with Dwight Moody he threatened to throw him into the gutter he just pushed him away he just told him to get lost this got back to some of the elders in Dwight Moody's church and they said you're doing more harm than good you're stirring up people to anger against us as a church and they begged him to stop but he

said he couldn't he still had to go on witnessing for

[57 : 55] Christ three months later Dwight Moody was awakened by a knock at his door and at the door when he opened it was this man who he had witnessed to on the street who had got into a rage with him and threatened to throw him into the gutter and he said I want to talk to you about my soul and he apologized for the way that he treated him that night and said I have had no peace ever since that soul is troubled and he came in with Dwight Moody he sat with him and they spoke of the wonder of Christ the beauty of Christ the one who is able to save come because Christ offers me everything and this man came to faith and served the Lord we should never lose our seal for souls that are lost and perishing and so our command as we come come to

Christ who offers me everything is also tonight to go to go because there are great opportunities around us and there are people who are perishing we have a great commission we have the truth of a risen saviour there are others who still spread the lie that Christ is not real he may have lived but he's dead he's of no use to you now but we have the truth Christ offers us eternal life through faith in him so we go because there are great opportunities around us let's not fail in our commission but be faithful to him seal for God and love to Jesus Christ and the saving of souls may that move us and make us go as we have been commanded let us pray our father in heaven we thank you that we hear your word and help us that we would take it to heart that we would take it as your truth to us that

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and that we have this command to go and tell others of the wonder the wonder of the gospel the wonder that he died for our sins the wonder that he rose from the grave and the wonder that he will come again may you help us Lord to be a people to be a church here on earth that reflects your glory and shows the wonder of your gospel to many that we would see your hand upon us Lord moving in our midst your spirit working bringing many to salvation bringing many to know the glory and the wonder of Christ as their Lord and amen we're going to conclude by singing again to God's praise this time in psalm 73 in the Scottish Psalter psalm 73 singing from verse 23 to verse 26 page 316 of the psalm books a psalm that reminds us as the psalmist goes through it how often we can have questions and doubts and fears and worries and yet he says at the end of verse 22 there so rude was

I and ignorant and in my sight a beast but then you have these words in verse 23 nevertheless continually O Lord I am with thee thou dost me hold by my right hand and still uphold this neither with thy counsel while I live will me conduct and guide and to thy glory afterward receive me to abide we'll sing from verse 23 to 26 to God's praise and we stand to sing stem to men with thee and does me hold By my God, and still the foolishness be.

The will I counsel while I live, will keep on guard and guide.

[63 : 21] And to the glory of the world receive me tonight.

To cover in the heavens high, that the, O Lord, alone, Have been here, O God, I desire, besides me there is none.

Thy patient heart doth faint and fail, The God doth fail me there.

For, O my heart, God is the same, And worship for us.

After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my left. We'll close the benediction. Now may grace, mercy, and peace from God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest upon us and abide with us now and forevermore.

[65 : 07] Amen.