

# Together on Mission session 1

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Preacher: John Risbridger

[0:00] Good morning, everybody. It's great to see you. I'll just give you a chance to take your seats because it's early to be up and about on a Saturday for some of us. But well done for coming here on time. Others will join us and take their seats as we get started.

But welcome to our weekend at home for 2024. It's so good to see you all. So good to have this time together. I'm really excited about what's in store for us today, about what God has got in store for us today. And I hope you are too. It's such a special privilege to be able to meet together like this as family, as church family, to meet together, to worship together, to get to know each other a bit better, and to hear from God's word and to learn together as well, as family together. So I'm really happy to be here. I hope you are too. Part of the aim for the weekend is kind of continuing our theme from our motto text, which we've been talking a lot about this year so far. And hopefully you've already picked up a postcard. And hopefully you remember our motto text, which is, you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood. And it's about being willing for God to shape us and God to build us as his people into the people that he wants us to be and into the church that he wants us to be.

And that is my prayer for today, really, that God will use this time together to build us, to shape us collectively together into the church that he wants us to be. And it's a great opportunity to do that as we spend the whole day together. So I pray that it's an opportunity for us to get to know each other better. I encourage you to be intentional about that, about talking to people you don't know.

We've got name badges to help you with that. I hope that it'll be a good chance to get to know God better and to get to know his purposes for us as individuals and as a church here in High Wycombe. And I hope it's going to be a chance to have fun. We've got a lot to celebrate today. It's wonderful to be together. I've just heard about some other news that we can celebrate today. Apparently it's Lena's birthday. I can't see Lena. Maybe she's downstairs. So do wish her a happy birthday.

[2:22] And congratulations to Max, who's had a baby boy this last week called Luke. So congratulations to them. Just to share on a sadder note as well before we move on. It's sad that some people who we would have loved to have been here with us today are not with us. Many of you would have heard the news that our dear brother Don Allen passed away on Monday. And we give thanks to God for his life and we praise God for the assurance that Don is with his Lord in glory. And that's wonderful.

But we do want to be in prayer, especially for Don's wife, Françoise, and for his whole family today. And also just to mention that Elizabeth Troman is in hospital in Stoke Mandeville. And she would have loved to be here. She was greatly looking forward to coming. And she's not able to be with us. So we'll uphold these folks in our prayers as well as others who we would have loved to have been here as well. So let's just take a moment to be quiet. I'll pray for some of these people and I'll pray for our time together today. A moment of quiet and then I'll pray.

Father God, we want to thank you for your goodness, for your love for each one of us and your care and your concern for each one of us. And Lord, we just want to start by giving you thanks for Don's life and for the encouragement he was to so many of us, to the friend that he was to so many of us, and to the love of Jesus that you showed and demonstrated through him and through what you did in his life. And we thank you that he is with you in glory. And we do just pray particularly for his wife and for his whole family at this time as they mourn his loss. And we want to pray for Elizabeth and others who are not well at this time, who would love to be with us today but can't.

And we just pray for your healing hand upon them and for your peace and for your comfort for them. But Lord, we want to just come before you now as we come into your presence and just lift this day

up to you.

And pray that your will be done and that you would have your will in us and through us as we meet together, as we spend this time together. I pray that we will grow closer to each other and grow closer to you as well. And I pray that we will have lots of fun as we do that and that you will shape us during this day into the people that you want us to be and that your name will be glorified.

[4:42] In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Now, it's a bit of a dull day today, which is a shame. A bit rainy, a little bit foggy. We've had some nice sunny days in the last week, which has given me a bit of hope that spring is on the way.

And it's made me think about summer holidays when the sun comes out. And one thing for me that makes a holiday a holiday, because today is a bit like a holiday, even though the weather doesn't say that to us. Today, I think is a bit like a holiday for us as a church family. Something for me that makes it a holiday is having ice cream. So today we've given you, sorry, not a real ice cream, but we've given you an imaginary ice cream. You should find somewhere on your chair a little card with an ice cream with the flavor on that. Now, if you haven't got one, please put your hand up, because Miriam's got some spares and she's going to give you one. So have a look at the flavor of your ice cream.

So I've got one here that all different flavors. Mine says licorice. Now, what I want you to do is take a minute and talk to someone that you didn't come with and you haven't already said hello to this morning and see if they've got a flavor of ice cream that you prefer to have.

And then if they're in agreement, do a swap. And if not, then find someone else that is willing to swap. So you end up with a better ice cream for you than what you started with. Is that okay? So you're aiming to swap and get a better ice cream. One minute to do that. Go.

Go. Go.

[6:44] ... ..

... Thank you.

Thank you.

Okay, no more swaps, please. You're going to have to stick with what you've got now. Okay, can you take your seats again, please? Okay, we're going to take our seats.

Okay, hands up. Hands up if you're happy with what you ended up with. Yeah, that's good. A lot of happy people. What have you got, Andy? Biscoff.

[8:27] I got Biscoff. Dante, what have you got? You got bubble gum. Your favourite. Anyone else get their favourite? Daniel, what did you get? Mango. Fantastic.

What did you get? Vanilla. Nice. Simple. Jameson, what did you get? You got what? Walnuts. Walnuts. I thought you said water. It's like walnuts. That's an interesting one. Okay. Did anyone end up with one that they're not so happy with? Hands up. Tim, what did you get?

Garlic. Garlic. Does anyone like garlic ice cream? It has been done. It's a real flavour. I found it on the internet. Anyone else? Hands up. I'm going to sit with Biscoff, but thanks.

Thanks, Nick. Anyone else get one they're really not happy with? Chris. I got carrots. You got carrots? Don't knock it till you tried it. However, this game can go on during the day, during coffee break.

[9:27] Nick, if anyone thinks they would like carrot, go and find Chris, do a swap with him. As you meet people during the day, ask them about their ice cream and see if they've got a better one and see if you can do another swap.

I love carrot. You got carrot? Well done, Nick. Thank you very much. You're taking it for us. That was just a bit of a fun, but also an illustration that ice creams are all different.

There's many different flavours out there. All these are out there somewhere. There's many different flavours of people as well. As God's people, as his church, he makes us all different shapes and sizes and we're different types of people.

It's wonderful to be together today and to celebrate that and to celebrate the differences, the diversity, but also the fact that we're united together being God's children today. Now, I just want to share a few practical things before we go on.

Hopefully, you're all familiar with where the toilets are and stuff just on this corridor out here. You should all have a name badge. That is to help us to get to know each other today. We don't have to have that awkward conversation with the person who you have met before, but you've actually forgotten their name.

[10:32] Don't worry. You can just look at their name badge. Just make use of that today. We'd encourage you, please, to use the opportunity today to get to know people that you don't know. This is part of what today is about.

Do please introduce yourself to others over coffee and during the various sessions and get to know each other. That will be a wonderful thing to do. During this session, we have a creche downstairs for preschool and under children.

It's in the Walnut suite, which is the easiest way to get to it is through the doors at the back, down, turn right, and then along the corridor. There's toys and stuff in there, and we're also streaming the session into there.

So do feel free to go in there with young kids. For primary age kids, later on, there's a session which Jackie and Helen are leading for you. We'll tell you when to go out. Parents, you're responsible for your kids again when it's coffee time.

So please, when it's coffee time, please go and get your kids as soon as possible so that the leaders of the kids can get coffee as well. And then there'll be a session for them afterwards. For young people today, secondary age people, you have the choice.

[11:34] You can go and help with the children's session. The leaders will appreciate your help. Or you can stay in these teaching sessions that we're having here. The other fun thing that we've got today, thanks to Georgie and Emmanuel, is we have a photo booth.

And it's down the end, and you can make use of this during the coffee breaks. And so Georgie and Emmanuel have a wedding photography business, and as part of that, they have a photo booth where you can go and get some photos with the props provided.

So there are some sunglasses, and there's various hats. I like the burger hats. I'll go for that. And you can do a bit of weightlifting, or there's a giant mobile phone, or ghetto blaster. So we'd like to encourage you to get some fun photos today.

A, as a memento for your day, but also just to celebrate being together as all different kinds of people. So get a picture with the people that you came with, by all means. But I'd love it if you could get a picture with someone that you didn't come with, and someone else.

And that would be a wonderful day to have a memento. That's a difficult word for me to say. Of the day. So please make use of that. Starting from the coffee break, it's going to be open in the coffee breaks and in the lunch breaks.

[12:44] So that's there to enjoy. Now I'd like to welcome our wonderful visiting worship band, Zyndesis. Would you guys like to come up, and I'd love to introduce you.

Yeah, let's give them a clap. Guys, thank you so much for coming. I'm just going to introduce these guys.

A lot of you will have met a lot of them before. Joel over here on drums was our ministry trainee.

How long ago now? Two years ago? Two years ago.

And we're so thankful he's willing to still come back and serve us with his friends as well. So we've also got Seb on bass. Thank you so much for joining us, Seb. Can you introduce yourself?

I'm Alex. Thanks, Alex. And can you introduce yourself? Caleb. Nice to meet you guys. Great.

Great to have you with us. And you know who the keyboard player is.

[13:43] This is Ben. Ben is playing with nine out of ten fingers today because he's broken one of them. So he can explain the story afterwards, but he's going to carry on.

So such a blessing and a pleasure to have you with us. Thank you so much for coming. Yeah, thank you for leading us in worship. And I'm going to let you take it away. Caleb, thank you.

Thank you very much. Right. Oh, good morning, everyone. Yeah, as I said, my name's Caleb. I'd say I'm the leader of this little group. Although Joel is the one that actually does all the organizing.

It's like the PA, you know. So what we're going to do is we're going to sing some songs of worship together corporately. And what I just wanted to do was tell you a little bit about our first song, You've Already Won.

I think we might have done it last time we were here with you as well. And I'm just going to last time I talked to you a little bit about the psalm that the song was based off. But this time, when I was thinking about this song, it just drew me to actually 1 Corinthians.

[14:40] And 1 Corinthians, I think it's 15, from verse 50 says this. And this is where, like, Paul is writing to the church in Corinth. And he's basically, a lot of the New Testament is for these letters. And Paul's writing to all these different churches.

And he's basically, like, helping them get their theology straight and work out these things that they're maybe not sure about or not practicing correctly. And he's talking about, in this bit, about the victory that Jesus, our Lord, has already won.

And I just think it's really good to look at what he says here. He says, He says, That is really awesome.

Now, this song and those passages tell us a few things. He has already won a battle. And that battle is the battle over sin and death. That's the resurrection, the crucifixion story, our salvation.

[16:31] Jesus has already won that battle. It's already done. And then there's another thing that he's already won. He has already won and he already wins our personal battles. He works all things for good.

Comfort, safety, solace. They can all be found in Christ, even in the most brutal of trials. There is a purpose in the furnace flame. Often God allows us to be in the fire to be refined.

But he's our fourth man in the fire. That story of, in Daniel, Sadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. I can't pronounce that right. But, yeah, that story where those three Jewish men are thrown into the fire.

And then they're left unharmed. And they leave the fire. And there's a fourth man seen with them. And that is Jesus. He's our fourth man in the fire. So he wins our personal battles.

He carries us through. And then, finally, he's already won the battle at the end of the age. To us and our perspective, what we read about in Revelation, the day of the Lord, that's coming, it's all still to come.

[17:33] It's all still to happen for us. But it's not like the day of the Lord is held in balance somewhere. It's not like it could go one way or could go another way. The ultimate victory we see in Revelation, it's already signed and sealed.

It's already sure. It can't not happen. He's already won that battle. And on that day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.

Amen? Amen. So remember this. Remember those things when we sing this song. He's already won. You've already won. Yeah? And when we sing that together, we're actually saying as a body, as a family of believers, as brothers and sisters, we all agree and affirm that we believe that he's already won.

And we genuinely do. And we're building each other up in that. So let's sing that together. So please stand with me. Yeah? We're going to sing, You've Already Won. We're going to sing, You've Already Won.

We're going to sing, You've Already Won.

[19:24] We're going to sing, You've Already Won.

We're going to sing, You've Already Won. We're going to sing, You've Already Won.

We're going to sing, You've Already Won. We're going to sing, You've Already Won. From my hope and sleep. When the sea is breaking. Your spirit is my help.

You'll fix my eyes on Jesus Christ. I'll sing that in you. Oh, I know that in you.

I'll fight it, I'll fight it. You've already won.

[21:06] No matter what time is my way. I will. I'll come to trouble what you're doing.

I know what you're doing. Thank you, God. I'll fight it, I know. You've already won.

Oh, oh, oh, oh. I know how the story ends.

For I know how the story ends. I know. I know. We will be with you again. We will be with you again.

You're my savior, my defense. No more fear in life or death.

[22:28] I know I know how the story ends We will believe you again You're my Savior, my defense No more fear in life or death Oh, I know how the story ends We will believe you We will believe you again You're my Savior, you're my Savior No more fear

No more fear I know how the story ends Oh, we know We know how it ends I'm calling your father You know where to hold Oh, I know how the story ends I'm already won. No matter what comes my way, I will overcome. Don't know what you're doing, but I know what you've done.

I'm fighting the battle you've already won. You've already won the battle.

[25:13] Oh, man. Oh, man.

Oh, man. Oh, man. Oh, man.

Oh, man. Oh, man. Oh, man. Oh, man.

Oh, man. Oh, man. Oh, man. Oh, man.

Oh, man. Oh, man. Oh, man. Oh, man. Oh, man.

[26:29] Oh, man. Oh, man. Oh, man. Jesus Christ, my living hope.

Who can imagine so great a mercy One heart could follow such power seems The God of Egypt stepped down from glory To wear my sin and wear my shame Sing at the cross tonight.

The cross has broken, I am obedient The King of kings told me his own He took the Savior on the earth forever Jesus Christ, my living hope.

Hallelujah, hallelujah Praise the Lord who sent me Hallelujah, hallelujah Death has lost his free by me You have broken and changed The salvation in your name Jesus Christ, my living hope Then came the glory That sealed the promise Your buried body Became to be Out of the silence The roaring lion Declared the grave Cast no claim on me

Then came the morning That sealed the promise Your buried body Became to be And out of the silence The roaring lion Declared the grave Ask your name on me Jesus Jesus, your peace of victory Christ, my living hope Hallelujah, hallelujah Oh, hallelujah Hallelujah Praise the one who set me free Hallelujah Let the cross have grip on me You have broken and changed Yes, I'll be saved Yes, I'll be saved Yes, I'll be saved In your name Jesus Christ, my living hope

[29:49] Hallelujah, hallelujah Hallelujah Hallelujah Praise the Lord who sent me free Hallelujah And the Lord still calling You have broken and changed Yes, I'll be saved In your name Jesus Christ, my living hope Jesus Christ, my living hope Jesus Christ, my living hope Oh, God, you are my living hope Yes, you are, yes, you are Amen Amen Amen Praise God Sorry Praise God Let me just pray Let me just pray Father, thank you

Thank you that we get to come and worship you We sing of and we remember and we agree and affirm, Lord, that you are our living hope That no matter how great the chasm that lay between us or how high the mountain that set before us We know that you are with us We know that you are with us We know that no challenge you set ahead of us is going to be greater than the power behind us because the power behind us is the living God We thank you for that, Father, because we don't deserve it We don't deserve it, but you give it anyway We bless you We exalt you in this place We want to thank you You've already won every battle We want to praise you and give you all the glory Amen Amen If anybody wants to pray If anybody wants to give a prayer of thanks to God or a prayer of anything, really

Just maybe now is the time to call out those prayers or pray them in your heart if you feel more comfortable Amen Amen Amen

Amen Should we carry on worshipping? Let's do it We've done this one before as well Rescuer, he's our rescuer Amen Isn't that a prayer?

There's good news for the captive There's good news for the shamed There's good news for the one who walked away His name is Jesus Amen And he's our rescuer He's our rescuer Now can we face him forevermore Oh how sweet the sound Hey Oh how grace of the land Hey We have grace of the land Hey We have grace of the land How grace of the land There's good news for the captive

Here's raise for the captive Good news for the sea There's good news for one who walked away  
There's good news for one who walked away There's good news for the doubter One religion failed  
For the people has come to see the same He's our rescuer.

[34:29] He's our rescuer. He's our rescuer. We are the leafless and  
forevermore.

Oh, how sweet the sound. Oh, how amazing. We'll raise the power of the earth.

He is beauty. He is beauty for the black man. Riches for the poor. He is friendship for the one the  
world they know.

He is pastor for the weary. Friends for those who start. For the good Lord is the way, the truth and  
the light.

Oh, he has the good Lord. He is the way, the truth and the light. He's our rescuer. He's our rescuer.

[35:29] We are the leafless and forevermore. Oh, how sweet the sound.  
Hey. Oh, how grace the sound.

Hey. We have the reason and our rescue work. Always. So come and be shameless. Come and be  
fearless.

Come to the foot of Calvary For every affliction, you're the flood of Calvary.

So come and retain us, come and we fear us. Come to the Lord of Calvary.

There is a nation in every place in the world of Calvary.

[36:35] He's our rescue, he's our rescue. I'm going to live for sin  
forevermore.

But I'll see you as well in the hall of grace or bounds. Let me raise the Lord, I'll ask you. Let me raise  
the Lord, I'll ask you.

You're my rescuer. Amen, amen.

Give me one second, because you might have had some water. Much better.

Amen. By grace.

[37:50] By grace alone somehow I stand. Where even angels fear to tread.

Invited by redeeming love. Before the throne of God I'm born.

He holds me, I'm born. He holds me, I'm born. He holds me, I'm born. He holds me, I'm born. With  
nails but hands. Into his everlasting arms.

A condemnation. A condemnation. A condemnation. A condemnation grips my heart.

And Satan tempts me to despair. I hear your voice that scatters me.

[39:00] Oh, praise. Oh, praise. Oh, praise. Oh, praise.

Oh, praise, the one who fights for me. Oh, praise. Oh, praise.

Oh, praise. Holy, I have crossed your throne. In this now I'm running home.

By the Lord I come. Welcome to the Lord. Into the arms of majesty.

Behold the rising risen sun. More beauty than this world has known.

[40:17] I'm face to face with heart and soul. Oh, this perfect spot was  
righteousness.

Oh, a thousand years. A thousand times. I'm not enough to see it again.

Oh, a thousand years. Oh, a thousand years. I'm not enough to see it again. I'm not enough to see  
it again.

Lord, I have crossed your throne. I'm not enough to see it again. I'm not enough to see it again.

I'm not enough to see it again. I'm not enough to see it again.

[41:23] I'm not enough to see it again. I'm not enough to see it again.

I'm not enough to see it again. I'm not enough to see it again.

Oh, a thousand years. I'm not enough to see it again. I'm not enough to see it again. This is the  
hour of celebration Though we're free from condemnation Oh, praise the Lord, praise the Lord We'll  
do it to all my sins Oh, this is the hour of celebration Oh, this is the hour of celebration Oh, praise  
the Lord, praise the Lord We'll do it to all my sins You broke the eye across your throne  
Wraithless now I'm running home Pride, my Lord, I come Welcome, there's a road Into the arms of  
majesty Thank you so much for leading us, guys Father God, we just thank you so much That you  
just invite us to come boldly Into your throne room To be in your presence The King of Kings, the  
creator of the universe And yet we can come into your presence And call you Father And we can be  
home in your presence And we're just so thankful for that Thank you, Lord Jesus Amen Do please

sit down Let's give a round of applause To some people Thank you so much for leading us That was wonderful Now at this point I'm very excited to welcome Our guest speakers for this weekend John and Alison Would you like to come up Just so we can introduce you Do come up if you stand on that side You stand in the middle, Alison Because you haven't got a microphone So I'm so delighted to be able to introduce John and Alison to you They're going to be with us for the whole weekend Which is such a blessing for us I'll let them introduce themselves in a moment But my connection with John and Alison I actually first met John About 25, 26 years ago When I was at university at Southampton Anyone else from university at Southampton?

[44:37] There's a few of us Best university in the world And I was involved in the Christian union there And I had the job of coordinating the cell groups And I didn't have a clue what I was doing And I was supposed to do a weekend To train up the cell group leaders I didn't have any idea How to lead a small group, a cell group And someone suggested that I ask John Who was working for UCCF at the time Which supports Christians in universities To come and help lead that weekend And he came and he was awesome And it was a big support And then I bumped into John and Alison Again very recently On the course I'm doing Some of you know I'm doing A leadership and theology training course Through Catalyst And John and Alison are now leading that course And it's been a wonderful blessing to me The input they've given on the course Has really helped me so much Just in my walk with God To grow in that But also to be equipped for The stuff I'm doing here And that's been awesome So thank you so much for agreeing to come Can you just tell us a little bit about About yourselves Before we pray for you And then at that point We'll send the children out as well Thank you

So we're based down Near Southampton still We live just on the edge of New Forest Which is all very beautiful And we worship in a church We were in leadership in the church For 18 years In the centre of Southampton And about a year and a half ago Two years ago We felt God was very clearly saying It's time to move on We didn't know what to So it was a huge step of faith We worship in a different church now That's a real blessing to us And John can say what he's doing I spend three or four days a week Teaching English to people From lots of different nations Who live from very difficult circumstances As refugees to the city So that's a real privilege And blessing for me And something that's been very exciting Over the years We've got two daughters Who are Well one is nearly 30

Which makes us feel really old And the other is 26 And they're a real joy to us as well Oh one of them got engaged Three weeks ago Wow Congratulations Wonderful Thank you And the other connection with here Is Tim Feeney And Sam and Lucy Lenton Both people that we All people rather That we knew very well In the Bud Bar days And Tim actually Had the misfortune Of living with us for a year So it's great to just Renew that friendship During lockdown During lockdown Yeah We didn't let him escape So yes After We were leading A Bud Bar church In the middle of Southampton For 18 years As Alison said Then I took a year out To study I did a very similar course To what Andrew did At All Nations College In sort of church and mission That kind of thing And then God led us into Working with Catalyst The church we go to At King's Community Church Is part of the Catalyst Family of churches

And the leadership programme That Andrew attends Is serving those churches And we're now Leading that together Which is wonderful And then from Easter I'll also be on the staff Of the church part time Doing mission things locally So that's absolutely Brilliant Thank you We're really looking forward To hearing you John's going to be teaching This morning Alison's doing a workshop Later on that some of us Are going to be attending So I'm going to pray For John and Alison I'm also going to pray For Jackie and Helen And others who are going To be leading our Children's session this morning Just a note We are a bit behind schedule But that's fine The schedule is A plan to work from Rather than to work to So the next session We're going to run until 11.25 Jackie if that's alright with you You'll have the children Until 11.25 We'll break for coffee At that point So let's pray for John and Alison And for our kids Before they go out as well Father God We thank you so much For John and Alison And for the ministry That you've called them to In teaching And leading others And

working with International students As well as we've heard And I just want to pray  
For John now As he shares with us I pray that you will Speak through him And speak to our hearts  
From your word That we would be changed And transformed By your word And I just want to pray  
For Jackie and her team And for the children Young people who are going out Now that they'll have  
A wonderful session Enjoying spending time together And growing closer to you And closer to each  
other We pray that in Jesus' name Amen Amen Amen So thanks Alison I'll let you go So children If  
you're a primary age child Or if you're a young person Who wants to help them If you can go with  
Jackie Now And then we'll see you again In about 40 minutes time So we'll let you go Carry on  
Thank you Great Well again Thank you very much

[49:40] For your lovely welcome to us And the hospitality We've already  
enjoyed With Sam and Lucy Last night And with Andrew And Miriam It's  
great to be here Great to reconnect With old friends And I trust Over the  
course of the weekend To make some new friends As well We're going to be  
looking Over today and tomorrow At the What we call The book of Titus  
Originally a letter Written by the apostle Paul To his colleague Titus  
And I You're going to hear Quite a lot of words From me I suppose In the  
next 24 hours or so So I want to give priority To the only words You're  
going to hear from me That are completely dependable Which are the words  
Of scripture itself So I'm going to read Titus chapter 1 And we'll take a  
chapter For each session I'll go through it Fairly quickly But let's  
Let's not see The reading of God's word As just a preamble To the talk  
It's a big deal To hear the word of God Read to us

So let me Read Titus chapter 1 I'm reading from the NIV 2011 version I hope that's Okay There  
may be slight Differences With what you have Depending what's in front of you So Titus chapter 1  
Paul A servant of God And an apostle of Jesus Christ To further the faith Of God's elect And their  
knowledge Of the truth That leads to godliness In the hope of eternal life Which God Who does not  
lie Promised Before the beginning of time And which now At his appointed season He has brought  
to light Through the preaching Entrusted to me By the command Of God Our saviour To Titus My  
true son In our common faith Grace and peace From God the Father And Christ Jesus Our saviour  
The reason I left you In Crete Was that you might Put in order What was left unfinished And appoint  
elders In every town As I directed you An elder must be Blameless Faithful to his wife  
A man whose children Believe And are not open To the charge Of being wild And disobedient Since  
an overseer Manages God's household He must be blameless Not overbearing Not quick tempered  
Not given to drunkenness Not violent Not pursuing dishonest gain Rather he must be hospitable  
One who loves what is good Who is self controlled Upright Holy And disciplined He must hold firmly  
To the trustworthy message As it has been taught So that he can encourage others By sound  
doctrine And refute those Who oppose it For there are many rebellious people Full of meaningless  
talk And deception Especially those Of the circumcision group They must be silenced Because they  
are disrupting Whole households By teaching things They ought not to teach And that for the sake  
Of dishonest gain One of Crete's own prophets Has said it Cretans are always liars Evil brutes Lazy  
gluttons There you go This saying is true Therefore rebuke them sharply  
So that they will be sound In the faith And will pay no attention To Jewish myths Or the merely  
human commands Of those who reject the truth To the pure All things are pure But to those who  
are corrupted And do not believe Nothing is pure In fact Both their minds And consciences Are  
corrupted They claim to know God But by their actions They deny him They're detestable  
Disobedient And unfit For doing anything good That's some pretty strong words In Titus Aren't  
there?

I hope we'll be able to make A bit of sense of them As we go through So a number of years ago  
Alison and I had the pleasure Of spending a couple of weeks On a lovely island In the Caribbean It  
was a beautiful time We were doing teaching for a week And then we had a week of holiday And in  
the second week We were staying in the lovely home Of a delightful family Who entertained us for  
the week And it was a beautiful home It was new And to be honest It was pretty swanky It was quite  
an impressive Kind of place But the thing that struck me about it Was on a marina With a kind of  
back garden Entrance onto the sea You know That kind of place But the whole thing Couldn't have  
been more than Two metres above sea level And the sea was right there Just in the back garden  
And so I can't quite remember How I dared to get the conversation To this point But at one point I

asked the guy who lived there

[54:12] If anyone on the island Talked much about global warming And rising sea levels Because I was thinking You know One metre And your garden's history Two metres The house is in the ocean This isn't a very happy situation My host looked a bit surprised That I'd asked the question And he said No I've not heard anyone Talk about that around here So I tactfully moved on And thought this wasn't quite The thing to be talking about But it did leave me With this rather uneasy sense That this tropical paradise That we were living in Which seemed so idyllic Was actually rather caught in unreality And was effectively living a lie No one's talking about that stuff here Well there was another island This time in the Mediterranean Which was famed for living a lie And it was the island of Crete To which Paul sent this letter Which we call the book of Titus

And lying was something That the island of Crete Was famous for in the ancient world So much so that as we read In chapter 1 verse 12 One of their own people Their own poets said The Cretans are always liars Strong language And Paul agrees with them He says this saying is true What's this deal there?

What's the connection between Crete Cretans and liars Lying It actually goes quite deep You see the Cretans worshipped The Greek gods Headed up by Zeus The god of the sky So they thought But the Cretans had their own Kind of version of the Zeus myths They believed And it rather suited their sense Of sort of island pride I suppose That Zeus was a man Turned god Who had been born in Crete And was buried in Crete I don't quite get my head around How they came to that conclusion But that's what they thought And they thought that he was A man who had been made a god By human beings After he had proved himself Rather useful to them Getting some good harvests And that sort of thing going But then here's the key thing They believed And they celebrated Zeus As a crafty deceiver

One of their myths Told how he had disguised himself As the husband Of one of the most beautiful women In the island In order to seduce her For himself And he was celebrated For the power of his deceptions Stand back What's going on here?

This is a society Living in a lie About a lying god Who was himself a lie And who didn't hesitate to lie To get what he wanted From other people It's little wonder Is it That in the Greek world To play the Cretan Meant to lie Or to deceive Deep connection Between lying And life in Crete When you realise that You then read this introduction Chapter 1 verse 1 To this letter In a rather different way Because Paul writes To the Cretans And to Titus in particular As God He's writing As God's servant And Jesus' apostle Commissioned Verse 1 To further the faith Of God's elect And their knowledge Of the truth That leads to godliness The truth That leads That leads To godliness Contrast

[57:56] With the lies That lead to deception And ungodliness So at the heart Of this letter Is the conviction That God has chosen A people To live In the truth In the context Of a world That is living A lie And of course That's still What it means To be a Christian It's still what it means To be a Christian In the West Today Isn't it The lies That govern And shape Our culture Are not quite So blatant Perhaps As those That shaped Cretan culture In the first century But the lies Are just as powerful Are just as powerful The lie That the path To happiness And security Lies in the pursuit Of more and more wealth It's a lie It's a lie But it controls What we do The lie That freedom Is found By disregarding others And turning your back On God The way we live But it's not true The lie

That there are no Givens And that who you are Is just who you choose To be Or who you feel Yourself to be It's not true But it's a powerful myth In our own society And just as I imagine Was happening in Crete Those lies Are slowly Destroying our civilization From the inside But in this world Of the lie God still has a people Whom he has chosen To live in the truth The truth of the good news Of Jesus With a mission As we're going to see In these coming chapters To make that truth Visible And attractive And credible By the way That we live In our community That's the calling Of the people of God Which is why Right up front Paul is emphasizing That he's writing To further

their knowledge Of the truth That leads To godliness The truth Of the gospel Of Jesus  
So in this session In chapter one We're just going to look At three kind of implications Of that  
emphasis Of the truth Of the gospel And how he applies that Into the life Of the church there First of  
all Verses one to four He understands The church To be grounded In the truth Of the gospel  
Grounded In the gospel That's why He's writing To further the faith Of God's elect In this truth Of the  
gospel And to be grounded In the gospel And to be increasingly Solidly grounded In the gospel  
Means a number of things Here It is just We know Tasha And That  
You Thank you.

Thank you.

[62:01] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[64:31] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[67:01] Thank you.

Thank you.