

Do what Jesus did!

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[0 : 00] We're in the middle of a three-part series, or the end of a three-part series today, looking at our purpose statement. And just want to start by reminding us of that and just doing! a little bit of context, but also to, as I said at the beginning, to commend these cards to you.

And these cards have our purpose statements put on them, and then, which, just to remind you, be with Jesus, become like Jesus, do what Jesus did. And then there's a little page of each of the cards is a little bit of a guide on that. So they're really very useful, and if you haven't got them, please do grab them at the end. I've got a few here, but there's also a big pile on the table at the back of church, well, in the entrance hall. But if we just have the first slide, please, Josh.

Just this context. And the context is this. Over the next three years, which sounds like quite a long time, we're going to be exploring what we mean in some depth, in our life groups, in our Bible studies, in our praying, not all the time, but as a focus through the year of this purpose statement. And this year, we're talking about and thinking about being with Jesus. But we wanted to start off by having the three-part series. So John spoke two weeks ago about being with Jesus. Mike spoke last week about becoming like Jesus, and today I'm going to talk about doing what Jesus did. But the focus, obviously, this year is be with Jesus. So there's the context to you, and that's quite an important context, because it's something that we need to see as a whole piece, not just little bits of it.

So every now and then, we want to remind you that this is all part of one big concept, if you like, one big purpose and mission statement. Okay, so the next slide, please. The problem that I have this morning, do what Jesus did, is that there's an immense amount of source material. They're called the Gospels, and the source material there. So I'll do that first, and then we'll get into having a think about what it says. So I guess that the homework, or one of your bits of homework, is recognize that whatever I say this morning is only a part of what we can talk about when we see, when we think about doing what Jesus did. And there's a real blessing and benefit in picking any of the Gospels, any of the Gospels, and just reading through. Read through in big chunks, read through a verse at a time, read through as you will. But be astonished, be astonished at what Jesus did, because he was forever astonishing the people around him. He was never predictable, and Jesus is never predictable, except for this.

He loves you. Except for this, he wants the best for you. That is always predictable. But if you read through Scripture, you see, and if you read through the Gospels, you see Jesus doing things which is quite breathtaking. And we sort of think about it and say, yeah, well, that was Jesus for you.

[3 : 52] But feeding 5,000 people, plus all the women and children. You know, we say, oh yeah, that was the feeding of the 5,000. Astonishing. Absolutely astonishing. Calming the waves. Astonishing.

Turning water into wine. Astonishing. And we could go on. Healing, healing, healing. Speaking truth.

Speaking love. Speaking challenge. So when we talk about do what Jesus did, and when I try in the next little while to think about that, please understand, this is just part of what Jesus did.

So, if we are going to spend time, if we're going to do, sorry, what Jesus did, if that is our ambition, and it is, we need to spend time and effort getting to know Jesus and studying what he did.

And that's just a sort of statement of the obvious, in one sense. But it's also really very important that we choose deliberately to spend time looking at the Gospels, looking at what Jesus did.

[5:12] And we have a real perfect mentor in Jesus. And I was turned, as I was preparing, to Philippians chapter 2. A very well-known passage, but one that's always worth reading.

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, says Paul, and there is. Any consolation from love, and there is. Any sharing in the Spirit, yes.

Any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete. Be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

I mean, there's such a lot in there. Such a lot in there. And then he goes on. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.

[6:18] Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited. But he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave. Being born in human likeness and being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name. So at the name of Jesus, every knee should bend in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

And I suppose that one of the things that I wanted to pick out of that passage, and there's such a lot to pick out, is Jesus humbled himself.

When Jesus did things and does things, he doesn't do it for self-glorification. And I find myself worried by Western Christianity, where much of it feels to me to be driven by personal aggrandizement.

Look how good I am. Look how well I've done. Aren't I a very godly man? And the minute that happens is the minute that you have received your award on earth and not in heaven.

[7:46] Jesus was the opposite, is the opposite. And so what we do is not for personal gain. What we do as Christians is not for personal gain.

It's for blessing because God will bless us. But the minute I want to become a famous preacher is the minute I've lost the plot.

The minute we want to become famous Christians is the minute we've lost the plot. I saw an advert somewhere, I forget where it was, for a Christian service.

Just essentially a church service, but in a big auditorium, a big arena-type place. And you could buy different levels of tickets to go to church.

You could go to church, or you could go to church with special access to a lounge for 500 pounds or dollars or whatever it was. And then if you wanted to meet the people, the worship leaders, you could pay 1,500 dollars or pounds, and it went up.

[8:56] Now, you know, we can be shocked by that, but that is the nature of humanity. So I suppose that what I'm trying to say here to start with is, when we talk about doing what Jesus did, this is not something like we're turning into some sort of circus show or something special.

And I'll come to this towards the end, but this is about our lifestyle. This is about our choice to be like Jesus and to do what Jesus did.

Doing what Jesus did, not because of our own cleverness, because of the passionate love for God that we have and the passionate love that he has for us.

I'm sorry, somebody's got me a glass of water, please. Thank you. You can get three glasses of water, go on. And the only way we can do that, the only possible way we can do that, is by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

He is the one who guides us, comforts us, and corrects us. He is the one who will give us the behavior and the attitude that we need to have.

[10:22] And again, that's something that we must not lose sight of, that we need to be, thank you very much, daily indwelled and filled by the Spirit.

We need to come to God routinely and daily, if not more often than daily, to repent, to come before God and say, cleanse me and make me new.

And we know that that's what God does. We know that that's what's available to us, and it's great. But we need to be humble, and we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Do what Jesus did isn't just a party game. It's part of our calling, and part of our lifestyle, and part of our privilege in Christ.

Next slide, please. Jesus here in Luke chapter 4, quoting Isaiah chapter 61. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he's anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

[11:34] He sent me to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

So there's Jesus setting out one of his mission statements. If you were in an interview, and they said, what do you think, Jesus, you're going to do?

I'm going to preach the gospel to the poor, proclaim the release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, set free those who are oppressed, and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Very good.

You've got the job. Thank you. What a wonderful, wonderful set of things. Have a look at those verses just for a moment.

Preach the gospel to the poor. If you like the dispossessed, it doesn't just mean the monetary poor. It means those who are dispossessed, those who have nothing.

[12:33] Those who feel abandoned. I'm going to preach the good news of Jesus Christ. Our job is to preach the good news of Jesus Christ by our words and by our actions, by the way that we live, by the way that we be.

There's something different about them. There's something different about us, each of us today, because we have Jesus in our lives.

And how do we preach? How do we choose to preach the good news of Jesus Christ? We can do it by standing up in front of a group of people. We can also choose it by being very quiet and very gentle and very generous and very kind.

Release of the captives. Again, I was thinking about this as I was preparing and thinking, what a lot of people are living in captivity today. I don't just mean physical captivity or there are lots and lots of people that live in physical captivity.

There are people who live in prison, but there are people who live in prisons of political regimes, of dogma, of attitude. There are people who live in this country in captive because of bad relationships, dangerous relationships.

[14:02] People who live in captive to substances. People who live in captive to their own self-defeating or self-hating thoughts.

All of these are really hard. All of these are really hard. But that's not how God wants us to live. That's not what Jesus came to do.

And if we are going to do what Jesus did, we need to actively choose to proclaim release to the captives. Not in the name of Andy Lloyd, by the way. Not in the name of Whitby Christian Fellowship.

But release and freedom in the name of Jesus Christ. But we have to get into this idea that we need to be people who free our brothers and sisters.

Those that we come across, those that we meet, those that come here. In the name of Jesus. Release is part of what Jesus did.

[15:06] recovery of sight to the blind and healing. Set free those who are oppressed. Proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

You get what I'm saying. And just don't lose sight of proclaiming the year of the Lord's favour. Don't lose sight of that wonderful notion that Jesus wants us to feel to feel actively his favour upon us.

Patronage is quite an interesting thing isn't it? And it's something that we know quite a lot about in this country and we've seen quite a lot of it in the last month or two following the Queen's death and the, well not the coronation but the, I don't know what the right word is, but the proclamation of our new King and patronage.

And that's something that is part of our country. It's just an inheritance and a benefit and a blessing. But just think of Jesus pronouncing patronage over you.

Pronouncing favour over you. pronouncing inheritance over you. We are heirs with Christ. Co-heirs.

[16:35] We inherit blessing. The Lord's favour is upon you. And Jesus announced that. Jesus said that is true and it remains true.

And again, we mustn't make the mistake of thinking, well that was then and this is now. Jesus announces his blessing onto you. And he wants you to know that blessing.

He wants you to have the confidence of knowing that blessing. Of the inheritance of eternal life. Of the inheritance of heaven. Of the inheritance of his presence within you through the Holy Spirit.

what else did Jesus do? Well, I've just got the, that slide please, Josh, if you would. I just put this up because again it came to my mind.

He's shown you, oh mortal, what is good and what's the Lord require of you to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God. Passage from Micah chapter 6 there. Very, very simple verse full of depth and we haven't got time and I don't want to go into it in great detail.

[17:45] But, if you want a shorthand, if you want a simple little thing to keep in your head this week, act justly, love mercy, walk humbly. Okay?

Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly. In all your doings, in all your doings, when you're out shopping, when you're out walking, when you bump into your neighbour, when you are driving, whatever it is, act justly, love mercy, walk humbly.

As a matter of will this week, if you're a driver, every time you see someone who wants to turn into your lane, let them in. Just because it's kind.

It costs you about 11 seconds. It's not going to make you late. Okay, next slide please. So to do what Jesus did, we need to be disciples, followers of Jesus, by a number of different things.

And I've just got a few here. So if we just think about these fairly quickly, if we think about being anointed first by the Spirit, we can do nothing without the power of the Spirit within us.

[19:08] Acts chapter 1 verse 4 and onwards. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. This, he said, is what you heard from me.

For John baptized with water, but you'll be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. So when they come together, they asked him, Lord, is this the time when you will restore your kingdom to Israel?

He replied, it's not for you to know the time or the period that the Father has set by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you'll be one of my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Two things really important there. First of all, and it's the second part of the passage, you'll do it through the power of the Holy Spirit. You will do what Jesus did through the power of the Holy Spirit.

But really importantly, wait until I say. Wait until I say. Some of you here won't find that a challenge.

[20:15] Some of me here find it a great challenge because I have brilliant ideas almost all the time. And most of my brilliant ideas aren't that great.

And that's why Jesus says, wait. Wait until the time is right. Wait until you are empowered by the Holy Spirit to do it.

We need to be anointed by the Spirit in all that we do. We need to receive the Holy Spirit in our lives and allow him to guide us, to prompt us, to encourage us.

But we need to do nothing in our own strength. We need to do nothing without the power of the Spirit behind us, with us and in front of us.

So that's the first thing we need to do when we want to do what Jesus did. Matthew chapter 28, probably one of the most famous verses in Scripture.

[21:21] Jesus said to them all, authority in heaven 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 the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.

And remember, I am always with you to the end of the age. Goodness me, what a wonderful little passage that is. Matthew chapter 28, 18 to 20.

All authority on heaven and earth is with Jesus. As we look around the world, as we look around our country, as you read any newspaper, watch any newspaper, any television program, news article, radio bulletin, you will see authority being discussed, hear authority being discussed.

I have the right. Goodness me, how often do we hear that? I've got the right. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me, says Jesus.

So as we do what Jesus did, as we aim to do what Jesus did, we need to recognize that the authority to do that comes from heaven.

[22:42] Go and make disciples. Go and make disciples. Baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, not in the name of Whitby Christian Fellowship. I repeat myself for emphasis.

Teach them to obey everything I have commanded. We can't do that until we find ourselves in submission to everything that has been commanded by God. So we need, again, to know what it is that we're being told to do.

But then we get this wonderful, wonderful encouragement and to paraphrase, don't forget I've got your back. Don't forget I've got your back.

In my job, particularly, for those of you who don't know, I'm a social worker. When I was managing people and asked them to go and do social work tasks, I used to make it very clear, I'm not coming with you but I've got your back.

I'm on your side. And if it goes wrong, it's for me to sort. And that's really important. And that was really important for my colleagues. How much more is important?

[23 : 51] Is it important, is it? When we find ourselves in a situation where we simply don't know what to do. We don't know how to work it.

and we can just say to God, you're with me. I'll go and do it because you've asked me to. But you're with me. This is on you. And that's really exciting.

Quite a number of years ago now I had a phone call out of the blue from a member of the fellowship we were in at the time and he was very distressed, this chap. And he said, our son has just been diagnosed as being blind.

He was a little tiny baby. Would you come and see us? And I said, yes, I'll come and see you. And I went to see them and as I was driving there I had this sense of complete emptiness in my, I didn't know what to say.

We have, at the time our children were living at home and little, we had three perfectly healthy children. And this father distressed beyond words could hardly speak.

[24 : 58] our son has been diagnosed as blind as a little tiny baby a few weeks old. And I said out loud as I was driving, God I can't do this, this is on you.

I'm going but I can't do it. I don't know what to say. And of course I should have remembered I remembered later when you don't know what to say the spirit will speak on your behalf.

And I went and we cried and we prayed and God was good. In fact God was so good that that little boy is not blind because of a miracle.

Now, which took the breath away of the doctors a few weeks later. That's, I suppose that's the byproduct of the story that I'm trying to tell. The story I'm trying to tell really is God is with you always in every situation when we cry out to him.

The thing that we forget, the thing that I forget so often is to cry out to him and say I can't do this. I don't know how. I don't understand. But you're with me even to the end of the earth.

[26 : 13] So one of these really important bits of doing what Jesus did is to know that Jesus is with us. And then of course the point of that passage in Matthew is go and preach the good news.

Go and tell other people about it. However we do this. We were talking about this in our life group and our house group on Tuesday night a bit. And I'm not a natural evangelist.

I'm a hopeless evangelist naturally. I don't find it easy. But fortunately I've never been asked to preach to an auditorium of 15,000 people.

Just as well it would not be good. That would not go well. There are members in our fellowship who are much more naturally gifted at evangelism. But that doesn't mean I don't have to share the good news.

I have to share the good news in the way that I can. By chatting to people. Because I chat to anybody. And I enjoy it. I like people. So as I chat to people how do I introduce my love of Christ?

[27 : 23] How do I do what Jesus did? Being me. Being ordinary. Being comfortable. Romans chapter 5. We need to proclaim freedom.

Therefore since we are justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have obtained access to the grace in which we stand. And we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.

We can boast in Jesus. We can boast in Jesus and allow him to help us to proclaim freedom.

in a world of captivity. In a world of being locked in to all sorts of behaviours and all sorts of attitudes and all sorts of thought patterns.

Being locked into a thought pattern of individualism and desperation. I'm on my own. I'm on my own.

[28 : 24] And God never says that. God never says that. And I suppose that I've really been struck in preparing for this morning how hurting people are and how hard it is when you're locked into a thought pattern or a behaviour pattern which just rules your life and how much we need to proclaim freedom as Christians how much just as Jesus did we must do the same.

Proclaim freedom to the captive. And then I've talked about God's favour before but Titus chapter 2 for the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled upright and godly while we wait for the blessed hope and manifestation of the glory of our great God and saviour Jesus Christ.

He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself the people who are his own who are zealous for good deeds.

The problem with reading all these things is there's about four sermons in each of them and it's quite tempting to preach them and I'm not going to but there we have this idea that the grace of God the grace of God which we have as we are indwelled by the Holy Spirit which we have because this is what Jesus did we have that favour upon us and God looks favourably upon us let's move on nice little quote from Dallas Willard here the greatest issue facing the world today with all its heartbreak needs is whether those who by profession or culture are identified as Christian will become disciples students apprentices practitioners of Jesus Christ steadily learning from him how to live the life of the kingdom and of the heavens into every corner of human existence

John uses Dallas Willard the lot as a reference and his writings as reference and he's absolutely brilliant and the language he uses sometimes needs to be re-read but equally this is not a difficult one to understand it's my emphasis there in the bold steadily learning from him from Jesus how to live the life of the kingdom as Christians we have to learn and learn and learn you never graduate from the school of Christianity this side of heaven because there's all the new things to learn but we need to learn because we need to influence every corner of human existence and for some of us that will mean going overseas for many of us that will mean every corner of human existence in Whitby and the surrounding villages and there's quite a few corners in Whitby and the surrounding villages you don't have to go very far to find a place where we need to share the gospel the good news the hope of Jesus

[32 : 12] Christ so let's make sure that as we think about doing what Jesus did and what Jesus continues to do we recognise the need to steadily learn and there's just nothing to get away from it we can't steadily learn if we don't spend time reading scripture we can't steadily learn if we don't spend time praying we can't steadily learn if we don't spend time listening to God it's not a guilt trip by the way I'm not saying feel guilty if you've missed your reading this morning or yesterday but it is a challenge it's a challenge to me and a challenge to you we can't do what Jesus did if we don't steadily learn from him how to do it like an apprenticeship watching the master like an apprentice rather watching the master we need to watch

Jesus and do and copy what he did and then finally if we come to this Matthew 25 Matthew 25 is a wonderful passage it's got three parables in a row and this is about lifestyle Christianity I promised I'd come back to this lifestyle Christianity three parables the parable of the talents the parable of the wise and foolish young women and the parable of the sheep and the goats if you don't know them please do read them in Matthew chapter 25 the parable of the talents somebody's given one talent two talents five talents go away and do something with it and the story of course is that those with five and two doubled the money the person with one buried it in the ground the person that was buried their talents in the ground was chastised by Jesus if we want to do what Jesus did we need to identify our

God-given talents and be ready to serve and the great thing is that each of us here this morning have a different talent the great thing is that in this room there are many many gifts gifts and skills and talents I can do stuff that you can't do that's quite remarkable to hear for you isn't it but what's much easier to believe is that you can do stuff that I can't do that's much easier we had somebody come round to our house a member of the fellowship come round to the house this week to do a little bit of DIY why because I'm hopeless and I have surrendered the fact that I shouldn't be let anywhere near a power tool it's fine that's fine because I can do other things like watch somebody use a power tool and go ooh that's clever what's your gift what's your calling what's your talent what has God asked you to do do you know because if you don't know you need to find out because none of you here today have nothing from God in terms of calling and talent doesn't matter about your age doesn't matter about your ability doesn't matter about who you are and what you do all of you here have a gift a skill a calling something that

God has given you without which we are the poorer in this church and in this community so what is it my lovely wife Fiona plays more instruments you can check a stick at not all at once but sometimes I can only play one thing I can play the fool that doesn't mean that was a joke that doesn't mean that Fiona is better than me it just means that she's a good musician and I'm not don't be diminished by somebody else's gifting find out what yours is and serve God with it to his glory do what Jesus did so the first thing we need to do is make sure that we know what our talent is the second thing the parable of the wise and foolish young women the oil and the lamps five had oil five didn't have oil they didn't have oil went to the shops to get some they ran out of oil they came in late and missed the party personal preparedness we need to make sure that we are ready to serve we need to make sure that we are at action stations and that we have got our oil we are ready to serve when Jesus calls us to do because sometimes you don't know when that call is going to happen but whatever it is whatever your talent is you need to be ready and the only way you can be ready is to be in strong relationship daily relationship with

Jesus so he can help you be ready the Holy Spirit will help you be ready to do the work that he wants you to do do what Jesus did and then finally the sheep and the goats the parable of the sheep and the goats and that astonishing passage I was hungry I was thirsty I was naked I was in prison I was ill and you came and served me but Lord when did we do that whenever you did it to the least of one of these you did it unto me but Lord when didn't we do it when you didn't do it to the least of one of these you didn't do it for me a powerful passage about service about humility about generosity you see Matthew 25 and we need to move on but Matthew 25 has such depth to it has such richness to it because it shows us a way of preparing ourselves so last slide please

[38 : 37] Josh this is lifestyle Christianity doing what Jesus did is a whole of life activity it's not just something we can do on a Sunday it's not just for Sunday best I nearly put a suit on today just to make the point but I didn't this isn't for dressing up on a Sunday this is just every day this is how we do stuff this is what we do it's our lifestyle it's a whole of life activity however old we are however young we are wherever we are in our life this is what we need to do we need to work at it before God every day and believe me friends this is radical as we do this this is radical stuff Jesus calls us to be counter cultural in a cultural world which so very often denies his very existence or even worse ignores him if we are going to do what

Jesus did if we are going to do what Jesus continues to do we need to find ourselves in that radical space it's challenging to us and it's challenging to others and finally let's commit together to steadily learn how to do it Amen