

11.9.16

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Date: 11 September 2016

Preacher: David Meredith

[0 : 00] Well good morning everyone and a warm welcome to the service this morning. It's good to see some visitors with us this morning also and you're especially welcome.

Tea and coffee will be served at the close of the service and all are welcome to stay for that. The evening service will be at 6 and will be conducted by myself, God Willard.

And the ladies Bible study meets tomorrow evening at 8, not in Tarbert but tomorrow evening the Bible study will be in the manse at Caius.

Also the deacons court will meet tomorrow evening and we'll gather at the new manse on the call as it's been constructed, renovated.

We'll meet there at 7, deacons court and we'll have a walk around and then we'll meet in Gordon's there after. To discuss any business. First group fellowships, Tuesday at half past 7, Church of Scotland Hall as usual, go to the public as usual at 8 on Tuesday and the prayer meeting on Wednesday at half past 7 here.

[1 : 05] All are welcome to that especially. The service next Sunday in the morning will be taken, God Willard, by myself. And in the evening we'll join together with the Scalkey Free Church for the communion service.

The Scalkey Communion will be running from Thursday through till Monday and on the back of your information sheet you've got the list of the services and those who are preaching.

So please defer to that at your own communion. Scalkey Free Church for the communion service. The collection for your team, which we had last night, is also available today to give to. And I said this evening we would have the collection but I'm sure the bucket is here somewhere.

And where is it, Keeney? It's in the cupboard. It's in the cupboard. So if at the end of the service it could be at the door. And if you want to give in the morning you can do that if you're not going to give in the evening.

[2 : 34] And there's also a chance to give to that clause in the evening too. I'm not going to ask Keeney or Mary to come up. I know they won't thank them for that to speak about it. But if you want to hear about it and you weren't able to hear already, sweep the either of them please.

And they'll tell you what it is that you're giving towards. Thank you to everybody who prepared food and who organised and who cleaned up and who did whatever.

At the party evening, yesterday evening, it was excellent. I'm still full. And I just want to say a word of thanks to everybody who did any part in that.

And I also want to thank you to David for speaking to us after that yesterday evening too. It's good to have Mr. Meredith. Mr. Meredith. Mr. Meredith is here from out that direction with us this morning. David is the mission director in the Free Church. And he's going to lead worship this morning. And I want to welcome him on your behalf. And assure you of our careful support as you take the service.

[3 : 46] So I'm going to hand over and have the privilege of sitting there. Well folks, it's lovely to be here. This is my very first time ever preaching in Harris.

I preached once in Scalpy. And that Scalpy is not Harris, of course. It's a different world, different experience. So this is my very first time on this lovely island.

So it is good to be here with you. I attended Pootree School over the hundred years ago. And many of my school friends came from Paris.

And have remained friends throughout most of my life. I remember writing a play in English in school with one of my friends.

It was called Last Tango in Drennersheba. It was a very good play. Tommy McLennan was from Drennersheba.

[4 : 46] He's one of my friends. He's been on higher things. And it's good to be back in this island with the Lord's people. And worshipping him together.

And let's do that with a great morning hymn. Holy, holy, holy. Lord God Almighty. Early in the morning. Our praise shall rise to you.

Let's stand to sing. Holy, holy, holy.

Lord God Almighty. Every in the morning.

Thy song shall rise to thee. Holy, holy, holy.

[5 : 45] Holy, holy. Holy, holy. Holy, holy. Holy, holy. Holy, holy. God in free persons.

Blessed Trinity. Holy, holy, holy. Holy, holy.

All the saints adore thee. Casting down their golden crown.

Far round the glassy sea. Cherubim and Seraphim.

Falling down before thee. Holy, holy, holy.

[6 : 53] And the darkness hide thee. Holy, holy, holy. Holy, holy.

Holy, holy. Though in the eye of sinful blood Thy glory may not see Only Thou art holy There is none beside Thee Perfect in power in love and purity Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord Almighty All Thy works shall praise Thy name

In earth and sky and sea Holy, holy, holy Merciful and mighty God in three persons Blessed Trinity Our Father, as we gather before You this morning, we thank You that early in the morning that we can give praise to You, our great God and our great King, the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We ask that we would come with reverence, that we would come with joy and also a sense of anticipation. We thank You for all that the morning brings. It brings the promise of a new day. It brings the end of a sleep.

And Lord, we thank You, we adore You that You have given us so many things. Father, You are the provider of everything. And we thank You for Your goodness and graciousness.

[9 : 29] Again, we think of the morning and Your word that says, Your mercies are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness.

And so we come before You thanking You for sleep, a home, rest, and all the things which we must never take for granted.

Lord, we acknowledge who You are, the creator and sustainer of all things. There was nothing. And You spoke. And then everything came.

There was a void and chaos. And You spoke. And out of that chaos came order. And Lord, in the chaos of our lives, we ask that You would bring order.

And even in the disorderliness of our experience, that we would recognise that even the chaos has a purpose. We confess our sin.

[10 : 30] Sins which we are aware of. Sins which we are unaware of. Sins of our speech. Sins of our thought. It is so ingrained within us.

But we thank You for the core of the Gospel. That though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though red and crimson, they shall be as blue.

And so we pray that we would revel in the Gospel today. That we would marvel that Jesus has died for our sins. And that our sins, if we trust in Him.

If we bring them to Him honestly. That He has forgiven. We bless You for the truth. That there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

So dear Lord, come amongst us at our congregation this morning. Thank You for everyone here. We pray for those who have lost loved ones in recent weeks.

[11 : 34] That You would bring calm and peace to them. We think of others who are struggling with bad news. And others who are dealing with good news.

Help us to see all things as having a purpose in life. Be with David and the elders and the deacons in the congregation here. As they lead the congregation on to a new phase.

That this congregation would be known for life. That it would be known for a Gospel outlook. And a love of the Lord's people. And of this community.

That we would desire to see this community grow. In godliness and zeal. Lord, we thank You for all the children present. And may they grow up to taste and see.

That God is good. Bless us now. In all that we say. In all that we do. We ask this in the Saviour's name. Amen. Oh, is it yours?

[12 : 33] Come on down. Let's have a wee chat. Let's have a wee chat. Oh, there's a lot of you. Huh? Right.

What's your name? What? Grace. That's a lovely name. What's your name, sir? Alistair. Ah. Are there any of you who arrange your supporters? One. Any of you? Two. Any of you? Seven-week supporters? None. Excellent.

Mr. McLeod's doing a great job in this church. Great job in this church. Right. Let's go into the slideshow. Slideshow.

Okay. We'll go to Plan E. Now, Plan E is one of my favourite programmes on TV.

[13 : 27] It's called Pop It Roll. Have you ever seen Pop It Roll? Yeah. Yeah? Yeah? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Great. What's your favourite characters in Paw Patrol?

Hmm? Gowl. Who? Guy. Guy. Sky. Sky. Sky. What a great name. Named after the most wonderful island in the world.

Sky. Yep. Chase. Chase. Chase is my favourite as well. Who's your favourite? You've forgotten it. Ah. It happens to be all the time. Does anyone know where a Paw Patrol live? Hmm? A Lakewood. They live in Adventure Bay.

They live in Adventure Bay. And Paw Patrol are all these rescue dogs. And every day they meet. And you know what they go on? They go on a mission.

[14 : 27] Can you see what do they go on? They go on a? Yeah. What do they go on? They go on a? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. They go on a mission. They go on a mission.

Yeah. They go on a mission. Yeah. Now another one of my favourite characters is... I wonder if you can guess who he is.

He's got a black and white cat. Can you describe what Matt's name? He's got a ... He? limb in Head. Is it Donald Jackson's name? Packed?

Yeah, pat.bral nut. He? hang. motion style, Nicole, know,■■■■ back.

Yeah, hey, live! Sleep is a bass meet. He's got to keep him on the floor. Logan Island. Yeah, they'll see him on a bit. He's got to keep him on a bit. Yeah. When speaking, he's got to do he? No. Well, it's a kind of lie, but it's a different kind of postural path.

[15 : 29] He's the same man, but he goes on a special mission. And he has this other man, do you know what he goes on a special mission on? No wonder. Because he uses a postural.

He does? Do you know what he uses? And a van, I think, flying. No, somebody knows it flies. He's got a helicopter.

So when he has a special delivery, he uses a helicopter. So, we've got a poppet roll, and they go on a... ..helicopter!

And we've got Postman's plant special delivery service. And he goes on a... ..mission! ...mission! They both go on a mission.

He goes on a... ..mission! Now, have you ever seen a factory called Cars? Yes.

[16 : 34] Yes. No. Does anyone have a car, a person, a car? No. No. No. No. I don't watch it. Okay.

What? There's one there, and it's my favorite one. And it's a secret agent. And his name is... ..Finney McMissar.

Okay? I think he's from Skylady. You're like... ..Finney McMissar. Finn McMissar. And do you know what Finn McMissar is?

He is a secret agent. And he goes... ..on a... ..mission. What does Finn McMissar go on? He goes on a...

...mission! ...mission! So... ..we've got... ..Pocket Row and someone that chase from Popet Row goes on a mission. We've got Postman Pan goes on a mission. And we've got...

[17 : 31] ...who's the big guy? ...A...COT. And what does he mean? ...A...COT. ...A...COT. And we've got... ..who's the third guy? ...A...COT. ...what does he mean?

...A...COT. ...Fin McMissar. And he goes on a mission. ...MISSISS! ...Inmission! ...So I've got all these people up there. And we may get there.

We may get there. But there was a fourth picture up there. There were 5 pictures up there. Number 1 was Chase from Paw Patrol.

Number 2 was... Number 3 was... And they all went on that. The 4th picture was of Mr McLeod.

And you know who Mr McLeod is? That's a great question. He is on a... Mission! Not a helicopter, a mission.

[18 : 40] And there was a 5th picture up there. And the 5th picture was really quite amazing. Because you know who it was of?

It was of... I wonder what we get in here. I don't think it's going to happen. Have you found the wee gadget?

Yes. Eh? You've lost the rest of the circle. That doesn't matter. It's all I need. I mean...

The 5th picture... I was okay. The 5th picture... Is a picture of... You love. And I got off the internet. Because there was a Christmas... Thing here. And there was someone over there talking to the boys and girls of Jesus. You see...

[19 : 40] One of the great things in life is to go on a mission. A mission is... When you do something amazing. And you really tell people wonderful things.

All these actors are a mission. And Mr. McLeod is a mission. But for the girls... You are also a mission. You are a mission.

You are a mission. To tell your friends... I've got the most amazing person ever. Who is Jesus. And Jesus... Has got the power to change the whole world.

More power than any superhero. More power than the toughest man. More power than anybody that went to the Olympics. All these folks are a mission.

You are a mission. And it's a great mission. Let me just pray for them. Dear Lord... We thank you for gathering us together today.

[20 : 47] And we pray that we love you... With all his heart. With all his mind. With all his strength. Thank you for the boys and girls. And we just pray that they grow up.

That they will grow up to know Jesus. To love Jesus. And to enjoy Jesus. For give us now all our sins. For we ask this in the name of Jesus.

Amen. Okay. Thank you very much. We can go back to the seat. We're back on screen. We're sitting there in Psalm 119.

From verse 97. Psalm 119 from verse 97. And the first verse is... Psalm 119 from 97. Yeah. From 97. Yeah.

From 97. Yeah. And the first verse is... Psalm 119 from 97. Yeah. Psalm 119 from 97. Yeah. Psalm 119 from 97. So, I'll have a lot of sin. I'll have a lot of sense.

[21 : 45] So, you know. And the first verse is... Psalm 119 from 97. Yeah. So, I have a lot of sin. Oh, how I love thy Lord, it is my love.

I study over here, it makes me wiser than my foes, for even with me stay.

The Lord, my teacher, do I now, more understanding fire.

Because my meditation, thy testimony's heart.

And understanding I excel, whose hearts are in patience.

[23 : 34] For I am never end to give all life of other men.

My feet groaning shall weigh thy skin. That I may give thy word.

I grow thy justice, hath not swear. For thou hast only known.

How sweet unto my taste, O Lord. Are all thy words of truth.

Yea, I do find them sweet upon. How sweet unto my love.

[25 : 00] I do find me. I do find me. The Lord, my heart to it. The Lord, my heart to it.

I dare for every way. I suppose. With all my heart to it.

Can we read the Bible, please? In Acts of the Apostles, Acts chapter 8.

We will read to verse 25.

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem. And all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

[26 : 19] The godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

The losers who had been scattered preached the word whatever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there.

When the prayers heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many.

And many paralytics and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in that city. Now for some time, a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria.

He boasted that he was someone great. And all the people, both high and low, gave them the attention and exclaimed, This man is the divine power known as the great power.

[27 : 34] They followed him, because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic. But when they believed Philip, as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Simon himself believed and was baptized, and he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them. They had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, and said, Give me also this ability, so that everyone in whom I laid my hands might receive the Holy Spirit.

[28 : 53] Peter answered, May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money. You are no part or share in this ministry.

Because your heart is not bright before God, repent of this wickedness, and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart.

For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin. Then Simon answered, Pray to the Lord for me, so that nothing you have said may happen to me.

When they had testified and proclaimed the word of the Lord, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.

They asked whether the flower was saved, but the word of God remains forever. And the word of God is not a prayer. Let's sit and I promise to the Lord.

[29 : 54] And the child exceeds me to do this in prayer of God. Let's pray in simple prayer. Here are others to discuss.

Let's notice that there is natural Vocal receive to blow, which will soon be the recurring organizing process, which is a positive thing of the Lord.

And also God in words andi Safran ATSU Trans pufum Até volta a dia, dia depois a noite do que çal ás e beleza áhá nós estamos até três Kitty e course a gente Linux by no começo de usar do que eu acho até aqui sou human profundo decided to stop because men do I you Au revoir.

Lord Godanoag , Again theotal is dedicated to helping you.

[33 : 24] And there is a great gift that the other family earned from the same I found a Bible name.

But I felt much time I falei now. I of God let me hear anything about this Jesus Christ.

Amen. Thank you. The sign of the theory, Psalm 103.

Maria Janik Utenisch. And here we go. The CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

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Apostles, Acts chapter 8.

Acts chapter 8. Let's read verse 4. Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did they all paid close attention to what he said was shrieks. Evil spirits came out of many and many paralytics and cripples were healed so there was great joy in the city. I don't know whether it's my Hebrideen upbringing but I love when I go on holiday to visit cemeteries.

[39 : 13] My wife goes to shops, I go to graveyards. That's the way it works. She is happy, I am equally happy. And there are some great graveyards in the United Kingdom.

Namely the Highgate Cemetery in London where many of the good in the great are buried. And there recently I noticed the grave of Karl Marx and he really was quite a remarkable character. Whether you agree with him or not he was a world changing character. And Karl Marx famously said this the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways.

The point however is to change it. And so in other words this world has got its talkers and those who philosophize and it's also got those who change the world.

And I wonder as we think of our place in the world this morning here in Carver in North Harris are we simply going to talk about the Christian faith or do we have the capacity with God's help to actually change the world?

[40 : 21] Steve Jobs, the CEO of the Apple company was looking one day to recruit a new CEO. And he went to the head CEO of Pepsi Cola and tried to recruit him and he would not get him.

He couldn't get him for any money at all. And finally exasperated he said to the Pepsi guy do you want to keep on making sugary water for the rest of your life?

Or do you want to change the world? And so time is limited and what we have here in the Acts of the Apostles is the beginning of the Christian revolution.

The specific point here is Acts chapter 8 and the point about Acts chapter 8 is that that's when we see the gospel beginning to spread from Jerusalem to the rest of the world.

And so here we see it and if you think about it the early church is really quite a remarkable phenomenon. One or two ordinary men not many more than a few hundred and they would want in the words of the Acts of the Apostles to turn the whole world upside down.

[41 : 31] They were not simply content to interpret the world in various ways as Mark said. They wanted to actually change the world. We see the plan there don't we in Acts chapter 1 where God says you shall be my witnesses first of all in Jerusalem and then in Judea and then into the rest of the world.

And that's why every congregation ought to be local and national at the same time. We are local here in Harvard and North Harris but we are also international in our perspective.

Do you know that from the pier in Harvard you can go to anywhere in the world? Anywhere in the world from that little pier. You're on the water and you could sail all the way to Sydney, Australia if you had a decent boat and enough petrol.

There is really nowhere where the church here in Harvard cannot go. And so what we have here is this ripple effect of the gospel going out all the time.

Christianity is in its very essence a conversionist faith. It's a proselytizing faith that wants to bring other people to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

[42 : 44] And so Christianity is not just a philosophy but it actually has the power to change. And here we see that as the gospel spread it changed through the power of persuasion.

One definition of evangelism from the Lausanne Covenant said this Evangelism is the proclamation of the historical biblical Christ and Saviour with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and be reconciled to God.

And so it's a faith which persuades men and women. We don't just shout at people. We don't just bang the open or the table or whatever.

We don't just harang people. That's not how folk are wanting for the faith. It is by the power of persuasion talking to them about the Saviour. And so what we have here is a spread of the gospel. Now, it's interesting that evangelism has become an embarrassing thing to the church. Many churches say, no, we don't want to proselytise, we don't tell to, we don't want to tell people and folks that evangelisation of our community, of the world is a priority.

[44 : 03] And so the church has really gone back in that. We preach a social kind of gospel, we preach about the family, we preach about all these, all these are nice things. It is a good thing to run all these social programmes, but you know, Mormons can do them just as well as we can do them.

You know, our Islamic friends can do them just as well as we can do them. What is distinctive about the church is telling folk about the good news that men and women are lost.

We become default quasi universalists. And now that word's the assumption that everybody is going to heaven and we don't really need to tell folk. Well, that's certainly not what we have here.

Notice, before we go into this in a little bit more detail, the context of this. Look at verse one. On that day a great persecution broke out amongst the church.

You see that? Before this point, the church was confined to Jerusalem. and then persecution came. Look at verse four.

[45 : 09] Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. You know what a dandelion was like? A dandelion spores. A dandelion spores goes everywhere.

Rose of us, when we were young, we used to get that flower thing and you remember? We were both, she loves me, she loves me not, she loves me, she loves me not, and depending whether or not we really liked her, depending on the volume of a particular puff of breath at that time, but the spores went all over the place.

And so you have here the persecution of the church in verse one, but it's crazy because as the devil is persecuting the church, the church just begins to grow.

It seems that problems do not keep the church back, but problems actually advance the church.

And so we even see that in our own community, we see problems in the church, but the problems don't make the church go within itself, the problems produce a body that's keen to take the gospel out into the wider community to have a church that's not just locked behind an old building, but one that's taking the gospel everywhere through the whole community.

Now I was reading about a survivor of the Momo crisis in Kenya, and this was in the 1950s, and there was tremendous persecution of the Kenyan church in the 1950s, and this survivor said this, when they come for you at night and threaten to put a sack over your head and drop you in the river, then you know at that point whether Jesus Christ means everything or whether he means nothing at all.

[47 : 05] That's where these folk were in verse 1. These folk were being killed for their faith, and they were being asked to decide, are you just playing at this? Tertullian famously said, of course, the early church leader, he says, the blood of the martyrs is indeed the seed of the church, dying we conquer.

the moment we are crushed, at that moment, at that moment, we go forth victorious. And you see, these are the values of the kingdom.

The values of the kingdom are totally different to the values of the world, because in the kingdom, the way down is the way up, and the way up is the way down, and it's through death that life comes, it's through Calvary that life came, it's through death that resurrection comes.

So what we're looking at this morning, very briefly, is the expansion of the church, as the church moves into Samaria, and it moves there through two men, one is called Stephen, and he is killed, he is martyred for his faith, and the other one is Philip.

Now it's interesting, the nine of these two men were clerics. Stephen was a church administrator, and Philip was a businessman, and so it's not just reverence that take the gospel across the world, what we have here is evangelism, public and private evangelism, the ordinary people spreading the word of God.

[48 : 37] It cannot be done by a minister, it should not be done by a minister, it is the job of us all. But as we go to the passage, I just want us to notice four things.

the first thing we notice here is courage, courage. Look at verse one, those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went, Philip went down to a city in Samaria.

Now, that may seem very benign, that may seem very ordinary, Philip went to Samaria, Philip was a Jew, Samaria was full of Samaritans.

For one thousand years, the Jews and the Samaritans had been at enmity with one another, there were kind of similarities, the Samaritans only believed in the first five books of the Bible, the Ben Jude, they did believe that there was a Messiah, but there were big differences between the two of them.

John 4, 9, it says, for the Jews do not associate with the Samaritans. Yes, well, the Jews don't associate with Samaritans, but the Christians did.

[49 : 50] And so that little incongruous phrase, Philip went into a city in Samaria, was incredible. For years there had been enmity, for years there had been separation. Some of us were watching the old firm game yesterday between Rangers and Celtic, and in the room there were three of two of them in the room were Rangers, and the third member did not declare his allegiance, but I suspect he was somewhat tainted with green.

And we were just talking to one another about, you know, in Glasgow there is this real tension between the blue and the green, the orange and green, whatever.

The real tension is not funny, it's naked bigotry, it's horrible. This is the situation here, in the Jews and the Spartans, there were these barriers, there were these no-go areas.

The point here is that Christians are not into no-go areas. Philip was willing to set aside every racial, religious, cultural prejudice that was far more important than that.

All this stuff didn't matter, because what was important was Christ. And he was determined to not let the prejudice go in a way, he was determined that Jesus would be his motivating factor.

[51 : 21] And so that's how he was very willingly, happily go among the Samaritans. Now remember it said that two men were responsible for the spread of the gospel. The one before that was Stephen and he was persecuted and he was ultimately killed.

Why? Because he had a bigger view of God than the Jewish people had. He pointed out the bigger vision of Abraham. He pointed out the fact that there was a need to break out from Jerusalem.

He offended the establishment. Courage, folks. This was the critical point in the expansion of the gospel because for the first time, non-Jews responded to the gospel in a significant way.

All because one man, Philip, was willing to break the train. One man was willing to go against the establishment. One man was willing to leave the comfort zones of his own culture and boldly go where no one had gone before and tell them about Jesus.

And folks, that's what I want us to have, that mentality of courage, not living within the sound of chapel bells, as someone said.

[52 : 44] Isn't it C.P. Studd? He said, some want to live within the sound of chapel bells, but I want to run a rescue boat to the very gate of hell.

Courage. What are you going to be? Where are you going to be? I have a house in Kilmure, Isle of Sky, just across the water.

And every day I watch out the window and the shipping down the bench is quite extraordinary. I've got a lot of shipping and I've got a program on my computer, an app, that tells me which boat is out there.

And the ones that really intrigued me are the cruise limits. Massive things. And you see them flooring by and all these people you can imagine them and fine dining, looking out the window at all these Hebridean crafting types, looking at the peasants out the window and saying, ah yes, these are the Hebrides, that's very, very nice.

And you know, you've got this cruise ship. A church can be like that, cruise ship. I've never been on a cruise. I think I love a cruise.

[54 : 02] I'm told there's water or food. I'm told that you can eat anything at any time. I'm told that just everything is there. I would, my heart would explode in that environment.

It is so comfortable. Are we a cruise ship or are we more like a fishing boat or even a light boat going out into the dangerous seas looking for the loss, looking for those who don't do church, the Samaritans, those who are a little bit edgy, those who other folk do not normally associate.

Is this going to be the church for folk who really don't do church? Is this going to be the church who doesn't care how you smell doesn't care how you look, doesn't care how you speak because they want to tell people about Jesus.

Folks, we see here courage. Courage to be different and to go to the Samaritans. The second thing we notice here is effectiveness.

Not just courage, but effectiveness. It says there he proclaimed the Christ when the crowds heard Philip and saw them and after a sense he did, they all paid close attention to what he said.

[55 : 25] As sweeps, evil spirits came out of many and many paralytics and cripples were healed. so there were so there was great joy and things happen when you preach Jesus.

Things change when you preach Jesus. Lives are touched when you preach Jesus. Miracles happen when you preach Jesus. There is an effectiveness on the gospel.

God and as a student I used to go to this church and the minister was a very erudite theologian.

I loved his preaching and occasionally he would ask a guy who was an ex-bus conductor to take the service and this guy had the broadest Glasgow accent you ever heard.

You would almost need subtitles to understand the guy. And I remember him giving me information once. He says the services next day will be as usual.

[56 : 30] And we pray that one day they won't be as usual. You see the man's point effectiveness. We saw that in Samaria when Christ was preached lives were changed.

There was this belief in and expectation of the gospel that it had within itself the agency to affect change in that community.

Now they played verse 6 they paid close attention to what he said and men were healed. Men and women were baptized.

And you know what the key was? the key was that he proclaimed the Christ. That's what he spoke about.

He spoke about Jesus. He didn't speak about poverty or the nation. It's a good thing. He didn't speak about environmentalism which is a good thing.

[57 : 38] He didn't speak about life coaching and how to make healthy wealthy wise three good things. He spoke about the most extraordinary man who ever lived, Jesus.

And so at the very centre of our witness, at the very centre of our worship is Jesus. Jesus. As a student I used to work for a garage and the garage sold Ford cars and the owner of the garage said they sell themselves.

They just sell themselves. The Lord Jesus Christ is our product and I don't mean that in a disrespectful sense. We have the most amazing man who ever lived.

The life changing son of God who spoke in the world and into creation. All things were made through him. How can you have a boring preacher?

How can anyone make the church ordinary when the subject matter is as Philip proclaimed the Lord Jesus Christ? He praised the good news of the gospel.

[59 : 01] Someone wrote these words. Wherever they went Christians were opposed as antisocial, atheistic and depraved. Their message proclaimed a crucified criminal and nothing could have been less calculated than that to win converse.

Their message was despised. And this again is the crazy counterintuitive values of the kingdom.

And this is what we're seeing happening today. I'm involved in the mission, as you all are. And the churches in Scotland and in the UK that are growing are churches that are proclaiming a message which is incredibly unpopular with society.

The churches that are packed with young people and the students have just come back this week, the churches in Glasgow and Edinburgh and Aberdeen that will be packed to capacity will be the churches that proclaim this biblical message.

And you know, the tighter and more faithful that message is proclaimed and the more Jesus is joyfully elevated, the more folk are between.

[60 : 32] The message was Jesus. He is our, if I may use this phrase, crump card. Folks, always have Jesus. Be Jesus obsessives.

Preachers, those of you who preach here, preach about Jesus. Don't let a single sermon go through, without preaching about Jesus. I was at a church three weeks ago and the preacher never mentioned Jesus once, apart from the end of the first prayer and the benediction.

It's all about Jesus. Courage, effectiveness. What's the third thing we see here? We see courage, we see effectiveness. The third thing is conflict.

Look at verse 19. Now, for some time, a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city. Now, this guy, Simon, was quite a character.

I love the description there in verse 19. He was a kind of minor league celebrity, wasn't he? It says that he boasted that he was someone great and all of the people, both hired, gave him their attention.

[61 : 49] Well, he boasted you, you're saying, you're great. You clearly are not great. He was influential. Verse 11. They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic.

Evangelism leads to conflict. You have the philosophy of Simon, the sorcerer, with his charismatic personality and his working magic.

And so, on the one hand, you've got the magic show. Now, we live in a society obsessed with celebrity.

Didn't someone say recently, remember, Britain's got talent. A few years ago, there was a dancing dog. The point one is here is 11 million people tuned in their TV to watch a dancing dog.

I've driven through the bays of Harrison. I've seen dancing dogs every day. What? A society? And yet, when you come in with a gospel that challenges that superficial analysis, they were not thinking, Simon the sorcerer, was doing his thing and they were amazed for a long time with his

magic and then the gospel comes and says, you can't do that.

[63 : 22] Even Simon himself, verse 13, believed. Unpack that a little bit. But the point here is there is a conflict between the message of the gospel and the message of the culture.

There is an engagement with the culture, but we're going against the culture. We are speaking into the way people think, but we're speaking against the way people think.

Because not everybody agrees. that's why there's a war just now, there's a war with sexuality, there's a war with money, there's a war with power.

And the church at some point has got to say, the world is wrong, it's going the wrong way.

Evangelism leads to conflict.

Now, the conversion of Simon the sorcerer is interesting. It says there that he believed, and he was affected by the gospel.

[64 : 22] And why did he follow? Well, 1 Corinthians 13 says, he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw. Simon the sorcerer was the sort of man who liked action.

He liked the bars, he liked things going on all the time. He liked to be where the action was. But, you know, he was so self central.

Look at verse 18 and 19. When Simon saw that the spirit was given to the laying on of hands, he offered the money. He said, I want disability. He wanted to buy supernatural power.

The gospel says, no, that's not the way we operate. That's not the way we operate. There is a call to honesty. Someone said, James Denny said, we cannot at one and the same time show that we are clever and that Christ is wonderful.

Simon the sorcerer was taken up with all the clever stuff. We see here courage. We see here effectiveness. We see here conflict.

[65 : 30] I'd love to see the church here in North Harris being courageous, being effective, being a conflict, church, for the right reasons, for the right reasons.

It seems to me that the church has often been in conflict with their culture for the wrong reasons.

The fourth and final very, very quick thing is courage, repentance, conflict, and fourthly, authenticity. In this chapter, you see here that it's a very strange thing happening, but we don't go into it in much depth, but we find here that in Philip, when the apostles heard that Samaria had been converted, it says here that they had not yet been baptized by the Holy Spirit.

Now, that was quite unusual because normally what happened was when folk were saved, they were baptized by the Spirit at the same time. But we have here what happened is that Philip preaches to them, they were baptized in the name of Jesus, and then a group of apostles came down from Jerusalem afterwards to baptize them in the Spirit.

And just very, very briefly, I think there's something going on here. The Samaritans were individualists. They always did things their own way.

[67 : 01] There was the way people do things, and there was the Samaritan way. And you've got a danger here, haven't you? You've got the danger of church independence, I don't mean that in a technical sense, but the Samaritan folk do things their own way, disconnected from everybody else.

So what happens is Philip preaches to them, and then the apostles, those who have the authority of God, the authoritative God and authority teachers of the tradition, were brought in to bring the Samaritans into the fold.

There was authenticity here. In other words, the church's foundations had to be right. It had to be built on the foundations of the apostles. They had to come into the mainstream.

So coming into the mainstream, uniting as a church with the right foundations, and that's what makes a church a church, that it's built on the foundations of the apostles.

Folks, I've just been with you for two days, and I have been affected by the sheer potential of this church, the potential of this church for this area, and I know that you have been formed not as a protest movement.

[68 : 37] You have been formed not as something, a body that's dwelling in the past. You have been formed by people not with a negative agenda, to be against things only, but with a positive agenda, to reach the world and grow and grow and grow.

And when you have grown, you just keep on growing, and you send money, you send people into the Samarias of this world.

You tear down the walls. Carol Marx was buried in Highgate Cemetery, and on my wanderings through Highgate, I came across the grave of another man called Michael Faraday. Michael Faraday was a scientist, and on one occasion he was asked, Dr. Faraday, would you speculate, would you speculate on what life is after death? And Faraday says, speculations, I have none.

[69 : 58] I am resting on certain things. I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that name.

We don't have all the answers, but we have the explosive life-changing message of the hospital. In the building this morning, in this room, there are only two categories.

You're either a missionary, or a mission field. Will you please leave your own personal mission field and become a missionary?

Will you follow the greatest master, the Messiah? Let's pray. Father, we bow in your presence. We thank you for all that you are, for your word, for its power, for its effectiveness.

Thank you, Lord, for the expansion of the church in Semenya. We pray for the expansion of the church in this community and through the world. Forgives our sins.

[71 : 21] We ask this in Saviour's name. Amen. Can we finish by giving God praise in this great missionary hymn, facing a cast unfinished that drives us to a knees, a need that unliminished rebukes our swanful peace.

Let's stand as Jesus. Facing a task unfinished that drives us to our knees, a need that unfinished reduce our swathful ease.

we we do rejoice to know thee, bring you before thy throne, the solemn pledge we owe thee, to go and make thee known.

Where none to need their crying for life and love and life, a number souls are dying, can pass into the night.

We bear the torch that flaring, fell from the hands of those who gave their lives proclaiming that Jesus died and rose.

[73 : 56] Ours is the same commission, the same blood message ours, far by the same ambition, to thee we yield our power.

O Father, who sustained them, O Spirit, who inspired, Savior, who loved no strength them, to toil with steel undie, from cowardice defend us, from leperty away, forth on thine errands send us, to labor for thy sake.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rest upon us now and always, and the people of God say, Amen.