

# The Lord's Hand was with them

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[0:00] ...since in the day of the day of the night, please. Mission phase 31, Amazing Grace, how sweet this sound is saved a rest like me. Girls and boys, would you like to take the mic to front now, please?

...since in the sky. Now how are you all today?

All fine, it's good to have a new face with us today. What's your name? Rudi. Pardon? Rudi. Rudi, it's good to have you with us today, Rudi. You here for your holidays?

Yes. Good stuff, you enjoying your holidays? Good, are you enjoying your holidays? Yes. That wasn't very commencing. You enjoying your holidays?

Yes. Slightly better. Did you enjoy the trip yesterday? Put your hands up if you enjoyed the trip yesterday.

[1:12] Put your hands up if you enjoyed the trip yesterday. It was good fun, wasn't it? Especially the weather. Tell me, what was the weather like in Carver between 2 and 4 o'clock?

Was it nice? It was. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. No? It wasn't nice? That's a shame.

Yes. Yes. Yes. It was great, wasn't it, to go away yesterday and have that trip? and when I was driving between Kylos and Shilabos and the mist was down and the rain was pouring I was thinking oh no oh no but we were praying and a lot of people were praying and the clouds lifted and the mist lifted and out came the sunshine and it was great fun wasn't it real great fun pardon great fun thank you John Roddy it was great fun tell them all what were you doing what were you doing yesterday having a burger having a burger we'll get to that what else were we doing playing football all the fat dads were playing football weren't they rolling around the pitch like a herd of elephants children trying to get out of the way the dads were saying at the end we should do this next week without the children just joking what else were you doing Caitlin a race you were doing running races what else were we doing yeah races and just charging about the place sand and fun it was good fun what else what else was there so there was races and there was football and there was burgers burgers there was food and that man was the chef and he was on the barbecue what were you counting that man burgers burgers and sausages and then there was coleslaw and salad and salad wasn't there have we got a clue you see all that yeah

Alistair let's see this is always good ice cream yeah ice cream ice cream so was there a little bit of food or was there lots of food lots of food lots of food a hundred a hundred food a thousand a thousand food a thousand and this could go on okay so let's just there was a lot and a lot of food but here's the question boys and girls I want you to tell me was the food good yes how do you know good we tasted it excellent that's the last point I was going to get to but that's excellent yeah we tasted it where's the photograph that's the photograph how did we know the food was good you know we could have said to our man we could have said to our man tell me about the food and he could have said well the burgers are 80% meat and there's this and there's that and the rolls are made of this and that and you still wouldn't know if it's really very good you might smell it and think well it smells quite good but you still wouldn't know if it was really good you might read a book about burgers that would probably make you not eat another burger and you still wouldn't know if it was really good so how do you know that food is really good you you eat it and that was an enthusiastic right let's have another one look oh look at that there's really there's really you can't see the ice cream that she's eating up in the road oh and there's another one how does she know how does she know do you taste it you know boys and girls there's some people and they spend lots and lots of years thinking about God and reading about God and wondering and scratching their heads and thinking should I become a Christian or should I not become a Christian is God somebody that loves me is he somebody that I should

I should ask into my life or not and they'll hum and they'll haw and they'll think and they'll read and they'll do all kinds of things do you know what God says listen to what God says we're going to sing it in just a minute in Psalm 34 he says taste taste and see that God is good taste and see that God is good how can we taste and see that God is good how do you think we do that go ahead the Bible we open up the Bible and we learn about who God is and we might wonder does he love me and then we go to John 3 16 and we realise that he loves us so much that he sent his son into the world to die so that we could have everlasting life the whole of the Bible is a huge love story of how much God loves us the Bible great answer how else can we know that God is good

[ 7 : 13 ] Bethany by praying and speaking to him and he always listens he never says I'm too busy he never says go away he always listens to our prayers and he answers our prayers even when we're driving over up the call hill is that what it's called and we're praying please let us let us live give us sunshine we see how good he is when he answers prayers what else can we do to taste and see that God is good we can ask him to come in what we can ask him take us to heaven or we can ask him if we want to know that we're going to heaven we need to act in this world and say sorry for my sin and please you are Jesus take it away and come into my life come into my heart and be my saviour and be my lord and you don't have to be a hundred to do that you can do that when you're very very small you're the bible says that you're to remember and trust your creator the one who made you in the days of your youth okay so taste and see boys and girls that God is good let's pray our heavenly father we thank you for we thank you for the fact that you are the God who is good we thank you that you are good all the time we thank you that you love us and that you show us that love and every day that you give to us we thank you for all the blessings that you give to us are all from your hand for the food that we eat and the water that we drink for the shelter that we have and the clothes that we wear for our homes and for all the things that we have we thank you all these things are from you and you show us how much you love us in that and above all we thank you that you showed us how much you loved us by sending Jesus into the world to take our sins away so that we could live knowing your goodness in our lives every day and so that we could know that we're going to heaven when we go from this world help us we pray whether we are young or whether we're old to taste and see that God is good we thank you Lord that you answer our prayers when we pray to you we thank you that you come into our lives when we ask you and when we're meaning it truly in our hearts we thank you that you answered our big prayers and our little prayers we thank you for giving us sunshine yesterday and show of us we thank you for all the fun that we had and we thank you that you were with us we pray that you would be with everyone who's here just now we pray that you would be with people who are not here as well some who are sad today some who are sad because people that they loved have died and gone from this world we pray that you would comfort them and that you would strengthen them we pray for those who are sick and who are in their homes and they're not strong enough to come to church today and we ask that you would go to them and that you would speak to them and Lord we thank you for the challenge of us and the message that we heard through them we thank you that we're able to give to them today of all the things that you have given us and we pray for them as they go around the country sharing the good news about Jesus we thank you for

Nurse Marion and for her being back here with us and we ask Lord that you would bless her and all the things that she's done in your name that these things would continue far away from us just now but they would continue where she walks and we ask now Lord that you would be with us in the service here with the boys and girls in Sunday school and that you would teach us more about who you are and more about how you would have us live and we pray all these things in Jesus' name Amen okay boys and girls we're going to sing now we're going to sing from the psalm that I was just reading psalm 34 and the words will be on the screen I will sing from verses 1 to verse 9 God will I bless all times as praise my mouth shall still express my soul shall boast in God the meat shall hear with joyfulness and we sing down to verse 9 which says oh taste and see that God is good who trusts in him is blessed fear God as saints none that in fear shall be with one will press means that God will look after us as we trust him as we taste that he is good so let's all stand we'll sing together God will I bless all times as praise my mouth shall still express my soul shall hold in God the meat shall hear with joyful dance and show the Lord with me and us and show his name together and show the Lord as we Bulgaria I 19thjan

Amen. The angel of the Lord had cast, and earned in comfort shed.  
All those of us that do his fear, are them deliver.

[ 14 : 32 ] O day shall see that God is good, who trusteth in his rest.

Fear God will say, the love in fear shall be with what to rest.

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Fear God will say, the love in fear shall be with what to rest.

The apostles and brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.

[ 16 : 31 ] So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticised him and said, you went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.

Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it happened. I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheep being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was.

I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds of the air.

Then I heard a loud voice, heard a voice telling me, get up Peter, kill and eat.

I replied, surely not Lord, nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth. The voice spoke from heaven a second time. Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.

This happened three times. And then it was pulled up to heaven again. Right then, three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying.

[ 17 : 39 ] The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house. He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, Send to Joppa for Simon, who is called Peter.

He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved. As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on you, and as he had come on us at the beginning.

Then I remembered what the Lord had said. John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?

When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life.

Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.

[ 18 : 57 ] The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. News of this reached the ears of the church of Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.

When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them to remain, encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.

He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch.

So for a whole year, Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people.

The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

During this time, some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agathos, stood up and, through the Spirit, predicted that a severe famine had spread over the entire Roman world.

[ 19 : 59 ] This happened during the reign of Claudius. The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. And may he give us understanding as we study it together.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Lord our God, we come into your presence again, thankful that we have your word before us.

We thank you that your word is truth. And we pray, Lord God, that we might take that encouragement of Barnabas to remain faithful to your word with all our hearts.

We pray, Father, that you give us hearts that are undivided in serving you. That, Lord, it truly would be all of our hearts being faithful to you. Rather than, Lord, just so often being willing to give a part of our hearts and a part of our lives.

[ 21 : 13 ] We pray, Lord God, that your blessing would be upon us as your people in this place. And that, Lord God, we would share that love of Christ with those around us.

That, Lord God, we would not be content with what we have. But that, Lord God, we would want the whole community to know the truth that Christ saves. That Christ died for sins.

And that Christ rose from the dead. That Christ is alive today. And we pray, Lord, that each and every one of us here this morning might have that true sense.

And that true knowledge and understanding of what it is to know the living Christ. And to have a living Christ at work in our lives. We thank you, Lord, that you have many faithful preachers and teachers of your word today.

And we pray for your blessing upon the gospel as it is preached throughout our country. And throughout the nations of the earth. We pray, Lord, that wherever your word is preached, you will be pleased to be present there.

[ 22 : 19 ] And that your spirit, Lord God, will be moving in the hearts and minds of unbelievers to show them Christ. And to bring them to that living faith in him.

And that, Lord, you will be moving in the hearts and the minds of believers to build them up in the faith. To show them the sin that needs to be parched and put to death.

And to show them in ever greater measure the beauty and the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Father, we remember our world today.

And once again, we thank you. That, Lord, the very worst that we see is a reminder to us is everything that we could experience. If you withdrew your hand and your gracious kindness to us and to so many other communities across the face of the earth.

We thank you for your blessings every day in providing people with food and water. With shelter. With friends and family. And with the blessing of your word.

[ 23 : 23 ] And, Lord, we remember the terrible attacks on Friday. The wickedness that was in the world when people were willing to murder others in them for the sake of an ideology.

Father, we pray that you would be at work in our world to subdue such evil. That, Lord, you would bless those who are working to de-radicalise those who would want to kill others in the mistaken belief that they themselves were doing a glorious thing.

We pray, Lord, that you would yourself put into the hearts of these young men and indeed young women who would kill themselves thinking they were going to glory.

That this is nothing other than a deceit of the devil. And we pray, Father, that you would turn many away from something. And we ask above all that those who are trapped in false beliefs arising from Islam and from Buddhism and Hinduism and other religions.

That, Lord God, you would use incidents such as these to speak into the hearts of the people. To show them the false things they are following. And we pray, Lord, that even in these terrible times in North Africa and the Middle East, that, Lord, you would be using them to build up and to create indeed a church where it has not existed before.

[ 24 : 52 ] That, Lord, you would bless those who are seeking to find the truth and are finding it in the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you that many are following correspondents.

We thank you that many are listening to radio programs. And many, Lord God, are finding faith in Christ. We pray, Lord, that you would soon bring about the end of false religion.

And that, Lord God, you would bless your word and that your truth would become an established fact. And your church, Lord God, would grow and be strong.

And, Lord, as we think of those evil things that happen, we are reminded of much quieter evil that rose on in our own societies. Lord God, we, Lord God, are astonished that a court in the United States could rule that everyone has the right to marriage.

Lord, we pray that your hand would be upon that situation that churches in the United States have waken up to. The evil that is around them and that, Lord, they and us would be united in prayer.

[ 26 : 03 ] That we would see marriage in the future defined in law as it is defined in Scripture. And, Lord, we pray that you would raise up ever more numbers of people who would indeed show by their Christian marriages just what true marriage really is.

And we pray, Lord, for those who are deceiving themselves, thinking that their wrong relationships are right because they're now seen as right in the eyes of the law of the land.

We pray, Father, that you would speak to them and speak indeed through your church. That we might hold up a ban on your truth and display that to the nation.

We pray, Lord God, that we would be willing to continue being firm for the truth, that we might be faithful to your word. And that we would be willing to pay whatever price you ask us to pay, that we might uphold your word.

We pray indeed, Lord, for all those who are trapped in whatever kind of sexual sin, that, Lord, you would grant them repentance unto life. We thank you, Lord, that Paul was able to speak of the worst of sinners being brought into the glorious freedom of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[ 27 : 22 ] And to grow in that freedom and to be true beacons of light for the truth. Father, we pray now that as we come to your word, that you would bless that word to us.

We pray that you would bless David as he preaches. And we pray, Father, that your word once more would remind us that indeed it is alive and powerful at work in us and at work in the world. And we thank you, Lord God, that your purposes will be fulfilled. And we pray that through all the events that are happening around us in the church and in the world, that we would indeed work together your ultimate glory.

And that, Lord God, we would see the name of Christ exalted and honoured in our society once more. And we pray, Father, that we would continue to pray for these things with all of our hearts, that we might delight in your word.

That we might delight in prayer and that we might delight in the Lord Jesus Christ. In whose name we pray all these things. Amen. We sing again to God's praise.

[ 28 : 38 ] We sing in Galilee, this time from Psalm 96. Psalm 96 in the first two standards of that Sabbath. We sing a new song to the Lord.

Sing all the earth to God. To God sing. Bless his name. Show still. His saving health is brought. Among the heathen nations. His glory do declare. And unto all the people show his works. That wonders are. These two standards to God's praise. We sing in Galilee and remain seated. We sing. We sing in Galilee and remain seated.

We sing in Galilee and remain seated. We sing in Galilee and remain seated. We sing in Galilee and remain seated.

We sing in Galilee and remain seated. We sing in Galilee and remain seated.

[ 29 : 48 ] We sing in Galilee and remain seated.

We sing in Galilee and remain seated.

We sing in Galilee and remain seated.

We sing in Galilee and remain seated.

We sing in Galilee and remain seated. We sing in Galilee and remain seated.

[ 32 : 18 ] We sing in Galilee and remain seated. We sing in Galilee and remain seated.

We sing in Galilee and remain seated. We sing in Galilee and remain seated. We sing in Galilee and remain seated. Amen. Amen. Well just as we turn back to God's word, if you could open your Bibles at Acts chapter 12, sorry 11.

And just as we come here, let's pray for a moment the words of the Psalms. And Lord God, we thank you for your word and we thank you that you've given us the opportunity and the freedom and the desire to come and to look for fruit for our souls.

To look for that instruction, for that singular truth in a world where there is so much confusion. And so we pray that as the word is before us and as we read it, that it would come to us in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And Lord that we would receive it as the word of God, not as the word of man. We pray that even through the foolishness of preaching, Lord God that you would do a work for your glory in each of our hearts.

[ 34 : 03 ] And we pray with the Psalms that the words of my life and the meditation of our hearts would be pleasing in your sight. O Lord our rock and our redeemer.

And we pray these sins in Christ's name. Amen. Acts chapter 11. Acts chapter 11.

Acts chapter 11. them the Lord's hand was with them and that's the phrase that I would like to think about today and use as the key which I think it is the key to unlocking the verses that are around it and showing us what was going on what does it mean to say what does it look like to see a fellowship or congregation that had the Lord's hand with them it's a peculiar kind of phrase but then there's a lot of expression in it and what it says there's a lot of expression in a hand you think about it you greet people in the car by waving a hand or waving a finger to all these different kind of waves that I'm getting to to know as we pass through the single track roads you you greet people by

waving a hand you offer a very warm welcome by extending your hand as Andrew's Alan pulls it off your shoulder you can offer support to somebody both symbolically and literally by giving them your hand you give them a hand you'll say to somebody who's struggling do you want me to give you a hand we can grant the assurance to somebody that we can see is struggling by putting our hand on their shoulder you can express loving affection you can see a relationship as it's formed as you observe people walking down the street holding a hand so there's a lot that's said in the use of a hand and in Antioch we know from Acts chapter 1 that the physical hand of the Lord was not with them because in Acts 1 we observe that Jesus ascended into heaven so the physical Christ was no longer present with this church but spiritually the Lord's hand was upon and was with this fellowship and so we see from the makeup of this fellowship and what was going on within and through the fellowship what it looks like to have the Lord's hand with you so that's the question really that we think through today what does it look like what are the marks of a people a church a fellowship that has the Lord's hand with them and hopefully five short points and the first point that we have the first point we can observe about this church that had the Lord's hand with them is that the world's hand was not with them and I'll put the points on the screen simply because there's five of them this morning the world's hand was not with them and the truth is we know it from experience and we know it from scripture that sometimes you have to let go of the hand of one to take hold of the hand of another

I told you a story a week or two ago about the sheep that invaded the garden in Lough Cairn it was told it was told to me by my neighbour in Lough Cairn Donny Colonel and I was so I was reading this passage I was minded of another story that he told me about a situation in the Highland Village I think it probably was Lough Cairn but I'm not sure it's a love story of sorts set in this small village and in the village there was one very pretty and very single and eligible young lady and there was a young doctor and a young minister who were both in the same village and they both had designs and affections towards this one particular lady both were showing interest the village was looking on with great interest and there was a degree of tension as this relationship was developing and very suddenly the minister was called away for a period of some months much to the glee of the doctor and the dismay of the minister and as the minister was preparing to leave he was thinking what can I give this girl as a gift to impress upon her my affections and maybe to win her heart and so he thought long and hard and then on the day that he was growing he said his farewell and he said there's a gift going to be coming to you in the course of the day and she waited a little while and sure enough late in the day uh the i don't know what that band the horseshoe cart that drew up and it had a huge box of apples strange gift huge box of apples that would have done her for months but a note on the top of the box with just a single line in it an apple a day keeps the doctor away it's a true story i'm told and uh i was told that the minister actually married the girl on his return but the point of this gift was in the nicest possible way he was saying to you're going to have to make a decision about whose hand you hold you're not going to hold the hand of the doctor and a minister you're going to have to make your choice your hand is with one and not both the world's hand was not with them the lord's hand was with them and that is a point that Jesus made very clear in the days that he walked and is still relevant for us today we can't expect to walk through life in this world clutching the world with one hand and the lord with the other we cannot serve two masters Jesus said that in Matthew 6:24 he said going further on in that than John 15 if the world hates you keep in mind that it hated me first and that is one of the hard realities at times of being a Christian yes we enjoy knowing the lord's hand with us we enjoy that intimacy and that affection that fellowship with that that love of the father that warmth that comes from the holy spirit in us and around us we enjoy knowing the the blessing and the security that there is in Christ there's great joy in knowing that the lord's hand is with you but inevitably that will cause the world at times either to withdraw its hand from you or even raise its hand against you

and the latter was the experience of the church in Antioch we read in verses 19 into verse 20 that there had been this persecution we read a few chapters back about Stephen as Stephen followed Christ and as he shared the gospel with them the world in the most brutal sense raised her hand against Stephen as he was stoned to death and the persecution was ongoing and these people that we're reading of here they had felt a heavy hand of the world they had felt a heavy hand of the authorities of the world against them and not with them the hand of the world was attempting in every way possible to close down the gospel operation but the irony was wonderfully so that the harder that the world raised its hand against the church the harder they tried to close down the gospel operation the wider the Christians dispersed with that gospel seed and so the gospel

operation was never closed down in fact as persecution intensified it was ramped up and so yes the hand of the world was against them but the hand of the lord was with them and so yes there was the trouble that jesus predicted in john 15 and john 16 but there was also that evidence of christ's overcoming the trouble and the question that i asked an application for each of us today is simply whose hand are you holding whose hand are you holding are you handing are you holding the hand of the world who are you seeking intimacy with and deep friendship with is it the world or the lord who do you seek satisfaction from or approval from is it the world or the lord and as you think about your time and how you use it as do i if you think about the gifts that god has given us and the resources that he has made available to us who are we serving to the world or the lord i think it was dylan was saying in the seventh piece you're going to have to serve somebody and it might be the devil or it might be the lord but you're going to have to serve somebody and i want to say with god's word open as we meditate upon this gospel call serve the lord seek intimacy with the lord seek satisfaction from the lord he's the only one whom the soul thirst that is in us can be quenched by seek approval from the lord not the world because the world may give you approval for five minutes and then it's gone we see it so often celebrities that rise to fame and once they're at their highest point they're just perfectly placed to be shot down in flames

[ 46 : 10 ] the world is fickle we are fickle seek approval from the one whom every one of us will stand before in the day of judgment seek approval from him past this time he is the one who loves you truly he's the one who died to take away your sin and mine he's the one who went all the way to calvary because the love that he spoke out was not a love that simply stuck with his lips but it was a love that he lived out all the way to the cross serve the one who has promised that he will never leave and he will never forsake you and he will be faithful no one else can consistently always be faithful only the lord so serve him take his hand and maybe this morning i know there is this morning uh some who have taken the lord's hand many years ago decades ago maybe you've had a bad week maybe it's been a tough one maybe you've taken a hit or two and when that happens in our christian life when we experience persecution not to the same degree that they did but when we are miscalled when we are sidelined when we are hurt for the sake of christ and for the the sake of standing for truth it is painful and it is difficult and it does sting but when that is our experience we are taught here as nehemiah has taught us week after week we've been coming to the firm and things we shouldn't be discouraged by any of that and we shouldn't be surprised by any of that in fact we can be reassured the hand of the world against you for christ's sake very often is striking evidence of the fact that the lord's hand is with you christians were being sorely oppressed it wasn't just that they were being sidelined it wasn't just that they were being given a silent treatment it wasn't just that they were being denied the top jobs in the civil service of their day these christians were being brutally and directly attacked they were being hunted down they were being thrown into jail they were being stolen they were being thrown into lions dens and so they knew who their enemies were every day they were facing their enemies they were being thrown into the sea so try and take a moment just to think about how you might feel in their position you know as duncan was praying we're reminded of the scenes that we saw in the course of this week scenes that are becoming all too familiar of such brutality and such evil acts and so many of them are directed at people who have an association with christ so many of these acts are targeted most directly at christians if you think about the orange boiler suits it's horrific to see like how do you feel when you see it because we don't have to think all that hard about what was going on back there because we're seeing on our screens what is it caused to raise within

i think there's two reactions that very often uh come up within us and one is rage when we see what's going on and when we see the evil of what's going on sometimes the reaction that comes up is they must not get away with it they hurt them let them be hurt let them not continue doing what they're doing let them taste some of their own medicine that's a fallen reaction that soften quells up within us and another reaction is that fear fear as we see the creep closer towards our own country there's that recoiling from it and that terror that that causes us to want to to step back from it and this church back then in Antioch they must have had the same reactions as you think of it there must have been something of that going on in them as they saw their friends and their families being taken and thrown into prisons and stolen and thrown at the lions den there must have been fierce anger that rose up within them at times they must have been tempted to to raise their fists and to raise their hands against the oppressors they must have attempted at times been tempted to to almost like dig a hole and hide just to escape all the horror of what was going on in their context

but they don't do either thing because this church in Antioch who had the hand of the lord with them they had heard this good news about christ they had heard how jesus died and rose again to take away their sin and give them everlasting life and they heard it and they believed it and christ was in them and such was the conviction of the faith that they had been given that they couldn't hold it in and so what they did was they shared it they didn't run from those who oppressed them they didn't rage against those who oppressed them they shared christ and his gospel with those who oppressed them they shared jesus christ with the jews and with the greeks and yes the world's hand was against them but they went against the world they weren't of the world but they were in the world not hiding in the cave and they had a love for a lost misguided hateful world that was against them and they had that love because jesus himself was filling them jesus who felt the full force of the world's opposition jesus who knew from before the foundation of the world that when he came he would be despised and rejected and beaten and killed and yet he continued to love those who hated him and he continued to come into this world not to condemn the world but to save him for god so loved the world john see that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life

for god did not send a son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him and when the lord's hand is upon a fellowship when the lord's hand is with an individual he enables us to love people to show out to share that supernatural not natural but supernatural christly love even to those who hate us leo leo had a talk story from war and peace great line in it he says you can love a person dear to you with a human love love but an enemy can only be loved with divine love the hand of the world was not with this fellowship the hand of the lord with them and the second thing we see is that their hand was not against the world third thing we see about this fellowship that had the hand of the lord with them is that the effect the people believe and they turn to the lord that's what was going on around them yes there was the horror yes there was the persecution yes there was the discomfort but at the same time people were turning to the lord and they were believing as the gospel was being shared as the gospel was being left out as enemies were blessed and not cursed many people believed they turned verse 21 to the lord in great numbers and that was a sign that the hand of the lord was with them and we should long for that it's great to see so many in the hall this morning but we should have an appetite to see more and more and more and more and not just in this hall but in every hall where the gospel where christ crucified is being preached we should long for great numbers that will turn to the lord not great numbers for great numbers sake not great numbers so we can go out and say well we had so many at church today we should long for something deeper than that the great numbers of people that will turn in repentance and in faith to the lord jesus it happened here in the 50s great numbers entire villages turning to the lord in these days of revival and we're going to sing at the end of this service story revive thy work oh lord but do we believe do we believe that god can do it do we when we were at the assembly in may elaine duncan from the bible the scottish bible society was speaking she spoke about various things but she spoke at one point about the saddest thing that she had seen in the course of the year and she said the saddest thing that she'd seen in the course of the year was churches that she visited that hadn't seen a new believer in 15 years or so and she was saying these churches were so sad and they were so disillusioned and they were churches that certainly had stopped believing that christ can convert people

why are we here today we are here today with this wonderful gospel to meditate upon and share in the hope that someone maybe many will turn to the lord will turn from just a routine of religion listen and turn from sin to the lord to be saved to be converted that's why we're here and so if you're here this morning and you're not yet saved why not today turn from sin to be saved to be saved why not today turn from sin confess it to be saved to be saved to be saved receive forgiveness receive forgiveness and ask christ to come in to your life and convert him to power save your soul why not today receive forgiveness receive salvation receive eternal life what could be so important that you walk out that door refusing eternal life that's what was going on in this church in antioch great numbers were believing and they were turning and why were they turning well because they could hear the gospel through the christians in that place and they could see the gospel being worked out in the lives of those who were in that place there was a consistency between what was being spoken out and what was being lived out jesus could be heard from them and jesus could be seen in them and how do we know that well we know that because of the nickname that the church first got in antioch they called them christians christians verse 26 the disciples were called christians first in antioch and i want to put that out as a challenge both to me and to all of you who are here today if

we as a church community were put into a big spaceship here just now and taken off to another galaxy if it would like there and dropped in the middle of nowhere and just observe by a people as the people looked at us and listened to us wonder what they would call us what nickname would they give us would we be living lives that were so like christ and would we be speaking so much about christ that the people would say i know let's call them christians let's call them christ's ones that's what was happening in antioch jesus was so filling them jesus was so being heard from them jesus was so much seen in them that the people were attracted not to the christians but to the christ who was in and christ was meeting with them and showing them their sin and showing them their need of him and they believed and they turned to the lord my time is gone so i want to just encourage you as we walk out the door and into whatever is ahead of us in the course of this week let us seek to stay close to christ let us seek to speak often of christ and let us seek to show out the attitude and nature of christ in us enough about denominations enough about church organizations enough about politics enough about the list goes on speak about meditate upon share christ and his gospel that's what transformed the community the world around them is with them the world around them changed in time and for eternity there's two more points there's no more time so let's pray our heavenly father we thank you for your word and we thank you for the example of this church in Antioch we thank you for these marks that we see that are imprinted upon a church where the hand of the lord is with them and we pray lord that you would have your hand upon us that you would have your hand with us we pray that we would seek to be a church that is focused upon and anxious to share day by day christ and his gospel and let us as we go from here go out with that realistic outlook that as long as we are speaking of christ the world's hand will not always be with us in fact the world's hand will not often be with us and yes there will be discomfort and yes there will be different forms of persecution but give us the strength we pray and to press on and to remain steadfast we ask lord that you would give us that divine love that excels all other loves that we may not only love those who love us [ 66 : 33 ] but that we may love those even who hate us and seek to reach out to them with the grace of jesus christ which has saved us we thank you that the grace of jesus is powerful we thank you that it lifts up those who are overwhelmed with grief and trouble and lord it puts down those who are prone to become filled with our own pride we thank you that we have nothing to boast of of ourselves that we have everything to rejoice in and boast of and share when we think about the grace of jesus and lord we pray that there would be some in this room even this morning and many in this unity in days to come who will turn in repentance and in faith to jesus we pray lord that you would give us the courage to speak much of the christ who saves and who sanctifies and who sustains us to the end of time the one who has promised that he will always be faithful and the one who has shown us that he has been faithful to the end as we lift our eyes again to see talbally so cleanse us from sin forgive us we pray come into our lungs and fill us with the holy spirit and send us out with the good news of the gospel we pray this in jesus name amen we sing to conclude give us praise. Survive thy work O Lord and I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forevermore. Amen.