

# 1.9.24 am

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Date: 01 September 2024

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. A warm welcome to the service this morning. It's especially good to see a good number of visitors with us this morning. If you're able to stay behind, there's tea, there's coffee at the end of the service and it would be good to get the chance to have a fellowship together.

Evening service is at six tonight and you're all welcome to come back for that. And there is also the youth fellowship which resumes this evening here at half past seven.

So young people, please note that and come along. Those who are like me, not so young anymore, we can be praying into that work as it resumes tonight.

The notices have been on the screen before the service. I'm not going to take 10 minutes to go through them all just now. You've had the chance to read through them and hopefully we'll be able to get them on an email out to the congregation in the next week or so.

The only thing I will say is a week on Saturday is the induction for the new minister, David Ferguson, in Uist. And it is possible to go over for the service on the first ferry and come back later in the day.

[ 1 : 10 ] The timings work for that. If you plan to do so, maybe please let me know and we could organize transport, share cars.

Also the folks in Uist are looking for an idea of how many pork pies to make for the day. These, I think, are all the intimations I need to share at the moment.

So let's worship God and let us sing to his praise. We'll sing Psalm 8 and the whole of this psalm. How excellent in all the earth, Lord, our Lord is thy name, who has thy glory far advanced above the starry frame.

We'll stand to sing, Psalm 8, to God's praise. How excellent in all the earth, Lord, our Lord is thy name, Who has thy glory far advanced above the starry frame.

From it that sand comes out in sight, Thou didst spread for him, For life whose cause that stole the might, The avenging for each strain.

[ 3 : 01 ] When I look up unto the heavens, Which thine on fingers fade, Unto the moon, And to the stars, Which were by thee or they.

Then say I've walked his mind that he, Remembered it by thee.

Remembered it by thee. For what the Son of God, The Son of God, So kind to him should be.

For the Lord has, In land the angels made, With glory and with dignity, Thou crowned hast his head. Of thy heart's words, Thou misteth Lord, All under street display.

[ 5 : 05 ] All sheep and oxen, Yea, and bees, But in the fields do stay.

Pearls of the air, Fish of the sea, All that thus could not save.

Awake, servant, In all the air, Lord our Lord is thy name.

Let's bow our heads, And let's draw near to God in prayer. Our Heavenly Father, We thank you that we're able to come together in this place, On this beautiful day.

And we thank you that we have the freedom, And that we have the desire, And the opportunity, To come and to worship you. We ask Lord that the words that we have sang, Would be words that come not just from our lips, But from our hearts, That we would be able to say, That truly your name is excellent.

[ 6 : 43 ] That you are the God who is worthy, You are the God who is holy, The God who is high and lifted up, The God who is almighty, Who is sovereign, And yet the God who is gracious and good and kind.

We thank you that, We thank you that, Although you are all powerful, That power of God is not used against us. But we thank you, Father, That you sent your son, To be Emmanuel, God with us, God for us.

We thank you that we are remembered by you. We thank you that not only are we remembered by you, But we are loved by you. We thank you that, We thank you that, Sunday by Sunday, As we come to this place, We remember the cross, The place that Jesus went to suffer and die, So that we might live.

We thank you that, As we confess our sin, As we do so even now, You have promised that you are faithful and just, That you will forgive us our sin, That you will purify our hearts, From all unrighteousness, That you will give to us even the righteousness of Jesus, That you would make us perfect, And holy, Not because of who we are, But because of who he is.

We thank you that we, Are clothed with the righteousness of Jesus, When we trust in him, And we are accepted, We are adopted into the family of God, And we are promised that we are loved, And that that love is continuous, It's unconditional, That love cannot be broken, That love will not let us go, But holds us fast, Today and eternally.

[ 8 : 29 ] So help us Lord to think, Upon who you are, And all you have done for us. Holy Spirit we pray, That you would open our eyes, That we would see, The extent of that love.

We pray that you would, Help us to see also, The greatness of our need, Of your love and your mercy, That we would ask for it, And receive it.

So help us to worship you, In spirit and in truth, On this your day. Help us to take time, To be in your presence, To wait upon the Lord, Knowing that as we do so, Our strength is renewed.

We pray for all, Who are here today, Thank you for so many, Who are visiting, From different places, And we ask Lord, That you would bless them, In their time in Harris, We pray that you would bless also, The congregations perhaps, That they have come from, That wherever, They are connected with, That even as your word, Is opened, At this time, In these places, That you would be moving, In the power of the Holy Spirit, That you would be working there, As we pray that you would be working, Also here.

We pray for those, Who would desire to be here, This morning, But who can't be. We think of those who are ill, We think of those who are grieving, We think of those who are, Struggling in their minds, And who may feel low today, As they wake up, Who may be anxious, And overwhelmed with that.

[ 10 : 00 ] For those who desire to be, With us in this place, But who cannot be, We ask that you would bless them, Where they are. And we thank you, That you are the God, Who is able, To meet with your people, Wherever they are, Even at the far side of the sea.

Whether, Sitting at a river, Like a prayer meeting, Many thousands of years ago, Or in some grand cathedral, You are able to draw near, To your people. So we ask Lord, As we think of those who are absent, That you would bless them.

We think also, Of those who, May be healthy, And who may, Be settled in their minds, And yet have no sense of need, Of Jesus.

You have no sense of, The fact that they, As we are sinners. And we ask Lord, That you would, Move in the power of, Your spirit, As you have done, In these parts in the past.

And that you would, Awaken souls. That you would, Touch hearts. That you would open eyes. That you would, Stir us, We pray. That there may be many, Many people, Who would look, In faith to Jesus.

[ 11 : 08 ] We pray Lord, For, Youist at this time, As we've mentioned them. We thank you for, The prospect of an induction, Over there. And we pray for, David and for, His family at this time, As they prepare.

We ask that you would, Bless them. We thank you for them, Sitting around the Lord's table, In North Uist today. And for the three new members, Who have gone forward. And we ask that you would, Bless them Lord, In that place.

We, Pray for them. And we ask Lord, That you would, Have your hand upon your servant, And upon all your people, As this, New ministry begins. We pray for Angus, And for Kirsty at this time.

And Angus especially, As he prepares to go away. And we ask Lord, That as he goes out, In your name, That you would go with them. That you would bless, Him and Kirsty. And that you would use them, In the places that you have called them to.

And we ask Lord, That you would, Give them, And give each one of us, Opportunity, And courage, And wisdom, And grace, That we may, Share Jesus, With those that you put, Around us.

[ 12 : 14 ] Around us. We ask now Lord, That you would, Go before us, In this day, And in this service. And that you would bless us, As we, Seek to draw near to you.

Hear our prayers, Take away our sin, Help us to have our eyes, Fixed upon Jesus, In whose name, We pray. Amen. Boys and girls, Would you like to come out please?

I thought about doing a children's talk about football, But it's just still too raw.

How are you all today? Good, good. Right, I'm going to show you something today, And I'm going to, I'm wondering if you know what this is. So if you know what this is, Put your hand up, And, Tell me what it is.

This is fresh air. But that's not what I'm going to show you. Tell me you know what this is. I'm going to start at the back.

[ 13 : 27 ] What do you think this is? It's tricky isn't it? What about you Finley? A snake. Sorry?

A snake? If it was a snake, I wouldn't be so brave as to hold a snake. It looks a bit like a snake, doesn't it? It's got a snakey kind of look to it, But it's not a snake.

Michael? A mechanic? Michael? It's a spring. It's a spring. So it is a spring, yeah. Can you tell me what this spring is for? Where it came from?

Fraser? Pardon? It came from a car, yes. And do you know what the spring does in the car? Finley? Keeps the car moving. Keeps the car moving, yeah. That's a part of what it does, yeah. Michael? It's something to do with the wheels. Something to do with the wheels.

[ 14 : 28 ] So it keeps the car moving. It's something to do with the wheels, yeah. Now we could go on and on. I think we've got an expert mechanic in here today, but I won't call Rory to the front. This spring, I could try and tell you what it does, but I don't really understand probably what it does either.

It's part of the suspension of the car. And this spring does a really important job in keeping the car steady. Do you know where this spring came from? This exact one. Josh, who was at the holiday club with us and he was here a few weeks ago, he drove all the way from Dumfries to Oog, Oog, and the car was feeling a bit funny on the road as he was driving along.

And when he got to the Kalmak car park in Oog, he says he just was sitting there and he heard this kind of ping, a knock, and then a ding. Something hit the ground.

And then the guy from the Kalmak office who'd come out with his big jacket on came over and he picked this up and he handed it to him and he says, I think you've just got a bit of your car that's just fallen off.

And after that, on the one side, on the passenger side, the suspension, the wheel was not sitting right. The suspension was funny. It was clonking and making funny noises as it was going round corners.

[ 15 : 47 ] So this spring, can you actually see this spring when the car is driving along the road? I don't know. You can't. You're right, Joseph. You can't see it.

It's hidden right in behind the wheel. So it's doing a hidden job, but it's doing a really important job because without this spring, the car is not safe.

Without this spring, the steering doesn't work quite right and the car is just, it's just not steady on the road. So it's a hidden part, but it's doing a really important job.

And boys and girls, see when, let me ask you a question. Do you think we have jobs to do for Jesus? Well, we pray, don't we?

That's a job that we can do. Do we think we've, have we got work to do? If we're Christians, if we're followers of Jesus, have we got work to do? Yeah.

[ 16 : 47 ] Yeah, we do, yeah. What kind of things we can pray? What other kind of things can we do? We can give people toys, yeah. Yeah. There's lots of different things that we can do if we are followers of Jesus, but see when we're working for Jesus.

See when we're seeking to do good works for Jesus. We're to be a bit like the spring. And we're to do them quietly.

You know, some of the people in this congregation who do the, who do the, the best work for Jesus. I believe that most of us can't see what they're doing.

So every service, there's lots of faces in here. There's some faces that are at home. We can't see them. And finally, they're praying. We can't see them praying, but they're doing such an important work, quietly, hidden.

And they're doing it for Jesus because he wants them and he wants us to pray. And how did the chairs, how did the chairs get, Do you know? Did they just magic?

[18:02] Did somebody just go click? The chairs were there? No. No. Somebody put the chairs out. We don't know maybe who put the chairs out, but it was an important work because if you didn't have chairs, imagine all these people over here sitting on the floor.

They would have pretty sore bottoms by the end of the service, wouldn't they? Imagine them trying to get up at the end of the service, creaking and joints and everything. So it's an important work, but we don't know who did it.

And there's lots and lots of things that we can do for Jesus, but we're not to do it in a way to say, Everybody look at me, look at all the good things I'm doing. No, we do them quietly like the spring. Because Jesus sees them and Jesus will reward us for the things that we do. Now, last question before we finish. You've listened well. Are we saved?

Are we given eternal life because of the things that we do? No. How are we saved?

[19:04] How are our hearts cleansed? How are we given life that's everlasting? How does that happen? Michael? Through Jesus. It's not our work.

It's Jesus' work that saves us, but if we are saved and if we are his children, he wants us to trust him, stay close to him, and work quietly for him.

And when we do that, he sees and he'll give us a reward even when we get to heaven for all the things that might be missed by others, but that he sees that we do.

So let's close our eyes and let's put our hands together and let's pray for a minute. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you love us and we thank you that you went to the cross to save us.

We thank you that we're saved. Our sins are taken away because of the finished work of Jesus on the cross. All we have to do is believe. We ask, Lord, that when we believe, that we would also try to do things that make you happy and that maybe help others to see that you are real.

[20:16] So help the boys and girls, whether we're very young or whether we're a bit older, to do work for Jesus. And we ask all this in Jesus' name and for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Thank you, boys and girls, for listening. Angus, I think we've got a couple of apprentice drummers here at the front. So maybe we've got a growing praise band in the making here. We're going to sing now and we're going to sing about Jesus' work for us to save us and then the work that we do because we love him.

There is a green hill far away without a city wall. And we're going to sing 6-7-4 Mission Praise and we'll stand to sing in just a moment. There is a green hill far away Where the city wall Where the dear Lord was crucified Who died to save us all We may not know we cannot tell What faiths he had to bear But we believe it was for us

We hung and suffered there He died that we might be for him He died to make us good That we might go at last to help Saved by his precious blood There was no other good enough To pay the price of sin He only could unlock the gate Of heaven and let us in Oh dearly, dearly has he loved And we must love him too And trust in his redeeming blood And try his works to do Okay boys and girls, if you head through to Sunday School now As they go, remember to pray for them We can turn in our Bibles to Matthew chapter 10 please Matthew chapter 10

[24:10] Matthew chapter 10 verses 1 to 7 Is the section that we're going to look at today I'm going to read in from the end of Matthew chapter 9 It probably won't be on the screen But I'll read the verses just before Matthew 10 Matthew 9 and verse 35 This is God's word And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages Teaching in their synagogues And proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom And healing every disease and every affliction When he saw the crowds When he saw the crowds He had compassion for them Because they were harassed and helpless Like sheep without a shepherd Then he said to his disciples The harvest is plentiful But the labourers are few Therefore pray earnestly To the Lord of the harvest To send out labourers into his harvest And when he called to him His twelve disciples And gave them authority over Unclean spirits To cast them out And to heal every disease And every affliction The names of the twelve apostles are these First Simon who is called Peter

And Andrew his brother James the son of Zebedee And his brother And John his brother Philip and Bartholomew Thomas and Matthew the tax collector James the son of Alphaeus and Thaddeus Simon the zealot And Judas Iscariot who betrayed him These twelve Jesus sent out Instructing them Go nowhere among the Gentiles And enter no town of the Samaritans But go rather to the lost sheep Of the house of Israel And proclaim as you go Saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand Amen And may God bless that reading of his word to us We're going to sing again now to God's

praise From Psalm 119 Psalm 119 The first two verses The first two stanzas Of the Sam We sing in Gaelic And we remain seated to sing in Gaelic I'll read the verses in English Blessed are they that undefiled and straight are in the way

Who in the Lord's most holy law do walk and do not stray Blessed are they who to observe Who to observe His statutes are inclined And who to seek the living God With their whole heart and mind We'll sing these two verses of Psalm 119 To God's praise NINGNINGNING NINGNINGNINGNING Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 28 : 13 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. We pray for the children.

We thank you for them. And we ask, Lord, that as they go to Sunday school, that you would bless them, that they would believe from the earliest years and that they would walk with Jesus all the days of their lives.

[ 30 : 27 ] We ask, Lord, that you would be at work in the congregations around us here. We've prayed for visitors and the congregations that they've come from. We pray for the different denominations around us.

We thank you that the gospel is preached in each one. And we ask, Lord, that you would bless and equip your sermons as they open your word. We pray especially for Gordon as he opens your word in Leverborough in just a short while.

And we ask that you would put words in his mouth and that you would enable him to know that you are close. And we ask that you would take away every distraction, that you would open our hearts and that we would know that you are God and that you are with us.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. On the 14th of September, which is a week on Saturday, as was in intimations, it's hoped that David Ferguson will be ordained and inducted as the new minister of North Uist.

So that will be a significant day. It marks the beginning of a new chapter in ministry for him as a student who's now come to the end of his training and also for the congregation in Uist as they've been looking for a minister.

[ 31 : 54 ] Now the Lord has led them to David. And so that date will be a significant date where there's the ordination and induction of David into that place.

Now as we open up Matthew chapter 10, what we're reading about in these verses is another ordination. Not in Uist, obviously, but in Israel.

And this is not the ordination of one man as we're normally accustomed to. This is the ordination of 12 men. And these men are men that Jesus called to be disciples or apostles, as it's put here.

J.C. Ryle says this. He says, Here is the record of the first ordination which ever took place in the church of Christ. The Lord Jesus chooses and sends forth the 12 apostles.

Here is an account of the first charge ever delivered to newly ordained Christian ministers. The Lord Jesus himself delivers it. Never was there so important an ordination.

[ 33 : 08 ] Never was there so solemn a charge. So that's the context that gives us the big picture of what's going on in these verses.

And in this time that we have this morning, I'd like to zoom in a little on the picture. And look in more detail at three things.

First of all, we'll look at the men, the men that Jesus calls. Secondly, we'll consider the mission, the mission that Jesus sets for them. And finally, the message that Jesus gives them to proclaim.

So first of all, the men. And if we start at verse 1 of chapter 10, we move down to verse 4. And we have the list of those that Jesus called.

And he called to him, says Matthew, The names of the 12 apostles are these.

[ 34 : 12 ] So these are the men that Jesus sets aside.

And these are the men that we see being ordained and inducted, you could say, into ministry in that place. Now, if I can make a confession this morning, I have to confess that I don't like ordination and induction services very much.

I can remember when I'd been here, I think, for three or four months. And it came to a time when I was supposed to be inducted.

I'd been here as a locum. And then it was induction time because the circumstances of my coming had been a bit unusual. And I can remember the sense of dread approaching this induction. Now, there can be some exceptions with induction services. But often the man who has been ordained and inducted in the service just, I think, becomes too much of a focus.

[ 35 : 43 ] And then there are speeches after the service has happened. And people come and they talk about all the good things that pertain to the minister.

And they don't give you an insight into any of the bad things. And I'd been here for three months. You already knew there was a fair few bad things. But sometimes we can leave an induction service with an unrealistically high opinion of the newly ordained minister.

So that's my issue with inductions. Sometimes they can be skewed by that kind of focus of the man that's elevated more so than he should be.

What I note here in Matthew 10 is that that doesn't happen. And yes, we see the 12. We're given their names in the passage that we've read.

Their names are there. They're not overlooked. This is personal. But their names aren't in lights. They're not elevated. We're given a realistic impression of the men that Jesus called to serve him.

[ 37 : 01 ] And that portrait of the men that Jesus called will become more and more high definition as we read through the Gospel of Matthew. But as we see these men, as we see these names, I think we can take encouragement from these names.

And we also have to note that there's a warning for us within this too. There's encouragement as we think about the people whom Jesus chooses.

So let's just step through some of these names. There's Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother.

So these are the first four. And these four that Jesus calls, first of all, are fishermen. And that was the most common profession in that place.

They were the most ordinary of people in terms of their working life. They were fishermen. Simon Peter was a bit of a loud mouth. And that becomes increasingly clear as we read on.

[ 38 : 14 ] James and John, they were hotheads. Their nicknames were the Sons of Thunder. And so when we think about even the first four, I think it's fair to say that others, if they were gathering a core team for ministry, others would probably look past them.

Because they're four ordinary fishermen. And truth be told, they're a bit of a liability. At least two of them, three of them. But the fact to note here is that Jesus chose them.

And then we have the names of Philip and Bartholomew as the next two. And there's not really a lot to say about them. We don't have much in the way of detail.

They're not, as far as we know at this stage, standout candidates for ministry. But Jesus chose them. And then there's Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector.

And Thomas becomes famous for his kind of glass half-empty mentality. If there was ever a dark side that you could see, Thomas would see it.

[ 39 : 38 ] Thomas becomes famous for his proneness to doubting. When others might be more willing to believe. And then there's Matthew, who was a tax collector.

Matthew was famous for all the wrong reasons. He worked for the Romans. Which meant that he was a traitor. He worked against his own people. He was robbing his own people to pay the Roman authorities.

So he was a man who was hated. He was dishonest. He was a licensed gangster. Probably the best you could say about tax collectors in that era.

So Matthew would have been one of the most hated people in that place. Everyone else would have rejected him. People would have had grave reservations about taking Thomas onto their team because of the negativity that he might bring on with him.

But Jesus, he chose them. And then there's James, the son of Alphaeus and Thaddeus.

[ 40 : 53 ] What can we say about them? Nothing much. There's not much to know about them.

They are unremarkable. But Jesus chose them. The kind of people maybe that you wouldn't notice.

Gray men. Unremarkable. Jesus chose them. Then there's Simon the Caninian. The word Caninian was the Aramaic word for zealot.

What was a zealot? Well, a zealot was a political revolutionary. We could say a biblical time terrorist. And we would tend to give that kind of person a wide berth.

But Jesus chose them. So these are the names. Some of the names. And as we reflect on these names, there's encouragement because we see ourselves in these men. Most of us are very ordinary. We are unremarkable. We are unremarkable. We are doing ordinary jobs. We are unnoticed by most people.

[ 42 : 11 ] We're not famous. And yet it seems, as we look down this list, that Jesus calls ordinary people to serve him and to follow him.

Some of us tend to speak before we think. There's always a few of them in every congregation. The temperature rises and they just blast some words out. just like Peter did. It's the kind of people that Jesus chose.

There are those who are quick to lose the rag in every congregation as well. The discussion begins and it develops and the next thing tempers are flaring.

Every congregation has at least a couple of sons of thunder. And so we see ourselves, we see every congregation represented as we look down these list of names.

[ 43 : 23 ] There may be some of us who have done very bad things in our past. We may have enemies because of that.

like Matthew the tax collector certainly did. Or like Simon the zealot certainly would have. Some of us are prone to doubt and stress out about everything and get over-anxious.

And that was Thomas. And so the message that comes through an application as we consider this cross-section of people that Jesus chooses is encouraging.

This list of names and these characters that we see develop in the Gospels, they demonstrate for us that Jesus uses the kind of people that others would overlook.

He uses the ordinary. He uses the unremarkable. He uses the bad-tempered. He uses loudness.

He uses the zealot. Every kind of person Jesus is calling and he's bringing in to scourge us.

[ 44 : 57 ] There's encouragement in that. But you note that there is one name that's included in the list that we haven't yet mentioned and that's where the note of warning sounds.

There's encouragement as we think about the names but there's also a note of warning as we read through this list because in this list of apostles of disciples we have Judas Iscariot and Simon Matthew who betrayed Jesus.

And this is an unsettling thing for us to see. Judas Iscariot he was a disciple.

He was called to be a disciple. He was called to be an apostle. He was ordained and inducted into ministry and yet to use our language he's never a Christian.

was never converted. J.C. Ryle again says this Ordination does not confer the saving grace of the Holy Spirit.

[ 46 : 17 ] Ordained men are not necessarily converted. we are to prove their teaching by the word of God and follow them so far as they follow Christ but no further.

Above all we ought to pray for them that they may be successors not of Judas Iscariot but of James and John.

It is a dreadful thing says J.C. Ryle it is a dreadful thing to be a minister of the gospel. Ministers need many prayers.

So it seems here that Judas worked for Jesus but he never truly came by faith to Jesus and that was and that still is the primary calling of every disciple.

We're to come to Jesus and receive grace receive forgiveness we're to abide with Jesus and only in as far as we do that can we be effective in serving him.

[ 47 : 49 ] So the question and application for you and for me today is have we come to Jesus? It doesn't matter who we are it doesn't matter how many letters we have after our name it doesn't matter what our profession is even as far as being the moderator of the church or whatever the question is have we come to Jesus and are we spending time day by day with Jesus?

That's our calling. So there's the men secondly there's a mission. Think back to the old Mission Impossible films and I was remembering the general formula for it the special agent would be called to HQ they would receive their instructions and they were to go out on the basis of these instructions.

When we think back to these old Mission Impossible films the agent didn't get to make up the mission. the agent was given precise instructions about the mission that he or she had to follow.

And that's what we see here at verse 5 and verse 6 Jesus sends out the twelve apostles. These twelve Jesus sent out instructing them go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the

Samaritans but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

So that was the mission. Jesus gives very clear instructions to these apostles and he tells them where not to go and he tells them where to go.

[ 49 : 36 ] So there's no doubt here that the mission is set by Jesus. The calling of the apostles was to accept it and to do it. And Jesus sends them out verse 6.

He wants them to go to the lost sheep of Israel. We might ask why is that? Why then? Why is Jesus sending them out to the lost sheep of Israel?

Why is he not sending them into Samaria to the Samaritans? Why is he not sending them out to the Gentiles those who are a bit farther afield?

Did Jesus not care about the Samaritans? Did he not care about the Gentiles? Well of course he did care about them. And we'll see that as we read on through the gospel.

So the question remains why start in Galilee? Why does Jesus say don't go to the Samaritans, don't go to the Gentiles, but go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel?

[ 50 : 45 ] Why are they to start in Galilee? And I think the answer to that question, although I can't be sure, I think the answer to that question is because that's where they were.

James Montgomery Boyce, the commentator, says no one can do everything at once and the obvious starting place for their work was Galilee, where the disciples already were.

And that I think in application is an instructive word for disciples of Jesus, not just back then on that day, but here today. And the encouragement and the challenge for us is to note that Jesus can use us today, here, exactly where we are.

Now it's true that Jesus may send us out on mission to another place far away from here, as we are remembering even today, Angus and Kirsty heading off.

Jesus puts his hand upon people sometimes and he gives a burden for a place far away and when we receive that call, when we feel that burden, when we're sent out to a distant place, we must hear that mission and we must respond and be obedient to the call of Jesus.

[ 52 : 21 ] Where he sends us, we must go. But today, he has put you and he has put me in this particular place.

and he surrounded us with a certain circle of people. And he has given us a mission to reach the lost sheep and to tell them about Jesus, the one who is the good shepherd.

shepherd, the one who laid down his life for the sheep. So, just to press this in, if you're a Christian, if you're a disciple of Jesus here today, this is your mission.

if you can say the Lord is my shepherd, if you know the blessing and the assurance of the fact that he has laid down his life for you, that he has forgiven your sin, that he has given you eternal life, if you know that, if you are one of his sheep, your calling, is to tell the people around you who are not yet trusting in Jesus, that he is the good shepherd, and that what he has done for you, he can do for them, and they need this.

Now, we are so quick to pray for people when they're going through a hard time, and we must, it's a privilege to do that. There are people who are sick, there are people who are grieving, there are people who are struggling with mental health, there are people who are under financial pressures, there are people who are going through all manner of things, and as we see that, we are to intercede, we are to pray for them, we are to seek to help them, but there are people in our circle who are healthy and who are wealthy and who are lost, and who are helpless and harassed, they don't know where to go, they don't know what to look for, and they might have truckloads of money and popularity and good looks and success, and they're still feeling that hollowness, and they need somebody to tell them about Jesus, we sometimes sing the hymn, don't we, now none but Christ can satisfy, no other name for me, there's love, there's life, there's lasting joy,

[ 55 : 37 ] Lord Jesus found in thee, people need to know that, young people, you need to know that, yes go and get education, we pray that you get a good job, steady relationships, but the ultimate thing is Christ, Augustine said our souls are restless until they find their rest, hope in Jesus, but somebody needs to tell them, and perhaps for some here today, you need to listen, because perhaps you're pursuing all manner of other things, and still there's no satisfaction, well you hear today, that there is satisfaction, there is life, there is forgiveness, there is joy, there is purpose in Christ, the good shepherd, he's reaching out through his people to the lost sheep, not just of Israel, but of

North Harris and Scalpy and wherever else we're from, so the apostles, the disciples, they began the mission exactly where they were, and that was no coincidence, that too was part of God's plan, remember in John chapter four and verse 22, when Jesus meets the woman at the well, he says to her in that verse, salvation is from the Jews, there's concentric circles that go out from there, but it begins there, and we could ask the question, why is that?

And the answer to that question is, I don't know, nobody knows, we could have sung the hymn today, I know not why God's wondrous grace to me he hath made known, nor why unworthy as I am, he claimed me for his own, they could have sung that in Galilee, 2000 years ago, why Galilee, we don't know, and we can take that same hymn and we can sing it in Groseby, or we can sing it in Graver, we can sing it wherever, Gary Ward, I know not why God's wondrous grace to me he hath made known, nor why unworthy as I am, he claimed me for his own.

The men, the mission, and finally, the message. Sometimes we might be listening to the radio and we hear a tune, and we recognise the tune.

I think I've heard this one before, I recognise this tune, or we can be told a story, or we can be told a joke, and we'll think, well I've heard that one before.

[ 58 : 59 ] We recognise it. And the apostles, as they receive the message, they're given the mission, and now Jesus, he not only tells them where to go and where not to go, he gives them the message, he tells them the message that they're to proclaim.

And as Jesus gives them the message they were to proclaim, they may have been saying to each other, as a group of disciples, of apostles, this sounds familiar.

I think I've heard the sermon before. And if we rewind to Matthew 3, verse 2, we hear exactly the message that Jesus gives the apostles, first preached by John the Baptist.

John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness in Judea, what was the sermon text? Well, we're given it in Matthew 3, verse 2. It was this, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

So in preparation for Jesus coming, this was the message, repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And then if we fast forward from Matthew 3 to Matthew 4, and at verse 17, we have Jesus' first sermon.

[ 60 : 09 ] So what did Jesus preach for his first sermon? Well, it's this, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And now as Jesus gives this message to the apostles that they were to proclaim, it's the same message, it's the same sermon.

Proclaim, says Jesus, as you go, saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand. In other words, the disciples were to tell the people, as they gathered around them, they were to tell the people, King Jesus is here.

The Lord of heaven, the King of kings, has come to earth. So put down your phone, and listen up, and stop what you're doing, and change direction, and look in faith to him.

That was the message. Repent. Change the direction of your life, and look to the King of kings.

Bow before the King of kings, and give your life to him. God will go to him.

[ 61 : 34 ] That was the message, and that remains the message still today. One commentator says this, the only difference between the early preaching and our preaching today, is that then the kingdom of God was just near.

Jesus was on earth, but he had not yet died for sin, nor had he risen from the dead. Today, the kingdom is not only near, it is realized, and we proclaim a crucified, risen, and returning Christ, who is both Lord and Savior.

There's the message. The gospel never changes. Your ministers can come and go, different people will stand here and preach, some weeks it will be Scott, some weeks it will be me, some weeks it will be somebody else.

The message actually doesn't change. we're never saying look to somebody else, we're always saying look to Jesus. We're always pointing to the cross, we're always pointing to the open tomb. Our phones and our iPads and all these things, every week we're seeing the little red notification saying your software needs to be updated. updated. So you press the update and you lose another four gig of memory in your phone so its length, its life length is reduced by now five years.

[ 63 : 17 ] There's forever updates needed for all our devices but when it comes to the gospel there is never a need for an update. It's the old, old story that remains always fresh and always relevant and always new.

It's the story of Jesus and only Jesus. It's the story of his love for sinners. It's the story of the cross that he hung and died on to take away our sin.

It's the story of the stone that was rolled away and the tomb that was empty. It's the story of the saviour who lives and who today makes intercession.

He hears our prayers, sorts them out. the story of the Lord who one day soon will return and will make everything that is so broken new and right.

So that was the message and that is the message still and that will remain the message always. Two questions to finish with.

[ 65 : 00 ] Number one is do you believe the message that the apostles proclaim? Because the message that comes through them to us today and it's through believing that we have life.

It's through believing that salvation comes. So are you hearing it? But do you believe it?

And if you do believe the final question is are we still proclaiming the message Christians? And you might say that the culture is more hostile.

It's not more hostile than it was back then. People don't want to hear it. They didn't want to hear it back then. but their calling was to proclaim it.

And our calling is still to proclaim this message. Not to tamper with it. Not to tone it down. Not to ramp it up. Not to try to update it.

[ 66 : 15 ] To align it with our modern thinking. not to hide it away. But to proclaim the truth that Jesus is king.

And if we turn from our sin and turn to him and only him, we will be saved from sin and Satan and death and hell.

And we will be promised life. Life in fullness here and eternal life in the hereafter.

The men much like us. The message and the ministry. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we pray that you would impress your word upon us, that you would give us ears to hear, eyes to see, hearts that will be responsive and the courage to believe and to proclaim this message of Jesus and his love.

[ 67 : 34 ] We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. We sing to conclude the hymn that connects with us this old old truth.

Tell me the old old story of Jesus and his love. Mission Praise 628. Tell me your old story of unseen things above of Jesus and his glory of Jesus and his love.

Tell me a story simply past to a little child for I am weak and weary and helpless and defied.

Tell me the old old story tell me the old old story tell me the old old story of Jesus and his love.

Tell me the story story that I may take it in that wonderful redemption God's remedy for sin Tell me the story often for I forget so soon The early dew of morning has passed away at noon tell me the old old story tell me the old old story tell me the old old story of Jesus and his love tell me the story softly with earnest thoughts and rain remember

[ 70 : 20 ] I'm the sinner that Jesus came to save tell me the story always when you would really be in any time of trouble the comfort turned to me tell me the old old story tell me the old old story tell me the old old story of Jesus and his love tell me the same old story when you have cause to fear but this world's empty glory this cross gave me to hear yes

I am and the story is darling on my soul tell me the old old story Christ Jesus bring to all tell me the old old story tell me the old old story tell me tell me the old old story of Jesus and his love now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more Amen