

God is God & You are You

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Preacher: Reverend Thomas Davies

[0 : 0 0] Good evening, a warm welcome to the service this evening. It's good to see all of you and good to see people from different places, from different congregations. It's excellent for us to come together to worship God and this evening we are delighted to have Thomas Davis. Don't be dismayed if you see me standing up here, I'll be gone in a second. Thomas is going to take the service tonight and he will preach and then afterwards we'll have a short break and a time of fellowship and tea and coffee and then Thomas is going to speak to us on that theme of evangelism, how we share faith, how we tell people about Jesus.

Something that we've kind of come to in our studies in Luke and in Genesis but it's something that we find very hard to know how to do. So Thomas will preach and speak tonight to give us some help on that and he'll also mention this book I imagine that is up for sale now and he can tell us how we can get our hands on it. The only other thing I was going to say is I forgot to say this morning that the prayer meeting on Wednesday evening will not be on Zoom. We've usually got Zoom and in person. We don't have anybody to work the computer so prayer meeting on Wednesday. I'm sorry it won't be possible this Wednesday unless somebody steps up and speaks to either Gordon or Stuart and we can clarify that at the end of the service but at the moment we don't have anyone to work the computer so prayer meeting on Wednesday but only in person as it stands. I'm going to just pray Thomas and then hand over to yourself.

Heavenly Father we thank you for this evening. We thank you for the call that we are given to come and to worship you. We thank you Lord that we are able to draw near to you because of Jesus Christ your Son our Saviour. We know that we cannot come and make our approach to God because of the sin that is within us but we thank you that Jesus came to seek and to save sinners and when we come in Jesus name trusting in his finished work we thank you that we have the assurance that we are received in Christ that we are saved that we are able to draw near to God. So lead us and guide us in this hour of worship we pray that we would sing from our hearts praise to you Lord that as we pray we would be in the spirit and as we listen to your word being preached and as we think about how we can reach out with the gospel message in the places that you have put us. We ask that you would guide us and lead us. Open our minds and our ears and our eyes and our hearts that we may be obedient, that we may be faithful, that we may be trusting in all that you are and all that you call us to do.

Bless Thomas. We thank you for his willingness to come over here this evening and we pray that you would speak through him and guide us Lord in the work that you've called us to and we pray all of these things in Jesus name and for Jesus sake. Amen. Thanks Thomas.

Thanks so much David and thank you all for your warm welcome. It's always, I absolutely love coming down to see you here and it's a huge blessing to be with you as we gather to worship together. So thanks so much for coming along this evening and it's just great that we have this opportunity to meet in the name of our risen saviour and to worship God together. I bring you the greetings of everyone in Carloway, your brothers and sisters there send you their love. We're going to begin tonight singing in Gaelic from Psalm 100 and we'll sing the first two stanzas. I love singing Psalm 100 on the Lord's Day because it's a psalm that reminds us that as we sing together here our voices are being joined along with millions and millions of other voices across the world gathering today to praise the name of Jesus and so we do that with great joy and with great thanksgiving. We'll sing the first two stanzas.

[4 : 20] To come on to Believe in the Lord the Lord as He is There is a page of nightmare, and that the whole life that makes you proud of your wishes that the Old Man is given up.

CHOIR SINGS Say hi to the boastful song Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[7 : 36] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. and he was thinking about the grass, he was thinking about the land. And he was thinking about the kids and the kids.

And I remember that he was thinking about the kids and the kids. But he was thinking about the kids and the kids.

[9 : 27] And he was thinking about the kids and the kids and he was thinking about the kids. it means that something happened by poor peace or blood She was raised so mostly loves and he was raised so much so many people are different Neither does so much work in the Dutch part.

No doubt, If your Colin would have 550 pills to even stealth or hacia the area involved He could also take 2 different parts of their journey and then breath will come to three different times, In the Dutch section, Frau won the black dedi strip and JavaScript for the Still to send of favour from the servent attitude will not likely.

There'd be a uit get like girm on the bus and anima maniwi beat like Buckethead through Hlynag lac There'd be a Podcast on each other, and inter Cantonese then born and a discussed ear in drafts There'd be a pleasant K console's club and a neat script member connection There'd be a delivery kit together There'd be a handy doesn't work There'd be myriad kit in drafts Otis see him back, villa and afterwards Amen.

We're going to sing together again. We're singing the hymn, You're the Word of God the Father. Mission Praise 1141.

Wonderful words that speak of Jesus coming as our Saviour, speaking so powerfully of some of the great truths of the Incarnation and also of how the great message of all that he's accomplished on the cross goes out to all people across all lands.

[11 : 54] So an amazing hymn, wonderful one for us to sing as we stand and sing together. Amen. Every planet has been fashioned by your hand.

Your creation holds together by the power of your voice. Let the skies declare your glory.

Let the land and seas rejoice. You're the author of creation. You're the Lord of every man.

And your cry of love rings out across the lands. Yet you left the gaze of angels, came to seek and save the lost, and exchanged the joy of heaven for the anguish of the cross.

With a prayer you fed the hungry. With a word you stilled the sea. Yet how silently you suffered that the guilty may go free.

[13 : 31] You're the author of creation. You're the Lord of every man. And your cry of love rings out across the lands.

With a shout you rose victorious, wresting victory from the grave. And ascended into heaven, leading captives in your wake.

Now you stand before your father, interceding for your own. From each tribe and tongue and nation, you are leading sinners home.

You're the author of creation. You're the Lord of every man. And your cry of love rings out across the lands.

A reading this evening is from Exodus chapter 3. Exodus chapter 3.

[14 : 51] And a reading from the ESV. We'll read the whole chapter together. This is the account of when God appeared to Moses in the burning bush.

Exodus 3. Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. And he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.

When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here I am.

Then he said, Do not come near. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. And he said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

[15 : 59] And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and I have heard their cry because of their taskmasters.

I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.

But Moses said to God, Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? He said, But I will be with you, and this shall be a sign for you that I have sent you.

When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain. Then Moses said to God, If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, The God of your father has sent me to you.

[17 : 07] And they asked me, What is his name? What shall I say to them? God said to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, Say this to the people of Israel.

I am has sent me to you. God also said to Moses, Say this to the people of Israel. The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.

This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, I have observed you, and what has been done to you in Egypt.

And I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.

And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us, and now, please let us go a three days journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.

[18 : 23] But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it.

After that, he will let you go. And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, and when you go, you shall not go empty. But each woman shall ask of her neighbor and any woman who lives in her house for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing.

You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians. Amen. This is God's word and may he bless it to us.

Let's pray again for a wee moment. Let's pray. Father, we're so thankful that we can pray to you this evening.

We thank you that when we pray, we can come and pour our hearts out to you. And we especially want to pour out our hearts towards you regarding people that we see in need in the world around us.

[19 : 25] We think especially of people who are suffering so much in Turkey and Syria and all the, just the awful aftermath of the earthquake there. We pray for all the efforts that are made to reach them and we pray that the nations of the world, particularly those that are powerful and wealthy, would channel their resources into helping that nation and others suffering in other parts of the world that maybe don't get as much coverage in the news, but those who are in need, we pray for them and ask that you'd help them.

We want to pray for any here tonight who are coming with their own burdens and struggles. And we pray, Father, that they would hear your voice speaking to them, that you would draw so near to them.

But we also are aware, Father, that there's such a massive need on our doorstep here in Tarbert, across our islands. And that massive need is that there's people who do not know you and people who desperately need to come to faith in Jesus.

And we recognize, Father, that you have placed us here with the amazing privilege and the big responsibility to be your witnesses and to be the ones who share the good news of Jesus, just as others have shared the good news with us.

And we often feel very, very daunted for that task, Father, but we know that you are the God who is able to work through people who, without you, can do absolutely nothing.

[21 : 01] And we want to pray, Father, both for the people we see and know around us in our families, in our communities, the people we work with, those who do not know you. We pray, Father, that you would be working in their hearts.

And even if we're unaware of it ourselves, please be working in their hearts. And may they come, may they hear your word through whatever means that that may be. And may they see in our lives a powerful witness for you and for all that you have done for us.

And so please work in their hearts. But we also pray for ourselves as we seek to go into this new week as your witnesses. Jesus, please help us to bear the fruit of the Spirit in every aspect of our lives.

Please help us to show, to live our lives in a way that makes it so clear and obvious that we love you and that we love others. And please help us to have the courage to speak and help us to have the wisdom to know how to speak.

And we pray, Father, that you would just take us all, and even for the people here, we pray, Father, that you would just do wonderful and surprising things in the days and weeks ahead.

[22 : 11] And so that there would just be a great encouragement. Help us, Father, to have a bigger and bigger, bigger view of what you can do. And may that fill us with confidence as we seek to go out with the good news of Jesus.

Our islands desperately need to hear the gospel. Our nation desperately needs to hear the gospel. people, please, Father, take us and use us and multiply us so that there will be many more people worshipping you, serving you, and proclaiming you in our nation in the days ahead.

Please have mercy on us and help us to serve you in our lives, we pray. We also pray that as we turn to your word in a moment that you would teach us and help us to hear your voice that everything we do would be shaped by the truth that you've revealed to us in Scripture.

And may your word be written on our hearts and may it shape everything that we do in our lives. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing again together, this time from Psalm 126.

Psalm 126 is just a wonderful psalm about going out with the gospel, sowing the seed, is something that we do, often feeling despondent and weak, and yet God is able to bring such an amazing harvest.

[23 : 33] And so this psalm speaks of that and so we can, as we sing it, we give thanks to God for all that he can do, but we're also praying to him that he would continue to do that great work among us.

So Psalm 26, let's stand and sing together. Amen. When Zion's bondage got her back, as men that dream were we, then filled with laughter was her mouth, her tongue with melody.

They long the heathen, saith the Lord, great things for them hath brought.

The Lord has done great things for us, when joy to us is brought.

As streams of water in the sand, her bondage Lord recall.

[25 : 04] This so in tears a reeling time, of joy and joy they shall.

That man who gave precious seed, enjoyed for a time, he deadless bringing back his sheep's rejoicing shall return.

Well, I'd like you all to turn back with me to Exodus chapter 3.

And we're going to look a wee bit at this passage together. We can read again from verse 13. Then Moses said to God, If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you.

And they ask me, What is his name? What shall I say to them? God said to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, Say this to the people of Israel.

[26 : 30] I am has sent me to you. As David mentioned, I was delighted that he invited me down to have the opportunity to preach this evening and to spend a bit of time with you in a fellowship afterwards.

And part of the reason David did that was to speak about a book that I wrote that's just come out. And I feel very kind of awkward talking about a book that I wrote.

I feel very embarrassed about that. And I don't want to sound like, Oh, like my book's amazing and all that stuff. I'm not really here to do that. But what I do want to do, both in the service just now and in the fellowship, is talk a little bit about what the book is trying to say.

Because although I feel a bit embarrassed about a book with my name on it, I'm not at all embarrassed about what the book's trying to say. Because I think it's setting before us something that I think is incredibly important as we seek to share our faith with others.

David was mentioning to me before, and you mentioned at the start, that in your own studies just now, as you've been looking through Luke's gospel, as you've been thinking about the life of Abraham, it's just such a powerful reminder that we have that role to be witnesses to the people who are around us.

[27 : 53] Tarbert and Scalpe and the rest of Harris are full of people who don't know Jesus. And the people that God's going to use to reach the people in Harris who don't know Jesus is the people in Harris who already know Jesus.

In other words, you. You're the people that God's going to work through. And it's the same everywhere. Everywhere that is the pattern that God has used all throughout the history of the church.

He just uses people, his people, to share the good news with others. Now that's a very daunting task, and I'll say a bit more about this in the fellowship later, but it's something that many of us, I think me, just as much if not more than anybody else, finds really difficult.

And because of that, as you prepare for that, as you think about reaching out with the gospel to your neighbours, your schoolmates, your colleagues, the people in your community, I want to emphasise tonight that there are two things that you have got to remember.

Two things that I think are two of the most important points that need to be borne in mind as we seek to share our faith.

[29 : 11] Two foundational principles that I want you to remember and that I want you to never forget. I want you to know that God is God and you are you.

Now that's the title of my book, but the book's title actually arose out of sermons that I had done. And tonight, I wanted to give you just a summary of some of the key things that we emphasised as we studied this together in Carloway just over a year ago.

God is God and you are you. These are two things that you absolutely have to know and understand and that you have to never forget. And behind that title for our sermon tonight is the conviction that the theology that the Bible teaches is absolutely essential for the practical work of mission that you need to engage in in your communities.

And I think that's an incredibly important thing. Sometimes, you know, we think about theology, we think, oh yeah, theology is really amazing. You learn all these phenomenal truths about God as they're revealed across the pages of Scripture. You can read books about it.

You can hear talks about it. And it's amazing. And you kind of put theology over here and you leave it in the one corner. And then you think mission. Mission's really important. We need to reach out with the gospel. We need to have things going on in church.

[30 : 33] We need to talk to people about our friends. We need to think of ways to connect with the community. We must engage in mission. And we kind of put mission over here. As though theology is what one class of Christian does and mission is what a different class of Christian does.

And the two things never meet. And everything that I'm saying to you tonight is trying to show that that separation of these two things is stupid and unbiblical and unhelpful.

The truth is the theology that God reveals to us in Scripture is the foundation and the fuel and the driving force for the work of mission that we need to do as followers of Jesus.

The two sit right together. And at the heart of that that theology is the incredible truth that God is God and the incredible truth that you are you.

And I want to just talk a little bit about each of these in turn for a wee while together. So starting off God is God. That's that's the great emphasis that we have here in Exodus chapter 13.

[31 : 50] This is one of the most important passages in the whole of Scripture. It's a passage where God reveals his name. He reveals really what lies at the core of his identity.

and you have this incredibly simple answer to Moses' question. He says you know when they say who sent me what should I say?

What's his name? And God replies he says in verse 14 I am who I am. Now that is I think simultaneously the simplest and yet the most profound theological statement that can ever be made.

And I love I just love how Scripture does this. It takes like three tiny simple little words and puts them into a statement that contains so much incredible truth.

I am who I am. That highlights several things. It highlights the uniqueness of God. And that's something that can be hard for us to get around.

[32 : 59] You know we ask the question sometimes what is God? There's really only one fully appropriate answer to that question. What is God?

God is God. And you're like well that's not very helpful but I want you to think about it because it's true God is God.

Nothing else is God and God is nothing else but God. And that immediately puts God into a unique category of his own.

And you know the Bible reveals a little bit more about what that God-ness involves and incredibly there's this beautiful beautiful balance of the fact that there is only one God who is God but that God's nature is actually a beautiful relationship of three Father Son and Holy Spirit.

And that's something utterly unique. There's nothing comparable to that. God alone is the absolute of reality. God alone is the one who is infinite.

[34 : 08] God alone is the one who has no beginning and no end and all of that is just what's involved in being God. And that's why you know making something other than God God is just ridiculous.

And the Bible speaks about that. Isaiah is one of the most powerful kind of critiques of that mindset of making an idol of something that's not God. The minute you stop and think about the fact that God is God you realize how utterly bonkers that is.

And so I am who I am is just pressing home to us the fact that God is absolutely unique. But it also presses home to us the fact that God is personal.

He is certain things. I am who I am. I am the person that I am.

There's that personalness of God. As we said the Bible reveals to us that that personalness of God actually consists of three. Of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

[35 : 11] And as God he has certain attributes and characteristics. There's certain things that God is, certain things that God isn't, certain things that God can do, certain things that God can't do. And forever and always he is who he is.

That speaks to us also then of the consistency of God. So I am who I am. He's always that. So when we speak of God as merciful and righteous and holy and good and wise, he is that and he's always that.

I am all these things and he's never anything different. Absolutely consistent. And it all culminates in emphasising the perfection of God.

He's always everything he's meant to be. And this is why, you know, you think of this passage of scripture and you think, you know, of how, you know, you think if we had been left to choose God's name, you know, what name would you give to God?

You think, well, strong or wise or powerful or almighty or holy or something and all these are all good words. God blows them all away by saying, I am who I am.

[36 : 24] Because that stands above everything else. Nothing compares to him. And it's been, it's pressing home to us the fact that God alone is God.

God is God. But from that we see then an outworking of who God is and an outworking of his purposes in the way that he deals with Moses.

And I'm going to highlight just four things very briefly. They're all unpacked a wee bit more in more detail in one of the chapters in the book.

But I'm just saying that because if you've read the book, you'll recognise these ones. Four key things. You see that God's sovereign. God's sovereignty is so apparent in all of this.

He comes to Moses. He knows what's going on. He recognises the suffering that they're facing. He has a plan. He is the one who is in control. He is the one who's above everything else. And you see that emphasised as you read through the rest of the chapters of Exodus.

[37 : 30] You have got the ultimate sovereign in terms of global power. Pharaoh. And God comes. completely overthrows and overpowers him.

You see God's initiative. So he's sovereign. He also takes initiative. He's the one who comes to Moses. Moses is not looking for God. He's the one. God is the one who comes and initiates the work of salvation.

We see God's power at work. You see that again throughout the whole of the Exodus. But here you see it incredibly in the burning bush because you've got this bush that's burning and it doesn't get consumed.

So that's so important to recognize. There's nothing like having the fire roaring but if you don't put more fuel on it it just dies down after a few hours. But this bush is not getting consumed.

It's showing us that God's resources never run out. The bush is burning but it's not consumed. He's got the resources needed for salvation.

[38 : 32] So we see God's sovereignty. We see his initiative. We see his power. But we also see his compassion. Because he has heard the cry of the Israelites.

He's seen their suffering. And he's willing to help them. And so these are massive truths that are being revealed about God here in this chapter. And there's many many more that we could go to.

And you think of the fact it's just telling us of how big, massive, glorious, immeasurable, immense, and also how gracious and loving and merciful and compassionate God is.

And so you see these truths being presented before us here and you think, wow, what an amazing God. But at the same time, every single one of these truths that's been revealed here is a powerhouse of encouragement for us as we seek to share our faith.

Because when we seek to share our faith, we look at people around us and you think, it's not going to work or we can't do it. If I ask someone to church, they're going to say no. If I pray for somebody, then I'm pretty sure that nothing will probably change.

[39 : 53] If we try to initiate something new at church, it might work a wee bit, but it probably won't. And you look at someone and you think, well, their heart's too hard. You think their situation's too broken. They're just not interested.

You look around you and you think, it's just not going to work. Then you come back to Exodus 3 and God says, I am who I am. And I am sovereign.

And I have initiated a work of salvation. And I am powerful. And I have unending compassion for the people in your community who don't yet know me.

And so it's all helping us to see that the truths that we learn about God are a goldmine of encouragement for us as we seek to share our faith.

And it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter how bleak it looks in front of you. It actually doesn't matter. Nothing looked more bleak than the Israelite situation. Moses had kind of alienated himself from the Israelites anyway because of his upbringing and because of his actions when he killed the Egyptian.

[41 : 08] The Israelites themselves were a mess. Slaves. And as best as we can tell, they had pretty much adopted all the religious practices of the Egyptians.

The whole situation looked terrible. And then God acts. And nothing is too hard for him. And so we think about sharing our faith with people.

There's tons of things that we need. We need opportunities to arise. We need resources for the task. We need hurdles in front of us to be taken down. We need people's eyes to be opened.

We need them to be able to understand the gospel. We need a message that can actually change people's lives. We need power that actually goes beyond any human effort that any of us can muster up individually or collectively.

There's so much that we need. And you ask the question do we have it? The answer is yes. We have it because God is God.

[42 : 05] So is God powerful enough to use a weak person like you? Is God able to open the eyes and soften the hearts of your friends, your colleagues, your classmates?

Is God's message powerful enough? Is he going to keep his promise to build his church? Can the Holy Spirit empower incredibly ordinary people like us?

Can God do more than we can ask or think? Too right he can because God is God. And that means he absolutely can do it.

He is bigger and stronger and wiser and more powerful and more compassionate and more capable and more gracious and more loving than anything else that exists.

He can do it. And that should give us so much encouragement. And this is why we've got to remember it. We've got to remember that God is God as we seek to share our faith.

[43 : 12] There's three things in particular that it should give us as we seek to share our faith. It should give us confidence. And that's probably the thing that we lack more than anything else.

And we'll maybe talk a wee bit more about that later. You know, in so many areas of our Christian lives. So you say to me, right, you say to me, Thomas, will you go up and talk in front of 100 people just now?

Yes, no problem. Would you go and sing in front of 200 people just now? Yes, no problem. Would you go and play the guitar along with Angus while everybody else is singing? Yes, no problem. Would you come and fix the life that's broken tomorrow?

Yes, no problem. I'll come and do that. I'll do all those things. I feel nice and confident. Thomas, will you go and knock on the door down the road and tell the person about Jesus? I'd rather not. Because I lack confidence as well.

God is able to be able.

[44 : 20] The fact that something amazing can happen tomorrow as you seek to share the good news of Jesus. I love the fact that in verse 1 of chapter 3, Moses was just looking after his sheep in the middle of nowhere by the end of the chapter, world history was on a path towards massive change.

So it should give us confidence. It should also give us a sense of dependence. Because as we seek to share our faith with others, we do that in total dependence on the God who alone is God.

And so, you know, if you find yourself thinking, oh, I can't do it. Well, you're absolutely right, you can't. But with God we can, because we do it in dependence on him. That's why it's so amazing when Jesus said in the Great Commission, go and make disciples.

In other words, go out and share the gospel. Go out, reach people, tell them about me. The very next thing he said was, I'm coming with you. I'm with you always, to the end of the age.

Because we are completely dependent on him. The fact that God is God though, means that in dependence on him, relying on him, in dependence, I mean two separate words, in dependence, not independence, in our dependence on him, he can do amazing things through us.

[45 : 41] So it should give us a sense of confidence, it should give us a sense of dependence. Thirdly, though, and this is incredibly important, it should motivate us to obedience. And I think this is really important because this is where we often have a kind of misunderstanding.

I've often come across people and when you think about witnessing, we think about people coming to faith and we think about people being converted and then people are like, yeah, but God's sovereign and nobody can come to faith unless the Holy Spirit's at work in them, nothing can happen unless the Holy Spirit opens people's eyes, all that's true.

But then people kind of put these two things together and they do kind of two plus two equals 27 and they're like, okay, God's sovereign, we can't do anything without him, therefore we don't do anything.

And you often see that, people think, well, you know, what's, well, we can't do that, you know, we shouldn't do that because it's God who has to open people's eyes and there's this kind of paralysis where you think, well, the sovereignty of God means that we, you know, we shouldn't do anything because ultimately it's God that does it, it's not us.

So many people think like that and it's, I think it's a very, very, it's a very unhelpful mindset to have.

[47 : 00] It's also ridiculous because if you think, if you really believe that God is sovereign, that doesn't just mean that you believe that God is in control.

when you say that God is sovereign, it means you also believe that he is king and that means if he asks you to do something, you do it.

And that's such a crucial thing. I'm not saying that to kind of guilt you or anything like that. I don't mean it in that way. I hope it inspires you and helps you to overcome this like, oh, but God's sovereign, how can we do it kind of paralysis? The God who alone is God, who reigns over all, has said go.

And there is absolutely nothing that justifies us in saying, actually we don't think we should because you're sovereign. That's bonkers. God said go, so we go.

And we're kind of going thinking we can't do it and God's saying, I know you can't do it, but I will help you. But the fact that God is sovereign means that we don't sit and not do what he says, it means we get going and do what he asks us to do.

[48 : 16] It's a wonderful quote from a theologian called William Cunningham. He says, in terms of witnessing, we have the command of God. We don't need anything else. We don't need anything else.

God has said to go and so we obey him. Any blessing that arises comes from him, but we do it because he's told us to do it. If God is sovereign, then we obey him and we serve him in every way that we can.

So all of that I want you to remember. I want you to remember that God is God. I want you to never ever forget that because we can so easily be discouraged by thinking, you know, this is a day of small things.

So we can think that things were better in the past. We can think that the nation's in too much of a mess. We can think that the church is too weak. We can think that the challenge is too big. We can think that people's hearts are too hard.

We can think that it's just not going to work. All of that is complete and utter rubbish because God is God and we need to write that on our hearts.

[49 : 29] But at this point you might be saying, well, that's not the problem. None of that's the problem. I know that God is God. I know that he's capable of all of these things. I read Exodus 3 and I'm just like, God, you're so amazing. The problem is not God.

The problem is me. And for all of us, I think we feel that way. We look at ourselves and we wish that we were different.

We look at other people who seem so much better at evangelising than we are and we think, I wish I was more like that. And we feel like we've got nothing to offer.

We just see weaknesses and failings and insecurity. If that's how you feel, then you have got to remember not just that God is God, you have got to remember that you are you.

When it comes to sharing your faith, you are you. Now, what do I mean by that? It seems like a bit of a strange thing to say, but it's an incredibly easy thing to forget.

[50 : 38] You see it so powerfully in this passage. God comes to Moses and he says, you know, you're going to lead the people out of Israel and he said, you know, I am who I am and he says all of these things.

And then, and then he tells Moses to say, I am has sent me to you. Moses is the me that's chosen by God to lead his people out of slavery.

And you think to yourself, oh, well, that's because Moses was so talented and because he was so confident and he was so capable. Yes? No. No. And we didn't have time to read it, but if you read through Exodus chapter 4, Moses is like, please don't send me.

Please send somebody else. I can't do this. I can't even speak. And God says to him, who is it who made your mouth?

Who is it who created man? You are my handiwork. And the wonderful balance we have here is that God, who is the great I am, works through an incredibly ordinary me.

[51 : 55] And that is so, so important. for us as we think about evangelism. And it's reminding us that you've got to remember that you are you. And the reason this is so important is because when it comes to evangelism, it's so easy to think it's just something done by a gifted group of experts.

There's these people who are really good at it. They can speak so clearly. They can talk to anybody. They're so good at bringing up conversations about the gospel. And we think they're amazing. But I'm not like that.

I don't really know enough. I can't speak very well. I always say the wrong thing. And our evangelistic enthusiasm is just drowned by a flood of fears and insecurity.

And when that happens, either we think, you know, well, I've got to change. I've got to have this kind of miraculous personality transplant if God's going to use me. or I'm just not going to do it.

And we kind of give up before we even start. But what this passage is teaching us and what scripture is teaching us is that if you look at yourself and think that the biggest problem with your witnessing is you, if you think that witnessing is a job for others, if you think that you need to undergo a radical personality transplant in order to be used by God, then you are wrong.

[53 : 13] wrong. You are very wrong. You are theologically wrong. And you must never forget that God is God and that you are you.

Now, that's crucial because it's just an outworking of two of the biggest and most fundamental doctrines in the Bible, the doctrine of creation and the doctrine of providence.

We are made by God with his handiwork. And his providence has placed us where we are in our lives. I want to say three things, time is racing by way too quickly, but I want to just say three things very, very quickly to highlight here.

In terms of the fact that you are you, I want you to recognise that you are where you are. So when we talk about God's providence, we're talking about the fact that God upholds, directs, and governs all of his creatures and all of his actions.

Everything that happens in the existence of the universe is under God's direction and control. So that means that the spinning of the galaxies is under God's control. It also means that what happens to you this week is under God's control.

[54 : 26] And so I want you to think about where you are. Where are you going to be tomorrow morning? I don't know if it's going to be school, work, community, meeting people, at home. I don't know where you're going to be, but you'll be somewhere.

And now I want you to ask the question, is anything that you are doing tomorrow outside the providence of God? The answer is no. Nothing is. Nothing is outside the providence of God.

So who has placed you where you are this week? God has. And why do you think he's done that? It's because he's got work for you to do.

And when we think about sharing our faith, are you likely to meet an unbeliever this week? Are you likely to meet an unbeliever at some point this week? I think the answer is yes.

And so nearly all of us, I think all of us, are likely to meet an unbeliever at some point this week. Why is God doing that? Why is the great providence of God working to bring a convergence of you and an unbeliever this week?

[55 : 31] Why is God doing that? It's because he can use people like you. And that's why he opens up opportunities for us all the time. Now that doesn't mean you're going to have a great gospel conversation on the pier tomorrow, but it does mean that you have got amazing opportunities where you are this week to show all the fruit of the spirit in the way that you deal with people, to show and make it clear that you love Jesus and that you love the people that you meet, and to tell people that you had a great time at church on Sunday and that you'd love for them to come with you next week, that Jesus has made a massive difference to your life, and all these different things that we can say just in passing to show the fact that Jesus has done something absolutely amazing for us.

You are where you are. Can the God who is God use you there? Of course he can. That's why you're there, because that's where he can use you.

So you are where you are. Second thing I want to say is that you are who you are. You are who you are. The Bible is full of magnificently different people.

You've got Moses who was quiet, you've got Elijah who was bold, Peter who was over enthusiastic, Martha who was a grafter, Mary who was kind of contemplating, Stephen who was fearless, Paul who was persuasive, Timothy who was nervous.

Throughout history it's all been the same. You've got Martin Luther who was blunt and bold, you've got John Calvin who was studious, Philip Melancthon, conflict averse, you've got Robert Murray McShane who was very devout but spent most of his life unwell.

[57 : 04] You've got Gladys Aylward who apparently was not smart enough but still went and did amazing mission work in the Far East. God's used thousands of people who are all so different and this is a crucial thing for us all to recognise.

You don't need to change to be a wonderful witness. I don't mean you can carry on sinning if there's an area of your life where you're sinning but that's a basic Christian discipleship. Sin has no place in our lives and we want to mortify it every single day but I mean in terms of just your personality, who you are is a person that God can use.

And as we think about that I want to mention a phrase that you've probably heard many times in church and I'm going to completely contradict everything that you've heard before in relation to this phrase. So you will have been told many times I'm sure, maybe not but I've certainly been told many times that you need to get out of your comfort zone.

And what people mean by that is that we all have a kind of comfort zone where we're comfortable and we need to get out of it. And that's a helpful thing if it's challenging us not to be lazy and not to just sort of always want things on our own terms and not wanting to kind of in any way do something that might be disruptive to our lives.

And so people will say get out of your comfort zone and that can be helpful. But I also think it's unhelpful because that phrase get out of your comfort zone can imply that God is only going to use you if you're doing something that you're utterly terrified of.

[58 : 41] And that's not true. The truth is God can use you in the areas where you feel most comfortable and where you feel most confident.

In fact that's probably the areas where you are most gifted. And so I want you to think about where you feel comfortable. So maybe you feel really comfortable talking to people.

So you love just meeting new people and you thrive on that. And that's maybe where you feel comfortable. Maybe you feel much more comfortable just one to one in a quieter setting. Maybe you feel really comfortable helping in the background on a night like this getting everything ready.

Maybe you feel comfortable singing. Maybe you feel comfortable inviting people. Maybe you feel comfortable at the door. Maybe you feel much more comfortable texting people than you do talking to people.

I don't know. We all feel comfortable in different places. I want you to think about where you feel comfortable and then I want you to think this. I'm not saying get out of your comfort zone.

[59 : 42] I'm saying maximise your comfort zone. And think how can I use this thing that I feel comfortable in to the glory of God.

So if you're comfortable texting people then text people encouragements from scripture every day. You could do that for ten minutes every morning. Go for it. If you feel comfortable going for walks with people then go for walks with people and build up a relationship and tell them about Jesus.

If you feel comfortable cooking then cook and cook and cook and welcome people to your home and demonstrate the love of Jesus through your hospitality. There's a million other ways to do it but think of it where you feel comfortable and then use it.

Maximise it. All for the glory of God. You are who you are. And so if you love cooking but hate singing you don't need to become a singer in order to be used by God.

Just use the thing that you're good at that you love doing. And whatever it is it might be you are who you are. Use that. God can use that for your glory. So you're where you're at.

[60 : 53] You're who you are. Third thing though is that you're also how you are. And again I think this is really important. Sometimes we think that in terms of sharing our faith we've got to put on this impression as though everything's amazing.

That we're strong and stable and everything's fine. And you know we're trying to present this best outward show to people so that we give a really good impression of Jesus.

So you kind of come across as though yeah everything's absolutely fine. Even if you feel awful inside you give off this really war you know this really positive impression.

Do you know what that tends to be? Annoying. And off-putting. But do you know what is incredibly endearing to people?

When you're genuine. And that means that there may be times when you can say to people I had an absolutely brilliant weekend. I'm so thankful to God for everything that he's done for me.

[61 : 54] Church was so encouraging and I feel so blessed. And that's wonderful to be able to say that. There might be times when you say I am exhausted. And I'm anxious.

And I don't feel very strong. But I know that God's promised to be with me. And I'm leaning on that as I go through what's probably going to be a hard week. That is just how you are.

And that can be an incredibly powerful witness. Our evangelism must display integrity. It's a great reminder that our best evangelism is not when we're putting on a show or trying to be impressive.

Our best evangelism is when by the grace and power of Jesus working in us we are being ourselves. And that's why it's so important to remember that you are you.

It's also a great reminder that the fact that you are you means there's loads of things that you're not. And that's why being in a church family is so good. The stuff that you're rubbish at someone else is good at. And someone asks you a question you don't know the answer you can get someone else to help you.

[63 : 02] And all these different things. You might think well I'd love to ask a friend I'd love to ask my friend for lunch but I can't really do a decent lunch at all. Well just both of you go to someone else's house together who's quite comfortable having hospitality.

The church family can work together. There's an amazing example of this in Exodus 4. Moses says to God I can't speak. God says no problem. Aaron can. He's coming with you. It's a wonderful example of the church working together.

All of this is reminding us that the God who is God can actually use the you who is you. Of course God can do that.

Because he's God. And so your life and my life we might feel so far from what we wish we were in terms of evangelists but the truth's been revealed in scripture are a powerhouse of encouragement reminding us that God works through jars of clay.

He works through weak people and he can do amazing things. Last thing I want to say just now is this.

[64 : 14] What if you're not yet a believer? And I don't know if that applies to anybody in here but I'm sure it probably does. What if you're not yet a believer or if you're not sure?

Remember? Well you need to remember these two things as well. You need to remember that God is God. The fact that you think oh I've missed my chance or I'm not good enough or I'm not this or I'm this and that and that.

None of that matters because God is God. That means that he can save you. That means he will save you. That all who come to him he will never cast out. He will keep every promise.

You reach out to him and he will save you because God is God. But you've also got to remember that to God only you are you.

Only you are you to God. And that means that as we come here tonight he's looking for you.

[65 : 29] He's waiting for you. He's calling you. Nobody can take your place in God's eyes.

There are I think eight billion people in the world. only one of them is my daughter. And the other seven billion nine hundred and ninety nine million nine hundred nine nine nine nine nine cannot replace her.

And that's a glimpse of how God views you. You are unique to him. You are precious to him. And if you've not yet put your faith in him.

He is holding out his hand to you tonight. Amen. Let's pray. Father we thank you so so much for the incredible truth that you've revealed in scripture.

and we pray that you'd help us to see and understand all that you're revealing to us. We thank you that that you are God that you are who you are and you've made us the people that we are as well.

[66 : 51] And we pray that you take us and use us for your glory in our lives. Thank you so much father for everything that you've done for us through your son our savior Jesus. Amen.

We're going to close with Mission Praise 755 when I survey the wondrous cross. And the last verse of this speaks of love so amazing so divine that it demands my soul, my life, my all.

And that's just wonderful words of commitment to think yes Lord I just want to serve you this week. I want you to use me. I want everything to be for you. So we'll stand and sing these wonderful words. as we close.

When I surmount the wondrous cross On which the prince of glory died My riches gave my count but loss And poor content on all my pride Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast Save in the death of Christ my God

Over in place that charming most I sacrifice them to his blood He from his head, his hands, his feet Sorrow and love flammable down Did e'er such love and sorrow meet Our thorns compose so rich a crown Where the whole realm of nature mine

[69 : 41] That were an offering far too small Love so amazing, so divine Demands my soul, my life, my all With the benediction God is sending you into a new week To serve and honour him And as you do so, may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ And the love of God And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all And all God's people say Amen