

Mission Statement 1

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Preacher: James Tang

[0:00] Morning, everyone. Good to see you all. Good to see you, sir. I've been to church all my life. At least like what I can remember. The church that I grew up in, actually that's where I met! my wife, Christina. So Joe and I, we went to the same church as Christina and her family.

It's the church that Francis grew up in. So I've known you since. How old are you? About five, something like that. Felix was in that church as well. And it's called LCCC, Leicester Chinese Christian Church. If you know anything about the UK, these churches are kind of just like, basically, they gather based on geographical, Leicester. And then the next most important thing is just ethnicity, just Chinese. And then, okay, oh, we're Christian. Okay, we're Christian. And then we're a church because we meet in a church because that's where we are.

And that was my experience. And it's a humble, modest experience, isn't it, Francis, in those kinds of churches? I remember playing worship. Music guys will appreciate this. Leading worship with my guitar and our drummer, bless him. He didn't really know how to play drums.

He, I was, the song was in 4-4, but he was playing in 5-4. I don't know how you do it, but which means every fourth bar or fifth bar, we were on the right note. But then after that, it was, but you just keep, you just keep going. You just keep going. It's just part of it. The sermons are long. They're translated. Bilingual, if you're lucky. Trilingual, if you're not.

I literally, we were in a service for, it probably lasts for three hours. And it was three people on the stage sharing the message. And then it's, I remember, it's like, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. I'm like, I'm like, unnecessary, unnecessary. It's the same word.

[1:55] It's fine. We get it. Oh, man. But I like to say that we, we grew up refined by fire. Yeah. Just, and you, you know what? Why did we go to church? Like, I remember being really involved in, wanting to be involved in sports. And then they'd be like, the sports clubs always did it on Sundays. And then I'd be like, oh, I'd wish I could, wish I could be part of this team and that team.

But then it was never a question. It was never a discussion. We can't, because on Sundays, we go to church. And so we grew up, now part of that is in England. There's nothing else to do.

Right. Queenie, you're like, there's just nothing else to do. You just, that's the only thing that, oh, we will go to church because that's all there is. And that's where all your friends are. And so you end up doing that. When I got to Hong Kong, that's when it kind of, things really blew my mind. Because, you know, I come and serve in the church here. And of course, this big church with this shiny gold building was the one that welcomed our family. And then I was sent to go and visit some other churches. And then I was like, whoa, Chinese people can do church like, well, like these worship people, team people are singing in tune and on time. And it's cool.

And the sermons are like, like you can tolerate them. And they're like, there's some really gifted speakers in town. But then something that really kind of caught me and that has, the Lord's been teaching me through these years is, and forcing me to rethink what church even is, is as I sat in those services, I was like, oh, I remember sitting in one, I won't name what it is. I'm like, this is the most impressive production I have ever been part of. I'm just blown away by the worship team. They all look sound, like pros. They're all as fashionable as JP. And then the speaker comes on and he just moves your heart and he's just the most eloquent speaker. He has props, he has slides, but not like PowerPoint slides. They're like properly designed. Anshan helps design some of these kinds of slides.

[3:58] And then I'm, well, it's not actually that church, but anyway, so. And then I realized, wow, this is the most amazing thing I've seen. And then as soon as this service finishes, people leave. I was like, oh, that's weird. You guys have somewhere to go. In England, when we go to church, you're there for the whole day because there's nothing else to do and it's cold outside. So I was like, oh, and then it was basically, oh, this feels just like we've just gone to watch an incredible, we've

just gone to watch Oppenheimer. And we go in, we watch something, and then we leave. And then I'm like, oh, that's church. This is the best church I've ever seen. But then it really got me thinking, but is that church?

What is the church? And we're going to go through the series. We've been going through just the book of Revelation and the letters to the church, starting with the end in mind, because I want to know what church it is that Jesus is pleased with. And as we're going through that, I realized actually, we've been doing the mission statement. Is this on? Can we have the first one on? Sorry, I'm putting whoever is on the screen. I want to go through the mission statements in these next few weeks. And we're going to go through the mission statement one, because I realized there's some people here who we've walked through this together with, and we've kind of formed these statements together, but there are many who actually don't know. But the question really then becomes, why are you here? Why are you here? In the kindest, most polite, loving way, why are you here?

I mean, we'll put Alex Lee on the spot, because he helped us read the statements. Why are you here, Alex? Like, this morning, literally, why are you here? Because being with me helped me, kind of a reflection that helped me to express faith, and explore faith, and know God, rather than just, like, isolated.

Yeah. Being a part of a community where you can explore faith and know God deeper. I want to ask you, do you know why you're here? Like Alex said, your feet brought you here, of course, that's part of it. But why are you here? There's people who go to church for all kinds of different reasons, right? We go to church because, well, you have to go to church because you're having lunch with Grandma afterwards, and she'll ask you whether you were at church. So therefore, you really should just be at church, and then you don't have to lie, and then you don't have to be in trouble. You might go to church because it's just so much part of your kind of, like, your muscle. Your muscle memory is that you wake up every Sunday morning, and you go to church. Your friends might go doing different things and surfing with cool people like Aiden, but then you don't do that kind of stuff, unless you go really, really early like Aiden, but you don't do that because on Sunday you go to church. But have we ever stopped and thought, why are we going to church? What is it for? I want to make us a little bit uncomfortable because I want to talk about this. I can't hear everyone share their thoughts, but I want you to be able to talk a little bit about this.

[6:48] Can you have a think about that? Can you articulate why you're here? Why are you here? I mean, let's try now. Just the person next to you, just have a think and try and explain in one sentence. We're not going to do this for long, so don't worry, it won't be that painful. Why are you here? What do you think, what's the reason why you're here? Go, try.

Try.

15 seconds.

Make sure they get it. Make sure they get to share. All right.

Why are you here? What's interesting? Gaps, why are you here? What did you hear from your little group? Why are you here? To seek God in community.

[8:28] That's it. Is there more to it? Jay? Oh, he stole your answer. Ouch. Yes, you're right. You're right.

To seek God in community. Mine was for Jesus. For Jesus. Yeah. Yeah. For me, it's this obedience to give Jesus a blessing.

Yeah. Yeah. Wow. In case you didn't hear, he says, I'm here to seek Jesus. And if Jesus is who he says he is, then actually he calls me to come to church.

That's why out of obedience I'm here to seek him in his body. Absolutely. Grace, what about you? Why are you here? Why are you here? I'm here to think of Jesus. Yeah. Throughout the week, the world is really message.

Yeah. So, I'm like, you have to refocus what is the purpose of your life to do. I'm here to think of Jesus. yeah man even just the first two answers just i'm here for jesus i'm here to know jesus and i'm here to do it in community delos good to see you putting you on the spot why are you here delos you're here because alex invited you yeah that's huge we played basketball with delos yesterday and i was texting alex again i'm in so much pain right now as i sit here as i am definitely sitting on a stool uh julian why are you here and not listening to a sermon a john stott sermon or a killer sermon online to spend time with jesus and with jesus's people that's such a good answer i think we have to understand why we're here in order to achieve the objectives of what this place is supposed to be

for or what this time is supposed to be for otherwise you come and you've wasted your sunday morning right and so for us we need to figure this out and so that's why we had these statements and we're praying hard that these don't end up being some kind of ritualistic uh just legalistic just mantra that we just kind of again just like just like when you're singing karaoke just kind of in one ear and out the other try and remind us it's like why am i here this morning why did i wake up could have slept in why why why i hope we understand that and so i want to go through these next few weeks so actually this week we're going to go through one next week will be two the week after we'll actually have a little pause because my brother will come back from uh rwanda with josh and game and actually we've got a special thing lined up that weekend for us which has a spotlight on everything that's happening in africa contrary to uh but popular belief my brother does work uh he works approximately two three days a month and here he is but uh yeah they're they're doing some fun things uh right now uh but i want to go through this one today i want you to understand a little bit the heart of the heart behind why i remind myself why i'm here we're a simple gathering in a complex time and we seek to walk daily in the way of jesus so that we may know him and enjoy him until the day he returns for good if i look at this slide here the thing that really kind of resonates with me the most is i'm here to know him and enjoy him i think that's actually the ultimate calling that we are here to know him and enjoy him and i want to unpack that a little bit but let's start with just the fact that it's a complex time we are a simple gathering in a complex time we live in an incredibly incredibly complex time right now there are some things happening in this world that i cannot figure out what are the things going on in this world just let's just throw some out pick us up here what what's so complex about this time what is complex about this time kelly war what kind of war what war are we talking about geopolitical war yeah i don't know about you when i when i open my scmp app when i have a look and i'm just like i can't make sense of this and the wars are tying together into different conversations about the same thing but different thing i don't know about you it's complex it's complicated war warfare what's happening in israel right now and in gaza right now i don't have the right words to say i don't have the eloquent articulate words to say about this but i want to be part of a group of people who are actually okay to talk about this to not be afraid to share and to not be afraid to pray for what's going on here i don't want us to be a church that just shies away from those things and then we just live the kind of happy comfortable bubble

[13:17] life that we have here in admiralty center and then go and have lunch and then play sports and that's it and maybe even just a just a word on that i know that i don't know what your views are on this um the only thing that i'm praying for is peace i know that there are people who god loves on either side of this war i think there are people who love god and who are seeking to follow god on either side of this i know there are godly men and women way more than even someone like myself on either side who are just crying out and praying for peace praying for peace for god's will to be done i also know that actually what's happening there's more happening than what i can see that there is a war happening that is beyond what i see on the news so for me that i'm humbled by that i'm i'm shaken by that and i'm trying to figure it out so one of the complexities for sure is war and the one in israel is just one of them and then there's so many other ones there's also just the war on just values as a society each each society is going through its own battles of what is right and what is wrong and we're fighting through those things what are the other things why what else makes this time a complex time james i'm just going to go all the way to you at the back here okay tell us something what's complex about this time shout it out different understandings for teaching just tell us a little bit more that one's that one's big i don't know about you but i mean there are so many different streams and of teachings of christianity and i'm like man you're reformed you're calvinist you're you're you're a pentecostal you're you're this you're that you're this man that's a lot of that's a lot of complicated stuff wait you guys you guys haven't sorted yourselves out uh what makes you different to the rest and and i'm here i'm sat here saying actually i'm not intelligent enough to be able to break down every single stream and every single denomination and what the beliefs they have are and that's part of why we gather here um it is a complex time even within the church the church has discussions and arguments that are happening i mean the church that james and julian you are at in in london in all souls some of the battles happening within england and the church of england and some of the values that are there man it's complicated it's complex there are all these things that are happening and so for us the question is can we keep the main thing the main thing that's my heart and i'm not smart enough to engage in every single conversation regarding the geopolitical war or theology even for that matter but my heart and this is where you need to hear my heart is man how do we how do we keep this how do

we be a simple gathering in this complex time that keeps the main thing the main thing right and so part of that is us understanding why we're here because if we don't understand why we're here then we're not going to be able to serve the purpose that we're supposed to be here for and so for us is to figure that what is the church what is the church how would you define church nathan you got a cap on so you're looking anonymous there i'm picking on you what is the church to you define church explain church yeah a gathering of people who want to see christ i like that the word in the new testament is the ecclesia ecclesia which means just an assembly a gathering of people we're trying we're not trying to be overly cool and hip here because we know not all of us are cool and hip uh apart from jp uh

but we're trying to we're trying to call it as it is what are we doing here we are gathering here we're a group of people who are keen to know jesus keen to seek jesus and we're just going to gather here and by being here we become the church you don't attend church you don't attend the gathering you are part of the gathering right and so that's important for us to figure out is that when we show up here we are part of we're part of the group that is here to seek jesus and to be jesus to the world if i look at scripture i see we're supposed to be the house of god exodus 40 is where the tabernacle is created we're supposed to be his dwelling place right here right now god dwells among us by the very fact that we are here we are ushering the presence of god into this reality here and so we are his temple right that's part of it ephesians 3 10 says this what are we to do ephesians 3 10 says we are here to make known the manifold wisdom of god this world needs wisdom this world is in the complicated place it's a dark place but we're here to display and show the wisdom of god we're here to be holy the question therefore does it do we know what the word holy actually means cuban what's the word holy mean to you yeah it's it's it's actually not your opinion it's it's a it's the completely accurate one holy is simply that you are set apart if i was to maybe even just to kind of expand on it more it's just basically being different are we different lebron james is described to be built different uh he still is he's pretty old now but he's still doing pretty well sorry kenneth mj still the goat but it's just this is what it is as the church are we actually different or are we just another kind of interest group are we just another group of people that are hanging out who are kind of half passionate about what we believe but we but we're not actually leaning into what jesus says that he is who he says he is and he will do what he says he will do and he will come back the church has to be different philippians 2 says that we live in a crooked and twisted generation you look on the news now you can see all the crookedness and all the twistedness but then what does he say but you are going to be children of god without blemish in the midst of this crooked and twisted generation among whom you shine as lights in the world that's philippines 215 we're in a crooked and twisted generation tick that's where we're at we are going to be children of god who are shining as lights in the midst of that what does that mean in this black canvas there are going to be pockets of light stars lights are we those lights do we bring hope in your workplace right now do you walk in and go people go oh that person's different that person's built different that person brings a light in that this world that our room did not have before that's what we're supposed to do why do we gather here so that we can know him and enjoy him why because when we know him and enjoy him we will we will just glow and then we can go back into the offices and the workplaces queenie you don't work too far from here so so you've got just a little short walk and then you can be a light into the chambers that you walk into right are we built different are we that jesus says we're the light of the world salt of the earth light of the world we bring light into this darkness that we're in a dark place again do we bring that light to the people that are surrounding us and second will we be the salt do we add flavor to life and do we help preserve some of the good things to preserve life in the context that we're in in order for us to do that we have to recharge we have to refuel we have to come to a place where we gather and basically be in a place where we can know him and enjoy him tell you what that means when we know him we will start becoming like him have you heard that thing where married

couples that they start looking the same they start looking more and more alike i mean i still don't understand that phenomenon really but i also think it's true i see people around i'm like man married couples who has been married for a long time they start to look alike for some reason but maybe in the same way for us as the churches when we seek to know him we will become more like him and then when we how do we enjoy him by worshiping him god says worship me not because he's a self-centered god because he wants to hear all our praise because he knows the moment you worship him the one who doesn't corrupt you that's when you fill to the full that's when you are just

filled with life when you worship the one who gives life how do we do that that's the thing so what is a simple gathering simple gathering if we look at acts 2 42 to 47 i've asked gab's this before so i'm not going to pick on him darren acts 2 42 has basically four things that the group the church are devoted to do you remember what one of them are fellowship we'll take that they're devoted to fellowship that's another thing so basically being together what's another one worship that will be in the form of um that could be essentially actually that could be all of them uh in some ways uh but i'll come back to that one because all of it is worship but there are some other ones that are specific words that we're looking at here breaking bread communion which is part of the worship prayer and the final one teaching and they devote the apostles devoted themselves they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching fellowship breaking bread and prayer what happened for them these people why are they devoted themselves to these things when they should be making money when they should be climbing up the career ladder when they should be making just living happy lives and getting married and just being joyful and merry what is what what changed the course of their lives to the point where they're devoted to these four things they were presented with the good news in acts 2 when the holy spirit comes upon them they are presented with the good news peter is filled with the holy spirit and then he just gives a sermon that he never could have done by himself and then one of the people what's the response they are cut cut to the heart that means he spoke truth into their hearts to the point where they're like oh man you cut deep and from there their response was what must we do to be saved and then they devote themselves to these four things teaching fellowship breaking bread prayers what's a simple gathering can we keep the main thing the main thing can we keep doing these same four things in the midst of this complex time can we hold on to the simplest of things that's why we're here can we gather and stay to these four things because we believe that they are time tested tried and true and hopefully be in a place where we can actually shed some of that light into this dark world that we're in that's why we're here that's what we're doing and so therefore we know it's not just we're not just sunday christians we are walking daily walking i look i like the word walking daily because one i like walking i don't like hiking but i like the idea of walking because walking is one actually of humility or and actually it's just a peace and trust and pace that we're not rushing ahead that we're not crawling sometimes life in hong kong i was just telling talking to someone about this recently these few months just feels like hong kong is just just come back with a absolute vengeance to the point where we're all just zooming around in teacups and we're just crawling and just spinning but i love the idea of just walking walking just shows this i'm not in a rush but i'm going somewhere and keeping in step with jesus walking daily in the way of jesus what is the way of jesus what's the way of jesus to you anyone trevor what's the way of jesus to you life what what aspect of life does the way of jesus impact everything you are not wrong but i'm wanting something more specific give us an example yeah i'll tell you what that one might be that one actually what the way of jesus impacts the way we use our time it it changes the way we approach every minute of every hour of every day because we're like okay this is important to me this goes contrary to actually there's there's two places people in hong kong maybe in the people that you know would be one you're using your time for work or you're using your time for junk boat trips and golf and all and what and what not that any of those things are bad but the way of jesus changes the way you use your time for sure uh what what is what are other examples of the way of jesus aaron rebecca any yeah wow so it's not just the quantity of time that you're spending it's actually the quality or what you're actually doing with that time so when you're spending whether it's one minute with someone whether whether it's one day they feel love which is something that's as the black-eyed peas would cry out and sing that it's hard to find there where is you know the love oh man i just took gaps and kelly to a different place come back come back come back oh dear a couple things for me when it comes to the way of jesus one is pace jesus never seemed to be hurried i don't know how you feel i feel like i'm spinning constantly uh but he just he was he just he just he did he did lots of things and he also didn't do much he just spent time with people there's a pace that comes to it there's a patience that comes with jesus i'm the least patient person i'm like come on why can't we get this done already and yet jesus just seemed to have this pace about him and for us it's how can we keep in step and walk in step with his spirit hey as i'm talking about these things have a think that's this is what we're supposed to look like when we're out there so people are outside are supposed to look and see oh this person this person runs at a different pace walks at a different pace they're not so rushed and hurried and harried about different things they seem to have this patience about them which is man their dream their dream job or their dream thing whatever it is they don't seem to be stressed stressed about it

because they seem just to be walking in step knowing that god is good and he has his time there's a patience that comes about there's a perspective that comes about it i was talking to okay fine i was talking to my mother uh and her dogs yeah whom i love dearly who i won't be sharing the sermon with uh we were talking about and we all have we all have this it just happened yesterday for me and we're talking about a project that's happening and she's like this is and i'm like is it like is it that big a deal like it's just it's just enormous if this if this doesn't happen the sky is going to fall down and i'm like i don't think it is i don't think it is but yet sometimes the things that we go through we think that it if we don't get what we want our whole world is going to come crashing down if if that person who i really like doesn't like me my life is over it's it but yet when we walk with jesus there's a perspective that comes and what is that perspective his perspective is father your will be done your kingdom come he's looking at a different thing he's looking at it from a completely different vantage point do we have that i'll tell you what this looks like this looks like when you are faced with your really annoying boss who has is out to get you you look at them and you're like man jesus show me what it is give me the perspective that you want me to see about this person how can i oh how can i love my boss in a better way

so i'm not attacked and i don't feel offended that is i don't take whatever he's saying personal but how do i that's the way of jesus that runs contrary to the way this world works it's when you have a family member or when if you're married you have a spouse who really annoys you or rebukes you for something that you've done wrong and you're like man how do i not take this personally but how do i love how do i turn that around and actually make this about me loving that person more you only do that if you have the right perspective that you're not consumed by the things of this world but you see something beyond that is the way of jesus that we seek to walk in daily uh there's a peace philippines 4 right there's there's a peace that surpasses understanding when everything doesn't make sense this happened during the fifth wave when all of our friends were leaving and hong kong was completely shut down and none of the restrictions made sense none of our lives made sense and i was like god nothing makes sense now what are we doing here and then and then the lord reminds me well yes nothing makes sense but i'll tell you what you're supposed to have james you're supposed to have a peace that doesn't make sense people are supposed to sit and have coffee with you and go man that guy has so much on he he has every reason to not be here he has every reason to be annoyed just like the rest of us to grumble and to moan and but yet somehow i'm sitting with james and he seems to have this peace that doesn't make sense i'm not saying that's what anyone has said that's what i'm hoping that they will feel you know that meme where the house is on fire at the back and you're just kind of like everything is okay everything is fine do we have that moment where people can look at us and go man you should you should you should not be reacting the way that you are but somehow you are that's the way of jesus that's the way of jesus and it looks different we're built different we think different we see different we feel different but also finally not only do we have peace we also have power jesus walked with just such gentle meekness and humility yet you would never ever confuse that for weakness never the whole point of being gentle as we deal with our children our tiny little children in superhero outfits and we're trying to look after them there's a gentleness that we have to display because they're they're weaker than us doesn't mean we're weak by not showing them strength in fact it's strong by us withholding our strength and still treating them with gentleness yet jesus had this sense of power as well as the peace and patience so when people look at you they're like oh you have a peace that doesn't make sense you have a perspective that is different to mine and yet you still have a power and the power of god the favor of god still seems to follow you wherever you go oh that's the way of jesus i'm seeking to walk daily in that way so then oh so that we may know him and enjoy him that's it that's the only calling i was talking to my mentor and we were talking about all different kinds of callings i was like oh maybe we're called to this maybe we're called to this or maybe we just have different callings and she stopped me and she said no james you're wrong we all have the same calling it's the same calling that we all have and that is to know him and enjoy him to know him and enjoy him before we even think about what we're going to do for jesus the goal is to actually just to be with jesus so that we would look more like jesus but so often we are thinking jesus what can i do for you what can i do for you have you been have you visited that friend's home who are so hospitable and the moment you walk in the house they have a million things that they want to do here they give their agents that they're giving you the the tohai to wear uh because you're not wearing shoes and you go in and you've got your warm water drink and then you've got this and you've got snacks and that host is just constantly moving constantly doing things for you have

people visited people like that and they're so loving they're so nice right and yet all you want to do is what sit down please i'm here for you i'm not here for the nuts that you want to bring out and the drink that you want to bring out and the and the cabomile tea that you want to bring out i'm here for you can we spend time together but don't we do that with jesus sometimes we lock him out and we forget that we even let him in

[33:38] and then other times he's in we're like oh jesus what can we do for you what can we do for you we're so obsessed with doing things for jesus that we end up neglecting the main thing is we just need to spend time with jesus and that we need to begin to look more like him the way of jesus to know him and to enjoy him that's the whole goal that's everything the question therefore becomes how do we do that okay i want to but how do i do it how do i get to know the person of jesus you might be sat here going i think i kind of know but i don't really james it sounds good that you say i should know and enjoy him but what does that even mean right what does that even mean how do we even do it well maybe my question to you is well how would you get to know a person how would you get to know just let's not talk about most high god right now but how would you get to know just a person well if it's someone who you have no i no way of actually knowing first thing you'll do is you'll probably google them right read some stuff about them okay so that's someone who's really far in the distance but just read about them but if it's someone that you did know then what do you do now yesterday christine and i we were we were giving a talk on a dating workshop to a group of mostly single people in in the church and we were talking about okay well you're single you're single first you got to figure out just actually where's your relationship with god and what's your relationship like with yourself because the most attractive people are the ones who actually are the most content in themselves the ones who are not content in themselves that actually it doesn't look attractive but someone who actually is just at peace with who they are themselves then it's kind of like oh and of course the they're so just in tune with just actually just loving the lord then actually everything else seems to kind of pave its way but then we started talking about okay well now you finally have someone you have you have located that target what do you do and we were i was we were talking more to the guys and i was like guys we need to well we need to like freshen up like wash our hair uh and like cut our nails and actually look decent uh we need to learn how to be able to hold ourselves when we talk to people why is erica looking in aided that's hilarious anyway we have to hold ourselves in a certain manner and we have to actually approach the other the person that we want to go to and you know what the main thing is then we need to talk to that person we need to ask questions we need to be inquisitive we need to just care and show interest if you do that for someone who you might be interested in in a romantic sense then actually the principles are not that different if you want to get to know jesus you spend time with him spend time with him be with him speak to him listen to him read about him what do those translate to in christian lingo go to church be around people who know him if you want to know this this is why we're gathered here and that's why we're not listening to john stott sermons on youtube at home is because in order to find out about jesus you need to be around his body you need to be with his people because when you are with his people you'll find out more about him and you spend and then the next one is read the bible oh gosh yeah i know it's that but if you understand the read the bible is the fact that it's actually you're reading jesus's message to you growing up christine and i when we were courting uh it was during the time where it was the nokia 3210 era does anyone know what the nokia 3210 is okay man young crowd hard crowd and and of course there's only 160 characters correct you remember when it was 160 characters and so my wife and actually in england each text cost money right and it's 10p a text that's i mean 10 texts and it's a pound and it's not cheap to message so my wife was uh incredibly frugal in the

way that she text so she was one of those annoying people that would text without any spaces in between so and they'd all be abbreviated words so joke becomes jk right and then talk to you later becomes dtyl and so her whole message of 160 characters was just intense word after intense word all and the only thing that differentiates between the next word is the capital letter and so reading it was just it was just terribly hard to read but because they were messages of love because because because and because of course there's 160 characters but the last 10 were all x's uh and i'd keep those messages and i would read them like all the time oh there's the x's again oh two x's oh we're heading somewhere uh when you when you when you want to grow in relationship with someone you can't help but just read those messages and be just in that just in that space i think it's the same it's the same for us as we try and do as we try and get to know jesus do we give him time

that's what i said last week we may have let him we may have opened the door and let him in and then we kind of leave him in the hallway and we say okay i've got other stuff to do and then we leave him so much of it is just time and i know i'm trying not to overthink this when we know him and enjoy him actually how do we do that it's just through the simplest of things it's through the simplest of things that we say oh i'm too busy well actually john mark comas when he's talking about praise is if you're too busy to pray you're too busy if you're too busy to pray you're just too busy and actually it's not an issue with time it's not as though i don't have time it's the fact that it's just not a priority the question for us as we gather then is actually as we look around is is jesus our priority if we're seeking to know him and enjoy him here does that even does that reflect what we look is that reflected in our actual weekly schedules do we spend that time with him and i'm not saying you need to force yourself to have your 10 minutes of quiet time three minutes of which are you just kind of just thinking about your work stuff anyway is there more to it how do you seek to know him and enjoy him and i think also everyone is different everyone is different just like we're doing pre-marriage counseling with a couple of couples here and we often we there's things to talk about which is love languages right everyone receives love different everyone gives love in a different way right and christina and we are very different so when we started dating i was actually working in footlocker at the time and of course you guys know that i have a sneaker problem i mean that's i had a sneaker problem um but uh one of the ways that i expressed love to christina was to buy her shoes right just so she'll have she has like so many pairs of air force ones just all she never wears any of them and i'm like what are you doing this is my way of showing love to you and but that's not the way that she receives love and so we might look at someone else and go oh man that person seems so in love with jesus and i want to do the things that they're doing not recognizing that we might actually be different and you might be trying so hard doing one thing and actually you're just knocking on the wrong door right because we're all different but i think what i'll tell you one thing that is the same that is unanimous across the board we have to spend time if you don't spend time then it's over then then it doesn't matter it's what you do with that time i mean the the faith and art thing i personally will not be invited to uh because i don't have that kind of side in me and that's not the way that i connect with jesus but it might be yours what is it that you have to find that thing and for me that's been my journey i've got i've got to try and figure out how i can get to know him and enjoy him if you told me to do like spend two hours just painting to try and connect with the lord it won't end well but maybe for you that works maybe for you it's music maybe for you it is going hiking but one thing i will say is likely not this this thing here this thing here i know that we have there's really good apps that do really good things i'm not hating on any of those things but i would say this has single-handedly knelt the death blow to prayer and intimacy with god in these last two decades i don't know about it the same for you but it's definitely for me i that's why i'm convinced that i read my bible through this because this stops me because even if i'm looking at an app new version with that ugly icon holy bible as i'm looking at that there's notifications that pop up it doesn't even have to be notifications because there's nba games happening so i'm checking the scores for those uh and i know there's focus modes and all these things but this this stops me i don't know whether it stops you so i think there are different ways that we connect with god but there are some things that are across the board stopping as and this is one of those things figure out how to figure out how to spend time with god without this around figure out how to spend time with god without this around and if you think oh i don't know if i have a problem with my phone i know everyone's supposedly addicted well just just try next time you're on the mtr next time like how count how many seconds it takes before you reach for your phone uh just just try just walk and say oh actually here it is this is one of the things so how do we get out of this and i said last week nature nature is a huge thing when you go out and you see this world in the way that it was created the symphony that's happening around you because of all the trees and all the skies and the birds and the fish of the sea there's there's something beautiful about being in nature you don't have to hike if you're like me you don't like to hike then you can catch the bus up to the peak and then you can just do the whole thing there uh but there's something about being in nature that you pull yourself out of the current surroundings that you're in the concrete jungle that we live in take yourself away uh christine and i we for our anniversary we went to okinawa for our anniversary and it was just the most beautiful time and actually who's been to okinawa here some people such a calm beautiful place that doesn't seem to have the intense materialistic values of the city that we have here like the the cars there are just these simple like subaru minbaote and everything just seems to operate at a really slower calmer pace i come back here and i'm surrounded by things that

i don't have surrounded by people that i want to meet things i need to do i think those run contrary to the way of jesus i think those run contrary to how they are not conducive to having a time where we can know and enjoy him and the hard thing is it's hard to do that on your own it's hard to pull yourself away from that schedule right but yeah it is so important so you know the organization i work for is called young life uh and we have a team of 15 staff that go out and go to schools and meet young people and university students aaron's the university director of that and something that we do is that once a month our staff on our own or with just one other person we go out and we spend that day with jesus together recognizing that's the most important thing and it and it's worth that day because if you have that time with jesus and your tank is full the other 29 days are good as a boss as an employer if i force you to work that extra day but actually your tank is completely empty i'll take five full healthy days over a whole month of emptiness and just dreariness spend that time away but hey that's that's me talking some of those some some of the things that i kind of put through but i actually wanted to bring someone up just to hear uh someone else and some of their thoughts about how they approach how do how do they know and enjoy him or how do they go on that journey to pursuing that to being in that place i want to bring florence up just for a second um uh round of applause for florence uh again i'm not i'm not saying i'm not saying that florence has it completely right and she's not saying that either but what i do sense in florence is actually just this eagerness and this diligence to want to try and i think that's probably even half the battle and so florence as i share about this how do you know and enjoy him and what are the things that you've tried that worked and what are the things that you try to have yeah i think um it goes back to when i was really young i think prayer is the first thing that i started with um as a little child i went to church and i think the first thing that they teach you is to pray and in those moments prayer to me is just calling out to god in the most extreme moments of distress um and just knowing that he's my father um actually because growing up was pretty hard for me and my family my mom had really severe depression and it was a really difficult home environment so i knew that god was my rock and my salvation and he would be there to just be for like be with me so i think prayer started then i knew that god was someone who i can depend on every time i prayed i sense him being with me and as i grew up i think prayer became more than just a thing that i would do in the times of stress i think it's like things that you can do regularly even in every single second so there was a point in time which is more radical than now when i would be on the mtr and i just like put my headphones in listen to worship music and pray out loud it would be pretty weird because then i know this because then my friend told me later on she's like oh i saw you talking to yourself are you okay and i'm like yeah i was talking to god but i think but it's just the show um that prayer doesn't have to be in a time and place where you're just sat down with your bible in front of you it can be anywhere it can be in your heart you don't have to pray out loud but i think inviting jesus into every single moment even short prayer it's like oh give me like james was saying right with your boss if they're being really difficult just ask god to give me your heart give me your eyes to see just like something short like that and just to have him there i think that's like one way to know him and to know what to pray for obviously is to then like delve into his words not something that i particularly loved growing up my mom would force me to read the bible every single day and i don't think any of that stuck but i think as i just got to know god either through community and just to know the importance of yeah he left this book for us the word the words there every time you read it actually there's something different as the spirit reveals more to you so i think yeah just like understanding that and seeing that come to life and how that applies to every single part of your life um and then having prayer connect that so through reading his word as well and falling in love with that not um sometimes it's easier to start in the easier parts of scripture not everybody should always start from numbers or deuteronomy but yeah it's a it's a whole journey and i think nature um i'm someone who loves to explore and to like do really random crazy stuff so um i think there was this one time when i just biked from yunlong to mawanshan and then to some thing to like set moon or something yeah right across it was 100k and then i just like kept listening to scripture along the way but i think one thing is just as i was biking i was just like realizing how how grateful i was for the body that i have you know that god created us to have muscles that can do this kind of thing and god gave us intelligence as humans to create the bike that we can move so much faster than walking and then and yeah and just like and to look at the nature and the scenery that's all around me so just like hiking or scuba diving and stuff like that i think you just sense it's it's pretty crazy you can't just burst out from a rock or have a bunch of atoms clash together and suddenly this is it so i think it's just seeing god everywhere i got one quick question for you you florence is actually one of the people

who i would say uh is a for me a symbol of all the good things that can happen in a city like hong kong a young person who loves the lord who is you're probably one of the busiest people i know right julian's just like yep yeah um and she obviously she's a dentist uh she was doing the hku fellowships back then and then you not only were you studying dentistry and becoming a dentist you you also founded your own ngo uh that then worked to teach cantonese to ethnic minorities and you did all these things and of course in a city that's just constantly busy with all the things vying for your attention and actually even yourself with the attention issue like can i say that yeah i mean you have adhd uh no seriously and so you say it so casually oh yeah it's all just praying and reading the bible all right for those of us who don't have adhd that's hard right so how do you do it what are what are some like tips that you've had over the years where like even everything that you've got going on you somehow still read the bible and pray what's the what's the secret i think it's not easy i think one is habit like setting that that time um for me it was the bus ride to work or to school so just any time that i can find that i'm sure i'll be like still in some sort of way and to and to start small as well i think for me sometimes if i'm exhausted right there's no way i can read a whole thing so just reading something super tiny but i think ultimately it comes from just i think yeah cultivating that desire to connect with god um and to enjoy him and to just like really enjoy spending that time with him just like how you would look forward to like a really good meal or look forward to meeting your best friend or whatever right i think it's just to once you know god a little bit more starting out super small find ways to connect with him more and as you know him more then you would fall more in love with him thank you round of applause for florence and on another on that note actually this is where i want to conclude because we have the pleasure actually we had on monday night we had florence and julian and we had aiden and erica at us uh doing pre-marriage counseling as both these lovely couples are getting married in the next few months and this ties in with my last point here why do you do all these things why are we seeking to know him and enjoy him because all of it is actually a precursor to him coming back actually why are we seeking to know him and enjoy him now because we're looking forward to the day where we get to do this unhindered unrestricted without tears and without pain and knowing that he returns for good that's what we're looking forward to and this is where hebrews 10 25 says don't neglect to meet together don't meet and this is where covid dealt a huge blow to the church because it just stopped us from meeting because when we stopped meeting we thought that we could do it on our own only to find out later that we can't do it on our own because as hebrews 10 says don't neglect to meet one another to stir each other up in love and good works encouraging each other as the day draws near i need you so that i can keep my eyes on his return soon because if i'm just on me if i'm just me i'm just stuck in this little bubble here i need you to point me to him that's why we do it together okay and that's why we as we gather that's the hope that we are pointing each other to live for eternity and not just for monday you