

Mission Statement 3

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Date: 26 November 2023

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[0:00] Hey, welcome to... Actually, we can switch this off actually, Eunice, thank you. We don't need this. I'm going to try and stand today. I'm packing a lot of heat, so I think I'm going to have to stand to be able to share with you a little bit.

But I wanted to, first of all, do a little bit of house business. I know that we're pretty full here. I wanted to kind of share a few things. Welcome to the gathering experiment. Welcome to the gathering experiment. We're trying to figure it out.

Our deacon, Tony, keeps talking to me and really is... I'm learning a lot from him about this. We're holding just a very light heart and we're just going to try different things. It's a pop-up shop mentality in terms of how we're trying to gather together on a Sunday.

One of the issues here... Let me tell you a couple of truths. This place is... I think it's about 3,000 square feet or something. Is that right, Agnes? Something like that. We have probably close to 160 people here. So actually the numbers don't quite add up.

There's another truth that I want you to know is that your pastor, me, I'm 5'5". Well, 5'5.7 actually. So if you round it up, me and Cubone are around the same.

[1:13] Which means if you're at the back, you'll struggle to see me. And I get that. And I'm sorry. I've been praying to the Lord every day that he would give me a couple of extra interests.

Just so that you at the back, who came to church late by the way, can see me better. Only joking. I love you, but you are late. We're trying to figure it out.

We're trying to do different things. I was just talking to Tony about maybe we'll go to Taobao and figure out some little stage here that you can see me a little better. Actually, you know what? I love this. Can we have a round of applause to the people who have chosen to sit around on the floor here?

Because let me tell you something else. If we stacked this place with chairs, you guys would have no hope seeing me at all. Like literally, you would not be. Some people here are taller than me while sitting on a chair. So that would not work. OK, so we have to do this.

But let me tell you a little bit about my vision. Of course, this is the mission statement, what we're doing. But as we're standing in the back is actually the welcome team have been doing such a great job in trying to help usher people into a place where they can like at least be semi comfortable.

[2:23] Yeah. And I get that. We have these nice bean bags and these big seats that are really comfortable. But, you know, there's a thought that crossed my mind. Hey, welcome. Come in. Come in. Don't worry. Don't worry about just come in. We welcome you.

It's I think a part of my vision of the church is that we would be a church that is known to not have comfy seats. Like let me just qualify what I mean by that.

That I would love for us to be known that actually it's hard to get a good seat in the house in this place because we're not supposed to be here and stay here. If the seats are too comfortable for you, then you are just gathering and you are not scattering.

Are you with me with that one? Because so actually when you're trapped on the floor on a cushion or when you're stood at the very back and you're standing, I want to encourage you that actually that's the reason why you gather with us, because I hope you're reminded that actually we're a church.

Yes, we struggle to have comfy seats. We struggle to have enough seats for everyone. But that's the reason why is because we are not only gathering, but we are also trying to scatter. My fear is that if we get too comfy here, we will just stay here.

[3:29] And if we just stay here, we actually stop being what the church is supposed to be. Do you get that? That's what my heart is. The other heart is actually if you do come at 11 and I was I've

stood there all the way back.

11, 11.05, 11.10, there's plenty of seats. Okay, so please do come if you want to see it. And that's actually even more so. At 10.30 today, me, myself and Florence and Rebecca, the welcome team here.

And just actually the whole group of team of people, we're talking about what's best. We're literally like, should we have all the chairs in? Or should we take all the chairs out? We're like, it's constant. We're just experimenting, guys.

Like we don't know the right answer. But I'll tell you this. If you have a strong thought about this, come and join us at 10.30. Talk to us about it. Contribute to the conversation.

You are part of this family. And if you have a good idea, I would love for you to tell us. I'm literally, I think I've spoken to our 20 people about this over this week. Hey, what did you think? Should we do this whole thing here? Or should we do the whole chairs?

[4:27] The truth is, I don't know. What I want is for us to be able to gather as a family, to make decisions together as a family. To be known as a gathering that doesn't always have all the comfy seats because we're not supposed to stay in our seats this whole time.

Does that make sense? I'm trying to say this in my most British, loving, passive, aggressive way possible. Okay? So I'm trying. And I hope you really feel my heart. Gab's knows, right?

I'm trying. And I, my heart is just so warm that we are here gathering. But if I've led you to believe for any second that you coming here is for your entertainment and for your comfort.

And that all you actually need to do is just come and watch a service and then leave. I've done you a disservice. We're gathering here to meet God. We're gathering here to meet God. You're not here to listen to this 5 foot 5.7 preacher preach.

You're not here to, you're just, you're here to meet God and to grow in God. You're in God. Number one, the me, that you would know him and you would enjoy him. And that you would walk in his ways every day.

[5:27] Me. And when you get that, and only when you get that, when you graduate from that and you start to know him and you start to enjoy him. Number two, you get to do number two, which is the we. Which is that we're a spiritual family.

Remember that tree that I got us all to fill out a couple of weeks ago? That's the question we're always going to be asking. You're not here for the worship or the preaching or the lack of seats or the comfy seats or whatever it might be.

You're here because there are people here that you walk with who are invested in your walk with Jesus. And that at any moment, Ellen will have someone she can call and say, hey, I want to talk to you. Let's just go grab coffee.

And in that moment, within 10 seconds, that conversation can go deep to talk about faith, talk about her struggles. Does she have those three people? That's the question I would ask her. That's the question I would ask you.

You're here because there are your three that are here. OK. And the other thing is, and I gave you an example, because if you're sat here thinking, oh, who are my three? I don't know.

[6:23] I gave a template as to how this could be. Someone could be your Paul. That's like a mentor. Someone when you sit down and I've actually this last week, I got to spend time with two of my mentors. And I'm just sat and I'm just asking questions and I'm just getting answers.

And I'm just being filled to the brim. And I come out of that having not really done any talking myself, but I'm just filled because my mentors have poured into me. My Paul's. Do you have that? Then I have some Barnabas's where I go and hang out with them and they're my brothers.

We're just encouraging one another. They challenge me. I challenge them. We ask questions. We cry together. We laugh together. We have, I have those kinds of people. They're my bros, my mates. And then I have the Timothys, the ones that actually when I'm meeting you, let's just, let's just cut to the chase.

How are you doing? What are you not doing? What? How's your discipline going? How's your, how's your structure going? How's your procrastinating going? How can I pour into you? So that's going on in my mind.

In a perfect world, we have nine. We have three times three. That you have three people pouring into you. You have three people kind of walking alongside you and you have three people that you're pouring into. For now in this gathering experiment, I'm just asking for three.

[7:32] It doesn't matter if it's a Paul, if it's a Barnabas, if it's a Timothy, if it's a Boulibus, or whatever it might be. Do you just have three who at a moment's notice you can pivot and talk to about God?

That's the we. Can we be a spiritual family that isn't a, that isn't a free. Like if you have people coming into your home, you're like, hey, come and, come and grab a good seat. Come and sit down.

If you walk in here in the beginning, you're like, you know what, those are seats at the back, but I'm going to save them for the people who need them. Like the old people, like Tony and Hank, who need seats, we let them have the seats. Okay? Because if we don't let them have the seats, and we let them sit on a bean bag, we're going to need a couple of us to help them stand back up afterwards.

So we need, so if I'm coming in here and actually ask yourself that question. If I sit down on a cushion, will I be able to get back up afterwards without assistance? If the answer is yes, sit yourself on a cushion, please.

Because there are people who cannot. Spare a thought for those people. Okay? And think about, okay, how can I love my family? How can I, if your uncle, if your guma, if your yee-yee comes into your home, you give them the good seat, right?

[8:37] So can we do the same for our family? Okay? So let's have a think about that. Because we are. Because the truth is, your pastor is short. Because your truth is, we don't have enough space here.

Now, one day, maybe we'll get to a size where this is impossible, or rather, quite frankly, dangerous for us to be here. And we'll let Tony and Hank and Agnes lead us on the journey on figuring out where we go next.

And we'll figure that part out. But for now, can I ask you that we can make this work together? Is that okay? Can I just get a nod? Can I get a nod? Please, thank you. Like, please. And also, finally, passive aggressive done.

Forgive me. Forgive me, because we're going to make mistakes. Like, I'm still not sure whether those, you know what, I love the chairs, those chairs. But you're right, efficiency-wise, we're not in the great place. But Dr. Alex looks super comfortable.

And my life's purpose is to make Dr. Alex comfortable. So, but we're just trying to figure it out. And if you have something to contribute, please, don't stay silent.

[9:37] Come early, and talk to us about it. And if you came in at 10.30, you'll see a group of us going, hmm, how should we do the chairs today? That's literally it. We're not that smart.

We're not that, well, then, of course I'm going. It's literally like, hmm, what's best today? Okay? So I just wanted to kind of peel back the curtain and show you that's what we're about. That's what we're trying. Because if you wanted pews or if you wanted cushions, there are plenty of other churches that have all the seats that you need.

We're doing an experiment here. And we're trying. And we love, we love the fact that you're here. So you've had the me, and then you have the we. And now we have the they.

Because we have to scatter. You cannot just gather and stay. That's not what Jesus told us. Last week we had some beautiful children come from Uganda remind us that we must go.

We will go. That's it. We will go. We have to go. When you are, when you meet the risen Christ, you have no choice. You have no choice because you've just seen something completely supernatural.

[10:43] You have to go. You have to turn around and share it to the people around you. And so we want to talk a little bit about that today. And actually, next week we're going to start Advent. And Aaron, who's, how tall are you, Aaron?

6'2". 6'2". Y'all are going to have no problems with Aaron when he's going to be stood here tomorrow. And so the next week, so you're going to see him. And we're going to go through Advent then. So we're going to have a Christmas segment for those next few weeks. So we're going to finish off on, what does it mean to scatter?

What does it mean to scatter? And how do we kind of educate ourselves and make sure that we're thinking in the right way, so that when you leave this gathering space, you will head out.

And you will actually be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. That is the goal. You see, the problem here with church, the problem here with pastors like me, is we spend the majority of our time talking to you about how you use the minority of your time.

Let me say that again. Pastors like me, we spend the majority of our time trying to talk to you about, trying to train you on how you spend the minority of your time. Those five minutes before work. [11:47] Those 90 minutes at church. I'm spending all my time talking to you. Hey, pray, read the Bible, do these things. But the rest of your time, you've completely compartmentalized and you have no idea how to live out your faith at all.

You're a Christian on a Sunday morning between 11 and 1230. Or if you came to church 1115, then it's 1115 to 1230. And then that's it.

Or maybe in the morning you have three minutes and that's it. But the majority of your time is where? The majority of your time is out there. In the city. In the workplace.

I would be doing you a disservice if I don't try and equip you and train you and encourage you and exhort you so you can live out your faith the proper way when you're out there for the rest of that time.

Apparently there's a stat which is people apparently spend about 100,000 hours of their lives working. And Malcolm Gladwell says that if you use 10,000 hours, you'll be a master at what you do, right?

[12:46] So we should all be geniuses and masters at what we do for work. But so often our work is just filled with just, it's work. It's the Sunday night blues. And I'm going to work on Monday and it's just kind of like, oh, it's just part of life.

But I think God has created you to be in a place as you gather here on a Sunday is that then you go out and scatter scatter and you do likewise the moment you step out. The moment you go to your office, the moment you go to your clinics, wherever you're going, you're supposed to be the church. You've just been with church. And then the moment you finish gathering, you're going out and you're scattering. That's the goal. But maybe trying, rather than trying to convince you how to be a good Christian in your workplace, I wanted to dial it back a little bit and zoom out completely.

Why do we even, why do we even go out and evangelize or spread the gospel anyway? Have you thought about that? I mean, I am part of a missions organization called Young Life.

There's a few staff here who are part of it as well. Different people do different things, go on mission trips and all these things. All to what? We will go to spread the good news. Have you ever thought about why? What's the, what's the, what's the end game here?

[13:58] What's the, maybe, where did we start and where are we heading to at the end? Because I think as we go out and scatter, the thing that I found the most helpful is what's at the end?

That keeps me going. Because I'll tell you when you go out and scatter and nearly all of you will know this, know this, the moment you go back into society, the weight, the pressure, all those things just completely stamp you out. Whatever little fire and flame that you had by coming here on a Sunday morning, usually by Monday, 10 a.m., it's gone, right? Because you're just slogging, you're just fighting, unless you have the end goal in sight. So I wanted to present to you a couple of thoughts that I had, because God, when he created us, he gives us a commission, right? What's the commission?

Who knows the commission? What's the, huh? Make disciples of all nations, Matthew 28, the great commission. I think there's actually another commission that happens in Genesis at the very beginning. Does anyone have a, could anyone have a guess what that might be? Be fruitful and multiply, absolutely, and it's tied into all of that, of course, is actually what Genesis 1.26 says, let us make man in our image. And then what does he say? And he gives dominion over man, over, or it gives man dominion over creation. That's a part of the commission. What it is, is God says, I want my children, I want these humans to look like me and to be like me.

That's the OG commission, if you will. If you're wondering why you're here and you're wondering, what am I supposed to do with my life? I'm not here to tell you. You're supposed to look like Jesus and live like Jesus. Look like Jesus and live like Jesus. That's the original commission. That's what we were supposed to do, right? That's what we were supposed to do. We were supposed to take culture. This is what God, this is what God does. God takes the raw elements of chaos.

Tim Keller talks about this and so does John Tyson. He says that he takes the raw elements of chaos and he reorders them, puts them into order to reflect him. That's what God does. What we're going to do is we're going to continue that work. We're going to look like him and then we're going to act on behalf of him and be like him and take the raw elements of creation and reorder them so that they would reflect the beauty of God. That's your commission. That's what you're supposed to do.

[16:27] So if you are in David, in finance, in banking, you're to take the raw elements of, actually, investment bankers are great at this. They create things. They look at a void and then they invest something into the void and then something is created from nothing. If you're an artist, who are the artists here? I'm trying to pick on people now. Who are the artists? There are some artists, surely.

What not that? Annabelle is an artist. Oh, well, Grace is an artist in a very different kind of way. Music or actually storytelling or filmmaking. You're taking the raw elements of human experience and you're reshaping them in a way to tell a story. When Paul is singing, he's taking the raw elements of sound, and for Paul, that's very raw, and he reorders them and turns them into something beautiful. That's what he does. Ernest is a teacher. He's in education and he takes the raw elements of knowledge, orders them in a systematic way for learning. Lawyers, Nathan and Juju.

Everyone just laughs at that name. I love that name. You're taking the raw elements of human experience. You're putting laws together to allow for that flourishing to happen. Chaos into order. We're continuing God's work for that medicine. Medicine, doctors, you're taking the raw elements of human biology, right? And you're reordering them for well-being, for health. You're doing God's work in the clinic or in the private practice whenever you, you know, whenever you go to work, Alex. That's what you're doing.

So the question is, are you doing that? Is this gathering helping you do that? Are you scattering for that? Because that's what we're actually supposed to do. The problem here is this. So that's the beginning. That's what we were supposed to do. What happens now? We're in the present. We all fall short of the glory of God. We don't look like him. We're not acting like him. That's Romans 3.23. [18:46] We are all fall short. What we were supposed to do, every place that you're supposed to be working at here, you're just not doing what you're supposed to be doing. You don't look like Jesus. You don't act like Jesus. You're not turning chaos into order. The problem then is when the church isn't doing what it's supposed to be doing and humanity isn't doing what humanity is supposed to be doing, then it's starting to crumble. There is death. There is pain. There is brokenness. There is neglect.

There is murder. There is war. Christine and I, this morning, we were just with someone who's really trying to serve the youth of the city in mental health. And he's like, last year, last year we had over a thousand people commit suicide in Hong Kong. That's the record rate.

The last time it was that high was 2007. A thousand people just deciding that there's no point living here anymore. And they're just taking their own lives. Those who have a vested interest or a burden for youth, since September, there's been over 20 who have committed suicide and lost their lives. Can you imagine, in these last few months, there are people in this world that we share this planet with who decide, actually, there's nothing for me in this planet. And they decide just to pull the plug. Because we have fallen short, because we are not looking like Jesus, because we are not acting like Jesus, there is so much tears. There is so much pain, so much brokenness. We need to know that.

[20:21] We need to know that. This is not a bubble. This is not a bubble where we're like, oh, we are family. And we just stick together and we have a good time. And then we have lunch. And then we all learn how to play the piano from Kelly later in the afternoon. And it's all going to be fun and games. And we'll all learn how to play really fun songs. And then we just kind of go off. No, there is pain and brokenness in this world. There is bad news in this world. Will we go, was the question from last week.

Will we get off our comfy seats, or lack of comfy seats, and will we go out and do what the Lord is asking us to do there? C.S. Lewis says, the world doesn't need more Christian authors. It needs more authors who are Christian. The world doesn't need any more pastors. It needs more lawyers. It needs more bankers. It needs more doctors who are Christian, who are filled with the Holy Spirit, who have their sights set on Jesus and go out and make impact in the world. We gather and then we scatter.

That's what we do. That's what we're supposed to do. But we have not done that. But then comes the end. We know the beginning and we know where we're at right now. It's not a great place. But I need us to know the end today. I need us to know where we're heading. Because where we're heading will give us the motivation and give us the goal as to why we go out and scatter in the first place. Because in Genesis 1, he tells us, be like me, look like me, act like me. We're in a garden and it's just this beautiful, tranquil place, which I can imagine. And it's kind of like, oh, let's just stay

in the garden forever. By the waterfall, where the birds and the flowers. But then creation just descends. And it creates cities that are idolizing so many things. It builds all these walls and these towers. Sodom and Gomorrah. New York City. London. Hong Kong. What I need us to know, though, God's design wasn't for us just to start the garden and stay in the garden. In fact, because we were supposed to look like him and act like him, we were supposed to create culture that reflected him. If you look all the way to the end in the book of Revelation, in Revelation 21, Jesus says, I'm coming back again.

And there's going to be a city. A city that's filled with culture. Humanity. It isn't going to be the garden. There's going to be a garden within the city. There's going to be this beautiful mix of both. I need us to know that's where we're heading. Because when we remind ourselves that there is an end game, there is a beautiful place that we will all end up, then we may have the motivation to move. If you have your Bibles, can I ask you to turn with me to the book of Revelation?

[23:20] Revelation 21.

That's my note from Alicia. Thank you. Can you read 21 verse 3 to 6 for me?

Yeah. Revelation 21, 3 to 6. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people. And God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore. For the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, Behold, I am making all things new. Also, he said, write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true. And he said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty, I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.

Thank you. Have a look. Let's continue flying through. So verse 21, verse 3, he says, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be with his people. That was the original desire of God.

When he created Adam and Eve in the garden, and then he goes to look for them, he wants to go walk with them. He wants to go spend time with them. But they turn their backs on him. And because of that, they're cast out of the garden of Eden, they are no longer in the presence of God. Then the rest of this book, the rest of humanity and history is about how God is redeeming that and bringing that story back around so that there will come a point where God will dwell with them, and they will be with his people. That's the goal. And this new Jerusalem is beautiful. This new Jerusalem is beautiful.

[25:23] Verse 4, he says, He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Can you imagine?

Imagine a creation, a city, there will be no tears. No children wondering whether to take their own lives or not. No fighting within families. No heartbreak when you see just all the things that mankind is doing to one another. There will be no more death. Those who have lost loved ones. Imagine this place that will not have any death, any grief. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore. For the former things have passed away. Behold, I am making all things new. He's redeeming this creation here. Everything here, he's going to make new, and he's going to redeem. And this new Jerusalem looks incredible. There are walls. Let me see if I can find, let's see, verse, the Holy City, verse 10. Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great high wall, verse 12, with 12 gates and the gates, 12 angels. And on the gates, the names of the 12 tribes. It's just this beautiful place that is going to be filled with pure gold. Later it says, verse 21, and the 12 gates were 12 pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. And verse 22, and I saw no temple in the city. Wait, there's no church there.

There's no temple. There's no synagogue. There's no building there. Why? Verse 21 carries on. For its temple is the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives its light, and his lamp is the Lamb. There is no night. There is no darkness.

There is no temple because God is just going to be amongst his people. You cannot put God in a box. You cannot compartmentalize God anymore because he will be everywhere in this new place. There will be no nighttime.

That's why we scatter. That's why we can't stay here and sit on this good news ourselves. Because there is a world outside that is tearing itself apart that knows nothing of this world that is coming, this new Jerusalem that will come. And because of that, we must go and share why verse 27 has

the key. This beautiful place, the new Jerusalem, verse 27 says this, But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

This perfect place. Nothing unclean will enter it. That's why we scatter. Because there's a place that we're going, that there will be people that we know and love right now, who can't go there.

[28 : 25] Because nothing unclean will ever enter it. I've shared this conversation before. I had an interesting conversation with a young man one time, and I was like, do you believe in God? He's like, no, that whole Christianity stuff.

I go to DBS. I've heard all about it. And I don't need to go. I'm much too smart for that. And then I said, okay, well, do you believe in heaven? Oh, yeah, yeah, I believe in heaven. Oh, what's heaven like? Well, heaven's this perfect place.

Oh, it's like this new Jerusalem. I was like, oh, what's going to, it's like there's going to be nothing wrong with that world. And it's going to be good. I was like, oh, that's really nice. So it's a perfect place, like 100%.

He's like, yep, not even a smear. I was like, so what about you? Do you think you'll get in there?

He's like, I think so, because I'm a good person. I'm like, okay, well, let me just stop you right there.

So as a former teacher, good is usually about 80% past grade.

But you're telling me that this new place is 100%. Here's the problem, though. The moment you step into this place as 100%, because you're 80%, you're dragging the average down.

[29 : 25] It will stop being the 100% that you say that it is. Your imperfection, even though it's tiny and small, the moment you step into this paradise that you talk about, actually, you're not even going to be allowed in it, because you don't qualify.

Nothing unclean will ever enter it. But, but, thank goodness there's a but. Because we are all unclean. We all fall short.

But, only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. Who is the Lamb? The Lamb that was slain. Jesus. The only way you can get into this new Jerusalem is you recognize that you are unclean.

That you recognize that you need to be saved. That's how you get your name into the book of life.

And only then, when you recognize the power of the blood of Jesus, does this new Jerusalem belong to you.

The problem we have is we feel entitled to be in this place. And so we forget that, actually, we don't belong there. But, you see, when you remember that you do, you're invited in because of Jesus, actually, your heart is compelled to share that with people around.

[30 : 34] You can't help but share. Like, oh, I didn't deserve to be allowed in, but I'm in. I'll tell you what, the guy who's letting me in will let you in too. Just come with me. Just come and see.

John 1. Just come and see about a man who knows everything that I've ever done. John 4. And yet still, yet still speaks to me. Yet still gave his life up for me.

We scatter because there is something coming. There is something coming that is beautiful. That is perfect. But right now, there are people that are around us who don't even know about it.

Let me show you one last story from the book of Matthew. Turn with me to Matthew 22. Jesus talks about this. And he kind of, he doesn't talk about the new Jerusalem.

He talks about a wedding feast, which we all love to go to because of all the places. Matthew chapter 22.

[31 : 36] Jesus speaks to them in parables saying, The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast.

But they would not come. Again, he sent other servants saying, Tell those who are invited, see, I prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.

But they paid no attention. They went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized the servants, treated them shamefully and killed them. The king was angry and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

Then he said to his servants, The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go, go, therefore, to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.

And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. That's a beautiful story, right?

[32 : 33] There's this wedding feast that's coming. This wedding feast is coming. The people that were invited are just too busy. They've got too many things to tend to. So they don't come. And the king's just like, Do they not realize what this wedding feast is going to be?

This wedding feast will end all wedding feasts. And yet they're not coming. You know what? Go. Go. Invite everyone. Invite anyone. Ephesians 2 talks about Jesus going to preach peace to those who are really far off.

Think of the person right now in your mind who needs Jesus the most. Who is just going through so many struggles. Who's the furthest off away from Christ. God is inviting that person to come to this wedding feast.

Now we, thankfully, have been invited. And I may be preaching to the choir here, but here are the people who have responded to the call. You're like, oh, God has invited me.

I'm so grateful. I'm here. But here's the problem. If you carry on. Chapter 22, verse 11. But when the king came in and looked at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment.

[33 : 34] And he said to him, friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment? And he was speechless. And the king said to the attendants, bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called and few are chosen. We may be invited, but are we ready? There's everyone that is invited outside, but there are people who are refusing to come in.

We must go back to them and just remind them just what is coming. And then for those of us who are here, we just have to ask ourselves, are we ready? You see, those people maybe didn't realize what this was.

But actually, in that day, when you're invited to a wedding, you have to put on the appropriate garments to go to this wedding. In fact, in the UK, when we go to weddings, I would say that we are fairly well dressed.

I mean, even Francis, when we used to go to weddings, would actually put on a suit. That's the only time you'd ever put on a suit. But it would look nice. It's only in Hong Kong, actually, I found there's a culture where people can just turn up to weddings in like sneakers and jeans and just fascinating for me.

[34 : 40] Are we turning up to a wedding and not really being ready? There are people outside. My heart is there are people inside who aren't ready. And when the king comes, we're not wearing the right stuff.

And it doesn't end well. But here's the thing. There is hope. That's why we scatter. That's why we have to keep moving. Because there are people who need to hear this message.

There are people who need to be invited in. There are people in you who are in who need to be told, hey, you need to get yourself ready. You're not ready. You're completely, you don't have a clue what this is about. And when the king comes, it's not going to end well for you.

There is a new Jerusalem coming. That wall of hostility that Paul talks about in Ephesians 2, that's been broken by Jesus. And he comes and preached peace to those who are near and to those who are far.

And he himself is the cornerstone of this house. Ephesians 2 finishes with this beautiful thing that I'll read to you. You don't have to find. And he came and preached peace to you who are far off and peace to those who are near.

[35 : 55] For through him we both have access in one spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God. In whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple.

Verse 22 finishes, in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. We are being built together so that we are a dwelling place for God by his Spirit.

Do we recognize that? Do we understand that? Do we own that? Do we commit to being like Jesus and looking like him and acting like him? Because if we do, we would do as he did and go.

He left his throne in heaven, emptied himself to reach us, those who are the furthest away. That's why we scatter.

Because of the original commission. Because of the great commission to make disciples. And because of where we're heading together. This new Jerusalem, this wedding feast, this banquet that everyone deserves to know about.

[36:56] I hope you remember that as you go back to work tomorrow. That that's what you're supposed to do. We're going to finish off now by bringing some other people up to share a little bit. Because as we scatter, the next question is, oh, well, where do we scatter to?

Number one, you have your workplace. You have your sphere. You go to that. The job that you have now, whether you like it or not. The people that you know right now, your friends, your circle. God sent you there to be his light. So the goal for you is to look like him, speak like him, act like him, love like him in that sphere that you have influence over.

What about us as a gathering? Like as a whole? What do we do? And there's really two areas that I want to just bring up briefly. I want to ask Gabs and Aaron to come up separately.

Maybe I'll start with Gabs first. One part of our mission statement is actually for the fringe. Those who are on the outside of society.

[37:58] Those who are unreached. Just like how Jesus reached us because we are far off. There are people in our city right now who are really far away from that.

And Gabs and Alex and Shem and a few other people, you guys have been participating in a prison ministry. And that's been good that you go on a Saturday morning. Tell us what that's about and what do you do there?

Yeah, so I had the opportunity to partner with Gunsang Association and go to the Lai Chi Kok Prison Holden Center.

So it's with the people who are yet to be tried. Also, they're still waiting on their trial to see where they'll be going. They'll be sentenced. So I was asked a couple weeks ago in my small group, like, which facet of Jesus really stands out to me or that I really resonate with.

And I always thought about, you know, when Jesus begins his ministry and it says in Luke 4 that, you know, the spirit of the sovereign Lord is upon me. And there's a specific line where it says to set the captives free and to preach freedom to the oppressed.

[39:01] So that was always a part that really kind of emphasized in my heart. So when I heard the opportunity to go to this prison holdings center, I was like, yeah, like, God, I want to go and do that.

I feel like that's going to be an opportunity to do that. So I went into this experience kind of thinking what I could do, like thinking like, oh, I'm going to have so many opportunities of like saying some preaching hope and like giving these guys some hope.

And it was really fascinating because when we got into this, it was a really, really simple setting. So it was in the place where they have food, like meals. And it was just a bunch of plastic tables and plastic benches.

And there were eight of the inmates there. And there were four of our team. So it was myself and Alex Lee and then two people from Community Church who we partnered with. So really small group, only 12 of us.

And there was a funny story about even how we planned that session and all of the things that we had to do because there was no planning, kind of. So on the day, one of the guys were like, so who's doing the sharing?

[40:03] Oh, I guess I'll do the sharing. And he had the notes that he was going to be sharing for the short encouragement on a receipt. So he had written it onto a receipt. And then he was like, OK, what songs are we doing?

Oh, we don't know. OK, so we went into the room and there was a songbook and we picked the songs while we were there. We're like, OK, let's just do these four songs. Does anybody play an instrument? No. I was like, I play cajon. And they're like, does anybody play guitar?

No. I'll just do cajon. So we literally did all of these songs with just a beat. And so it was this really, really simple sort of approach to this mini service.

But honestly, guys, it was actually amazing. I think the first thing we noticed, the guys were already in the room when we got there because we were a bit late. They were all smiling as we walked in. They were ready to receive us. They were like, oh, it's the group. Yeah, they're here. They were all so happy. We, one by one, each of them came up to all of us and shook our hands and looked us in the eyes. They were just shaking their hands. They're like, yeah, so good to see you.

[41:00] So good to meet you. So good to meet you. So already I was taken aback. I was like, oh, I thought I was going to be doing this. These guys are ready. Turns out a bit of context about that group. Everyone who's there have chosen to be there.

So they have this free time and they can choose to either go and play basketball or go and sit somewhere or they can come and join this sort of Christian service. So all of the guys there had chosen to be there.

Some of them already Christian, some of them not. There was one guy who's Hindu and he decided to come because he wants to learn and he's open. So we had this small, really humble gathering and service with a few songs.

And even just as we started singing with just the cajon beat, there was such a freedom in their hearts and in their just desire to sing out. And we were singing worship songs. We even had some of the guys ask for songs that we could sing.

They're like, oh, can we do Hosanna? Hosanna. I really like the song Hosanna. So then we were just like, OK, I think I know that one. And I just played a beat. And then we sung Hosanna. And it sounded weird, but it was so good.

[42:03] It was so good. Can you play it for a song? Oh, yeah, yeah. On the cajon? Yeah, sure. I can play on the cajon. But just everything about that experience was so amazing. And then we had someone who gave a short sharing. And it was about blind Bartimaeus asking Jesus to see.

And Jesus asks him that question. He's like, what do you need? So actually, in our discussion, we had a bit of a discussion time. We asked the guys, what is it that you need right now? And that could easily go to their current situation.

I want to be free. I want to be out of my situation. I don't want to be here. But the guys I happened to be speaking with, one of them said to me, I want Jesus to change my heart. I want my heart to be changed.

I don't want to leave if my heart isn't changed. And that gave me chills. That actually gave me chills. And as we were leaving, we had this amazing experience with them. And it was weird because we only were with them for an hour, less than an hour, 45 minutes.

And by the end of it, we were all hugging each other. One by one, we were just like full embrace hugs. And I felt so impacted. Like truly, I went into that thinking, oh God, mission.

[43:09] I'm going to do something. I'm going to preach freedom and hope. But I think I received just as much, if not more, than those guys in that room. So yeah, amazing experience.

Thank you. A round of applause. I'll tell you this. They may not know it, but there's people in the world outside who are just so hungry. They're just so desperate.

For someone to smile at them, to love them, to give time. There's an author reading recently. He said, actually, the main way to show love is just attentiveness. Just give them their attention. Your attention, sorry. And just show them that you love them. That's huge. And so that's one of examples. We've got tons of charities that, of course, we're a part of. And Joe and Shoma and Gabe went to Rwanda recently.

And, of course, there's Young Life as well. There are so many people out there. If you're sad, they go, oh, but I don't really know what to do. There are people here that you can ask. How can I help?

[44:09] Please don't leave here and go, oh, I don't really know what I should be doing. And then leave. And then go and have lunch. That doesn't solve your problem. You won't get the answer if you're not asking the question. So please feel free to come and ask us.

I was on HKU campus the other day. I was walking through and I was meeting a friend there and I saw all the students. And our campuses are back to being full again. Can I have a hat? Show of hand. Who's a university student here? Yes.

Young, filled with life, future ahead of you. Full head of hair. Full head of hair. We love what you represent. We love what you represent because you are leaders of the next generation.

You are leaders of the next generation. Society's problems will all be yours to deal with. But our goal is to how can we get behind you? How do we pour into you?

How do we remind you of the truths of the gospel and the kingdom of heaven so you can live here on this earth in a way that sounds like Jesus, looks like Jesus, and acts like Jesus?

[45:11] And I want to bring up Aaron with you here. I'm going to ask him to sit on a stool because he's significantly taller than me. And you'll hear him speak. Aaron is the Young Life University director, along with Rebecca.

How? Oh, my goodness. So Aaron and Rebecca and Sam and Bella, they spent 10 years in China teaching.

Please ask them about their stories. It's just incredible. But then the Lord sent them back to Canada to pastor there for a few years. And then one of the very, very few people, the few families who then sense the Lord calling them to go back to Hong Kong and China, which is just so he emails us from Canada.

He goes, hey, we feel the Lord's bringing us back to Hong Kong and China. And we're like, are you crazy? Like, no one does that. It's the wrong way around. And you guys just read CNN. So surely you don't want to come back this way.

But he's like, this is where the Lord is asking us. So we had such privilege and honor in inviting him into the Young Life mission. He is dreaming and leading and strategizing for us what our university ministry looks like.

[46:21] So if you're a university student, please, can you ask Aaron, hey, how can we help? When are you on campus? Can we come and hang out with you? But I want him to share with you a little bit about his heart, about what he thinks the Lord is doing here amongst the leaders of the next generation.

It's a big question. I'm just reflecting on, I was actually just with a group of about 10 City U professors last night having dinner. And they're all Christians, part of a Christian fellowship, sharing about the desperate need for hope on university campuses.

They shared that in the last month, there's been four suicides in City U alone of students who just felt hopeless. They had nowhere to turn.

They had no one to talk to. They had no one that they could share their problems with. And so the best solution for them was to end their life. And they sit in this room heavy because they said, how did we not know?

Like, we're teaching them. We're in classrooms with them. We're preparing them for their professional lives, but we're not doing anything else. And so how can we actually create opportunity for these students to be in community and to be known?

[47:38] And I think working with Young Life, that is our heart, that we're creating community on university campuses for students to be known. To be known by people so they have those people they can text and they can come to when they're having issues, when they don't know the questions of life.

And we may not know the answers either, but at least we can talk about it. But then ultimately that these students would be known by God. And so how do we do that? I've just started working in July, and so we're in the midst of trying to figure that out.

But in the last three or four months, we've had incredible opportunities and open doors of people saying, we need to figure this out. Again, presidents of universities saying, we don't know how to do this, but we need to figure it out because it is a big need.

And so we're looking to disciple and empower Christian students who are on campus, who can reach their friends. We're looking for professionals to come in and work alongside of us, to partner with students, to mentor with students, to love on students.

We're looking for people who are just willing to be in relationship. I say I think I have the best job in the world because I'm paid to build relationship. I'm paid to have coffees and have lunches and be there with students.

[48:56] And we're looking for people to come alongside of us and do that as well, to give hope to people who truly, they feel like they have no hope. They feel like they have no hope.

And how sad is that? And so that's what we get to do. And so if you want to be a part of that, I'm currently the only one focusing on it in our office. And we have how many universities and over 92,000 students in the city.

And so I need help. I need people. So come and talk to me. I'd love to work with you. Thank you. Round of applause for Aaron. If you're asked, oh, what is this gathering thing?

It's people who want to know and enjoy Jesus. It's people who want to be trying to live out what it means to be a spiritual family. Who at any one moment notice, we can ask, who's your three?

Who's your three that you will know? And then that we scatter. May we be known to be a gathering that doesn't have that many comfy seats. May we be known as a gathering that is just adamant on reaching the unreached.