

The Church That Changed The World

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[0:00] Last week I started with the question, why are you here? The mission statements kind of give us a little bit of that, but why are you here?! Queenie, why are you here?

Because it's a good thing to gather. Because it's a good thing to gather. Why is it good? Because the Bible tells us to. Because the Bible tells us to. Why does the Bible tell us to? Because we're made for community.

Because we're made for community. Oh, I love it. Because even if sometimes we don't feel like it, there are introverts among us, like Dr. Arrow, who don't like people.

Even though they work in the hospital, they don't like people. And yet he still has two years to gather. He's got his hand in his hands right now because he hates it when I do this. But I love this guy. We gather because the Lord tells us to because we can't do things alone.

That's important. And Mihi, why are you here? Because you don't even live in Hong Kong. Well, I'm here because church people are pretty cool.

[1:05] Because church people are pretty cool, really? Yeah. Have you met Nathan? No. For me personally, I gather because of my love for Jesus and his bride as an extension.

You gather because of your love for Jesus and love for his bride, which is his people here. That's so good. We have to keep asking ourselves that question because there's something that I really don't like about church that maybe has gone seeped into culture, which is I'm here to attend church.

And there's two reasons why I don't like that word. Because one is either you're literally just attending and you're just present and that's it. And the other is, oh, I'm here to be attended to, just to be cared for, just to be looked after.

It is so much more than just you showing up and sitting on a seat, a seat that maybe we don't really have. And you just being here, using up oxygen. That's not why you're here.

That isn't the only reason why you're here. But there's got to be something more than right. The other word is observe. Oh, I'm here to observe a worship service. No, no, no, you're not here to observe a worship service. You're here to worship God yourself.

[2:11] As we've been looking through the book of Acts, you see lots of people that are happening. There's actually Acts 7. Stephen says, hey, those people need food. I'll volunteer. I'll go and help. And before you know it, he gets killed.

He gets stoned to death. Acts chapter 8. Philip from J-Town, from Jerusalem, spreading the gospel, gets persecuted. People are going and ransacking homes. So he has to leave Jerusalem, heads to Samaria, meets an Ethiopian, meets a magician.

And he's like, whoa, that's happening there. Chapter 9. Saul, going to kill these people, meets Jesus. And then he gets converted. Chapter 10, you see Peter praying, getting hungry, seeing a vision.

You see Cornelius, the Italian soldier, the Roman centurion, praying, meeting, hearing from the Holy Spirit. And you see these two people being converted almost and being shown that actually there is more to this.

What do you see then as you see Acts chapter 7, 8, 9, 10, as you see the Spirit of God just moving through people? These are not people who are just here to attend a service, who are just here to observe worship.

[3:12] These are people who are actually used by God to actually further the movement of Christianity, further the good news of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. So I ask us again, are we here to just attend a worship service?

Are we actually part of a movement? Are we a part of movement of what God is doing, not just in this city, but in the world? Do you feel like that? Last week I asked you, if you have the Holy Spirit in

you, you're basically like a burning bush, the one that Moses met.

And he's like, whoa, you can actually have the Holy Spirit in you and live in such a way that is completely countercultural, that will set this city ablaze if we allow God to do what he wants to do through us.

Let me give you a little bit of church history just to kind of hammer home the fact that you're sat here, not just attending as a service. You're sat here because you're a part of a movement that started 2,000 years ago. And this movement is continuing to go.

And actually, it's funny, we're in 2025. Whether you believe in Christianity or not, whether you are a Jesus follower or not, you're counting the years since he's been around, 2025. Okay, so whether you acknowledge him or not, he's part of your existence.

[4:17] He split time in half, and he's the most significant human in the history of mankind. And actually, in these 2,000 years, interestingly enough, you can kind of split the history of Christendom into 500-year parts.

Let's just say quarters. So the first 500 years is Christianity starting, and then boom, in 313, Constantine basically makes it the religion of Rome. And so you see for the first 500 years, it's growing in that area of the world.

But then, of course, Rome starts to fall. And then what happens in from 500 to 1,000 is basically, it's actually the church, the pope, that stabilizes that whole area of Europe.

And then so you see Christianity moving into Europe. And then you have something that happens in 1,000 AD, where basically the church splits in half. You've got the Roman Catholic Church on one side, and you've got the Eastern Orthodox Church on the other side.

And so that splits. And so you start hearing about these other kinds of churches happening. And then in 1500, another 500 years later, is the Great Schism. It's the Great Reformation. We're sat here, or at least you're sat here.

[5:25] I hope you acknowledge this, that you are a Protestant Christian. What does that mean? It means you protested. What did you protest? You protested against the fact that we can be saved only if we are really good people doing very good things.

It's the church going, no, no, no. If you look at this Bible, it's actually not about us doing good things. It's about one person who did one good thing, and the rest of us following along and saying, I'm with him.

It's that we're saved by grace. We're saved because we're this guy. And so then the Protestant Church starts to evolve. And so for the next 500 years, what you see is the Great Awakenings that happen in Europe, in the UK, in the US.

And you hear about the movement of God moving over to the US. And of course, then there's World War II that happens. And after World War II, basically, Europe starts to become secular. And then you start seeing the US being the one where it's kind of the central hub of Christianity for the next few decades.

We're in 2025, so that means there or thereabouts, we're hitting that other next 500-year mark. And of course, you look at the news and you think, okay, the world is changing once again.

[6:34] And now Christianity hasn't left the West, but you can see it moving through Latin America, through Africa, and through Asia.

Can you see that? As I just trace that story, you can see how Christianity is moving around the world. You're a part of a movement. You're not here just to attend a service.

You're actually a part of a movement of God. Just over 100 years ago, 66% of the world's Christians were in one place in Europe. Just over 100 years ago.

And now it's about 25% of the world's Christians. Just over 100 years ago, Africa had 9% of Christians. And now it's nearly over half. And you see God just continually moving.

150 years ago, there weren't that many Christians in South Korea, in Korea. And now it's probably one of the major missionary hubs around the world, sending people out to share the gospel. In the late 1800s, it was an American missionary that went to Korea.

[7:39] And now the biggest churches in the world are in South Korea. Isn't that crazy? I don't want us to take that for granted. I don't want us to take that for granted that we're living at a really interesting time where the church again, or society again, is at another crossroad.

What it needs is not people who think, okay, I'm just here just to attend a worship service so I can go for lunch. It's that I am here because I'm part of the movement of God. And there's something

that he's asking you.

There's something that he's asking me to do. And you wonder actually, why is actually something else? If it continues this way, in five years time, the largest Christian community population will be in China.

That's where we're heading. And so then we have to ask ourselves, what is God actually doing?

Why is Christianity moving so fast through the global South into the Southern Hemisphere?

Some people think it's because actually those in the Southern Hemisphere, if the West is focused on individualism, actually, at least in Asia, we can say we're still focused on community. We're still focused on what does it mean to do life together.

[8:46] It's harder, I promise you, it's harder. It's easier to attend a service. But to actually be followers of Christ, to be disciples that are actually trying to share the gospel, that's hard.

And you know where the hardest place is? Cities. Cities. 1950, there were only two cities in the world that had over 10 million people. Any guesses to where they were?

Two cities in 1950. You're about to say it. No? Joe? New York is number one. And the other one? Not Shanghai.

London. 1950, there were only two cities in the whole world that had 10 million people or more. New York and London. Now there are 34. 20 of them are in Asia.

Mega cities now. Young adults are flocking into the cities. Why? Because that's where the action is. That's where the work is. That's where the money is.

[9:46] But cities are the hardest place. The city is an absence of space. There's an absence of time. There's just, there's no space to think, breathe, or move sometimes, right? And yet you look at cities and you go, this is where there are the most people.

The Bible doesn't paint a great picture of cities sometimes. What is it? I would say the Bible basically shows it's human nature magnified.

Does that make sense? It's just human depravity magnified. You see immense wealth. You see incredible poverty. You see social classes. You see all the different social problems across all the classes and all the races. All within the city.

You think about Sodom and Gomorrah. And yet actually Jesus had a very special heart for cities. One of the few times that we see Jesus crying, weeping.

One is when his friend dies, Lazarus. And the other is when? When he sat outside Jerusalem and he looks at the city of Jerusalem and he's weeping. God cares for cities.

[10:45] Where does Jonah get called to? A city. But a city is a super hard place. Ask my wife Christina and she'll tell you she prefers the countryside.

She prefers the suburbs. And that's where she can breathe and do the things that she wants to do. But cities are hard because if you catch the MTR at her height, at my height, you're basically stuck under someone's armpit.

Cities are not fun. Cities are also the places where most of the idolatry happens. Money and sex and power just on display in a city.

And yet it's a city where actually I think a lot of the most creative ventures happen as well. The most creative moves of the kingdom of God happen through cities.

If 20 of the world's 34 megacities are in Asia, and actually Hong Kong isn't even one of them. What is God doing through cities? So I ask you again.

[11:45] Maybe not while you're here at church, but why do you think God has placed you in Hong Kong? What is it for? My job here is to ask you, why do you think God placed you here?

Because I think God has something that he wants to do here. In Jeremiah, he tells the people who are in exile, the Jewish exiles, he says, go and seek the welfare of the city. Are we truly maximizing the opportunities that this city offers us when it comes to being a Christian, when it comes to sharing the gospel?

Today we're going to read a passage, a not too long one compared to last week, and it's about a city. It's about the third biggest city in Rome. So not New York. Chicago is probably a good example of what this city is.

The city is called Antioch. And we're going to read this and see where we go from here. And I'm going to invite the birthday girl to read for us today. And so can I invite you to stand for the word of the Lord as she reads Acts chapter 11, verse 19 to 30.

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews.

[13:03] But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also preaching the Lord Jesus.

And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and he saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.

And a great many people were added to the Lord. So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year, they met with the church and taught a great many people.

And in Antioch, the disciples were first called Christians. Now in these days, prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch, and one of them, named Agabus, stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over the world.

[14:10] This took place in the days of Claudius. So the disciples determined everyone according to his ability to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.

And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul. This is the word of the Lord. Please take a seat. Thank you, Mihi. So I'm here to do a couple of things today.

The main thing is for me to convince you that you're not here to attend a church service and that you're actually part of a movement. And second, that actually, if you are placed here in this city by God, then there's something that he wants you to do in the city.

Because the city is so important. Right now, just over half of the world's population, 55%, live in cities. If we keep going on that trajectory, in a few years' time, it's going to be 70%.

The people of the world are flocking into cities because that's where the opportunities are. That's how globalization is happening. It's becoming more urbanized. And it's just what we're going to be facing as we move on from here.

[15:11] And cities are important. And if I can convince you that you're actually part of a movement and that God's placed you here for a reason, then actually maybe the Lord will do something here in this city. And honestly, I say that maybe I already know that he's doing something here in this city.

Cities are so important, whether we like them or not, because they are the cultural engines. You reach the city. You reach culture. You reach the world. When Jesus said, hey, go and make disciples of all nations, go to the ends of the earth.

Well, I'll tell you what. Cities make that super easy because you don't have to go to the ends of the earth. Right now, our church has people who are in the Congo. Some just came back from Manila. Someone else is in Thailand right now.

We can reach other parts of the world. But one thing that's beautiful about the city is that the world comes to the city. So you can reach all these nations, all these ethnicities in one city.

You don't even have to go that far. So if I can just exhort you and inspire you and actually remind you of who God is calling you to be, then maybe as we scatter here, actually the city will move.

[16:10] That's my prayer. And that's my hope. Because if you can affect society, cities is where it's at. Business. Art. Media. Law.

Education. If God can place people like yourselves into all these different sectors of society, the gospel will continue to move.

Antioch is the city that we're looking at today. The third one. So after Rome and Alexandria, you have Antioch. Famous for sports. Famous for sensuality. Famous for business.

This is interesting. And I keep saying this is interesting. And I hope you'll never get numb to this.

The Bible is very interesting, by the way. Up until now, the church, the kingdom of God has been moving right. And Acts chapter 7, Stephen says, all right, I got this.

I'll go. And then Acts chapter 8, Philip goes and he goes to Samaria. The Samaritans, actually, they were part Jewish. So we're actually still dealing with a very kind of familiar crowd. Enemies, nonetheless, but still a familiar crowd.

[17:10] And then you go into Acts chapter 8, you've got Saul, who's actually a Pharisee, who's complete Jew, complete Roman citizen. Again, we're still kind of in the same territory. And then in Acts chapter 9, you've got Cornelius, oh, finally, a Roman citizen.

But he was a converted Jew. So we're still dealing with people who are basically still speaking a similar language in some ways. Now, though, it reaches the city. Reaches the city that is filled with Gentiles.

This is where it's really going to explode, where it's really going to kick off. And Christianity will start its move around the rest of the world. Basically, leaving us to where we're here right now. I have a South African lady with a beautiful South African accent that I cannot imitate, standing in Hong Kong, reading the word of God to English-speaking Chinese people.

This movement has been happening, and I want to convince you that we are part of it. This Antioch was a melting pot of cultures. You see, Rome, the most powerful civilization that has been known to mankind, conquered so much of the world.

What happens when you conquer so much of the world? Your own cities become more and more diverse, right? So these cities, actually, I say Hong Kong is a great city, but it's not really that diverse. You look around, and all we really see are Chinese people.

[18:20] So that's why we don't truly understand what's happening here, that there are all kinds of people, all kinds of races, all kinds of cultures, all kinds of gods. There's a fierce pluralism that's happening in this city.

And so the gospel creeps in to the city. And you'd have thought, well, just a small bunch of Jews. What are they going to do? Well, actually, it's fascinating here, because suddenly, the moment it goes into these cities, 300 years later, over half of Rome is now Christian.

These are real facts, people. These things actually happen. We're sat here because these things actually happen. That's why it's interesting. And I think we live in an interesting time now, where God is continuing to move.

Why is a city so good? It's filled with creativity. It's filled with idolatry. It's mostly filled with people who are ambitious. You're sat here because probably you're quite ambitious. You're here to kind of further your career, explore the world, or make as much money as you possibly can.

You see, those people are the best people to be receiving the gospel, because you guys are looking for answers. You guys are asking questions. That's why cities are so exciting. Whereas if you go into the country, actually, the word pagan, actually, back then, actually meant farmland.

[19:29] If you go into the farmlands, people aren't asking those questions. The few of us from England, Gabs, I can just look at you and see, we come from a very different place where maybe people aren't asking that many questions. We're just living life day to day in a very kind of modest, simple kind of way.

But you come into a city, you go into London, you go into New York, you go into Hong Kong, everyone's asking questions. Everyone's trying to get somewhere. Those are great people to introduce the gospel to. Why? Because they're asking questions.

They're curious. And actually, with any luck, they may have even had some success in their career, in their field, in their friendship circles, and they will have found out that they still don't give the satisfaction that they're craving for.

Those people are the best. Those people have got to the top and realized there's nothing there. That's why the moment the gospel hit this city, it caught fire. Because people were asking, were hungry for the truth.

And now finally, the truth has arrived. What if we, what if we committed to being those kind of people?

[20:33] To carry that kind of message into the workplace that you're in. Juju, as you head into your law firm, and as you're working, and as you're reading, I don't know, whatever you read as a lawyer.

But then you turn around and someone goes, oh, Juju, he's interesting. Not just in a weird kind of sense of humor kind of way, but he's, he's supernaturally kind.

He's countercultural. He doesn't make sense to me. I would love for people outside to look at me and go, that guy doesn't really make sense to me. He shouldn't be as nice as, what does he want? But maybe I'll ask you, how do your colleagues describe you?

How do your friends describe you? How do you, how do you, how does your family who doesn't know Christ describe you? When in this city, what happens when the gospel came, it caught fire because there was a group of people that lived a different way.

To the point where the people in Antioch looked at this group of people and said, oh, look, those people follow something called the way. They're a little bit strange. They're like, I don't know.

They're like mini Jesuses just floating around everywhere.

[21:44] I don't know, like little Christians. Hmm. Maybe we'll just call them Christians from now on. That's what it says, right? Verse 26. And in Antioch, the disciples were first called Christians.

Little Christians. People who'd looked like Jesus. People who sounded like Jesus. What if we were those kinds of people in the society that we've been in?

Something else that this tells me here that doesn't bring me comfort sometimes because I am a creature comfort kind of person. I like to be in the confines of my own comfort zones, live in the places that I feel the most comfortable.

I look at this book. I look at how the movement of God happens. It seems to be rarely with people who stay in the place that they grow up. It seems rarely to be that, hey, you grew up here.

Why didn't you stay here and live a radical life for Jesus? There always seems to be a calling out. Abraham, go. Moses, go. Jonah, go.

[22:46] There's something about if we are to take up our role, there's a go spirit that we need to have to go to a place that maybe we aren't too comfortable. I remember a few years ago during COVID, actually, Christina and I have this habit of doing this thing where we go on a spiritual retreat because why?

Hong Kong is too crazy. And I've shared a lot about this, the schedule of being here. It's too crazy. So we realize the only way we're going to survive is if we spend regular intentional time with Jesus, just like he did.

Can you imagine the time back in Jesus's day? The pace of the schedule would have been so different. Yet Jesus constantly went away and left everyone just to spend time alone. So I kind of like, OK, well, let's pattern our lives after that.

Actually, I learned this from my brother. He did this very well. And so we decided just to go away. And one time I decided I actually didn't know where I was going. So I caught the bus and somehow ended in this faraway land in Hong Kong called Stanley.

Beautiful place, by the way. And then there was like a little ferry pier. And then there's like a ferry pier to go to this other island called, I'm blanking, what's it called? Pold High Dole.

[23:50] There we go. So I went over to, some of you have heard me tell this story before. And then I go over to Pold High Dole and then you keep walking and there's nothing there. This whole island is powered by its own electricity. And then you go all the way to the end, there's these georocks.

And I just lay down my mat and I just sat there for pretty much the whole day. And then I was like, oh, it's time to take a picture. Got to take a picture. A selfie for the gram, for the fans. And so I take a picture and I look at what a beautiful view.

The ocean, the mountains, the blue sky, everything. And then I looked further into my picture as I took it. And annoyingly, there were a group of humans. This was before iOS 26 where I could actually use AI to get rid of people on pictures.

So I said, darn it. This picture would be so perfect, would be so beautiful if those people were not in the frame. And I felt the Lord remind me at that moment.

And he said, James, that's the most beautiful part of the picture. And I was like, oh. And he was like, James, you may think that this is beautiful where you're at.

[24:52] The ocean waves, the blue sky, the mountain. I'll tell you where most beautiful is in Hong Kong. It's that crossroads outside Sogo in Causeway Bay. Why?

Because there are people there who all bear my image. Who were made fearfully and wonderfully made by me. And as you cross their road and as their elbow hits your face.

I want you to know that's what I find the most beautiful. That convicted me. Because I was like, I don't find people as beautiful as you do, God.

And yet God finds that the most beautiful. There's something about cities that he truly loves. If we, as long as we actually embrace what we're supposed to be doing here.

And I ask us, I ask us to reconsider why God's placed us in Hong Kong. Whether you moved here because you spent time abroad. And then you made a decision to move here.

[25:51] Or whether you grew up here and you don't feel as though you can leave. Whatever the reason is, you're in a city. God's moving in the city. What are you supposed to be doing to move with him? Anyway, let's carry on here. What's actually happening?

So verse 19, they're scattered. They head into the city. Verse 20, but there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists, which is the Gentiles, the Greeks, also preaching the Lord Jesus.

And then actually this line here, verse 21, I need us to hold on to. Which is this. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. So you've got a group of guys, unnamed. And I'll talk about that a little bit later.

They go and they preach about Jesus. And then here's that line. And the hand of the Lord was on them, and then a great number who believed turned to the Lord. So before I send you out and inspire you to be the people that you're supposed to be, I want you to remember, actually the only way that hearts are going to turn is if the hand of the Lord is on you.

That's the only way. But there isn't going to be you convincing them about Jesus. It's not going to be you winning an argument with them about apologetics, about science and faith, about all these other topics.

[26 : 55] That's not how it's going to happen. It's going to be God's hand on you, and that will be the thing. This just shows actually God's the one who's turning hearts towards him. All we have to do is just go, God, I'm about to step into work.

Can you use me? Can you speak the truth through me to share the good news to them? And it's good news, and let's not be ashamed and embarrassed and afraid, but it's just good news. So when you have a colleague who's really struggling with the boss, who is maybe really disappointed with the promotion they didn't get, you can say, hey, I have some, okay, that's pretty bad news.

I'm sorry, that sucks. But let me tell you about some good news. Someone loved you so much that they died for you, and then now they are alive, and now they live inside you. Isn't that great news? And they'll be like, what?

Well, let me tell you more. I love to be that kind of person. I love to, and they'll be like, oh, Kelly, she's just different.

She's actually having a really tough time at work. The project is really hard, but yet somehow there's always just a glow about her. What is that? Oh, she's a little Christ, Ian.

[27 : 58] She's a little Jesus. So then, this church grows. This church grows. And then it grows to the point where those in Jerusalem hear about it.

Have you heard about that church? Those Gentiles, those Greeks, those people that we don't usually talk to. There's a church that's growing there. And so what does Jerusalem do? They're like, okay, well, we should go check it out.

So they send their guy, Barnabas, to go check it out. So Barney leaves Jerusalem. Interesting fact about Barney. When everyone else was scattered, he stayed put. Okay, so he stayed in Jerusalem. And then they hear about something happening in Antioch. So they send him because he's a good man. And we'll find out a little bit later. That's what they say, that he is a very good man in verse 24. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.

Search this Bible through and through. There's not that many people who get described as a good man. So we should pay attention to Barney. And so they send him. And then he sees, he's like, whoa, the Gospels act.

[28 : 58] Wait, guys. Remember, he probably hasn't been following word for word, minute after minute, by what's happening with Peter and Cornelius, one chapter before, or chapter nine with Paul.

So he's just like, whoa, guys. It's not just us Jews. There's a church there that's growing. Isn't that crazy? And he says, and it actually says, he saw the grace of God.

He was glad and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose. He was so happy. Oh, this grace that you don't deserve is on you too. I don't deserve it.

And it's on me and now it's on you. That is amazing. Stay the course is what he's saying. Now, this is how you can tell that Barney was a good man because actually a couple of things could have happened with Barney. So he goes, as a guy who's respected, who is in Jerusalem, basically the headquarters right now, he goes and see this group of Gentiles who are trying to worship God and be Christians.

He could have said, hey, guys, you're doing worship all wrong. The worship is too loud. Actually, you're singing too many songs. And the songs that you're singing are too charismatic. Don't sing those songs. Sing songs that are this.

[30:04] Hey, actually, your sermons are too short. You're preaching too much from the Old Testament or from the New Testament, which actually wasn't there at that time. He could have gone in and he could have critiqued every single thing and said, guys, this is how you do it.

We know because we are the Jews. We're God's chosen people to lead this next movement. So listen to us. He doesn't say that. He doesn't critique. He's just glad that this is happening. That shows you a little glimpse of how good he is. The other thing he could have done was actually say, oh, this is a church plant that I want to take over. Guys, move out of the way. I am now the senior executive pastor of this church and I'm going to lead us to the promised land together. He doesn't say that. What does he do? What does he do? He looks at them and goes, oh, this church is amazing. One sec. I'll be back. And he goes and finds another guy. He goes and finds Saul. Paul. This is where the drama just keeps building because only just one chapter before, Saul was blinded and then he's chased down by the Jews because he turned on them.

[31:07] So he's labeled as a traitor and he goes home to Tarsus and he actually hides out there for a few years. Years. Sometimes we share the gospel once and then we wonder, okay, that person needs to be converted like tomorrow or yesterday.

There is just a slow pace sometimes, but it's just continually moving. So Saul's hiding out in Tarsus, probably just reflecting on all his education, all his life going, man, I never read that scripture that way.

I had memorized the Torah, but now I understand what the Torah is about. So he's just probably just thinking for three years about this and then finally, Barney shows up and says, hey, there's a bunch of Greeks who are starting a church and we need to teach them.

So Barney goes, gets Paul, they come back and then they spend a year teaching this church. There is no discrimination. There is just a year of intentional discipleship saying, hey, this is what being a Christ follower means.

It encouraged me because the thing I shared about last week about the fellowship, we're lasting for just about a year or so. And I was like, hey, this is what we need to do. How can we equip one another, those who live in this city, to actually be a part of the movement of the city where God is actually doing different things?

[32:20] But it's uncomfortable. If you imagine that term, hey, you're a Christian, and imagine that term is a derogatory one. It's kind of like mocking you. Oh, you're going to be like Jesus is what he's saying.

It's what they're saying. Oh, you're a businessman. Oh, and you're a Jesus man. So that means, I guess there's no corruption in you. I guess you're just going to do things the Jesus way, which is stupid because that means you're not going to make that much money.

That's how they were describing Christians. But it's funny, that's where Christianity moves the most, when there is persecution. And sometimes we're shocked. Let's say Kelly goes to work and people are like, Kelly's different.

Isn't Kelly amazing? Sometimes that will happen, but the other times it'll be, yeah, don't invite Kelly. She's not like us. We don't really want her around. Yeah, she's just always pretending to be good. We have to be prepared for that. We have to be prepared for people who talk down about us, talk behind our backs. And then you say, well, actually, why are we so surprised?

[33:26] The one we're following, the one we're named after, Christian, he was persecuted, he was put on a cross, he was killed. And somehow we wonder why, oh, when we go and share the gospel, we should be met with flowers and roses and free lunches.

Yet, it's in those circumstances that Christianity grew. Are we willing to be uncomfortable? Are we willing to make a conversation awkward at dinner, at lunch, at work? When you're talking to your colleague and they're sharing something about their own personal life and you're suddenly, actually, or sharing what they did in the weekend, you say, yeah, no, actually, I actually don't like that kind of stuff because I don't think there's any point to it.

Are you willing to be a party pooper and say something that just, you know other people will be like, okay, if I can even get us to a point where this week we are convinced that we're going to go out and make someone else a little bit like, oh, that's different.

I think that's what being a Christian actually means. And you see this. And so maybe I'll finish here. What's this all got to do with us? This church is growing, this movement is growing.

You'll say, okay, I'm a movement, but what does that mean? Because actually, I'm not, I didn't go to seminary. I didn't study the four years of MDiv. I don't know what soteriology means. I don't know what ecclesiology means.

[34:40] Theology, I think it begins with TH. Here's the interesting thing. If I go back to verse 20. So they scatter, but there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also preaching the Lord Jesus.

What else, what do you notice about that? There's no names. This church was started off the back of people who didn't make that, who didn't make it into the Bible. There were no names.

What does that tell me? That tells me that sometimes I think we have church the wrong way around because you guys sometimes come and you're like, okay, well, here's the pastor, not the most educated or intelligent one, sadly, but he will do all the stuff.

He will do the Jesus stuff. He will talk about the Jesus stuff because he knows the Bible. And so he's, he's going to be the one that shares the gospel. So all I have to do, it may be, the most I can do is bring my friends to church and then let him do it.

So contemporary Christianity, the church right now has this where actually there's one person who's doing everything and everyone just sits and attends and observes. But you see here, it's not, we talk about Paul being the guy who plants all these churches, who is the apostle to the Gentiles.

[35:54] And yet this Gentile church started without him. it's not me. It's you. It's not those that went to seminary.

It's just every single person in this room has a job to play. And that's how the movement of the gospel catches fire. That's it. And then you will ask, okay, well, I actually don't know what to do. What do they preach? Verse 20, also preaching the Lord Jesus. If you don't know what to say when you're talking to a friend, honestly, this sounds revolutionary.

I promise you I didn't invent it. Tell them about Jesus. Hey, do you know about, okay, we all know Jesus because when you stub your toe on the table, you shout his name, Jesus Christ.

So you know who he is. You've used his name before. But do you know who he actually is? The message is actually very simple. Life and death and the resurrection of Jesus.

[36:58] Find opportunities. Pray for opportunities where you can just tell people about Jesus. What does this look like? You say, hey guys, can I tell you a little bit about Jesus? Now, you know Jesus and we're living in 2025 because of him.

But you know, I think you might have your conception of who God is wrong. Because so many people have a wrong, incorrect conception of who the father is or who God is.

They see this distant ruler crossing his arms, watching who breaks the rules and you say, no, no, no, no, no. Can I tell you about Jesus? That actually he is gracious and compassionate. Jesus described his own heart in Matthew 11.

He says, I am gentle and lowly in heart. Can I tell you about that? Can I tell you about Jesus being just filled with grace and truth? So he will tell you the truth.

Actually, let me flip this another way. Have you met anyone or seen anyone who reminds you, okay, I think that's a little bit what Jesus would have looked like. Yeah?

[37:58] I hope you have. Because I have. I sat and I watched this lady speak one time and she was comforting and terrifying at the same time.

She was just preaching the gospel. People were crying and other people were offended and I was sat in the middle neither crying nor offended and I was like, I think she looks a lot like Jesus to me because Jesus was divisive.

Jesus was confronting. Are we willing to tell people about him, say, okay, he might be scary, but he also invited little children to him. Prostitutes would come to him.

Tax collectors would come to him. Everyone would come to him. He had this super high bar of what it meant to live. But somehow, the lowest of lows in society all came to him.

But sometimes as a pastor, actually, I feel convicted because there are people that I hang out with that, oh, you're a pastor. I shouldn't hang out with you. Or it's funny, I play basketball with a group of people who aren't Christians and then it's only later on they find out that I'm a pastor.

[38:55] They're like, oh my goodness, I've been swearing in front of you all this time. I'm like, it's okay, it's okay, chill. But can we be different?

That's what I'm saying. Can we have people look at us and go, okay, there is something different about us. This movement needed two things. It needed a bunch of unnamed people that were

willing just to do the thing and then it needed one leader to empower them and encourage them. Barney, Barnabas, in chapter four in Acts is called the son of encouragement. That was his gift. Actually, John Snellgrove who started this church, he would often say his best, biggest, strongest spiritual gift was what?

Encouragement. So if you're stuck, you're like, I don't know what to say, I don't know what to do, I would say start with this, encourage. You see someone at work who's just a little bit discouraged, a little bit stressed, encourage them.

I'll tell you, I think that's actually shocking. I think that's actually new to a lot of people. It's rare for a lot of people. I'll tell you what this looks like. It's just like, hey Brenda, I noticed that actually you're really good.

[40:01] We're just talking to people and caring for them. That is it. I've been recipients of people saying just even simple things and my spirit is lifted.

What if we just, we're all going back now and maybe we'll deal with sharing the gospel and Jesus later. What if it started with just, hey, can we be encouragers? Because this movement needed unnamed people and needed one encourager and Barnabas saying, you guys have got it. Keep going. You're on the right track. Stay true to the Lord and that's all they needed. So if there's a spiritual gift that you're asking for, maybe the first one to ask for is encouragement because I think people need encouragement.

Once they feel the encouragement, they'll be more receptive to the gospel, to the life and death and the resurrection of Jesus. So you can tell them about Jesus and then you can tell them about his death. Hey, it's okay.

There is no condemnation anymore. Don't feel guilty about yourself, about what you did because someone dealt with that. Yes, what you did does have consequences but praise, actually, I messed up as well but I'm so thankful because actually the consequences of my sin and have now been dealt with on the cross.

[41:07] Can I tell you about the death of Jesus? It wasn't just a good man dying. It wasn't just an interesting guy who had good teachings dying. This guy did not make any mistakes. This guy was sinless. He who knew no sin became sin so that we would be the righteousness of God.

So now, I made a mistake. I messed up. I still have bad thoughts but I am free from any guilt and condemnation. I don't feel bad at all because Jesus paid the price for me.

Tell them about the death and finally, tell them about the empty tomb. You'll have heard me say this countless times and we'll keep saying it. I pray. My prayer is that this place doesn't become, this service doesn't become a memorial service for Jesus where we all come in, remember this guy Jesus.

He did some good things. We sing a few songs about him. I share some nice things about him and then we go from here acknowledging, or basically refusing to acknowledge that he's actually alive and he's actually here. Tell them about the empty tomb. Tell them about the biggest thing that they fear, death, has been dealt with.

It's gone. Tell them about that. They need to hear about that and really, that's all it is and he is coming back. When you're talking to someone who's dealing with cancer and it's terminal and this might be the end.

[42:16] Say, I'm praying that Jesus will heal you now and he may or he may not but I know he is coming back and he will bring complete healing not just to your body but to your soul and to your heart and to your mind and he will wipe away every tear and every disease will be gone and every pain will be gone.

Why? Because he has the authority. Why? Because he defeated death. And you can still be respectful. You don't need to be a jerk. You can say, actually, I don't know what you believe but this is what I believe.

Can we get to a place where people go, hey, how come you still have that hope? Funny you ask that. I would love to share with you why I have this hope. There's only one word, it's Jesus. It's his life, it's his death and it's his resurrection.

And then watch the gospel continue to catch fire. Watch it continue to move through us. It just takes people who are willing to say, yes. When God says go, you say where?

That is it. God loves Hong Kong. God loves Causeway Bay. God's here to restore the brokenness in this city.

[43:24] In every city. In all of humanity. Would we be willing to be part of that? I'm genuinely excited. I'm a Brit. I'm Chinese.

I'm on the side of cynicism and conservativeness. But I'm genuinely excited. Because I think there are people here in this room who feel the spirit of God who are starting to understand, man, Jesus is a big deal.

And he's doing stuff. And all I need to do is grab my surfboard and the waves are already happening and I can join this movement. That fills me with excitement. Please, would you allow me to be that empowering, encouraging, equipping leader?

The most important part of church isn't the 90 minutes here. It's what happens after this. May we all be called little Christians. Spirit, would you lead us?

Spirit, would you lead us? To wherever you want us to go. Our only ask is that you would be there with us.

[44:53] If you're not there, we don't want to go. Would your hand be with us? Would hearts be turned towards you?

We were so blessed this morning by Nathan in pre-service prayer when he brought Psalm 34. And he says, those who look to him are radiant and their faces shall never be ashamed.

Jesus, we don't know what to do. We don't know where to go. We don't know who to talk to. All we can do is keep our eyes fixated on you. And that by doing so, we will become radiant with your glory.

with your beauty. In a way that we won't be ashamed. Embarrassed or afraid.

Would you shine on us? Would you keep us upright? Would you keep us moving and going? Thank you, Lord. Thank you for letting us gather.

[46:14] We take seriously your words that it's important for us to be together. To encourage each other as the day draws near. Would you be with us as we go?

And it's in your powerful, beautiful name we pray. Amen.