

The Call to Mission

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[0 : 00] We're going to turn to our Bible reading this morning. You'll find it in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 5, continuing our study in the Sermon on the Mount. If you have one of our visitor's Bibles, I think that's page 810.

And having been in the Beatitudes the last few weeks, we're going to read this morning from verses 11 to 17 of Matthew, chapter 5. Matthew 5, verse 11, Jesus says to his disciples, Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth.

But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It's no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world.

A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works, and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

[1 : 26] Do not think I have come to abolish the law of the prophets. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. Amen.

May God bless to us this His word. Amen. But please do turn to Matthew chapter 5, page 810 in the Church Bibles.

And our subject this morning is the call to mission. And I want to focus our thoughts very particularly today on verse 17. Do not think I have come to abolish the law of the prophets.

I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. We've spent the last few weeks looking at the Beatitudes, these sayings of Jesus at the very start of the Sermon on the Mount, where He lays out the marks of His people, those who are blessed with God's seal of acceptance and ownership, those who become true disciples, true people of the King.

And we've seen that what we're given here is a portrait of that true Christianity, according to the Lord Jesus Himself. And Jesus began His ministry, remember, in chapter 4, verse 17, saying, Repent, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

[2 : 53] And He goes on immediately to call people to follow Him, because He is the King of this kingdom. He is the promised Messiah King of Israel, and at last He has come.

And of course, that promise for the Messiah King goes right back to the very start of the Bible. It goes right back to the beginning of Genesis, the very first book of the Bible.

And so Matthew's Gospel begins, in chapter 1, with a genealogy that takes the story of Jesus right back to Genesis. Jesus, in the first verse of the Gospel, He says, is the son of David, the great King, and indeed the son of Abraham.

He is the climax of God's great promise that through the seed of the woman, at last, the great Savior of the world would come, the one who would restore God's perfect rule on this earth.

And in Jesus, the King at last has come to inaugurate His rule. And He calls people to repent, therefore, to turn away from their sinful rebellion and self-rule, and to follow Him, to bow the knee to Him, as Lord and Master and King.

[4 : 11] And the Beatitudes, as we've seen, give us a portrait of that life of true discipleship. That is a life that is shaped by that repentance and faith. The life that has found the grace of God in Christ, and has received that grace, and therefore is living out the mercy of God in Christ.

And, as we saw last time, therefore sharing in the experience of Christ in this world, which was to be despised and rejected and reviled and persecuted.

It's a portrait of the lives of those who have been humbled by grace. They know that they have nothing to offer God, and so they hunger and thirst for their righteousness, which can come from God alone.

And God has pronounced His verdict upon them, blessed. And therefore, because God accepts them, they live for God alone.

It's only God's verdict that matters. It's only His approval that matters. The world's thoughts don't matter a whit any longer. And so they live lives of gladness and rejoicing, as verse 12 says, rejoice and be glad, even amid the many scars of discipleship, when the world does revile and persecute and speak falsely of them, because they love Jesus.

[5 : 31] These are the marks of Christ's true people. This is the mark of the people of the kingdom of heaven. But, of course, Jesus does not end His Sermon on the Mount right there.

Of course not. He goes on immediately from giving us the marks of His true disciples, to talking very plainly about the mission of those who are His true people.

So these verses tell us all about the purpose of true Christianity, in the words of the Lord Jesus Himself. And that is, as verses 13 to 20 make clear, that Christ's followers are called to be His ambassadors, the ambassadors of His kingship to the whole world.

There to be salt and light, we're told, to the whole world, so as to bring the glory of God throughout this world. And that is the mission of God's people.

His call is a call to mission. And that calling also implies, of course, that Christ's people exhibit, what I would call, a culture of mission.

[6 : 40] A presence in the world that is as conspicuous and distinctive as salt is to food, as light is in the darkness. And that's exactly what's pictured in verses 13 to 16.

And that, of course, in turn means, that God's people must take very seriously, Christ's missionary commands. Because it's in taking His commands seriously, that the church will exhibit that distinctive missionary culture, which will enable them and empower them to fulfill their missionary calling in the whole world.

Now, that is a vital issue, isn't it, for the church today, as it is for the church in any age. That we should know what our purpose is in this world, as Christian people. That we should know what the purpose is of the Christian church.

So we're going to look over three weeks at this little section in verses 13 to 20, because I want us to be absolutely clear in our minds what the mission of Christ's people really is, in terms of our distinctive calling, and our distinctive culture, how we live as the church, and the very distinctive commands that God has for His people.

But today I want to focus on this call to mission. And here's the message in a nutshell. So wake up and listen. Don't be just gazing out of the window or thinking about your lunch at this point.

[8 : 10] Here it is. What is our calling as New Testament Christians, as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ? Well, our whole purpose, according to Jesus Himself, our whole mission in this world is the radical fulfillment of the promise of the whole Old Testament.

That is the law and the prophets. The promise that God would have a true missionary people for the whole world from the seed of Abraham.

That through the person and work of Christ, the Messiah King, His people would bring the glorious revelation of the salvation of God in Christ to the very ends of the earth.

That's what this key verse, verse 17 here, is telling us. It's a verse that people have raked over endlessly over the years, writing whole PhDs, whole books just about this one verse, and still not usually remotely understanding it.

All right? Largely because they have ignored totally its context right here in Matthew's whole story of the gospel as he's unfolding it. But I want you to see that what Jesus is saying here in this verse is really something very simple indeed and something very wonderful about the purpose of the true calling of God's people.

[9 : 37] Do not think I've come to abolish the law or the prophets. I've not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. Now if you take away that silly heading above it in our Bibles, which is not in the Bible text, and if you take away the gap from that new paragraph there, you will see that this verse flows, as I read it earlier, immediately from verses 13 to 16.

And what Jesus is saying here is that this idea of His people being called to be distinctive lights in the world, but it is not something new.

Not at all. The idea of God's people as being His missionary ambassadors to the whole world is a very, very old idea.

It goes right, right back to the very beginning when God called the people for Himself and named them under His name, under Moses, in the time of the law.

And when He reemphasized that again and again in subsequent history through all of His prophets, through the law and the prophets. And that's so, so important, especially in Matthew's Gospel because Matthew makes so much, doesn't he, of this great sense of continuity of the whole Old Testament story, the law and the prophets.

[10:57] Matthew is not writing a new story. Matthew is telling us this is the climax in Jesus of a very, very old story indeed. That's why He begins His Gospel with a genealogy that goes right back to the beginning, right to King David, right back to Abraham.

And then if you remember in the first couple of chapters of Matthew in the story of the birth of Jesus, everything that Matthew narrates, he tells us pointedly, is in fulfillment of the law and the prophets. So if you look back to chapter 1 and verse 18 and following, from there right to the end of chapter 2, Matthew is constantly telling us that all this took place to fulfill what the prophets had spoken.

Chapter 1, verse 22. The same in chapter 2, verse 5. For so it is written by the prophets. Same in verse 15 and verse 17 and verse 23 of chapter 2.

Look at the beginning of chapter 3. John comes preaching, verse 3, for this is he who was spoken of by the prophet. Chapter 3, verse 15.

[12:05] Jesus is baptized, we're told, to fulfill all righteousness. In chapter 4, Jesus' temptation. Remember his battle with the devil. It's all about the real meaning and significance of what is written in the law and the prophets.

It is written, says Jesus, in verse 4. For it is written. For it is written. Then in chapter 4, verses 12 to 17, Jesus begins his own ministry in verse 15.

verse 14 and says, so that what was spoken by Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled. And then in verse 17 of chapter 4, Jesus' message is, now at last, it's all being fulfilled.

Now at last, the time is at hand. The kingdom has arrived. All is being fulfilled. And so, you must listen to me. And you must follow me.

And you must let me tell you what your calling is as my kingdom people in this age of fulfillment.

You see, God's people have always been called to be his ambassadors in this world.

[13:17] That was Israel's calling right, right from the very start. But now at last, Jesus is saying, this calling is coming to its fullest and most wonderful fruition with the coming of the Messiah himself.

But the story isn't over now because Jesus has come. Absolutely not. Now is the time of at last the great worldwide fulfillment of all that God has promised.

something that was only partially realized before is now coming to its climax and fulfillment through the person and work of Jesus. And so, the role of God's people as ambassadors of his glorious rule in the world, it now takes on a whole new and much more glorious meaning, a much greater responsibility, a much greater reach and scope.

And that's the real key to everything that follows in Jesus' teaching about holiness for his people in the Sermon on the Mount. He tells us that all Jesus' teaching about obedience to God's command has a great missionary purpose.

In other words, we can only understand the place of God's commandments for us as New Testament Christians when we begin to understand that they are missionary commandments.

[14:42] because it's as we radically obey God's missionary commands that we will display the radical missionary culture of God's kingdom to the world all around us so that people will see the good works of his kingdom and be confronted with the gospel of the kingdom of God in Christ.

And only thus will they be able to believe and obey and give glory to God our Father in heaven as they bend the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. That's what Jesus means in verse 17 when he says I've not come to abolish the law and the prophets with their missionary calling for God's people to shine as holy lights in this whole world in this dark world.

No! I've come to fulfill that. To fulfill that very promise and purpose. See the purpose of God's people in the world has always been that they are to be messengers of his light and his goodness in the world.

And the purpose of God's commands for holiness for his people has always been to serve that missionary vision. A people of light. A people shining the holy purity of God's light and goodness and to radiate that in the world.

That is what the whole law and the prophets the whole Old Testament testifies to. Let's take the law first. The book of Moses.

[16:12] Genesis to Deuteronomy. Think back to Sinai. Think back to the time of the Exodus when God constituted Israel as his chosen people and he brought them to the great mountain at Sinai.

Do you remember what he said? Just listen. I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant you shall be my treasured possession among the peoples for all the earth is mine and you shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

You see God redeemed his people out of slavery to make them a kingdom of priests to mediate the glory of God to the whole world around among the peoples for all the earth is mine says the Lord. And that's why immediately after saying those words God goes on to give Israel the Ten Commandments and all the rest of the laws about holiness and so on to teach them how to live as distinctive lights to all the nations round about.

All those commandments are given in that context of the call to world mission. Israel's calling was to live holy and beautiful lives so as to be constant witnesses to God's purity and truth in a world that outside was in utter pagan darkness.

[17:39] That's very very explicit in Deuteronomy chapter 4 where we get a repeat of the law as Israel is about to enter the promised land at last. Now I would like you to look this up because I think it's very helpful.

It's page 148 I think in our church Bibles Deuteronomy chapter 4 and verse 5. And we see so clearly here the missionary purpose of all of God's commands for his people Israel.

Verse 5. See, I have taught you my statutes and rules as the Lord my God commanded me that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who when they hear all these statutes will say surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people for what great nation is there that has a God so near it as the Lord our God is to us whenever we call upon him and what great nation is there that has statutes and rules so righteous as all the law I've set before you today.

That's so clear isn't it? Why God's law? Well it is so that his people will be distinct and conspicuous in the world so that there'll be shining beacons of God's purity and goodness in the sight of all of the peoples so that people will say who is a God like this whose ways are so righteous and whose presence is so real and so powerfully present among this very people you see their light is to shine before men so that they see in God's people the light of God himself and glorify him the God of heaven that's the purpose of God's people and always has been to be his missionary ambassadors in this world and that's the purpose of God's commands to lead that mission of a powerfully holy people in this world right back then in the law in the Torah in the day of Moses and it's the same all the way through the rest of the Old Testament in the prophets

Moses of course is the great prophet and all the rest of those who come after are simply expounding and applying Moses' teachings so it should hardly surprise us that it's the same message just take the one prophet Isaiah one of the great prophets perhaps the clearest of all I want to look at one or two references in Isaiah just to help us see this but I want to avoid a paper chase so don't look this up don't just listen in Isaiah chapter 41 you can read it later God talks about Israel the seed of Abraham as my servant and he says my servant's purpose is to be the light of the nations but the problem is that Israel he says is a blind servant and therefore it's proving useless who is blind but my servant God says in the very next chapter who is as deaf as the messenger I send he sees many things all God's commands but does not observe them

[20:59] God says I was pleased for my righteousness sake to magnify my law and make it glorious but this people plundered and looted and worse they would not walk in my ways they would not obey my laws and so the result was that instead of being a glorious witness to the world God's name was despised in the world because of his people blasphemed among the Gentiles because of God's own people and as you know Paul quotes that from Isaiah in Romans chapter 2 verse 24 you find the same accusation in Ezekiel chapter 36 and verse 21 and that's why of course in the end God had to send his people out of the land into exile because they'd completely abandoned their

missionary calling as God's people they'd become counter-missional instead of turning people to the glory of God they'd turn people away from God so disgraceful was the way they lived now you would think wouldn't you that that would be the end that God would abandon his people so sick so perverse so much a failure you would think that God would abandon humanity altogether but no because God had promised and God had purposed that his people should be a glorious witness to him in all this earth that was God's purpose in creation to fill the earth with the glory of man reflecting the glory of God and even man's great rebellion his great transgression and the result of that did not change

God's purpose and that was the promise wasn't it of God's great covenant of redemption but through the seed of Abraham this glorious purpose would at last come to pass because God will not be thwarted in his purpose and so when you read Isaiah you find in the later chapters a rather strange thing God seems to be talking rather mysteriously about two Israels there's an Israel his chosen servant people who are blind and deaf and disobedient and disappointing but there's also another Israel that he calls the servant a promised a promised one who is to come who will at last fulfill the destiny of witnessing God's glory to all the nations now perhaps you would look up Isaiah chapter 49 page 609 if you have a church bible we can look at this famous passage which is what we call the second of the four servant songs in Isaiah just as you're looking that up what we're what we're really doing this morning is an exercise in what we might call biblical theology we're tracing how some of the great themes of the bible develop and follow through from the beginning all the way to find their fulfillment in the lord Jesus Christ and in his kingdom and in his kingdom people sometimes helpful sometimes it's very necessary for us to just take time to do that to see how the story of the whole bible is fitting together and I hope it'll help us get it clear today look at Isaiah 49 and verse 3 you this is you singular says the lord are my servant Israel in whom I will be glorified now this he this one that he's speaking of can't possibly be the whole of the people Israel because look at verse 5 this servant he says is going to bring Jacob that's the whole nation back to the lord that Israel the whole nation might be gathered to him again this servant is going to restore God's wayward and blind servant Israel but more than that look at verse 6 over the page as well as bringing back the ones he calls the preserved in Israel he will be a true light to the nation so that God's salvation will reach the end of the earth you see what he's saying God's true servant his messiah will do at last what his people could never do he will shine the light of God's glory to the whole world and what Jesus said I am the light of the world and here in Matthew 17:5-17 I have come to fulfill the promise of the law and the prophets and Jesus at last fulfills the calling of God's servant people Israel he fulfills it for them but that is not all and this is very important that's the problem that's where many people stop and they'll say yes Israel was a complete failure and therefore Israel's failure is all fulfilled in Jesus in God's true servant so where God's people failed his servant Jesus triumphs in their stead and that's the end of the story no no no that is not the message of the new testament what is God's ultimate purpose what is God's purpose predestined before even

the foundation of the world according to Paul in Ephesians well he tells us in Ephesians 1 that in Christ and through Christ we his people shall at last be what he called us to be we shall be to the praise of his glorious grace that God's people will shine the light of his glory not just to the ends of this earth but throughout all the heavenly places and among all the rulers in the heavenly places that is God's plan through all the ages according to Paul he says in Ephesians 3 verse 10 that through the church that is the true Israel of God the manifest wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places and this he says is the eternal purpose of God now realized in Jesus Christ our lord the glorious witness of the people of God the church of God redeemed forever in Christ their glorious witness not just on earth but throughout all heaven and that's what Isaiah is prophesying here in Isaiah chapter 49 Jesus the messiah came to fulfill the promise of all the law and the prophets about the great destiny of God's chosen people his true Israel his church and so far from Christ's coming meaning somehow the end of the mission and the call of God's people it's in fact the real beginning of their real and glorious mission their mission to display the manifold wisdom and purpose of God first to the ends of the earth and then to the farthest reaches of the heavenly realms forever and ever and ever that is the great fulfillment of the old testament's promises that Jesus came to bring to fruition he fulfills the promise of the law and the prophets through his own great serving work so that he will fulfill that promise for us but also in us and through us his people that's what Isaiah saw and spoke of right here and in many other places

too look at verse 8 of isaiah 49 here again he's talking here now about israel as a nation as his people and he's saying to them in the day of salvation you will help them he says i will make you as a covenant to the people verse 19 you'll be ones who call to prisoners come out and to those who are in darkness appear verse 12 he talks about there being a highway to draw those from north and south and east and west to the glory of his kingdom verse 22 he says god's signal in those days will go out to all nations in the climax at the end of the chapter in verse 26 all flesh then shall know that i am the lord your savior and your redeemer the mighty one of jacob god's people at last a true light to the world through the wonderful saving work of the messiah god's eternal purpose being realized through jesus christ the lord now we don't have time to go through the whole of isaiah and show you but you'll find this pattern again and again remember isaiah chapter 61 that jesus quotes of himself in the synagogue in uh in nazareth the spirit of the lord is upon me because the lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor but that goes on immediately and and the prophet says because of me you my people my redeemed people shall be called priests of the lord shall be called ministers of our god you find the same thing in isaiah chapter 43 because of what god's servant messiah is going to accomplish god's people will be his witnesses they will be the servants that he has chosen you are my witnesses says god through the prophet exactly what jesus says as he ascends to glory and says to his disciples his followers and to all the church subsequently you are my witnesses to take this glorious message to the very ends of the earth you see he is fulfilling the purpose the calling of god's people at last to witness his glorious light to the ends of this earth and so you see if you come back to matthew chapter 5 verse 17 what jesus is saying is that that day is now dawning with his coming with his great redeeming work that god's eternal purpose is coming to fruition through our lord jesus christ and for all who are in him through faith and trust in him as their king the climax of the calling of god's holy people has come not the end of our purpose but the true beginning of its worldwide fruitfulness with the coming of jesus with with god's perfect and true servant he will at last fulfill the destiny of all his people and in ushering in this great age of salvation and the promise of the spirit he fulfills the destiny of all of his true people to restore them to be lights in this world to restore them to be the ambassadors of the glorious salvation of heaven and jesus as the king of heaven is sharing his glorious mission with his people and he's saying the light has dawned as his words have come true the great light has been shown to all the peoples and the first thing he does is to call people to follow him to be fishers of men with him and to join in in shining the light of heaven to the world to be ambassadors of the glorious king and to proclaim god's salvation to the very ends of the earth see what he's talking about here in verse 17 is the climax of the calling of god's people his church what the old testament israel could only foreshadow in monochrome the new testament people of god will fulfill in glorious technicolor that's why the apostle peter echoes the words of mooses from sinai when he's writing to a church of jews and gentiles in first peter chapter 2 and he says to me you are a chosen race you're a royal priesthood you're a holy nation a people of his own possession that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light and that's just what jesus is saying here it's your destiny that i've come to fulfill listen again to verse 14 to 17 you are the light of the world a city set on a hill cannot be hidden nor do people hide light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a stand and it gives light to all in the house in the same way let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father who is in heaven do not think i've come to abolish the law of the prophets i have come not to abolish but to fulfill them don't think that this is now time for my people's witness in this world to be over not at all this is the day of real fulfillment this is just the beginning this is everything that mooses and the prophets longed for and looked to or to use paul's language from ephesians this is bringing to light for everyone the mystery hidden for ages in god that through the church of jesus christ the light of god's glory will shine not only to the earth but to the outer reaches of the heavens this is the beginning of the great salvation god promised to abraham that through his seed all nations would be blessed and you my followers says jesus you will be my ambassadors to bring this glorious message to the world that's the calling of the christian church that's the calling of every christian disciple it's a missionary calling the call to faith the call to follow jesus is a call to be fishers of men and our purposes as followers of jesus today is to be part of the radical fulfillment of the promise of the whole old testament from its very beginning to be god's missionary people to all nations through the work of jesus the messiah for us to redeem us but also through his work in us to renew us and his spirit given to us to empower us for this very task the call to be a christian a disciple of jesus and

the call to be the church of jesus christ is the call to mission to be missionary ambassadors of christ the king to the ends of the earth to make his light known here on earth and then to make his life his light known endlessly throughout all ages in the heavenly realms and that is what we see being played out in the story of the new testament beginning with the apostles in acts but this is where the apostles learned it from jesus himself he's passing the baton of responsibility for shining the light of the one true god to his his true and renewed israel through jesus christ those who are renewed and redeemed through what jesus has done and he began with the apostles they understood it paul says in in acts chapter 13 for so god commanded us and he quotes from isaiah 49 i have made you a light for the gentiles that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth it's a language he uses in second corinthians 5 where he says and we are god's ambassadors he's making his appeal to you through us not of course for a moment that he's saying we are somehow reconciling the world or or that even god is reconciling the world through us not at all he said it was in christ that god was reconciling the world to himself but he has committed to us as paul this message of reconciliation what he calls the light of the glory of the gospel of christ the light to proclaim to the whole world that's your destiny says jesus to share my light in this whole world i came to fulfill the promise so that my people would be at last a royal priesthood proclaiming my excellencies to the world and sharing the light of my salvation to the ends of the earth well over the next couple of weeks i want us to look a little bit more about

[38 : 53] what this means in terms of the distinct missionary culture that it demands of us and indeed the missionary commands that create that culture because that's so important but just as we finish today there's plenty to think about isn't there what is my life all about what is my calling as as a christian disciple what is our calling collectively as a church as a congregation of the lord jesus christ well we don't have to agonize and pray and seek all sort of guidance for that do we we don't have to spend endless hours trying to thrash out oh what is our vision going to be no the call of jesus christ is the call to mission and so our purpose of being here on this earth as christian people as believers our purpose of being in this city as a christian church is mission it's the light of the glory of christ proclaiming the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness and into light we could hardly have a better passage could we to be studying on this day of all days as we're about to face the upheaval and the uncertainty of of moving into two different morning meetings it's all about mission it's all about the great and mighty and marvelous eternal purpose of god being realized in jesus christ our lord and given to us to be part of this inestimable privilege to be ambassadors of his saving light so it's not about us it's all about jesus it's about jesus fulfilling the purpose of god in us and for us from before the foundation of the world that puts such a different complexion on things as we think about them doesn't it some of us i'm sure we're going to find sundays over the coming weeks and months a lot more hassle we're getting up earlier we're traveling further all kinds of uncertainties but but jesus reminds us this is part of what we're on this earth for it's his mission it's part of the climax of the whole history of this universe that'll stop us being selfish and introspective won't it when we think of that some of us i'm sure will feel sad we come to church next sunday here and we won't see some of the folk that we like to sit next to or chat to or whatever it is and that may be hard but jesus reminds us doesn't he that we're here as a church not just for fellowship and friendship wonderful and important as that is but for mission he came to redeem us for a purpose and we would see that it is our destiny to be his witnesses and so you see we'll need to encourage one another won't we we'll need to minister to one another constantly in the coming weeks in such a way as as to keep that missionary call as the number one priority for our lives together here as a church as well as in our personal lives always if we're in a family every one of us is in a family then we have a missionary purpose don't we it's what we're there for it's often the hardest place isn't it to be a missionary in our own families we need a lot of help and encouragement we need a lot of sensitivity but we also need courage let's be be sharing with one another and encouraging one another and praying for one another in our mission in our family life if we're in work well again that's what we're there for isn't it not just wages although we need that we need to live and and eat and be clothed it's not just wages it's witness that we're there for if you're in school or in college or in university again that's

that's why you're there it's to shine the light of god's glorious truth you are the light of the world my followers those who call themselves christians you have this great calling in the world don't think that i've come to abolish the call to be a kingdom of priests and witnesses of course not i've come to fulfill it so that you will at last fulfill your true destiny as my people so that you'll shine the light of

heaven before others here on this earth and so that many others will come to that light and will find the glory of my gospel it's a challenge isn't it to be reminded that that is the purpose of our lives here on earth that's why we're bound together in this fellowship too it's a challenge but it must also give us confidence too i think that if us being christ's ambassadors in this earth is the eternal purpose of god and if it is being realized in jesus christ because it's the very thing he came to do and accomplish on this earth and if he's poured out his holy spirit upon the church for this very purpose being fulfilled in our witness and we can have confidence can't we that god is doing something even through us and we can have courage to speak to a friend about jesus to invite somebody along to church to hear about jesus there'll be a lot more seats from next week that's one of the main purposes isn't it to give space to fill them it's a challenge but it gives us great confidence god's eternal unstoppable purpose will be fulfilled and his people follow his call so let's be praying every day and whenever we pray together asking god to help us all fulfill our calling to be radical missionary believers and to be a radical missionary church so that we will shine his glorious light in this city and from this city to the world will you do that with me and join with me each of us encouraging one another to live out our true destiny in jesus christ because that is our destiny you are the light of the world do not think i've come to abolish the law of the prophets i have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them amen let's pray heavenly father we marvel that you the god of glory the god of creation the god of redemption should think to set your love upon us and to call us not only to share in your marvelous light but to share in proclaiming your marvelous light to this world to this earth and then even for all eternity to proclaim your manifold wisdom and glory throughout the heavenly realms forever and ever that what you have done for us and in us in jesus christ should fulfill your eternal purpose from before all worlds how we marvel at your greatness and how we rejoice in your goodness and generosity to us so help us lord help us to shine as stars in the firmament in this dark world and so make jesus christ known for his glory we pray and hope Come to a beautiful new tuftime and cover up a huge in his glory and verse in a round of illuminating we pray