

A True Missionary Church: 5. Has Clarity on the True Gospel

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Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 00] ...that a true missionary church today has clarity on the truth of the gospel. Tonight we're going to stray a little bit from the pastoral epistles that we've been looking at predominantly in recent weeks as we've focused on the theme of what it means to be a true missionary church today.

What it means to be a pillar and a buttress of the truth, as Paul says the church is always called to be. As the household of the living God, the household of God here on earth.

And we've seen very clearly that these letters, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, are all about truth. A missionary church that is true to the apostolic gospel will live the truth, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, as Paul writes to Titus.

It will guard the truth. We are to guard the good deposit that is entrusted to us and we are to pass it on. It will proclaim the truth in season and out of season.

That is when it's popular and, which seems to be most of the time, when it's unpopular. And therefore, inevitably, a true missionary church, as we saw last week, will entail enduring hardship, suffering, and often suffering real persecution for the truth.

[1 : 28] The shape of what we are and what we do and what we say is all to be governed by the truth of God, the truth of the gospel.

But that, of course, begs the question for us, well, what is the truth of the gospel that we're to live and guard and proclaim and suffer for? To do all of these things, rather, assumes that we have absolute clarity on that point, doesn't it?

And as we read in 1 Timothy 2, verse 8, Paul sums it up like this. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, offspring of David, as preached in my gospel.

And obviously, he assumes that that little summary that he puts there has great significance, that has power to encourage and to endure hardship and to help people to endure sufferings and even chains.

Clearly, these statements, Jesus, Christ, son of David, risen from the dead, these things encompass a world-changing message and a life-changing truth for the Apostle Paul.

[2 : 44] Well, I wonder if you and I would understand why that little verse should be such a powerful encouragement to struggling and to suffering Christians. Why does that help me, you might say?

It doesn't even seem to mention me. Well, of course, that's true. I wonder how you would sum up the Christian gospel. Somebody comes to you and say, you're on the rota here in the church on 12 to 2, one afternoon, or at lunchtime on a Saturday.

And somebody comes in and they say, tell me, what is the gospel? Well, what would you say to them? You might say, well, it's the way of salvation for sinful people like us.

Or you might say, well, it's believing that Jesus is the Savior. Or you might say, well, it's about your sins being forgiven.

That's what the gospel is about. Or you might say, well, it's the good news of new life with Jesus for believers. That's the gospel.

[3 : 49] And there's all sorts of other things we might say, aren't there? Many, many things, many different ways we might put it. But we need to be clear, very clear about this. Though there is some truth in all of these things that I said, none of these things is what the New Testament understands the gospel to be, not at all.

Now, the gospel in the New Testament is not at all about us. It doesn't primarily concern us at all. Although it does, of course, affect us all.

Now, the gospel in the New Testament is first and foremost a declaration about Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, offspring of David.

That's what the gospel declares, says Paul. Now, I want you to turn to Romans chapter 1, the passage that we read. Because we'll see there, and I'm sure you heard as we read it, that Paul expands and fills in a little bit what he says very compactly in that verse in 2 Timothy 2, verse 8. But it's just as clear, isn't it? Look at verse 1. Paul says he is a servant, an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God. And that gospel, he says in verse 3, is, do you see?

[5 : 13] Concerning his son. That is the gospel. It's a declaration by God about his son, Jesus. Well, what is this declaration, this message?

Well, it's summed up, isn't it, in the phrase at the end of verse 4. Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah King of God, and he's our Lord.

That is, he is the cosmic majesty on high who rules enthroned over all things. That is who Jesus is. And this public declaration about Jesus is the gospel.

The gospel, as verse 2 says, that is promised by the Old Testament scriptures. He's descended from David according to the flesh. That's the gospel from the Old Testament point of view, if you like.

The messianic son of David who would at last come and who would rule over all. But now, says verse 4, do you see? Declared to be the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead.

[6 : 23] That is, the one, the Christ, the Messiah, who is long promised, has been exalted as Lord of all by his resurrection from the dead.

The resurrection of Jesus declares and confirms to all, to all the world, that all the promises of the Old Testament about the Christ have been fulfilled.

And Paul says that declaration is the gospel. And the rest of the epistles of the Romans simply expands the consequences of this.

Not only is the gospel the news, the declaration of Christ's lordship, it is the revelation, says Paul, of God's righteousness. And it's the instrument of salvation from the wrath and from the judgment of God that the gospel also reveals.

Did you notice that in verse 18? The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness. In verse 17, the gospel reveals the righteousness of God from faith to faith.

[7 : 28] The righteousness of God and the wrath of God revealed to all the world are the consequence of the declaration of the gospel. The declaration of Jesus as the Christ and the Lord.

The gospel is the declaration that Jesus of Nazareth, a real man in history, verifiable historically, knowable personally by people who saw him and heard him and knew him, that this man is both Lord and Christ, according to promise, by the resurrection from the dead.

But the question still arises, well, what does that mean? What's the significance of it? Why does that matter? And these are vital questions, aren't they? It's essential to understand that question if you're somebody who's asking questions about the Christian faith.

Who's asking, well, what is the gospel? It's essential to understand that too, isn't it? If people are asking us questions about the Christian faith. What is the significance of this declaration about Jesus?

How would you answer that question? What is this declaration about Jesus of Nazareth as being Lord and Christ, declared by his resurrection?

[8 : 44] What does it really mean for you or for me? What does it mean for the whole world? Well, let me tell you what the apostles said in the New Testament by way of answer to that question.

It's the focus of our thinking tonight. First and foremost, and above every other consideration, it means this. It means that Jesus is the judge of all mankind, of all the living and the dead.

And that judgment day has been announced for this world. And indeed it has begun. That's what the significance of this declaration about Jesus of Nazareth is.

It's just what verse 18 of Romans chapter 1 says. The wrath of God is being revealed already against all unrighteousness because of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

Because Jesus is both Lord and Christ. I realize that that might surprise you to say that the first thing that the gospel declaration means is the certainty of God's coming judgment.

[9 : 54] But I want to show you tonight that that is in fact the focus, the overwhelming focus of the apostolic proclamation of the gospel throughout the New Testament. I want to show you it by looking at a number of places in the Acts of the Apostles.

Maybe you'd turn with me first of all to Acts chapter 2 to the first great apostolic sermon on the day of Pentecost. And here is Peter preaching in Jerusalem to thousands of people who are gathered there.

And I want to look a little bit at this sermon just to make that point. Now I direct you first of all to verse 36 to the very end, the climax of his sermon.

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him, that is Jesus, both Lord and Christ. This Jesus, whom you crucified. The resurrection, you see, he is saying, makes certain that Jesus is both Lord and Christ.

Just as Paul says in Romans chapter 1. But what does that mean for those who are listening to that sermon? to those Jewish people who are steeped in the Old Testament scriptures?

[11 : 05] What does that word mean? Well, what it means unmistakably is this. According to the scriptures, the appearance of the one who is God's Messiah, his King, the Lord of all, can mean only one thing.

that the day of the Lord is upon us, that the kingdom of God is here, and therefore, that the day of God's judgment is here.

And that, in fact, if you actually look at Peter's sermon, is exactly what his sermon is all about.

That's what he's saying. Look where it begins in verse 16. This, he says, this which has now come upon you today in your presence is what was attested to through the prophet Joel.

And then we have this long quotation from the prophet Joel. Now, those hearers on that day were a lot more familiar with the prophet Joel than you and I are. They probably knew it by heart.

I'm not going to ask if anybody here knows the prophet Joel by heart. I doubt if you can quote one verse straight away just like that. But these people who listened to Peter on that day would have known that prophet like the back of their hand.

[12 : 18] And they would know the context and the significance of Peter's words. Joel's message was a devastating message for the people of God, of Israel.

He uses imagery of an invasion of locusts to speak of a coming day of judgment. The day of the Lord. The day when God would judge not only the enemies of Israel, not only the nations of the world, but also every one of his own people Israel.

And I can tell you, friends, the horror of that day that Joel spoke of was very, very real indeed. Let me read to you. Don't turn it up just now. You can read it later. But let me read to you just some of what Joel said.

Alas, for the day, for the day of the Lord is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes, it's not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness, cut off from the house of our God.

Blow a trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm on my holy mountain. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness.

[13 : 31] The Lord utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great. He who executes his word is powerful, for the day of the Lord is a great and very awesome day. Who can endure it?

And much more in the same vein. And yet in the midst of all that promise about judgment to come, there was also a word of hope and a call to return to him and to be saved.

Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. And it's in that context that come the words that Peter quotes here.

Let me read to you from Joel. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel and that I am the Lord your God and that there is none else and my people shall never again be put to shame.

And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, even your young men shall see visions, even the male and female servants in those days.

[14 : 40] I will pour out my spirit and I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape as the Lord has said and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.

And he goes on to call all nations to stir themselves for he says there I will sit to judge all the nations.

And what Peter is saying here on the day of Pentecost is this today is the beginning of that. That's the prophet's message and I'm telling you says Peter that that is all bound up with the resurrection of this man Jesus.

That's what he says in Acts chapter 2 verse 22 to 24 isn't it? You crucified him but it was impossible for death to hold him. And he quotes again this time from Psalm 16 about how God's anointed one must conquer death.

[16:01] It had to happen he says. And David also foresaw it he says in verse 31 and he spoke about it and in this Jesus that has been fulfilled.

And now he says in verse 33 he's exalted at God's right hand and everything that was promised about his lordship and his reign as judge over all things has been confirmed.

as Psalm 110 says that's the last quote there in verse 34 and 35 the lord said to my lord sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.

When you go home read the rest of Psalm 110 the lord says to his anointed son rule in the midst of your enemies he will shatter the kingdoms and the kings on the day of his wrath.

He will execute judgment among the nations. And Peter says that's what it means that this Jesus is both Lord and Christ.

[17:11] That day of the Lord that day of judgment has begun. And Jesus is the judge of all the earth. And that's why when you read verse 37 of Acts chapter 2 you see that all who heard it were cut to the heart with fear because they understood the significance of the message that they heard.

What shall we do was their response. You must repent is the answer because you face real danger because you face ruin.

And that was the apostles gospel. And that was the response that was demanded to it. That's exactly the gospel as you find it everywhere in the New Testament.

If you go right back to the very beginning of Luke's gospel chapter 3 you'll find that that was precisely the gospel as John the Baptist preached it wasn't it? You see it's exactly the same.

John says in Luke 3 verse 16 I baptize you with water but he who is mightier than I is coming the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.

[18:22] He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

That was John's gospel news about what it meant that Jesus the Christ was coming. And incidentally that's a very good example of why we shouldn't just translate the word gospel as good news.

Look at verse 18 So with many other exhortations he preached the good news to the people is our translation. It wasn't really good news was it?

It certainly wasn't good for all. It certainly was news but it was pretty bad news. It was pretty devastating news wasn't it? about the one who would burn with unquenchable fire.

Certainly Herod didn't take it as good news. He locked John up and put him in prison because it was terrifying news for him. It was news about sin and about judgment to come. And that's why the response to the gospel to the news was not rejoice but repent.

[19:38] That's why it was not an option it was a command. But Jesus himself preached exactly that gospel didn't he? His very first words in Mark chapter 15 are repent repent and believe the gospel because the kingdom of God is at hand.

In other words the great day of the Lord the day of God's judgment is here now. And that also was the apostolic gospel preaching always here in Acts 2 right through to the very end proclaiming the kingdom of God and the lordship of Jesus as the Christ that is as the king and the judge of all the earth.

You get to the very last verse of the Acts of the Apostles Paul is in prison in Rome and he's preaching the same thing preaching the kingdom of God we're told and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Just read all the sermons in the Acts of the Apostles that are recorded for us. That's why you find that the resurrection is so significant in the apostolic preaching. It's nothing to do with trying to prove that somehow Jesus is God because he's risen from the dead.

That's never a thing that the apostles use the resurrection as a proof of. Christ's divinity never. No. What it proves with certainty is that the promise of the Old Testament scriptures has been fulfilled that God's king, his judge has come.

[21 : 05] And therefore now all the world Jew and Gentile alike must submit to the unique authority of the one who is the Son of God, the Christ, the judge, the Lord.

So for example in Acts chapter 17, don't bother turning there now, but when Paul is preaching on Mars Hill to the Athenian philosophers and intellectuals, the climax of his sermon is this, the times of ignorance, he says, God overlook, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed.

And of this he has given assurance to all. How? By raising him from the dead. And that's the New Testament gospel message.

God's judgment and his judge are declared to all by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. That is the gospel. Let's just turn to one other place in the Acts of the Apostles to drive this home.

Do turn with me this time because it's exceptionally clear here in Acts chapter 10 verses 42 and 43. Of course there are many places we could come to but this one is well known and it's very clear.

[22 : 30] You know the story well. It's the context of Peter's vision and the call for him to come to the household of Cornelius the Gentile centurion and preach the gospel to him. Verse 33 sets the scene.

Cornelius says to Peter, we're all here Peter. Now I want you to tell us all exactly what God has commanded you to tell to people like us. It's a great intro for any preacher.

Don't miss anything out. Tell us everything. And so Peter does if you look. First of all he tells them the story of Jesus life through to verse 39.

Witnessed he says by the apostles. Then he tells of Jesus death on the cross. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. Then he speaks in verse 40 of the resurrection.

But God raised him on the third day and made him to appear to us as witnesses. And then if you look at verse 42 he tells us what Jesus commanded the apostles to preach to the people.

[23 : 33] Here is the apostolic New Testament gospel given by Jesus himself. What is it? Verse 42 Jesus commanded us to preach to the people and to testify what?

That he is the one appointed by God to be the judge of the living and the dead. That is the urgent news that Jesus sent his apostles into all the world to proclaim.

That is the New Testament gospel message. That there is wrath to come and judgment to come because Jesus Christ is risen.

And he is the judge of the living and the dead. The gospel of the risen Jesus means that Jesus is the judge of all mankind and that judgment day, the great day of the Lord, the day of wrath, the day long promised through all the scriptures, has begun with the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus Christ to reign at God's right hand.

That is the gospel. That's the news. That's the great New Testament declaration that all of the promises of God have been fulfilled and have been brought to pass by Christ's resurrection.

[24 : 51] salvation. That's the first thing in the gospel of the New Testament, the significance of the risen Jesus. But that's not all, of course.

Also, along with this new declaration in the New Testament witness to Jesus, Peter says there is an old, old message also. Not only is this Jesus the judge of the living and the dead, but Jesus is declared the Savior, he says, of all who believe.

Look at verse 43. It speaks of a message that goes right back to ages past in the Old Testament. To him, Jesus, all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

There is salvation for all who believe because there is forgiveness of sins in his name. That's the gospel, promise God in the Old Testament.

Striking, isn't it? Turns totally on its head, doesn't it? The ridiculous, ignorant nonsense that you sometimes hear about people. Oh, the God of the Old Testament full of judgment and anger and the God of the New Testament in Jesus full of forgiveness.

[26 : 05] Well, here is the God of the New Testament, Jesus as the judge. And here is the promise from the very earliest of the Old Testament that the Messiah would be the Savior of all who believe.

And that is the promise of the Scriptures from the beginning, but it is so because it's a message of salvation from real judgment, from wrath to come, righteous wrath directed at the sin of men and women who are not right with God and therefore who face his wrath in the coming judgment and therefore who need real forgiveness.

See, the New Testament gospel is essentially about a future salvation. Did you realize that? The wrath of God, says Paul, is being revealed from heaven.

The day of judgment has begun, but it will climax in the day of Christ's return, the dreadful day when he will appear to judge the living and the dead.

That's why Paul says in 1 Thessalonians chapter 1, we wait for his Son from heaven whom he raised from the dead. Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

[27 : 20] That's why he says to the Philippians, we await a Savior from heaven on that day. That's why he says in Romans chapter 5, that we shall be saved by Christ from the wrath of God.

That's the genuine gospel of the New Testament. Jesus is a Savior from the wrath to come in the future from the judgment of that great day. notice for all who believe, who have received forgiveness now, in the present, through the response to the gospel now, about what Jesus has done once and for all in the past.

All the prophets bear witness that he is not only the judge, but he's the Savior, the Savior from judgment and sin. because, and only because, tell us the prophets, he is the sin bearer.

Isaiah said he's wounded for our transgressions, he's crushed for our iniquities. He bore the sin and the judgment of many. His soul was made an offering for sin.

He bore their iniquities. Read Isaiah chapter 52 and 53 when you go home. But now he is risen. He is the exalted Lord and Christ.

[28 : 39] He will no longer ever be despised and rejected by men on this earth again. No, the earth will only ever see him again with their eyes when he appears triumphant in glory to reign and to judge the living and the dead, to make all his enemies his footstools, to break them in pieces like a potter's vessel, as the psalm says.

That is the only way. The eyes of this unbelieving world will see Jesus Christ again in his glory and his splendor. And that is the gospel.

Jesus is declared Lord and Christ by his resurrection from the dead. He is the judge of all, all the living and the dead. The day of judgment is fixed and it draws closer to that dreadful day of wrath. God is not for all, but yes, for all who believe, who submit to his lordship.

That's what repentance and faith really means. It means real submission to the lordship, the kingship of the risen Jesus Christ as Lord and Christ. Christ. That's why the New Testament never speaks about decisions for Christ, never speaks about accepting Christ as though somehow he was helpless outside, knocking on the door of our heart.

[30 : 10] Can't do anything unless we let him in. No, the New Testament proclaims Christ's risen lordship and demands that all men everywhere will repent and bow down and submit to his rule.

It's belief and submission to Christ's lordship that brings about forgiveness and salvation in the New Testament. So in Acts chapter 16 when the Philippine jailer cries out in the middle of the night, what shall I do to be saved?

The answer comes from Paul, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to him as Lord and Christ and you'll be saved. Romans chapter 10 Paul says, confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, that is, that he is the risen Lord and the judge and you will be saved.

See, the Christian gospel is a sovereign command of power and of authority to bow the knee to Jesus Christ as Lord. Yes, it's true.

It is, of course, also an offer of grace, but it is also a command. And that's the message that begins and ends Paul's letter to the Romans as we saw it, his great exposition of the gospel of God.

[31 : 32] Chapter 1, verse 5, he is there to call all nations, he says, to the obedience of faith. He ends in chapter 16 as we read, speaking about the revelation of the mystery that was long hidden, but is now disclosed to the prophetic writings according to the command of the eternal God to bring about the obedience of faith.

Real faith is capitulation, bowing down to the lordship of Jesus as the Christ and as the Lord of heaven above.

That is the biblical apostolic gospel of God. It is a declaration about Jesus that he is both Lord and Christ in fulfillment of the scriptures and proven by his resurrection from the dead.

It declares him judge of all mankind, the living and the dead. And it declares him the savior from the judgment to come for all who believe and who submit to his lordship.

And it calls men everywhere to repent, to bow the knee, to submit to that lordship now. Or else to face what must be faced for all who will not bow the knee now, his eternal wrath.

[32 : 59] And a true missionary church, says Paul, will remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, offspring of David, as preached in my gospel.

Not any other gospel. Or else it's not the Christian faith at all. Now let me close by noting some implications of that for our mission and our evangelism.

First of all, it matters what we believe. Only a gospel of Jesus as Christ and Lord, with all the implications of that is the true gospel.

And first of all, it follows that this gospel depends utterly, doesn't it, upon a physical resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Without that, there is no gospel because it's the resurrection that declares Jesus as the exalted Son of God, the Lord and the Christ.

And therefore, if you make the resurrection of Jesus in its physical sense optional or vague or somehow not important, then you destroy the gospel. No resurrection, no gospel.

[34 : 08] Second, this gospel focuses upon the real salvation from real judgment that is to come. It's focused on the future, on the appearance of the Savior who will save us from the wrath to come.

And therefore, any gospel that focuses just on the present and focuses on health and prosperity and destiny now is not the biblical gospel.

And we need to say that plainly. And we need to reject all such false gospels. We are saved in hope. Of course, yes, we have life now.

The life of the world to come is begun now by the Spirit within us. But we do not yet have full salvation. We await a Savior from heaven. And that will have many, many implications on our expectation for life now in this world before Jesus comes.

And this gospel also is centered on a real atonement for sin, a substitutionary atonement that removes the penalty of sin, a propitiation that turns away the wrath of God upon sin, that justifies us so that the verdict of that last day is brought now and declared in the present so that on that day the verdict shall be no condemnation, no guilt, no wrath in the judgment on the great and terrible day of the judgment of Jesus Christ.

[35 : 52] That is not what Christ's work has done. Then we can have no assurance of salvation on that day. We're still in our sins. And therefore, those who deny such things do not just offer a different angle on the gospel.

They destroy the gospel. They destroy the gospel as we find it on the lips of the apostles and on the lips of Jesus Christ himself. It matters what we believe.

And a true missionary church has clarity on gospel belief. Second, it matters what we proclaim. Only that gospel of Jesus as Lord and Christ is the power of God for salvation and it's submission to Jesus' Lordship that saves us.

Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and you will be saved. So to preach Jesus as Savior alone is no way of salvation according to the New Testament.

Only a Jesus who is Lord and judge can save us from the judgment to come. Only a Savior who is also the judge can be a Savior. Savior. And therefore, despite even professing evangelicals, it seems these days shrinking from talk about judgment and about wrath and such things, we are simply not at liberty to admit from the gospel what is the very heart of its message.

[37 : 20] Salvation in the judgment to come. To do so robs the gospel of all of its power to truly save. And we, therefore, as a missionary church, must be unashamed to proclaim the whole truth of the gospel message, whether we find it in season or out of season.

A true missionary church proclaims clearly the true gospel. It matters what we proclaim. Third, it matters from where we proclaim the message.

The true gospel, says Paul, is promised in the Old Testament scriptures and it's fulfilled and applied in all the New Testament writings. And therefore, a fully biblical gospel needs declaration of all the scriptures.

That was the apostles' method. They proved from all the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ and the things concerning him. That was Jesus' method. Remember, on the road to Emmaus, beginning

with Moses and all the prophets, he taught them the things concerning himself.

A whole Bible is required for gospel mission. A whole Bible is useful in gospel mission. 2 Timothy 3, we've already looked at it.

[38 : 35] All scripture makes us wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. All scripture is useful and powerful to equip so that the man of God may be equipped for every good work.

And the true missionary church, therefore, has a clear commitment to a whole Bible ministry.

Finally, it matters how we proclaim the message, doesn't it?

There's great urgency, isn't there, about this true biblical gospel. Jesus is the Lord and the judge of all. The wrath to come, the judgment to come is real and it's universal and it is coming.

And therefore, it must mean, mustn't it, friends, that the most unloving thing in all this world that you can do is to fail to proclaim the truth about the kingdom of God and the Jesus who is Lord and Christ.

We must warn and alert people to the truth. And we must speak of a Savior who commands all people everywhere to repent, whatever your background, whatever your religion, wherever you're from, whatever you've done.

[39 : 52] We must command people to repent and to show that by accepting the Lordship of Jesus. To make real disciples is the only way to make real converts.

That's the New Testament's position. The Great Commission tells us plainly, doesn't it, go and make disciples. Who are disciples? Those who obey everything that I have commanded you.

And so the true missionary church is clear and urgent about the absolute priority that the gospel gives to making converts. No.

To making disciples. People who live under the Lordship of Jesus Christ as Lord. Nothing can ever be more important than making true disciples for a gospel missionary church.

Matters what we believe. Matters what we proclaim. Matters from where we proclaim it. All the scriptures. And it matters how we proclaim the message.

[40 : 58] The priority. The urgency of the task. Well, are you clear on the gospel? We all are because that is the gospel that we are to live, that we are to guard, that we are to proclaim, and that we are to be willing to suffer for and endure hardship for here in Glasgow, right in the heart of this city.

May God help us to be clear on this gospel. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, you have declared in the resurrection of your Son that he is both Lord and Christ.

There is no more important message for us to understand, to take to heart, and for us to proclaim. Grant it, O God, that if there is any one of us here this evening yet to understand fully what that means for us, you would bring us to our knees tonight to proclaim with our lips the Lordship of Jesus, to believe truly in our hearts that he is risen and that he is coming in the clouds of glory to judge the living and the dead.

And may every one of us, we pray, have the urgency of that message to dictate our lives and to dictate what comes from our lips.

We also may have the joy and the gladness of seeing others bow the knee and name the name of Jesus, the name above every name to which one day every knee shall bow, whether in heaven or in the earth or under the earth.

[42 : 54] So help us, O God, we pray, for we ask it in Jesus Christ's name. Amen.