

Why Evangelise?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 March 2015

Preacher: Phillip Jensen

[0 : 0 0] I've had a great day today so far with some excellent ministry. If you're like me, you'll feel that your soul has been nourished and well fed.

And it's been a great blessing just to have Philip's ministry today from those chapters in 2 Corinthians. We look forward to the final session in a moment or two.

Let me just say a little bit just before we pray for Philip and we get on to our final session about the West of Scotland Gospel Partnership. Of course, the day is hosted by the partnership and it's a great blessing to bring a number of churches together.

The partnership is, as it says on the tin, a network of churches around the West of Scotland who are united together around partnership. In the gospel, we share some core gospel convictions and we have a vision to strengthen our collective gospel work and witness in the West of Scotland.

And we're looking to do that with our opportunities in training, in mission and in prayer and fellowship. Just to encourage each other to work together where that's effective and appropriate.

[1 : 1 5] And hopefully to be a bit more than the sum of our parts in making Christ known in this part of Scotland. There are currently 10 churches in the West of Scotland that are formally linked to the partnership that have become formal partners.

Those are the Tron Church here, Harper Church on the south side of Glasgow, Greenview Evangelical Church and Harvest Bible Chapel, both on the south side of Glasgow.

Again, still on the south side, Cross Hill Evangelical Church out in East Kilbride, Calderwood Baptist Church in the city here, Glasgow City Free Church.

A little further north, Allender Evangelical Church out in the Bearsden area. Bells Hill Baptist Church and South Glasgow Church out in Clarkston.

And so those are the current churches and we would love to see that network grow and to see other gospel churches partner with us in this work.

[2 : 1 4] We have a steering group made up of those representing some of those partner churches. Just for information because you might want to speak to them and maybe ask them a bit more about the partnership.

Ask them some questions. The steering group is myself, Willie Phillip, Craig Dyer, Alan McKnight, Andy Gemmo, Scott Hamilton and Zach Watts.

We also have a website so you can go and Google that and find out some more information about events and the kind of vision and work that we hope to be doing together in the west of Scotland.

So that's just a little bit about the partnership, which I hope is helpful. But we're going to come to pray now and let's just commit ourselves to the Lord and pray for Phillip as he leads us through this next session.

Let's pray together. Gracious and Heavenly Father, We thank you that we gather together in that great and peerless name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[3 : 19] We thank you that in him we have access into your presence and we can come with freedom, with boldness and with confidence. We can call you Father.

We can come casting ourselves upon you, knowing that in Christ and because of him, because of that finished work, of taking away sins once and for all at the end of the age, for those who will believe.

We can come and ask your blessing upon us. We can come and ask that you would work among us by your Spirit, that you would feed our souls, that you would speak to us, that you would encourage us, that you would build up our faith.

So Father, thank you for the ministry that we have already sat under today. We thank you for the ways that it has already helped us. To understand your great plans and purposes in this world.

To refresh our confidence in the power of God and in the promises of Scripture. So Father, continue to work in our hearts and our minds to illuminate us, to guide us, to thrill us, to excite us, to raise us up to love and to serve you all the more as we now come under your word again.

[4 : 33] So speak to us, we pray, in the great name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you, Andy.

As we come to read our Bibles, we come to some problems, which we just need to sort out in terms of language. And one of the problems that we have is the problem of the inclusive we.

When you use the word we, I'm not talking about a little thing in Scotland, I'm talking about we. When you use the word, I just realised that this is not a place to talk about we anything, is it? I'm sorry.

When you use the word we, who do we mean when we use the word we? It obviously means the speaker, but who else with the speaker? And so, you know, we enjoyed this convention.

That means we, that's me, and some other people, possibly you. Or we enjoyed the convention till you came, which means we, and some others, but not you.

[5 : 47] Or we enjoyed the convention till they came, which means me, and you, and presumably, but certainly certain other people, not so.

Or we enjoyed the convention, didn't we? Well, that means I did, and I'm hoping you did as well. See, the word we, who does we cover? Where's the boundary of that word we?

That's a big problem as we come to chapter 5 of 2 Corinthians, the second half of it, which is where we're going to now. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others, but what we are is known to God, and I hope it's known to you also to your conscience.

We're not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearances and not about what is in the heart.

For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God. If we're in our right mind, it's for you. For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this, that one has died for all, therefore all have died.

[6 : 54] And he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh, even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.

Therefore it is, if anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation. The old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake, he made him to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Working together with him, then, we appeal to you, not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says, in a favourable time, I listened to you.

[8 : 05] In the day of salvation, I have helped you. Behold, now is the favourable time. Behold, now is the day of salvation. So with the problem of we in mind, as we come to this passage, the third topic that I had is why evangelise?

Now one thing that Christians and non-Christians generally agree upon is that they both don't like evangelism. They don't like selling, they don't like pressure. So when asked, why evangelise?

We're really asking, who me? Do I have to? That's really the question that's there. So, really a better question is, who should evangelise?

Because, that's more honest. We're not pretending that we're asking why, when in fact what we mean is, do I have to? Who should evangelise? Should it be gifted evangelists?

Should it be every Christian? Should it be ministers? Should it be the evangelists? Should it be apostles? See, I think the question is wrong because we're really asking, do I have to?

[9 : 17] And so that's why the better question is to go back a step and ask, well why? Why evangelise? Why should anyone evangelise? What role does evangelism play in the purposes of God?

Now last talk, I left at 2 Corinthians 5.10. The fear of the Lord. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Therefore, verse 11, knowing the fear of the Lord, which remember is the beginning of wisdom, knowing that he is the judge of all, therefore, we seek to persuade all.

And here we see the problem of the inclusive we. Who is included in what we do? See, verses 11 to 15, it's we apostles and whoever he's writing the letter with against you, Corinthians, because he specifies from 11 to 15, we this, you that.

But verse 16 seems to be universal. Verse 16, from now on, therefore we regard no one according to the flesh, even though we once regarded well that's true of all Christians in a sense.

[10 : 32] And following that, we and you should, and verse 20, well it comes, we implore you. So who are the you, who are the we, as we read through this passage?

Now before we decide the answer to that, and I'm going to say something radical towards the end, so do stay with me, before we come to that, let's look what it is that we are to do, whoever we are.

persuade is the answer. That's the aim, to persuade. That's what Paul did in, well the book of Acts. If you go to Acts chapter 17, he persuaded and argued and reasoned in Thessalonica, and then he reasoned with people in Berea, then he argued and persuaded people in Corinth and in Ephesus into chapter 19.

So when we declare, when we proclaim, we actually reason with people, we persuade people, we argue with people, we try to win people across. It's an intellectual activity aimed at the heart through the mind.

We speak to people to their minds that we may change their hearts because what we are speaking is the word of God. Why evangelise? Why persuade people?

[11 : 43] Because we know the fear of the Lord. We know the reality of the resurrection life, that we are living for that life, that we're going to die and face, either prepared by the gospel or unprepared, by our rejection of the gospel.

We're going to face him, the reality of the judgment of God. We are to evangelise. He explains this further so that the Corinthians may be able to answer others, verse 12.

We're not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you cause to boast about us so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearances and not about what is in the heart so that they might know his motives.

For people are always impressed by outward show, but Christians are impressed by what's on the heart. So you need to know what's on the heart to be able to say, yeah, that's a true man.

That's the man of integrity I follow rather than that's the showman who's really impressive. He should get a television show, but what's he really on about?

[12 : 54] I mean, the tele-evangelists have so seriously let us down, haven't they, that they've brought the word evangelist into ill repute. The heart has its reasons that the world doesn't understand.

So you've got to understand what makes the apostle tick. Well, there's two options, one that he's mad and the other that he's sane. And he gives these in his defense of being a mad apostle because his life looks mad.

He's running around preaching to people and he's accused of being mad. Festus accused him of that in Acts chapter 26. As he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, you're out of your mind.

Your great learning is driving you out of the mind. And still today when people give up a lucrative career in order to pursue gospel preaching, the world thinks they're mad.

They'll accept it if you're a missionary doctor because you're still a doctor. But to become an evangelist, that's mad. They have their religion, their culture, we should leave them alone to do it their way.

[14 : 05] You'll have your whole life ahead of you. Don't give up your small ambitions. Don't ruin your life and your career. I mean, we've invested so much in your education to throw your education away now, to go and do something as silly as preaching the gospel.

You could do more good in this world if you entered into politics or became a journalist or ran a good business. You see, the arguments keep coming in Mr. Worldly Wisdom's words, don't they?

Paul says, if he is mad, then he's mad for God. For whatever madness I have is between me and God, for nothing other than God's sake have I accepted what the world calls madness.

So I have no choice but to continue as I am for the sake of God whose mission I am on, even though you may call it mad. But if, on the other hand, I'm not mad, then my sanity is for you.

The reason I do what I do is for you, Corinthians, because we see ourselves, chapter 4, verse 5, as slaves for your sake.

[15 : 14] Your slaves for Christ's sake rather. And then he explains himself in verse 14. For, the word means because, and there's four steps in his logic.

One, the love of Christ controls us. Christ's love for us, that he should die on our behalf, controls us, constrains us, surrounds us, hedges us in.

You know, when you get the animals that you want to put onto the truck and you just get this race which is very big at the front and then gets narrower and narrower until in the end they go in one at a time. Christ's love hedges us in like that so that we can do nothing else but go in the direction that he would have us to be in.

Christ's love controls us. Secondly, for we have concluded. It's a mental decision that he has made. It's a judgment that he's made. Look at the evidence, weigh the arguments, thought through the issue and we've concluded, thirdly, that one died for all and so all have died.

One died for all in Jesus' death. He died as our representative and more than as our representative, he died as our substitute. You know, a man plays football for Scotland, he's the representative.

[16 : 38] But when they run a man off the bench and put him in as they put another man off, he's a substitute. Well, Jesus is not just our representative, he's our substitute as well as our representative.

And so, he died as our substitute, on him was laid the iniquity of us all. So in his death, all have died. If Jesus' death is for me, then I have died already in the death of Jesus.

Furthermore, to be his disciple, I was invited to deny myself, take up my cross and follow him, for whoever will save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it.

Or as Colossians 2 says, I have died with Christ. Or Romans 6 says, I have been buried with him in baptism. That is, Jesus died my death for me on the cross, and I died my death in repentance.

So, fourthly, he died for all so that those who live, and it's universal at this point now, those, anybody, those who live, not just Paul, those who live, no longer live for themselves, but for him, who died for them and was raised again.

[18 : 00] If we're to live for him, then he wants us to live for others. For we are your slaves for his sake.

With that, he then comes to the conclusion in verse 16, therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh, even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard us no longer.

From now on, because we no longer live for this world, but for the world to come, because the love of Christ now constrains and controls our life, because we're living for him and therefore living for others, we don't think about people the same way that the world thinks.

We don't think about people the same way we used to think. So the world is impressed by your beauty, by your athleticism, by your wealth, by your fashionability, by your cleverness, by your career, by your family background, by your accent.

None of those things matter in the slightest, do they? They're all in irrelevancy. That's not how we are to think about people. We, not just the apostles, Christians, are not to regard people the way the world does.

[19 : 21] To regard means to know, to think. No one would you think by the way the flesh. For now any who are in Christ are a new creation. That's what matters.

Some years ago Stephen Bradley was a bishop of South Africa and he came across to Sydney. He was an Australian in the first place, went out as a missionary amongst the Zulus. He was there for the rest of his life.

He used to come home and visit Australians every now and then. I remember having him in the height of the real struggles in South Africa about apartheid coming and speaking at meetings. People would ask him about the troubles in South Africa which were massive and which needed fixing.

Everyone wanted to know what about it. The bishop of South Africa as he was, he used to say, the trouble is there's two kinds of South Africans, two peoples, two, that's the problem.

He says, as long as there are two times the South Africans, we will always have the racial problems that we have. He says, there are those who know Christ and there are those who don't know Christ. And he's right, of course.

[20 : 32] It's not the answer anybody wanted. There's all kinds of answers everybody else wanted, but that in the bottom line is the real problem. Because those who are not in Christ view the world the way the world views, which is racial and racist.

But those who are in Christ cannot view the world along racial terms and racism. Must not. So then, the life we now live is quite different.

For the love of Christ now controls us. We're no longer living for ourselves. We're living for him and therefore we're living for others. Too many Christians want to live for him and still live for themselves.

others. Or even want to live for him and live for their family. Or live for him and him alone. If you're living for him, you've got to live for others.

And when I mean live for others, I mean die for others. So we don't regard according to the flesh. We're not impressed as the world is impressed. We're not fearful as the world would terrify us.

[21 : 42] nor are we seduced as the world would have us seduced. See, the evil one, he uses two powers to stop us doing anything. One, he persecutes us.

The other, he seduces us. Now, the poor Christians in what you would call the Middle East, what I call South West Asia, and I'm right, the poor people there, they're facing persecution, aren't they?

give up Christ, become a Muslim, or die, or pay the tax. That's persecution, pure and simple.

But we in the Western civilised parts of the world, we're facing seduction, aren't we? Oh, it doesn't matter that much. Get a university degree, get a good job, own a big house, you deserve it.

You need that car, you need the overseas trip, you deserve it, it's yours anyway. You've got every right to it. And so we have the thorns and thistles that are choking the word of the seed out of our lives, aren't we?

[22 : 47] But the devil uses seduction and persecution and sometimes bounces back and forth from one to the other in order to win us around, away from doing what we should do, that is serve Christ by serving others.

But we don't judge by externals. For us to live is Christ and to die is gain. You can't seduce a man who's living for Christ and you can't in the end terrify a man for whom death is a gain.

So we see people as a new creation from God. Well that's what really matters. It's whether you're born again, not which denomination you belong to, not how spiritual or moral you are, whether you are well fed, healthy or you'll die one day anyway whether you're healthy, well fed or sick.

what matters is are you part of the new creation, whether God has done that miracle in your life, that's what matters. It's all from God in verse 18, this new creation from God.

I can't bring anybody to new birth. I preach the gospel, one man spurns it, another man believes it. Is it my, is it the difference lies in me and how I spoke to it?

[24 : 03] No, the difference lies in God's work in their lives. But that difference is enormous. This is more than Moses' great ministry could do. This is like the clay pot, the power is in the word themselves.

This is Christ writing letters on the hearts of people, that they are moved from hell to heaven by what I say. It's incredible. So we have, he says, this ministry of reconciliation.

reconciliation. Our ministry is the work of evangelism, is the work of reconciliation, of making peace with God, and of making peace God, making peace with us, really.

And so making peace between peoples as they are equally reconciled to God together. Thus he is describing that in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself.

This is the great work of God in Christ Jesus. God's great work in the death of his only son. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. Verse 19, you'll see that in Christ God was doing that, restoring friendship, making compatible that which was incompatible.

[25 : 15] How? It's a two-stage program. By not counting our trespasses against us, and by entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

See, he is not counting our trespasses against us because of the death of Jesus on our behalf. Remember 1 Corinthians 15, for I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures.

Christ died, that's the fact, for our sins, that's the interpretation, that is the message of what Christ has done. God, that is why our sins and trespasses are not counted against us, because they've already been paid in full.

But the second stage of the program is, he entrusts the message to us. Do you remember the scene in the upper room, after the resurrection, when Jesus is risen from the dead and appears to the disciples, how he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he says to them in Luke chapter 24, thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem, and you are witnesses of these things.

So God's great plan for the world, foretold in the Old Testament, implemented by Jesus, was to reconcile the world to himself by Jesus' death and resurrection, and our preaching of the gospel.

[27 : 02] So two things that take place. Thus Paul says, we are ambassadors for Christ. God making his appeal through us.

Ambassadors don't have their own message, they have the government's message. They carry the message of their master, their king, their political rulers. We're like ambassadors. God uses us to take his message to the ends of the world, to make his appeal to the nations.

Just as we are slaves, faithfully doing our master's bidding, so we are ambassadors, faithfully doing our master's bidding. Kind of two statuses in one.

Slaves down the bottom, ambassadors, pretty impressive. We're both. We're slaves and ambassadors. In both of them though, what are we doing? Serving others. And that appeal that we are to make is, be reconciled to God.

That's God's appeal to humanity. Now, notice verse 20. The ESV that I'm using with almost every other translation is wrong.

[28 : 10] I hate telling you that because I want you to trust your Bibles. But frankly, sometimes Bible translators drive me mad because they get it wrong. I'm no great Greek scholar, but they got it wrong.

They've put a word in here that isn't in the original. You don't have to be a great Greek scholar to recognise when some extra word's been added in, do you? It's either there or it's not there, and it's not there in the Greek.

They've put in the word you. See, therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God.

But that word you is not there in the Greek. And it's not there in the Greek for a very good reason. Paul is not appealing to the Corinthians to be reconciled to God because they already were reconciled to God.

He doesn't have to do that. Paul is telling them what the message to the world is. Be reconciled to God. That's our message. My message, your message, our message.

[29 : 14] Be reconciled to God. We plead on Christ's behalf. Be reconciled to God. That's what we say to the world. Be reconciled to God.

That's our message. For God has done his work of reconciliation. Verse 21 explains it. For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ was made sin. He who knew no sin. He was become the very embodiment of sin. And why? For our sake. We who are conceived in sin and followed our sinful desires in nature, out of love for us and by his grace, he made him who knew no sin to become sin for us, that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

This we is not the apostles alone. Can't be. It's all Christians. Jesus didn't die for the apostles alone. It's for Christians. We've become the righteousness of God.

And so, working with God, operating as God's fellow workers, his partners in this operation, we, and now it comes to we, the apostles and his colleagues, we appeal to you.

[30 : 31] And that you is in the text. We appeal to you Corinthian Christians. Chapter 6, verse 1. We have the apostles appeal to the Christians, the exhortation, the encouragement to the Christians, to those who have received the gospel.

We appeal to you, don't receive the gospel in vain. Don't receive God's grace for nothing. For one day you will stand before Christ in chapter 5, verse 10, and it will be a great tragedy to have nothing to show for your lives in Christ Jesus.

Paul Barnett, an Australian scholar, wrote on chapter 5, verse 10, the teaching about the judgment seat before which all believers must come reminds us that we have been saved not for a life of aimlessness or indifference, but to live as to the Lord.

1959, I first professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ with any sense of understanding. It was in a Billy Graham crusade.

I was a young boy at the time. How much I understood or didn't understand, I don't know. I can't work out. It doesn't matter. But that was the first time when I, as a person, independently of parents, church, or anything else, I said I am for the Lord Jesus Christ.

[31 : 57] 1959's a long time ago now. Very long time ago. All these years the Lord Jesus Christ has given to me. And one day I will stand before him and he will say, Philip, what have you done with those years that I gave you?

That is what I must answer for. What have I done with the years that he has given me? Because he's given me these years to do what? To live for him.

By living for others. That's what he's given me the years for. To call to the world to be reconciled to God. For God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself and giving me that message of reconciliation to take to others.

What have I done? About it. This is why Paul doesn't lose heart in all his afflictions because he keeps his eye not on what's happening in the world now but on the eternal day when he stands before the Lord Jesus Christ and gives answer for what he has done.

He was called on that road to Damascus not just to be a Christian but to take the gospel to the nations. And to that he must give answer for what he's done.

[33 : 09] It's not a matter of losing his salvation. It's a matter of living a life in vain. Do not accept the grace of God for nothing.

Badity. Emptiness. Futility. You haven't been saved in order to watch a lot of television. Become a great expert in football.

Especially from the grandstand. That's the best place to be an expert. You know. You haven't to be able to say well I've travelled around the world. I've seen all the great cities of the world. Do you think Jesus will be impressed that you have seen all the great cities of the world?

Oh you might impress the people at the dinner party. You're not going to impress Jesus by telling them about all the great cities in the world. What have you done with the years that I have given to you to live not for yourself but for him who died for you and was raised again?

What have you done? Do not live your life in Christ in vain. And so chapter 4 verse 16 and you look there over there.

[34 : 19] We do not lose heart though our outer self is wasting away. Our inner self is being renewed day by day for this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

As we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient but the things that are unseen are eternal. Seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Set your mind, your hopes, your aspirations on those things. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control. Being transformed into his likeness.

And if you are like him going into all the world to save sinners for that's what he's like. And aren't I glad? And aren't you glad that that's what he's like?

And while we look eternally we operate then temporarily. For now, now is the favourable time. Now is the day of salvation. Now is the moment of the prophets we're looking forward to.

[35 : 22] Now is the moment not to lose in your service of the Lord and his people. So let me return to our question. Why evangelise?

And the answer is threefold I think. Firstly, now is the moment for it. This is the day of salvation. This is the moment in history when the amnesty has been declared.

It's been won by the Lord Jesus Christ and declared by his servants. Now is the moment in history when you can come back to God. When out of fear of the Lord before whom we will one day stand.

When out of the love of the Lord who has paid the price for us. We are to live for the Lord and for his people. Now is the moment to do this. Why has the Lord Jesus Christ not returned?

He could have returned any time in the last 2000 years but he hasn't. Why has he not returned? So as to give time for the nations to repent.

[36 : 31] That is the reason for our existence now. God is the moment to repent. And we want to keep quiet about the great gospel. I believed therefore I speak.

We are afraid of reaction from our fellow workers, from our family, from our neighbours, from the community. We mustn't lose heart. We must not be discouraged.

The plans and purposes of God is to give time for Scotland to repent. And if you think that's beyond repentance, shake your dust off the feet and leave. For there are millions of other people elsewhere who are willing to hear the gospel if the Scots in their hard-heartedness will not listen.

But don't stop preaching the gospel. That cannot be the way. Be of good courage. Go on. Speaking in season and out of season. God, now is the moment.

Now is the time of the amnesty. You understand amnesties, don't you? We've had several amnesties in Australia. We had a migration amnesty. We had so many illegal immigrants, we couldn't keep track of what was happening.

[37 : 42] So the government said, come to the offices of the migration people now in this next one month or two month period. And we won't ask how you got here. We'll just register you as citizens.

We'll make you citizens straight away. All kinds of people came out we didn't know were there in Australia. Whole communities came out that we didn't even know existed. Now we do, we can get tax from them.

Governments are not always stupid. And so all these people came out. But that was the amnesty. No questions asked. Forgiven completely. Come. We had a terrible massacre down in Tasmania where a madman shot up 20 or 30 people back in the late 1990s.

1999 around there I think it was. And our Prime Minister, I mean the whole nation was shocked by this terrible barbarity of the Port Arthur massacres. And so we had a gun amnesty.

For a couple of months you could go to your police station and hand in whatever firearm you had and no one asked how you got all those AK-47s and bazookas. Or why you had them in your garage.

[38 : 53] Or where you stole them from or how you used them. No questions asked. Just give them to us and we'll destroy them because we don't want guns in the community. Because without guns in the community people don't get shot.

But when you've got guns in the community people get shot. So we had a gun amnesty. No questions asked. Well my friends we've got a sin amnesty. One for us by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Come home now. All is forgiven. Turn back now. You are pardoned. The amnesty is on now but it's not forever. There comes a day when if you're an illegal immigrant in Sydney the amnesty is over.

You'll be deported. There comes a day when the amnesty is over and if you've got a handgun and it's not registered, it's not licensed, you'll be in jail.

There comes an end to the amnesty when the Lord Jesus Christ returns and you give answer. There comes an end. So while the amnesty is on is the day of salvation.

[39 : 59] Is the time to make the appeal to the world. Be reconciled to God. Now is the day of salvation. Now is the time. The first reason is the time.

Second. Is because Christ's actions require it. He has paid his price. price. You wouldn't want that to be ignored.

Spurned. Missed. He has paid his price for us because of his love for us. You don't deserve it. I don't deserve it. It's because of his love for us.

Are we going to now ignore his sacrifice for us? He has paid his price for us. Oh we want to accept its benefits. We get forgiven.

But be unmoved by our Saviour's love. No this love of Christ constrains me says Paul. I cannot be saved and not speak of what has happened.

[40 : 54] I cannot be unconcerned about his passion for the lost. The person who is unconcerned about the lost. Is the lost. When a person tells me they're a regular church going Christian. And they're not interested in the world mission. I doubt whether they're Christian. Because how can I be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ and be unconcerned about the salvation of mankind.

People say what would Jesus do? Well I know one thing he'd do. He wouldn't have a little bracelet on with WWJD on. I'm sure he wouldn't do that. But it's a daft question.

What would Jesus do? Now let me think it up. Well he wouldn't smoke cigarettes. He wouldn't. I'm just making it up aren't I? Let me tell you what Jesus did do.

He came into the world to save sinners. That's what he did. Don't ask what would Jesus do. Ask what Jesus did. And then go and do it. For if he came into the world to save sinners.

[42 : 01] What am I supposed to do as a follower of the Lord Jesus? I've denied myself. Taken up the cross. Followed him. I've lost my life for his sake and what? And the gospels.

Well I'll leave that bit out. I'll just lose my life for his sake so that I can get the benefits of forgiveness and I don't have to worry about the gospel. That's daft. It doesn't make the slightest sense.

So the first reason is because now is the moment. The second reason is because Christ's actions require it. And the third reason is because we've been saved to do it. To live for him who died for us and rose again.

You see it there in chapter 5 verse 4 to 15. He died for all that those who might live no longer live for themselves. Stop it. Stop living for yourself. Well okay that's all right.

What am I going to live for then? For him who for their sake died and was raised. Christ. I either live for myself or I live for him. There's my choice. Okay I'm a Christian.

[43 : 04] I live for him. Right. What does he want me to do? He wants me to lay down my life for other people's salvation. That's what he wants me to do. That's living for him. This is the Lord's work and we were called to it not only to die for self but also to follow him.

Not only to die for him but also for the gospel's sake. And when that day comes and we stand before him to receive his commendation or his disappointment. We will not be disappointed if we've lived for him.

As Paul wrote to the first letter to the Corinthians. Therefore my beloved brothers be steadfast. Immovable. Always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. The work of the Lord is the preaching of the gospel. The building up of the church. That's the work of the Lord in this world today.

And you look at that verse at the end of chapter 15 as it flows on through to chapter 16. That's the work of the Lord. There's nothing wrong with being a painter, a plumber.

[44 : 18] There's nothing wrong with being a secretary. There's nothing wrong with being a bus conductor. There's nothing wrong with these things. They're good and proper things. And you can do those things for the cause. You can do those things in a right and godly way.

You can do those things in a selfish ungodly way. As a godly person you'll work hard and diligently. As a godly person you will do what your boss wants and you will care for your employees.

As a godly person you'll give honest labor to your customers. That's all good and godly and that's right and proper. But what's the reason for doing any of those jobs?

So that you can be a tent maker preaching the gospel on Sunday morning to the Sunday school class, on Sunday afternoon to the youth fellowshippers or on Wednesday nights to your home Bible study group or so the neighbors around about you.

All Christians are tent makers except those set aside to be paid for by the Christian community to do it full time. The difference between the full time worker and the part time worker is time and money.

[45 : 23] That's the only difference. The person who teaches the three year olds in the Sunday school is doing the same thing as the person who preaches the sermon to the adults. And sometimes it's more difficult. But never underestimate the under eight.

As you teach them the very words of God you are doing the very activity. The reason to go to work all week is to teach the kids in Sunday school on Sunday morning. Because you don't live to work.

You work to live. So what do you live for? You live for the Lord Jesus Christ. And to serve other people in his name. We work in order to enable that to happen.

Christians talk these days as if there's Christians and then there's tent makers and then there's full time ministers. Some even talk in terms of there are Christians who just do an honest work and then there are tent makers who are impressive and then there are full time ministers who are really the Christians.

And other people I know they talk about there are Christians who are doing work and then there's tent makers and then there's ministers who well we've got to pay someone to do it. It's all a nonsense way of thinking.

[46 : 35] All Christians are to be ministers of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Make that straight out front. Some of us are self-funded. Some of us are church funded. It's just a difference of funding.

That's all it is. But the ministry of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is exactly the same. The power lies not in the preacher. The power lies in the gospel. That's where the power lies. And each one of us is responsible for living our lives for the salvation of other people.

In whatever configuration of however that happens in your life or my life or anybody else's life. We organise our life around this central aim and goal of what we're doing.

Because we're not living for this world. We're living for the world to come. And we're not going to be discouraged by the fact that numbers are small. And we're not going to be discouraged by the fact that people resent us. And we're not going to be discouraged by the fact that people are turning us down.

We're not going to be discouraged by the fact that people are turning away. Or that the government is becoming more hostile. Or everybody else seems to be able to say whatever they want in this land. But as soon as Christians stand up and speak they get persecuted.

[47 : 39] And we're not going to be discouraged by the movement of society against us. And we're not going to be discouraged by the feminist or the Marxist or by anybody else who's speaking. Because our God speaks the truth.

And his truth is the power that changes lives in ways that nothing else can. And so we speak. Because we believe.

Because we're the saved. We speak. Because we know that without the Lord Jesus Christ our neighbour is lost. And because we want Jesus to be glorified.

And to be known. And so what we have here and I really love it and I'm glad to be it's a privilege to be here is a gospel partnership.

It's terrific your churches are partnering together. Praise God that's marvellous. But it's a gospel partnership that it must be.

[48 : 45] Not ecclesiastical fighting partnership. That's got its uses but that's not. It's the gospel partnership. And if it's the gospel partnership and we believe the same gospel then we can truly partner together.

Support each other. Pray for each other. Fund each other. Fellowship each other. With each other. Help each other in each other's missions. We can actually do things if we've got the gospel as the basis of our partnership.

It's written into the words. It's written into the language of who we are. Let it be the reality of who we are. The gospel partnership. Give up the small little empires that we're in.

Appreciate the heritage of how we've wound up in the building we've wound up in or been kicked out of. Appreciate the history of how we've got to where we are and what our denominational reflect.

But in the end it's our unity in the gospel that is to be expressed in our partnership together. Because that's such a big thing.

[49 : 50] And whether we sing hymns or choruses or whether we pray with a prayer book or don't pray with a prayer book or whether we give trivia really doesn't matter, does it?

It's unimportant when we're dealing with the salvation of mankind and the glory of the Lord Jesus. and when we're confronted with a society that has its back so resolutely turned against our loving Lord and Saviour.

Well, my friends, a gospel partnership is a privilege to come and share with. May it be truly a gospel partnership. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank and praise you for the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for his death for us. We praise you for that, Father, that you should so send him out of your love, out of his love, and that he should be so faithful even unto death and you should be so faithful even to your promises.

Father in heaven, you are indeed wonderful beyond our imagination and that, Lord, you not only spare us by making him who knew no sin to be sin for us, you not only spare us but you give us this task of making his work known and that you put within our mouths your powerful word and you use us, Father, frail, weak, fearful people as we are.

[51 : 34] You use us to bring real change into the lives of others, taking them out of hell and bringing them into your family, transforming them as we teach your word to them.

Father, there's no way we deserve it. and there is nothing about us that could make us competent or sufficient for this task other than what you have done and are doing in us, transforming us from one degree of glory to the next.

Heavenly Father, help us to keep our eyes fixed on the Lord Jesus. Help us to keep turning to him in his glory that we, full of your glory, would not lose heart, would not be tempted to the latest tricks to make our church grow, but would not give our way to underhanded means and methods, but would keep our courage to speak the truth, not losing heart, but making open profession of the gospel, that your word may be our words, that our words your word, so that what is spoken and what is heard may be at work in those who believe, bringing people to repentance and faith, and transforming lives, ours and theirs, into the very image of your Son.

We do pray, Father, for your help in this. We pray for your strength. We pray for the work of your Spirit to continue to work in us, that we may indeed be like the Apostle who modelled himself on your Son.

And we ask these things through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Well, immense thanks from all of us, Philip, to you for your ministry today.

[53 : 56] It's been wonderful to listen and to have our hearts focused together on this real heart of what we're all about. And we're very, very grateful indeed. And we wish you Godspeed as you head back south tomorrow and for the rest of your time here in the United Kingdom and then via South Africa back to Australia.

But thank you for being with us today. As we stand, let's say the grace together. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Amen. Thank you, everyone. And we'll see you at the next Gospel Partnership Yeltsin Chipp yard■m to you.

We'll see you