

Christ Centred Service

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- [0 : 0 0] Listen to these words, verse 19. I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you.
- I have no one else like him who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.
- But you know that Timothy has proved himself because as a son with his father, he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope therefore to send him as soon as I see how things go with me.
- And I'm confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon. But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier who is also your messenger whom you sent to take care of my needs.
- For he longs for you, for all of you, and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed, he was ill and almost died. But God had mercy on him and not on him only, but also on me to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.
- [1 : 0 9] Therefore, I am all the more eager to send him so that when you see him again, you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. So then welcome him in the Lord with great joy and honor people like him because he almost died for the work of Christ.
- He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me. This is the word of the Lord. Let's pray. Let's ask for God's help as we study together.
- Father, you have the words of eternal life. We can get them nowhere else. And so we come to you and we come to your word this morning.
- Ask that you would speak to us. That you would speak into our hearts, into our lives. That we would see truth. And that we would be changed by the truth that we see.
- Remind us that the center of your word is your son. His glory, his wonder, his saving work. Let us see him and be changed by what we see.
- [2 : 1 4] Just spirit be at work in every single part of this we ask. And we ask this for Christ's sake and his glory. Amen. So as I mentioned last week, we will return to Acts in the new year.
- We're going to start a series on worship in a couple of weeks' time. But I'm actually going to be away for three weeks in the U.S. on presbytery business again. I know I didn't work it out very well, the calendar this year.
- But these two opportunities came up to be over in the U.S. So I'll be away for the next three weeks and then back in. And then we'll dive into the worship series. And so we had this one Sunday and we thought, well, what are some of the things we need to think about?
- What are some of the things we need to focus on as a church? If you've got kind of like a one and done sermon, what do you speak about? And you will know that as a church, we've committed for a number of years to pray around certain goals.
- Around certain things that we would love to be able to see and be part of here in the church. One of those goals has been a numerical growth goal. We call it what's next because we didn't know what was next.

[3 : 19] We had prayed for a specific goal in that area. We'd prayed that the Lord would provide us with a certain number of people worshipping. And then we got to that point. And then we said, okay, Lord, what next do we pray in that area?

And so we've been thinking about that as the Lord has answered that prayer, exceeded those prayers, saying what looks next here? Like as some Sundays where we've had almost no seating space in here and we've had some people standing in the back, what do we do next?

Do we have a second service? Do we try and knock down some of the stage here and put an extra seating in the front here? Do we find someone who's got millions and millions of ran and build a balcony at the back there?

What do we do? Nobody put their hand up at that point. I didn't see anyone say, yes, I'll do it. What do we do? That's the prayer. What's next? Now, we haven't got clear answers to that prayer yet.

We're still figuring this out. But one of the things we know is that whatever we do next, it's going to require us to increase the volunteers in our church.

[4 : 23] Because there's so much that happens on an ordinary Sunday and then in the ongoing life of the church, that to grow this body here is going to mean more volunteers doing different things. Coffee, tea, setting up communion, music, Sunday school, greeting.

Things we haven't even thought of yet that we probably need to be doing. Things that people sometimes say, hey, can't we do this? Can't somebody do this? And I say, well, that would be great. But we just, we were stretched. Our volunteer roster is stretched as far as it is right now.

And so any increase is going to result in an increase of volunteers. If you think just, for example, about going to a second service, that would mean doubling up several different responsibilities that are currently there.

And so as we look at our future, I thought it would be good for us to spend some time thinking theologically about what it means to be a Christ-centered servant.

Now maybe you're already serving here in some capacity. And like I even prayed in my prayer, there are some people who are on multiple rosters here, serving in multiple ways, giving many, many hours each week to different things.

[5 : 30] And we praise God that he has brought people like that to our church. But maybe that's you or you're in that sort of category. Then what I hope is that you will see what we say this morning from Scripture and be encouraged by it.

Be strengthened by it. Be built up by it to continue. Maybe you're not serving there. Maybe that's not you. And you're sort of on the outside looking in.

Well then I hope what we say today from Scripture will be something of a challenge and a motivation to you. To sort of get off the sidelines and get into the game.

Get engaged. Now perhaps the most challenging words that you can find in the Bible about service actually come to us in the Gospel of Mark. Mark chapter 10 where Jesus speaks to his disciples.

They're actually having an argument at that point in the story. They're having an argument about who's going to be the greatest. As we tend to do as human beings. Who's the greatest? Who's going to be the greatest amongst us?

[6 : 31] Especially when Jesus comes into his kingdom. Who's going to be the greatest? This is what Jesus says. He says, Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant. And whoever wants to be first must be slave for all.

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. So he says, Guys, You are getting this completely wrong.

True greatness is found in being a servant. Now that's not the way we think about things. We might pay lip service to that but it's not the way we think about things.

True greatness is to be a servant. And how do you know what servanthood looks like? Well he tells us. He says, Look at my example basically.

I didn't come to earth to be served but to serve and to give my life on the cross. He serves us by dying. That is true service. That's the example that he then holds up for us.

[7 : 33] And you might look at them and go, That is, That's just like a deal breaker. I mean like, Could there be a higher bar to lift up in front of us today? And we could end the sermon right there and you could all just go away feeling incredibly, incredibly discouraged this morning.

Like guys, You should all engage in service. You want to know what the biblical model is for engaging in service? You want to know what the bar is? It's Jesus dying on the cross. End of sermon. Go figure out what you're going to do in terms of your service now.

See, throughout the Bible we have this very radical other person centered ethic. It's all over the scriptures. It's actually all over the book of Philippians. We are to give ourselves for the good of others.

For our families. For our friends. For our faith community. Even for our enemies, Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount. And you look at that and you can say the bar just feels way too high.

Unachievable. Jesus in his selfless sacrificial death is the bar. That is not realistic. And so I'm going to try and make it a little bit easier for you this morning. I'm going to bring it down a notch.

[8 : 36] And not at first point directly to Jesus as an example. We're just going to look at two ordinary Christians. Two ordinary first century Christians.

Ordinary people like you and me. Who would have sat in a pew like you and me. And maybe by looking at these examples of radical other person centered servanthood in them.

We will be encouraged and empowered and built up and challenged to even follow Christ in this example. So that's where we are. Philippians 2. Two shining examples of love and service to other people.

Timothy and Epaphroditus. And the two things I want you to see this morning. Number one, I want you to see the center of the servant. And then number two, the risk of the servant. The center of the servant and the risk of the servant.

Here's the first one. The center of the servant. Go down to verse 19. Paul says, Paul writes this letter from prison.

[9 : 54] And he's still waiting on news as to whether or not he's going to be released. He's confident that he's going to be, but he's not entirely sure. And so to kind of keep abreast of what's going on in the church in ancient Philippi.

He sends his companion Timothy to go and see them. Like go see them come back with a report. And so he does what is a custom in a lot of letters in Roman times from back then.

And that is he commends Timothy to the church. This guy's just rocking up on their doorstep. And they want to know where's he coming from? Paul commends him. And the chief detail about Timothy's character that he puts forward is that Timothy takes a genuine interest in the welfare of others.

That's what he says there. He takes a genuine interest in the welfare of others. And in this way, he kind of goes on there. He's proven himself as a servant of the gospel. Now, this is not the case for everybody else that is around Paul at this time.

In fact, he thinks that Timothy stands out as something of a shining example against a very dark background of selfish people who are around him.

[11 : 07] If you actually go back to the first chapter of the book of Philippians, you'll find there that there were people who were connected to the church who were preaching the gospel with selfish motives.

As in, they weren't preaching the gospel so that people might know Jesus and come to faith. They were preaching the gospel that it might cause trouble for Paul and get him in trouble with the authorities.

So there were selfish people around him at the time that he's sitting in prison. He says, Timothy's not like those people. He serves.

He genuinely takes an interest in the welfare of others. Now, look at what he's doing here in this passage. Think about this. Think about the contrast. Paul contrasts these other selfish people with Timothy.

Then he says, everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Christ, he says. In other words, everyone is selfish. They're not focused on what Jesus wants.

[12 : 02] Whereas, Timothy is focused on what Jesus wants. How? Well, by taking a genuine interest in the welfare of other people. So see Paul's thinking there.

See where, if he's doing a little sum there, this is how it's going. Timothy being concerned about other people's interests is being concerned about Christ's interests.

There's an equal sign between those two in Paul's thinking. This is really, really important. It's a really fundamental theological principle to understand. To be concerned about others is to be concerned about Christ.

It's a critical connection between those two things. I remember being taught as a child. I don't know if my parents taught me this, but other people around me would say things like this.

They would say, don't be so heavenly minded that you're no longer any earthly good. Has anybody heard something like that? Don't be so heavenly minded that you're no earthly good. There's this idea that you can sort of get so spiritual, so into Jesus, so radical in your faith, that you become functionally useless to all the normal, ordinary people around you.

[13 : 11] And I've stopped and I've thought about that and I've wondered, where would an idea or a sentiment like that come from? Maybe people have got in their minds something like medieval monasticism, medieval monks, with their vows of silence and their strange haircuts and their self-flagellation, they're whipping themselves in the back and withdrawing from normal society to go and live on a hill somewhere in a monastery.

And you look at a person like that and you think, yep, that's what happens if you get a little bit too religious. A little bit too spiritual. You move out of everybody else's realm of reality into your own private little space with you and Jesus.

You become inward. You become withdrawn, introspective. You dig yourself into books of theological abstraction, far removed from the struggles of everyday people.

I mean, you literally build your monastery on the top of a mountain away from the village. Maybe people get the idea for that phrase from looking at something like that. But I would say Paul pushes against the idea here.

For Paul, when he looks at Timothy, he sees a person who is deeply concerned about the interests of other people, other ordinary people, because he's fixated upon the concerns of the extraordinary Jesus.

[14 : 42] His center is Jesus. He is in effect so heavenly minded that he is now finally useful down here on earth. C.S. Lewis wrote about this in his famous work, Mere Christianity.

He said, It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.

He says, aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you will get neither, he says.

See, I think both C.S. Lewis and what seems to be the fairly obvious implication of scripture here, is that that phrase, too heavenly minded to be any earthly good is a nonsense.

And we should probably throw it in the bin. It's just not true. It's just not true. To dig deeper into Christ, to dig deeper into Christ's agenda for this world, to dig deeper into the hope that Christ brings of a world to come, to dig deeper into all of that will make you even more useful down here on earth.

[16 : 36] Way more useful. For Timothy, it had the effect of making him even more other person centered. He took a genuine interest in the needs of others, placing them above himself, serving them.

Now friends, there is a very uncomfortable conclusion that comes from this fact, and this connection. And that is, if you are not particularly servant hearted, looking out for the interests of others, it could be, because you're not particularly focused on the things of Christ.

That is, you might talk a really good game, spiritually speaking. You might cross your theological T's, dot your theological I's.

You might have an outward appearance of being a Jesus-focused person, but the lack of basic service of others in your ordinary life, in the life of the church, suggests that all of that stuff is actually a ruse.

It's put on. It's not real. It's false. It's fake. See, true saving knowledge of Jesus has a sanctifying, a making holy effect upon the believer.

[17 : 56] And that often evidences, or always evidences itself, in what we might call good works. In our confessional statements, in the Westminster Confession of Faith, there's a chapter, chapter 16, on the nature of good works.

You're trying to figure out, where do good works figure into our thinking about salvation? And in the second paragraph, it reads like this. It says, good works done in obedience to God's commandments are the fruits and evidences of a true and living faith.

They're not the basis for faith, but they are the fruits and evidences of a true and living faith. So God, sorry, good works are the outworking.

That is real saving faith. If you have real saving faith, it will always necessarily produce good works in the life of the believer.

And one of the most common examples of good works that we find in Scripture over and over again is basic other person centered service. And so when that basic other person centered service is absent from your life or particularly weak, it must cause you to ask uncomfortable questions about just how well you actually know Jesus.

[19 : 14] You'll know that I often stand up here on a Sunday, make announcements about, well, we need more volunteers. We need more people on coffee or tea or more people to greet, more people at Sunday school, more people in music.

When I do that, I am not just trying to fill rosters. In fact, I'm not even in charge of the rosters anymore. So it's not even my problem anymore.

I'm not just trying to fill rosters. What I am trying to do is I am trying to give you an opportunity to express the fruit of God's grace in your life. That's what I'm trying to do. And if you're constantly resisting that call to serve or constantly coming up with excuses in your own heart about why you don't serve, it can in fact be a fairly damning critique of your state of spirituality.

And that needs to be said. Paul looks at Timothy and he thinks, this guy, this guy has the interests of Christ firmly in the center of who he is.

his heart and his mind. And how do I know that? Well, look at how he serves others. Look at the genuine interest he shows in the welfare of others.

[20 : 33] And so to be other person centered is to be Christ centered. That's the first thing. Second thing, the risk of the servant. Have a look at the other person that Paul mentions, Epaphroditus.

It's a great name. Anyone going to have a child soon looking for a name? What a biblical name. There's a biblical name, Epaphroditus. Verse 25. It's got a good pedigree as well.

Paul says, but I think it is necessary to send back to you, Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you send to take care of my needs.

For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard that he was ill. Indeed, he was ill and almost died. But God had mercy on him and not on him only, but also on me to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.

Therefore, I am all the more eager to send him so that when you see him again, you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. So then welcome him in the Lord with great joy and honor people like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ.

[21 : 40] He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me. So like Timothy, Epaphroditus is a wonderfully other person-centered individual.

I mean, he even worries about the people who are worrying about him while he's ill. I had a very profound experience of this when I was younger in the church that I grew up in.

My mother had a friend who was in their Bible study who was dying of cancer. And her Bible study group would phone her up and would basically say, what can we pray for you?

What are you going through? What can we pray for you? And she would actually get all embarrassed by the attention. And she would say, no, no, no, no, no. No. I'm up in the early hours of the morning because of the chemotherapy. The Lord has given me this extra time.

What can I pray for you? That's a little bit like our friend Epaphroditus here. He's worrying about the people worrying about him while he's close to death in illness.

[22 : 45] Now, the thing that I want to highlight here is the risk, the cost of being other person-centered. So from the details in the text there, we know that Epaphroditus had traveled from the Philippians to come and encourage Paul.

We know that in the process he'd become deathly ill. We know he almost died. And we also know from verse 30 at the bottom there that his illness seems to have been contracted while serving in the work of Christ.

So his radical service, his other person-centeredness, has resulted in him taking a really significant hit in terms of his health. Just for context here, these sorts of trips were incredibly dangerous and difficult to go from one church to the next, to travel across land and sea and encourage brothers and sisters in a foreign city.

It's not like jumping in an Uber or jumping on a plane like I'm going to do on Friday where I can be on the other side of the planet with a long time, relative, not a ton of inconvenience. This was a dangerous thing to do.

You took a big risk doing it. It could cost you even your life. Now, it seems to me that the New Testament is pretty unanimous that taking up the cause of Christ and thus being an other person-centered servant is risky business.

[24 : 06] It almost necessarily comes with a cost. And that could be a social cost. It could be a material cost. It could be a physical cost, like in this passage. But it will cost you.

I can guarantee you that. I can offer you two things. I can stand and say, please go and sign up for the volunteer list and I can guarantee you there will be some cost incurred. Two things to say about this.

Number one, I know that a burning question for us as we think about this is, what is acceptable risk? Or acceptable cost?

Like, where's the line? How do I know how much of myself to give? Stephen, you're standing up here. You're saying, throw yourself into the service here in the church.

Give of yourself here. Give your time. Give your energy. Give your money. How much do I give? Do I have parameters to work within? Because if I'm to be radically other person centered and serve, it seems risky.

[25 : 10] It seems the risk, the cost of sort of burning out is real. I could neglect other parts of my life. My family, my work, my financial well-being.

What is acceptable risk? What's acceptable cost? And the answer to that question is, that's a really tricky thing to say. A really tricky thing to say.

If you are looking for the Bible to quantify for you acceptable risk or cost, I think you're going to be sadly disappointed. You're not going to find it. Because in the Bible, you will find Christians who served Christ at relatively minimal cost, and you will find Christians who served Christ at the cost of their very lives.

There is almost no way to say when enough is enough. And I suspect that the Bible probably does it on purpose. At least partly to say, you need to understand that there is no high water mark that you can look at and you can say, I have done it.

I have been other person-centered up to the required mark. I have served up to the required goal.

[26 : 26] I have fulfilled the stipulations of the Bible. I can now sit in my deck chair and put my feet up. You see, that's because the Bible doesn't work on the basis of law and obedience to law as the benchmark for success.

It just doesn't work that way. It works on grace. God is much, much, much more interested in people who can admit their failure, their weakness, their sin, their inadequacy, than He is interested in people who think that faith is basically a moral checklist.

And if they can just check off enough items on that checklist, then they will be good with God. The Bible says this is not how grace works. The Bible says, do this, receive grace.

Not on the basis of anything you do, anything you bring, like what we prayed at the very beginning of the servants, no merit that you bring, only the merits of Christ. Receive grace and then, overflowing with thankfulness, overflowing with joy, driven by the great gift you have received, go out and be other person centered.

Go out and be a servant. Not because you're trying to obey a particular law, but because grace compels you, as Paul will often say. It's changed you. Receiving grace, being a recipient of something you did not earn yourself has now changed you.

[27 : 53] It has rewired you. It has rewired your priorities, what you want to do with your time and your energy, what you think you actually own and belongs to you. It's changed you. Now friends, that does not give you an answer of how much is too much, sadly.

But I think it does set the attitude and the tone in which we should approach this question in the first place. In fact, I think it actually does more than that. I think it rebukes us for even asking the question in the first place. How much is too much risk?

Grace says that's the wrong question. Are you just trying to be a good little legalist so you can tick off your list? Or are you wanting to live a life of service that is fueled by the grace of God?

Jesus, I mean, we could paint it in really stark terms. Jesus doesn't sit next to the Father in heaven and wonder, listen, what is acceptable cost when it comes to the redemption of humanity?

Like, what do I actually have to do to save human beings? He doesn't ask that question. In fact, as Paul says very earlier on in this exact chapter, he made himself nothing.

[29 : 11] Literally, he emptied himself. By taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

In fact, in one sense, the Bible actually does answer the question. I'm wrong. You can scratch everything I've just said. The Bible does answer the question. The answer to the question, what is acceptable risk, is risk your life up to the point of, risk your very self up to the point of your life.

Because that's what Jesus did. Now, I say all that to say, if you're not at least prepared to get uncomfortable and endure cost in the service of others, then I wonder if you understand God's grace.

If you're thinking, this is, I just want to pick me up sermon, and then I'll go and do a couple of extra things in the life of the church, then I can't give that to you. Because the Bible doesn't give that to you.

And so, if you're not even prepared to consider that this is going to exact cost, and might on occasions be uncomfortable, then we're in the wrong ballpark as we think about this subject.

[30 : 30] That's the first thing to think about. Second thing on this, when following Christ is costing you, in those hard, sometimes difficult moments, the cost of the cross needs to be your motivation and your hope.

It needs to drive you. It needs to be your fuel. It needs to be your energy. Because there will be moments of cost. We've guaranteed that already. If you're going to throw yourself into service, there will be trade-offs.

There will be things you have to give up. This is like, no, we are finite beings. We can't be everywhere at the same time. We can't do everything. That is incredibly frustrating to someone like me who wants to do lots of different things, but you can't.

You're going to have to trade-off stuff. There will be loss of time. There will be loss of energy. There will be loss of resources that you could be putting into other things. And then sometimes serving other people, because this is often other people focused, will feel very thankless and hard.

If you're constantly trying to show genuine interest in other people, there will be that person who is hard to love and consistently show compassion to. There will be that person who betrays your trust even after you've expended yourself for them.

[31 : 45] There will be that person who wears you down with endless problems that never seem to resolve. There will be moments of pouring yourself out over a long period of time and you are thinking, I'm making no functional difference to this ministry at all.

Nothing's changing. Nothing's getting better. I can't see the fruit of this. The cost is inevitable. The cost might be, on occasions, very significant, like in this situation with Epaphroditus.

It is at that point that you need to see that your attempt at practicing this other person-centered service cannot be rooted in sort of general goodwill or sentiment.

Oh, I'd love to try and make Union Chapel a better place. It cannot be grounded in a passing desire to make our church more functional. It cannot be grounded in a sense of guilt that you have for not doing enough with your skills or your resources or your time.

Like you're sitting here listening and going, oh, I really probably should do some more stuff. That cannot be the primary reason for engaging. The primary energy and motivation for engaging. If you ground your attempts at Christ-centered service in any of those sorts of things, in guilt or in sentiment, the only result that you will get in the end when stuff starts to get hard is despair and disillusionment in the process of serving.

[33 : 16] I've served so hard and look at this. Our work for good can only ever be grounded in the good work of Christ. Our church doesn't need sentiment or guilt to create an army of servants here.

It needs people who look to Christ. It needs people who consider the cost that He endured and then live out of sheer wonder at the fact that they would be recipients of that cost and then serve.

You see, because as a Christian, here's what you get to look at. Here's what you get to stare at. It's what we stare at every single Sunday as we worship. You get to look at this. You get to look at Him who has borne the cost already.

You get to look at Him who was radically, radically other person-centered and yet was betrayed by the very people who He served. You get to look at Him who expended Himself for humanity and they thanked Him by jamming thorns into His brow and nails into His hands.

You get to Him who didn't, you get to look at Him who didn't just risk His life for your sake but gave His very life for your sake to bring you peace, to bring you hope, to bring you comfort, to bring you forgiveness of sins.

[34 : 50] And so there is only one motivation and hope that we have that drives and fuels our Christ-centered service and that is the cross of Christ. That is the power. That is the energy that we need.

That is the sustenance we need, the food we need to do what is in front of us. It's what drives us to service. You cannot, cannot follow Christ in servanthood without cost to yourself but you follow one who has paid the ultimate cost.

And because He has paid that ultimate cost, any cost that you pay now is always only temporary in nature. It's almost like that deposit that you put down on a new flat rental.

It hurts but in this case you get it back with astronomical interest. All paid for. Christ has paid the ultimate price.

You never have to pay that. Let me close with this. I stand before you and I bet you my wife is, even if she wouldn't do it outwardly because everyone's going to look at her now but inwardly she's nodding.

[36 : 05] I stand before you as a creature of comfort. I like my comfort. I don't like the thought of having to endure cost in the service of God, the service of His church.

This does not come naturally to me. I find a passage like this to be a very hard word when I start to think about the implications and take them to where they go.

But do you know what excites me? What enthruses me to still go to this hard place and wrestle with it? The possibility of God raising up an army here of people who have gazed upon the costly love of Jesus Christ whose hearts have drunk deeply, deeply from that grace and then as a result have been transformed into radically other person centered servants.

The possibility of being part of that, of seeing that, that thrills me. That's exciting. I hope that excites you.

As hard as some of these challenges might be, I hope that excites your heart this morning and it's something you are praying to and then on an individual level saying, well, what should I be doing?

[37 : 26] How do I engage? Let's pray together. Father, your word is truth but sometimes it brings hard truths to us.

Truths about our own inadequacies. Truths about our weaknesses. And yet as much as it provokes and it pushes and it prods us on to greater levels of holiness, to greater levels of good works, it never ever does that apart from Christ.

it never ever does that without reminding us that Christ has paid the ultimate cost for us. He has secured our eternal future and in him we have everything we possibly need.

And so Lord, might you teach us to look first to that, to gaze upon that, to be changed and transformed by that, to have our hearts rewired by that and then through that to go out and to be your servants.

Lord, won't you raise that army of servants here, servants who honor and glorify you through taking a genuine interest in the lives of others, sometimes doing very menial, ordinary jobs, but that all build together to do something beautiful here in this church and that is promote your glorious gospel.

[38 : 46] So that we can tell that news that there is someone out there who has paid the cost. We want to tell that news more and more, Lord, and we need servants to be able to do that. Build us in this area, Lord, we pray.

I ask for any person who is sitting on the outside looking in and saying, I'm not engaged. I pray that you have provoked them this morning by your spirit and that you have caused them to go, I need to trust in Jesus Christ here.

I need to turn away from being selfish and self-absorbed and trust in Jesus Christ. I pray you would bring them to repentance and faith this morning. We ask all these things for Christ's sake and his glory.

Amen. Amen.