

The Mission of the Church (Part 2)

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[0 : 0 0] Every week we've been talking about the mission of God and we've said that the mission of God is to come and redeem the world. And God has fulfilled his mission. It's past tense. He has redeemed the world.

We saw that two weeks ago that he has redeemed the world in Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection. And at the same time, he is redeeming the world. God's redemption is past tense, present tense and future.

He has done it in Jesus and he is doing it in Jesus. Jesus is still working at God's right hand. The Old Testament, which we spent most of our time in this semester, has foreshadowed this redemption.

In Luke 24, Jesus explains how the whole Testament, the Torah, the Law, the Psalms, the writings and the prophets were about him. God has been foreshadowing the coming of this one redeemer. And Acts 2, and James 1 that we just read, in addition to what we looked at last week, Matthew 28 really is just answering this question. What does the church do to participate in God's mission to redeem the world?

What does the church do? Matthew 28, last week we saw, commissions the church. It sends the church. It sends the disciples out. It tells them to go make disciples, to go form a community, to go baptize people, to practice the sacraments, to teach, to observe all that he had commanded.

[1 : 2 7] These are the activities of the church we saw last week. So when you take Matthew 28, Acts 2, verse 42 to 47, and the end of James 1, together you have a flyover, a 32,000 foot view of what the New Testament thinks about what the church does.

A big picture taking all three of those passages together. And if you take them all together and you look at them all together, they teach us three things. The way we participate in God's mission, the church's mission, is always both word and deed.

It's always both word and deed. And then secondly, if you want to be a minister of word and deed, you have to become poor. You have to become poor.

And thirdly, if you want to minister in word and deed, you have to know your job. So those are the three things we're going to talk about. The church's mission is word and deed.

Acts 2, the Book of Acts, gives us the earliest picture of what the church did. The church just after Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead, ascended into heaven. The Book of Acts is telling us what the early church looked like.

[2 : 3 8] And did you know that the Book of Acts was written by the same person that wrote the Gospel of Luke? And so in the Greek Bible, Luke and Acts, we call it Luke Acts, they're like one book, Luke Acts.

It's part one, part two. It's the same writer, the physician, Luke. And in the Book of Acts, he gives us a thesis statement. He gives us one sentence to tell us exactly what the Book of Acts is all about.

And we didn't read it, it's in chapter one, so I'll read it to you in verse eight. Jesus tells the disciples, here's the thesis, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, into the ends of the earth. So that's the thesis statement of the Book of Acts. Now, the Gospel of Luke is the work of Jesus, the Son of God.

And the Book of Acts for Luke is, you see, the work of the Holy Spirit. You see, the thesis statement of the mission of the church, the thesis statement, is this is what the Holy Spirit will do through you.

[3 : 39] The mission, see, the Book of Acts is about the Holy Spirit's work through people. That's what the Book of Acts is about. And even more than that, the Book of Luke, the story of the Son of God, the story of Jesus, it has a definite ending. You know the ending.

Resurrection, Jesus rises from the dead. But if you've read through the Book of Acts, you know that the Book of Acts doesn't have an ending. There is no ending to the Book of Acts, it literally stops in the middle of a story.

It doesn't tell you any resolution to what happens to any of the main characters, Paul or Luke or anybody, Barnabas. It doesn't give you any satisfactory ending. Everybody's left in prison, actually.

It doesn't tell you why. Why? Because that's where you come in. You see? The story of the Son of God has a definite ending of resurrection, but the story of the Holy Spirit's work through the church, it doesn't end.

There's no ending to the Book of Acts. It keeps going in perpetuity. Right? And this is mapped out in exactly the outline of the Book of Acts. Did you know that the outline of the Book of Acts, the way the chapters work out, is parallel to this thesis statement in Acts 1-8.

[4 : 48] So listen to this. Chapters 1-5 of the Book of Acts is all about ministry and where? Jerusalem. It's all about ministry and Jerusalem.

So if you look at the thesis statement, you'll see, you're going to be my witness is where? Where's the first place? Jerusalem. And then when you go to chapters 6-8, it goes from Judea to Samaria.

You see? Now Acts 1-8 says, you'll be my witness is in Jerusalem and then in Judea and then Samaria. And then in chapter 9, what happens? Saul gets converted to Paul and what's his mission?

His mission in chapter 13 is to stay to point blank. He is to take the gospel to the Gentiles by going to where? It says the ends of the earth. Now you see Acts 1, chapter 8, you take the gospel from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria and then to the ends of the earth.

You see, the book maps out exactly to that outline and we haven't taken it all the way to the ends of the earth yet. The story continues. That's where we come in.

[5 : 49] So there hasn't been a resolution yet to the story of the church. You are still writing that story. You're still participating in that story.

So that begs the question, what does the church do in the meantime? What does the church do until the end of the story? And Acts 2, 42 to 47 is like a descriptive flyover of exactly those activities.

So if you look at the text, you'll see in verse 42, they devoted themselves. So this is the first thing. That word is a word for deep commitment.

The earliest church had a deep commitment. And so the question is to what? And you see it right after that. They devoted themselves to teaching and to the fellowship.

So there's the two things that the church devoted itself to. In the earliest of days, it devoted itself to teaching and to the fellowship. Now, the teaching is obvious, right? We're doing it right now.

[6 : 49] They devoted themselves to, we call it the ministry of the word. Peter had just given a long term, the proclamation of the gospel, the proclamation of Jesus dead and rose to life.

That's the ministry of the word. That's the first thing they devoted themselves to. But the second thing it says is the fellowship. Now, did you notice that it didn't just say fellowship, it said the fellowship, right?

Now, the word fellowship in modern day English is a word that we use to basically mean hang out together, right? Like potluck dinners or something. Or at least that's where we use it where I came from.

That's fellowship. It's hang out time. But the word behind this word in Greek is the word koinonia. You might have heard that. Koinonia literally, its base meaning is literally the word, it's a verb, to share.

So literally what it says here is that they devoted themselves to teaching and to the sharing. The sharing. It's like an institution. They were committed to the sharing.

[7 : 48] Now, what is that? Well, it tells us, right? It gives us three things. It first says that they were committed to the sharing, which involves the breaking of bread. Now, that's literally a meal.

That's literally talking about eating meals together. In other words, they shared meals. That's the first thing that it means to do koinonia together. What the church does is it shares meals together. But in the midst of that meal, which was called in the early church in Agape Feast, a love feast, they would always also share the Lord's supper together at the end of the meal.

So they shared meals. The second thing it says they did was that they shared prayer. So to fellowship means to pray together. That's the second thing. And then there's one more.

And it's in verse 45. It says they not only shared meals, they not only shared prayer, but they shared resources. You see in verse 45, they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need.

In other words, one of the first things that the church started doing as soon as Jesus ascended into heaven was liquidation. They started liquidating, freeing up cash, freeing up resources.

[9 : 03] And what scholars will say is that these Agape Feast, which they've done a lot of study of these, these Agape Feast basically would involve that the churches would come together. In some places, this was literally daily, they would come together.

And the people who could afford it, the people who could liquidate, the people who could spare resources and make sacrifices would pile up these resources onto one table at the Agape Feast. And what they would do is then they would have people distribute to those in the community the sharing that had need of them.

Now in Acts chapter 5, this is exactly what's happening, right? Because the apostles in Acts chapter 5 are saying, we don't have time for this. We can't do all the preaching and teaching and distribute all the resources to everybody.

They elect deacons, you remember, and literally the word diaconos, the Greek word for deacon, it literally means, literally, table server. You see? It means table server.

It was a very little word because they literally were appointed to take the resources at the Agape Feast and distribute them, to share them with everybody that had need. To be a deacon in the New Testament is to be a table server is literally what it means.

[10 : 16] So what does the church do? What is the flyover 32,000 foot view of what the church does in Acts 2? The church speaks words of life, namely death and resurrection.

And it loves all the way to the point of sharing in deep service to meeting needs. That's what the church does. You see, fellowship is not hangout time in the New Testament.

It is that, but it's more. It's sharing things. It's sharing meals, prayers, and resources. That's what it says. Now, we might be tempted to think that this sharing is just something that happens inside the church.

And it absolutely is something that happens inside the church, but it's not only that in the New Testament. The logic of the Bible is that it also extends outside the church in ministry. This is the word that it uses to the outside community.

So, look, Acts chapter 2 is descriptive. What does that mean? It means it's not giving us commands. It's just telling us what happened. You see, it's just telling us the story.

[11 : 26] But James chapter 1, lest we think it's only descriptive, James chapter 1, oh boy, it's commands. So what does James say in James chapter 1?

In verse 22, this is the way James puts word indeed. He says, don't only be a hearer of the word, verse 22, but be what? A doer of the word. You see, James is combining the same thing we see in Acts chapter 2.

Word ministry and deed ministry. You always have both together. He's saying that to have true religion is the word he uses.

You must not only hear words and speak words, but do things. And this is why in the very next chapter, he'll say, faith without works is dead. Right?

So, you know, Martin Luther, I said this something not a few weeks ago, Martin Luther said that the book of James is an epistle of straw. He wanted to rip it out of his Bible. He might have changed on that. I'm not sure, but he wanted to rip it out of his Bible because he said there's no gospel.

[12 : 27] James always talks about works, but James wasn't doing that. The gospel was first for him. The words were first for him. What he was simply saying is that word ministry always comes with the love of deed ministry.

That's what it means to show agape, to participate in the law of Christ. The law of love is that it includes deed ministry. So, James gives us actually in the book three things.

He says that you must speak. You must understand how to speak carefully. That's word ministry. But then in verse 28, he gives us two more. The first thing he says, it means to do true religion.

In verse 28, at the very end, is to keep yourself pure and undefiled, unstained from the world. What's that mean? It means to pursue holiness.

And then the last thing he says, what does it mean to do ministry? To do true religion. He says true religion is this, to care for the orphans and the widows and their affliction.

[13 : 30] Here's the ministry matrix. Here's the church's ministry matrix. The ministry of the word. This is what Edmund Clowney, a fantastic scholar on the church and on the mission of the church, has a number of books on this.

And this is how he outlines the matrix. There's the ministry of the word. We preach and proclaim the gospel. And without it, we wouldn't have the church. There's the ministry of discipleship.

James calls it pursuing holiness or keeping yourself pure. The older word for it is the ministry of edification, of growth. And then there's the ministry of, and this is what the early church would have called it, the ministry of mercy.

Word indeed, the two things of word indeed are encapsulated in all three of those areas of ministry. Words with love in proclamation, in edification, and in mercy.

That's the old matrix. If you combine them, you simply have the gospel plus agape, agape love. Now, look, this changed the world.

[14 : 40] Did you know that? This ministry matrix, this combination of word indeed, it changed the world because the world had never seen anything like it before.

The emperor of Rome in the fourth century wrote a letter to one of his priests at a temple far off. The priest's name was Arsaceus.

And the letter, in the letter, he's both lamenting and strategizing. So the letter starts out, he's sad, he's upset because the Greek religion has kind of fallen into disrepair.

Everybody's leaving the gods, they're not going to the temple, they're not giving their sacrifices, they're not worshiping the emperor, which was standard Caesar cult stuff in the Roman Empire.

It's not going well. And so Julian's just coming to the throne and he's saying, alright, revitalization time. How do we get the Greek religion back into vogue? How do we put it back in the center of our culture?

[15 : 39] And so he writes this letter and he says, here's his strategy. Here's what he tells Arsaceus to do. He says, we have to look at what the Christians are doing and mimic it.

He says, that's the only way we're going to get back into the popular culture. He says this, what we are doing to get the Greek religion back into action so far is not sufficient.

He needs a new advertising agency, in other words. Why do we think that it's sufficient, what we have been doing, and we have not observed how the kindness of Christians to the stranger, their care for the burial of the dead, their sobriety of lifestyle, has done the most to advance their cause.

Each of these things ought to be practiced by us, I think. If anyone of the priests is not acting like this, then fire them. He doesn't use the word fire, but that's what he meant.

Or persuade them to do it. Tell the priest to stop drinking so much. He says, I am devising a plan. Erect hostels for strangers in all the cities and be kind to them.

[16 : 45] See, this is novel. This is novel. A hotel for foreigners? What? That's what the Christians are doing. I'm ordering a fifth of our food supply to the poor.

See, he's responding to each of the things that the Christians have done. And then here's the quote, For it's disgraceful when none of the Christians are beggars on the streets.

And even more than that, the Christians care for our poor too. Everyone can see that they're all doing the work for us.

You see, word and deed ministry together. The proclamation of the gospel and the love all the way down to the most unlovely. Change the world.

Turn it upside down. 1 Corinthians 13. You can have all the gifts. You can have all the words. You can have all the eloquence. But if you don't have a gap, you're just a clanging symbol.

[17 : 45] Just noise, not music, not a symphony. You're just making noise. You see, in other words, word without love. Word without a gap, a word without loving action is not true faith.

That's what he's saying. That's what James is saying. Now, we have description and prescription. Acts 2, James 1. Descriptively we know what the story was about in the first century.

Prescriptively we know what James is telling us that ministry looks like. You know, really Acts 2.45, at the end of the day, what it's saying is this, that giving of ourselves like Christ as a servant is not simply giving out of our surplus, but it should cost something.

It should actually make a dent in our lifestyle. That's the picture that we're being given. Okay, how are you enjoying the sermon?

Are you inspired, are motivated, are guilt ridden? If I speak for most of you and I say I'm a little bit inspired, but a lot of bit crushed by the picture in the New Testament.

[19 : 05] But you know what, that's not the point. Look, guilt is a terrible motivator, and so is motivation. Motivation is a terrible motivator.

That's why every single week coaches, you know, they have to give the speech over and over again. If you're an athlete, you know this, the coach has to re-say it every time in the locker room before you go out.

Right, because motivational speeches only last for an afternoon. They don't change you. How many motivational speeches are you still motivated by today? Zero. Motivation, inspiration, and guilt, they don't do anything.

That's not the point. Thankfully there's a second point. If you want to practice word and deed ministry that loves all the way down to the most unlovely, that wants to see the most unlovely hear the gospel, both inside and outside of the church.

All the way down, if you want to show a gapay to the poor, the New Testament says you have to become poor. Oh boy. Now, this sounds like more guilt, but don't worry, it's not.

[20 : 14] I'm not saying you have to become literally poor. Just wait a second. Deuteronomy 10 gives a prophecy about God being a God of mercy. Deuteronomy 10 says this, God will proclaim good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom to the captives.

Did you know that at the beginning of Luke's gospel, the author of Acts, he opens up Jesus' ministry where Jesus walks in in Luke chapter 4 to the synagogue, to the temple, and he pulls out the Isaiah scroll.

They would have had all the books of the Old Testament in these scrolls and a stack, and he pulls out the Isaiah scroll and he unwinds it, and he goes to where? Isaiah 61, and he says this, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom to the captives.

Today, Jesus says, this prophecy is fulfilled in your very presence. You see, the only way to love all the way down to the most unlovely is to know that you are that person.

It's to understand that Isaiah 61 was always about you. And when Jesus reads that scroll in Luke chapter 4, when he says, I've come for the poor, I've come for the captive, that he's talking about all of us.

[21 : 58] You see, Matthew chapter 5, when Jesus describes what it means to be blessed, he says this, blessed are the poor in spirit.

The only way to have the blessed life is to be poor in spirit. You see, what does it mean to be poor in spirit? Well, it means understanding this that every single thing that you have is a gift.

You know, how did you get here? How did you get to middle class status or upper middle class or whatever? How did you get here? Well, yeah, you got marketable skills. You got talents. You worked hard.

But when you think about it at the end of the day, every single place that we've arrived at in life is a gift. It all depends on where you were born, who your parents were, how much money they had in the bank, what school you were able to get into because you were able to go to a particular school growing up, all these things.

Look, if you had been born in the 16th century during the height of the bubonic plague, it doesn't matter how many marketable skills you would have had, you wouldn't have defeated it. You would have just died.

[23 : 02] See, we don't own our circumstances. We don't have the authority to determine where we're born, when we're born, and how we're born. We come into this world naked.

You see, to be poor in spirit is to realize that everything is a gift. You know what that means? That means it's to realize that you're an utter recipient of mercy.

Materially, you're utter recipient of mercy in every way, but even more, poor in spirit. You see, here's what it means to be poor in spirit.

It means to understand the difference in being a disciple and becoming a disciple. Matthew 28 was sent to make disciples of all the earth, but there's a huge difference in being a disciple and becoming a disciple.

You see, if you try to become a disciple by being a disciple, then you'll never become one. In other words, what's a disciple? It's a person, Jesus says, who obeys all the laws, who loves the Lord with all his heart, soul, and money.

[24 : 05] You see, you can never become a disciple by acting like one. You can never become a disciple by obeying. You have to first become a disciple of Christ to then act like one, to do the ministry of Word and deed.

You see, what it means to be poor in spirit is to understand that you have no resources in and of yourself to ever become a disciple if it was left up to you. That's what it means to be poor.

If mercy is love for the orphan, Jesus Christ loved orphans so much that he became one on the cross.

There was a moment, a moment of fatherlessness, a moment where the father turned his face away, where he was forsaken. If he came to set the captive free, how did he do it?

By becoming the captive. He became the ultimate captive to sin so that he could set captives free. You see, being poor in spirit is understanding that you were the poor beggar that Jesus came for.

[25 : 08] You see, the only way to become an agent, an actor, who loves all the way down to the most unlovely is to understand that the gospel is the proclamation to poor people.

There's no, we don't cultivate ministry out of guilt tropes. We don't cultivate ministry out of motivational speeches. That's not what the sermon is. We cultivate ministry out of being changed, you see, out of having your desires reshaped.

And that only happens by knowing that you were once an enemy, that you were once a captive, that you were once a slave, a poor man, a poor woman, and that the gospel is the only path to being set free.

That's the only true motivator, a change of heart, a change of heart. Alright, so finally, to minister in word indeed, you have to know yourself poor in spirit and to do the work of the church, to minister in word indeed finally, you have to know who you are.

Now, you know, when you get out of bed in the morning and you go to work, you know your identity dictates to you your vocation, right? So if you know, if I'm a lawyer, I know what I ought to do today.

[26 : 25] I know that as a student, I know when I get up in the morning, well, as a student you're never really sure, but you get up in the morning and you try to figure out what you're supposed to be doing. Your identity dictates to you your vocation, what you should do, right?

Now the question after all this, ministry of word indeed talk, ministry of word, of discipleship, edification, and of mercy and hospitality, out of all this talk, the question becomes, what do I do? What do I do?

And the answer is, I don't know. I can't tell you. I don't know, because it depends. This takes expression in different ways, in different contexts, and it takes a lot more talking about.

You see, we never arrive at being creatures of word indeed ministry fully. But what we can say is we know something about who you are and who I am, if you're a believer in Jesus Christ today, and that tells you something about the direction you take.

And here's the answer the New Testament goes, that you are a priest, that you are a prophet, and that you're a king. You see now our Mission of God series comes all together, because we focused in the Old Testament on the priesthood office, the prophecy office, and the kingship office, how that pictures Jesus Christ.

[27 : 41] And then we looked at Jesus and we said, He is the true priest, prophet, and king. And now what we're saying is this, that your identity in Christ is that you're being sent out as a priest, prophet, and king, or queen.

What does that mean? What does that mean? What does it mean to be a prophet? Well, the New Testament idea of a prophet, very briefly, just to highlight these three things that you are. The New Testament idea of being a prophet is being a person that proclaims, that's all.

It's not talking about future telling and all that kind of stuff. The New Testament idea of prophecy is a proclaimer, a teacher. And you know, we have gifted ordained proclaimers and teachers, elders that teach from the pulpit, but the New Testament logic is that every single one of you is also that.

In other words, listen, just listen to the text, Hebrews chapter 3, exhort one another daily in the Word. Confess, sends to one another daily, it says.

Colossians 3, 16, every one of you have the Word of God dwelling in you richly so that you're always prepared to teach and admonish. 1 Peter, always be prepared to give a word to the person that asks you.

[28 : 53] You see, being a prophet is the activity of the whole church and it's for you both inside and outside the church. Inside the church you are to exhort one another and confess to one another, it says. And outside the church, obviously, it's the work of evangelism, it's the work of proclaiming the gospel.

Every single one of us is a prophet. It's your identity if you're a believer in Jesus today. In Matthew chapter 11, John the Baptist sends messengers to Jesus to ask about his identity and whatnot and Jesus is upset and they come and Jesus responds by saying, do you know who John the Baptist is?

And they say, yeah, he's a prophet and Jesus says, but I tell you, among all those born of women, and that's a large data set, that's a big group, all those born of women, I tell you that there is no one greater than John the Baptist as a prophet.

But, what does he say? But the least in the kingdom of God is greater than him. Now what does that mean? It's not talking about saying everybody's more, the least person is more holy.

It's talking about the prophetic office. It's saying the least of you in the kingdom are just as much a prophet as John the Baptist if you go out proclaiming the kingdom. Preaching the death and resurrection of Christ.

[30 : 09] Alright, secondly, what's a priest? You're a priest. What's a priest? A priest is a person who represents God to people and people to God. Now the book of Hebrews makes it very clear that every single believer is a priest.

That's this 1 Peter 2 9. You are a royal priesthood, but in the book of Hebrews, it's talking about how in your priesthood you have access to the high priest, to the throne room.

You see a priest goes to the throne room and how is it that you have access through prayer? The first activity of a minister that is a priest, all of us, is prayer.

And you know what this means? The priest represents the world to God, the people to God. That means that in our prayer life, the priestly ministry is to literally pray for the world, to represent the world to God, to be on petition for the world, for huge, huge cosmic things.

You see, that's the first thing it means to be a priest. But the second thing is to represent not only the people to God, but God to the people. Now did you know that in the Old Testament, the priest had three activities.

[31 : 15] They were to make sacrifices, they were to teach the law, and what was the third? The priest were to take the food that was left over from the sacrifice and be the ministers of mercy.

Did you know that? They were to go out to the fringes of the society, to teach the law, and to give food to the leper. Now when Jesus comes in the Gospels, well you see the Levites were, basically this means that the Levites were the public health officials.

They would go out to the edges of society and then determine who was clean and who was unclean by their sicknesses. They would never touch them unless they become unclean. But when Jesus Christ comes in the Gospels, he goes to the leper, he goes to the edge of society, and you remember what happens?

The disciples are sitting there telling him he's reaching out, he's reaching out, and the disciples are saying, don't do it. Don't touch him. Don't touch the poor. Why? Because they were afraid that he would become ceremonially unclean.

And you know what he says? He says, I will touch them. And he does it. And he says, be clean. Your sins are forgiven. And then he tells them, go to the high priest and tell the high priest what's happened to you this day.

[32 : 35] Now Jesus wasn't saying that so that the poor people would go to the high priest and rub it in their face. Look what Jesus can do. You can't do this. That's not the point. The point was that the high priest was the public health official.

And what was happening was he was saying, go show the priest what's happened to you, that you're clean, that not only have you been forgiven your sins, but I've healed you. You see, he was reconstituting their entire place in society.

The priestly function is not only representing the world to God in prayer, but representing the God to the world by going and putting your hand on people and saying, I have a message for you. Be clean. Death and resurrection.

And at the very same time, it never comes without ministering to their needs. Jesus never did it without ministering to needs. Now this means, finally, lastly, that you have to go into the world with authority. You see, if you go out on a mission to be a priest, you have to do it with authority. If you can say to somebody, be clean because of the gospel, believe on Christ and you are clean, then you have to have some type of authority and that's what it means to be a king. Your final office is kingship or queen.

First Peter 2.9, you're a priesthood, but what does it say? You're a royal priesthood. You see, Matthew 28, all authority has been given to me and now I give it to you. You've been given authority, every one of you.

[33 : 58] You've been given the imprimatur of Jesus, the stamp that puts on the letters, the king stamp that you take to the world, the messenger stamp. What do you call us someone who is an adopted son or daughter of a king? You call them a prince or a princess.

They have a particular type of ambassadorial authority and that's what you have. Every one of you, if you're a believer in Jesus, alright, conclusion. This means simply that you can and should take initiative in ministry. The ministry of the word, the ministry of discipleship, and the ministry of mercy and hospitality. You can and should take initiative. You know what this means?

This is what makes our tradition different from some other traditions. You don't need the clergy's permission to go do ministry because you've been sent by Jesus yourself. You already are a priest, prophet and king. Elders and deacons are simply here to lead and equip in that effort.

But the effort's all of ours. This is not the work of committees. This is the work of everybody. So the ministry of proclaiming, teaching, of hospitality, of mercy, of exhorting and discipleship, it's all of our work.

There's a lot more to say. This is just a starting point, right? As Paul says in Romans 12, there's the clock. It's time to go. We all have gifts given to us according to grace, Romans 12. Let us, Paul says, use them. Let's pray.

[35 : 38] Father, we ask that you would show us what it means to be ministers of word indeed in our context. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[40 : 15] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[45 : 15] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[50 : 15] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[55 : 15] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

I will close worship this morning and go forth. He will hold me fast.

[59 : 08] I fear my faithful will hold me fast. Stay in and sing together. When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast.

When the tempter would prevail, He will hold me fast. I could never keep my hold through life's tears or path.

For my love is old and cold. He must hold me fast. He will hold me fast.

He will hold me fast. For my Savior loves me so. He will hold me fast.

He will hold me fast. Those He saves are His delight. Christ will hold me fast.

[60 : 42] Precious in His holy sight, He will hold me fast. He'll not let my soul be lost.

His promises shall last. Lord, by Him at such a cost, He will hold me fast.

He will hold me fast. He will hold me fast. For my Savior loves me so.

He will hold me fast. For my life He bled and died.

Christ will hold me fast. Justice has been satisfied. He will hold me fast.

[61 : 48] Raise with Him to endless life. He will hold me fast. Till our strength is turned to side.

When He comes at last. He will hold me fast.

He will hold me fast. For my Savior loves me so. He will hold me fast.

Let me invite you all to the ministry of sharing right after this as we share tea and coffee together. And go forth with God's blessing, grace, mercy, and peace.

From God our Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit be with you all both now and forevermore. In all God's people said Amen.