

# Time for Harvesting

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Good morning. Good morning. It's always very encouraging, having preached somewhere previously, to get invited back. So thank you very much for bearing with me once again this morning.

Do have your Bibles open at Luke 10. Do be checking that what I say is what God says in the Bibles. I'm fallible. I'm not God's Word, which is infallible. Now, as Paul's ready to pray for us, why don't we just get started?

Well, before we properly dig into this passage, there is two things I would like us to see first. And they're in verse 1. Chapter 10, verse 1.

The first two words in verse 1 is this. After this, the Lord appointed 72. After this. Anytime you see it in the Bible, you've always got to go back to what came before to find out the context of this passage.

So clearly, something's just happened. And let's just remind ourselves where we are in Luke's Gospel. We've just entered the next section of Luke, which begins at chapter 9, verse 51.

[ 1 : 0 8 ]     It says this. As the time approached for him, that is Jesus, to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. The time is coming for Jesus' earthly ministry to come to an end.

The time is coming for Jesus to be taken back up into heaven. The time is coming for Jesus to leave his disciples. But something has to happen first before that comes about.

Where is Jesus heading to? He's heading to Jerusalem. And as we know, we know what's going to happen in Jerusalem, don't we? Jesus is going to be betrayed, arrested, crucified.

Which makes it incredible when you read verse 51, which says that Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. He knew what was going to happen in Jerusalem. He knew he was going to be betrayed by one of his own.

He knew he was going to be arrested and eventually die a humiliating death upon the cross. Yet here he is, setting out, face like flint on Jerusalem. Knowing exactly what's going to happen. So Jesus is going to die.

[ 2 : 1 7 ]     He's going to be raised back to life. He's going to be taken to heaven. But he's going to leave his disciples behind. So right now, there is a need for Jesus to train his disciples. He needs to instruct them and teach them to equip them for a time after he has gone back to heaven.

And last week, Scott Hamilton was preaching from this passage and he showed us the cost of discipleship. It was saying in verse 57 and 62, there's no way to lay your head.

Let the dead bury the dead. There's an urgency to this mission. Leave your family behind. There's a priority to this mission. And this week, we're going to be looking at Jesus as he teaches his followers about going on mission for Christ.

Going on mission for the sake of the gospel. That's the first thing. Second thing. Who is Jesus speaking to here? Read with me again. Okay, after this, verse 1, after this, the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them.

72 others. Why does Luke say others and not just 72? By the way, some versions might have 70 in some of your Bibles. It doesn't really matter.

[ 3 : 29 ] 70, 72. But what does matter is the word others. Well, we've already seen Jesus send out his disciples, the chosen 12, at the start of chapter 9 on mission.

So when Luke now says 72 others, he is telling us that these are not the chosen 12 being sent out. These are everyday followers of Jesus.

There's nothing particularly special about them. They're not professional, full-time gospel workers. They're regular people who have chosen to follow Christ.

And because they're followers of Jesus, they are sent out as followers of Jesus. Now, what's the point? Well, the point is, if you are a follower of Jesus here this morning, then you are sent out by Jesus on mission.

It doesn't matter if you're a full-time gospel worker or if you're a plumber. It doesn't matter if you're a lawyer, teacher, a binman, retired, unemployed. If you're a follower of Jesus, you're called to go.

[ 4 : 32 ] And so the words we read in this passage matters to us. Because it's Jesus teaching us and instructing us what we should do when we go, when we're sent out by Christ. Now, I have sat, I've heard many sermons.

I've preached sermons myself. Who are called to go. We know the Great Commission, Matthew 28, go and make disciples of all nations. And quite often I sit there under that teaching or even when I say the words myself, I think, fine, okay, let's go.

Jesus says, go, let's go. We better do it with a sense of duty. We need to obey him, off we pop. We get to work on Monday morning, might share a gospel conversation with our fellow worker, with a friend, with a neighbor.

By Tuesday, we've kind of gone off it. We start to feel guilty by Wednesday and forgotten it by Thursday. But I think if that is our attitude, if we see this call to go by Jesus as a sense of duty rather than a sense of joy, then we are missing something quite profound, I think.

We are missing the joy, the blessing, the privilege that is ours to be sent by Jesus on his mission. There's a hope that as we work those passions together this morning, we will be captivated by just who it is that sends us, Jesus Christ.

[ 5 : 54 ] Because the more we're captivated by him, the more we'll have this desire to go out for him. And that will make all the difference in the world.

Maybe you're here today and you don't think yourself as a follower of Jesus. Maybe you're just exploring the claims of Christianity, of who Jesus is. Well, can I encourage you also to keep listening?

Because I believe Jesus has some very profound to say to you this morning as well. Jesus contains the words of eternal life. Words that I believe are for you to hear.

So let's keep going. If you take a note, we're going to do this under three points. Followers of Jesus pray and go. Followers of Jesus proclaim the good news. And followers of Jesus rejoice.

Followers of Jesus pray and go. Followers of Jesus proclaim the good news. Followers of Jesus rejoice. First one, followers of Jesus pray and go. Now the first thing we see in verse 2 is that Jesus tells his followers that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

- [ 7 : 00 ] In other words, Jesus is saying, now is a great time for mission. Now there are plenty of people just ripe to be plucked. Jesus says in John 4 to his disciples, I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields.
- They are ripe for harvest. Now Jesus is not talking about corn or wheat to make his bread. He's speaking about spiritual harvest that is ripe for the picking.
- When we look out over Edinburgh, do we see what Jesus sees? When we look out over the hundreds of thousands of people who do not yet know Jesus and are currently running towards an eternity cut off from God, what do we see?
- Do we see a dry and barren land where it seems that there could be no gospel fruit? Or do we see what Jesus sees?
- A harvest ready to be picked. And if we do see this harvest ready to be picked, we'll also see there's the same problem here that Jesus sees.
- [ 8 : 13 ] There's a lack of harvest workers. Now when I say harvest workers, I do not mean full-time gospel workers. Although that is true, there is certainly a lack of them.
- But remember the context. It's the 72 others who are being sent out. The everyday followers of Jesus. There's a shortage of everyday followers of Jesus going out into the harvest field.
- So what's the solution? Well, perhaps surprisingly, it's not to go. At least not at first. What does Jesus say? Come on in the verse 2.
- The harvest are painful, the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest fields. The followers of Jesus are to pray for more harvest workers.
- So as we look out across Edinburgh, as we see the thousands of people who are currently lost, like sheep without a shepherd, we should pray. Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field.
- [ 9 : 21 ] Simple enough, isn't it? But do we do it enough? Do we remember to pray for more harvest workers when we pray as individuals, in our home groups, or when we gather together as a church?
- We may well wonder why there are so many lost people in Edinburgh when there are a good number of decent, Bible-centered, gospel-centered churches, but yet we don't pray for more harvest workers.
- Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his field. That's the first thing we are called to do. But here's a word of caution. As we pray, do not be surprised to find out that you are the answer to your prayers.
- Look at the very next words of Jesus in verse 3. Ask the Lord of the harvest, send out more harvest workers. Go, I am sending you. See, the first thing Jesus follows to do is to pray, but then right away, Jesus sends the 72 out.
- Instant answer to prayer. Jesus is saying, you are the answers to your prayers. You are the harvest workers that I am sending out. Let's think about that for a moment.
- [ 10 : 37 ] Jesus asks Jesus 72 to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out harvest workers. Then Jesus says, go, I am sending you. What does that tell us?
- Jesus is the Lord of the harvest. Jesus is the one who sends. Now why does that matter? Well, because as we go out as followers of Jesus, as we pray and as we go, what happens?
- We keep praying for more harvest workers. Lord of the harvest, send out more harvest workers. Lord of the harvest, send out more harvest workers. And what happens? Jesus keeps answering that prayer. He keeps raising up more harvest workers.

What does that tell us? Our mission will be a success because of him who sends us. As we go out there, we are going to see gospel fruits.

As we go out there, we are going to watch more harvest workers be raised up by Christ. Now we may not see that in the immediate sense. I hope that we do sometimes. God is very gracious and lets us experience the joy of seeing that firsthand.

[ 11 : 42 ] But when we get to eternity, when we get to heaven, then we will really see the fruits of our labors because of Christ. Now this isn't going to be easy.

There is going to be opposition. Look at how Jesus describes them when they're sent out. Go, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.

Great. Fantastic. I'm sending like a vulnerable lamb to a pack of wolves so I'll get my club and my spear. Jesus goes, no, no, no, no, no. Forget your club spear.

In fact, forget your purse, your bag and your sandals too. Just leave them aside. Can you imagine the disciples' faces? Right. Leave all that behind, but I'm going to need money to pay for accommodation and food.

Jesus goes, no, no, no, you won't. No, you won't. You won't need that. Leave it behind. Imagine for a moment that I came this morning with three boxes. One marked purses.

[ 12 : 44 ] One marked bags. One marked shoes. I left them at the door and said, Gabriel called to go on your way out if you'd be so kind. Leave your purses, bags and shoes behind. Imagine your faces.

What I think what Jesus is trying to say here or what he is saying here is that there's an urgency to this mission. Jesus is telling the 72 do not get weighed down by earthly possessions when there are people's eternity at stake.

Get on with it. Just go. And we see that at the end of verse 4 as well. Jesus instructs his followers not to greet anyone on the road.

And otherwise he's saying, don't dilly dally. Heard that phrase, don't dilly dally? When I was younger, going to primary school, I used to go in for one of my friends at her house. And she lived with her grandparents.

And every time we left the grandparents' house after I picked her up, the last words our granny always said to us, get straight to school and don't dilly dally. Just get straight there.

[ 13 : 48 ] And that's what Jesus is saying here. Don't need dilly dally. Just go. Leave behind earthly possessions. Don't get distracted on the way. Go out there. People's eternity is at stake. There is a great need so there's a great urgency to meet that need.

And what Jesus is also teaching his followers here is that they can leave behind all this stuff because he is the one who is sending them. I am all you need.

I will provide for you as you go. You don't need money because I will provide food and accommodation for you. We see that in verse 7 where they're welcomed in. Verse 8. They eat the food given to them.

They've got roof over their heads. Yes, Jesus says, you may be like lambs sent into a pack of wolves but do not fear because not only will I provide for you, I will also protect you.

Come with me quickly to just verse 19. Verse 19, Jesus says, I have given you authority, that's I have given the 72, authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy.

[ 14 : 54 ] Nothing will harm you. Now in the original Greek, this nothing will harm you phrase is emphasized. It's an emphatic position. It literally jumps out the page to you as you read it. nothing will harm you. Now, does this mean that as followers of Jesus we are not going to be harmed in any way?

No, it doesn't. Just look at Acts, the sequel to Luke's gospel and that will quickly rid you of any notion that followers of Jesus are left unharmed. This verse does not teach us that we can start jumping off cliffs for Christ or run into a wolf's enclosure.

I grew up in a small town called Girvan on the southwest coast of Scotland and there was this lovely, godly lady in the church who refused to wear a seatbelt because she said, Jesus is with me.

It's okay. When my time has come, my time has come. I don't need a seatbelt to protect me. I've got Jesus. Now, there's something wonderfully admirable about her faith but at the same time, God gave us a seatbelt for a reason, didn't he?

[ 16 : 09 ] To try and protect us. It doesn't mean to be stupid and just run into fields of scorpions and snakes or defy the laws of gravity. No, that's not what Jesus is teaching here.

To find out what Jesus means, we've got to look at the context. Coming to verse 18, Jesus says, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Wow. There's a statement and a half, isn't it?

I saw Jesus fall like lightning from heaven. See, the context of verse 19 is the fall of Satan, which I think is more to do with the defeat of Satan rather than his actual fall from heaven.

And Jesus gives his disciples the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions. Now, again, does this mean that as followers of Jesus, we can go and take on the racing snakes in planet Earth too?

Does this mean that David Attenborough needs only employ followers of Jesus because they're immune from all nature, biting them or killing them or eating them? No, it doesn't. Apart from Paul, the apostle Paul, in Acts, where was it?

[ 17 : 14 ] Yeah, Acts 28, where Paul was bitten by a snake, but left unharmed. Apart from that, there is no literal fulfillment of this promise found anywhere in the Bible. Instead, the scorpions and the serpents represent Satan's power.

They represent the hostile creation. And the 72 are now protected from that because of the authority of Jesus that he has given to them. Nothing will harm them because I have authority over all things.

Nothing will harm me because I've given you this authority to trample on Satan's power and hostile creation. Can we see that? So the Lord of the harvest has not only sent us, but he'll provide for us and he'll protect us as we fully depend on him.

And at the end of the day, if we truly believe in the sovereignty of Christ, then we can afford to take the unavoidable risk when we go out on mission. Rather than spend our earthly lives asking, well, what if this happens?

What if that happens? What if that thing happens? We can say, it doesn't matter. Jesus is with me. He'll protect me. He'll provide for me as I go on mission for him.

[ 18 : 27 ] Let's just get on with it. That's the first thing. Followers of Jesus pray and go. Second thing, followers of Jesus also proclaim the good news. What are the 72 to do when they're sent on mission?

Come with me to verse 8. When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, the kingdom of God has come near to you.

The kingdom of God has come near to you. What does that mean? Well, the kingdom of God is when God's people enjoy God's blessing under God's rule.

The kingdom of God has come near. The kingdom of God has come near. The kingdom of God has come near. Kingdom of God has come near.

How has that come near? How on earth? What does that mean? Well, again, the context will help us out. The 72, we're sent ahead of Jesus. Remember where Jesus is going to Jerusalem?

- [ 19 : 30 ] His betrayal, arrest, death, resurrection, exaltation. And see, Jesus, if I do know this, is the one who's going to bring in God's kingdom, God's people enjoying God's blessing under God's rule because he is God's chosen king.

God's rule and power and deliverance is coming. That does not mean to say it has arrived in its fullness now. No, there's going to be a further fulfillment to come.

But what it does mean is that the rule of God through Jesus as his king has begun. So when the disciples say, look, the kingdom of God has drawn near, what they're actually saying is, look, he is near.

Jesus, the one who's going to bring in God's kingdom where God's people enjoy God's blessing under God's rule is near. Look, here he comes now. He has drawn near.

That's what they are to proclaim. The good news is that Christ has come. God's chosen king promised from the beginning of time has arrived.

- [ 20 : 39 ] The good news. And you also noticed that 72 are to heal the sick. And we don't have time to get into a discussion about whether the gift of Merax's healing still happens today, whether this is a mandate for us to go into royal infirmation and heal the sick there.

That's for another time. But what I want us to see is a purpose of healing the sick. Why are they to heal the sick? Well, the healing backs up the message that the kingdom of God has drawn near.

The healing is a representation of the blessings experienced by those in God's kingdom. No suffering. No pain. No illness in the kingdom of God.

One of the many blessings that we have. The healing is a physical sign of the compassion that God has for these people. It gives an authority and authenticity to the message of the 72.

But one thing we must note. Healing in and of itself does not save. Only spiritual healing can do that. No amount of healing or miracles will bring salvation to those who reject the message.

- [ 21 : 54 ] because only in the message which is God's word can we find life. Jesus says, the words I've spoken to you they're full of the spirit and life.

His disciples say to him, you have the words of eternal life. Healing does not save, God's word saves. So when we proclaim God's word and if we show God's compassion in a concrete physical way, this word takes on a dimension that it otherwise might lack.

It attracts people to the gospel. It attracts people to Christ. That's why I think as followers of Jesus we should be engaged in, for example, helping the poor, food banks, alleviating the suffering of those around us.

But we must always remember that as we do so, we must always, always, always back up our actions with our words. We must always tell people why we do this.

We must always tell people of the good news because if we don't, we may as well be a good Muslim. We may as well be a compassionate atheist.

- [ 23 : 07 ] We may as well just be a friendly neighbor. We must always back up our words, back up our actions with our words because if we fail to share the gospel, we may be soothing their immediate suffering, but we are doing nothing to alleviate their eternal suffering.

And that is a tragedy. Now Jesus is very upfront with the 72. He tells them that when they go, they are going to face opposition.

They are going to be rejected. Notice, in verse 8 and 10, there are no ifs and maybes, but only whens and ours. So when you enter a town and when you are rejected, here's what you do.

It's not if or maybe, it's when. Jesus tells them what to do in verses 8 and 10. The first time says, go on the streets if you're rejected, a very public place.

Shake the dust off your feet and move on. Notice the message doesn't change. They start to proclaim the kingdom of God has drawn near. So it doesn't matter if we accept or reject the message.

[ 24 : 15 ] The message is still the same. It's not dependent on what we do with that. God's kingdom is going to come. The shaking of dust, symbolic.

This city now stands alone against God. And that's not a place you want to be. Jesus gives us examples of what fate awaits the towns that reject God's message in verse 12 and 15.

Come with me to verse 12. I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. Now, Sodom was one of the most wicked towns in the Old Testament.

And it was a town that got turned to dust because of its sin. But it will be more bearable for Sodom than for these towns who reject your message now.

for Tyre and Sidon as well, two towns in the Old Testament. They would have repented if the miracles had performed there that are now performed in your towns and cities.

[ 25 : 18 ] So woe to these cities that reject Jesus' message. Woe to them on the day of judgment. That's what it means by on that day, on the day of the Lord. Healing does not save because word saves.

If we reject God's word, then that is very serious indeed. Because the message that the followers of Jesus proclaim is a matter of life and death.

If you're not a follower of Jesus here today, can you hear the warning of Jesus? You do not want to be standing alone against God.

You do not want to, Jesus say to you, woe to you on the day of judgment. Capernaum, lift you to the heavens, no, cast down to hell.

If you're sitting today and you're rejecting this message of the wonderful message of the kingdom of God has drawn near in Christ, oh please, repent of your sin and run to him. Hell is not a place you want to be.

[ 26 : 31 ] Stand alone against God is not a place you want to be. Do you see that? Can you hear the warning of Christ?

See, to reject this message, you're not rejecting 72. You're not rejecting those who tell you the gospel. You're rejecting Jesus Christ himself. And if you're rejecting Jesus Christ, you're rejecting the Father.

You're rejecting God when you reject this message. You are aligning yourself with the enemy of God, Satan. There is no middle ground.

There is no sitting on fences. There's only two ways. You're with God or you're against him. I hope that you see that and you run to Christ to find salvation. Because see, to accept the message is to accept Jesus and therefore God.

To accept God's gift eternal life and that's to become permanent citizens of heaven, which brings me to my third point. Followers of Jesus rejoice. 72 return ecstatic from their mission in verse 17.

[ 27 : 40 ] And they are joyful because even demons submit to us in your name, Lord. How amazing is that? Oh, to experience the power, the authority that you have and even demons submit to us.

Oh, fills us with joy. But notice what Jesus says next. Let's go to verse 17 together. In return, even demons submit to your name.

Jesus replies, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. It's almost like he's playing a game of top trumps, isn't he? Demons submit to your name? I saw Satan. The head of demons fall from heaven.

From heaven, I've given you authority to overcome scorpions snakes. We've looked at that. Nothing's going to harm you. Verse 20, however, do not rejoice that the spirit submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

That is a greater joy than demons and spiritual forces submitting to you in Christ's name. That your name is written in heaven. Now, the Greek used here means that when your name is written in heaven, it remains written in heaven.

[ 28 : 50 ] It is recorded forever. When your name is up there, you are now a permanent citizen of heaven. Nothing can take that from you. That is our reason to rejoice. We are to keep on continually rejoicing in our salvation because our permanent citizenship means that we will one day dwell with God in a place where there is abundant blessings.

We will see our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ face to face. We will be transformed into his likeness. We will reign as co-heirs with Christ. Yes, it is a privilege to be used by God in mission and to have access to his power and authority.

That is exciting. But the real cause for us to rejoice is that we have the sheer privilege of entry into the kingdom of God. And as a 72 rejoice, so too does Jesus rejoice.

In verse 21, we have this wonderful picture of a triune prayer. The Son, filled with the Holy Spirit, praying to his Father. Now, what's it they're praying about?

It's the free, electing love of God, to hide things from intellectual and reveal them to babes. Verse 21, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to the little children.

[ 30 : 11 ] Yes, Father, for that is what you're pleased to do. This does not mean that your educational attainment matters. It does not mean that if you've got a doctorate then somehow you're hidden from seeing these revealed things.

No. Jesus is thanking God that he's revealed these things to those who come to God in humble dependence, just like a child. It's wonderful being here, by the way, because there's hundreds of kids.

See, you must have had a baby boom like two years ago, by the way. So many toddlers going about right now, it's wonderful. But notice how needy, how dependent these toddlers are. They need you as parents, as grandparents, as aunts, uncles, as friends, to look after these kids.

Without you, they've got no hope whatsoever of surviving. They need you. And that's what Jesus is saying here. He's rejoicing the truth got to the ones who recognize their needs, that recognize they're like little children, rather than the wise and learned who think that they're good enough, that they're intellectual enough, they're wise enough for salvation.

No. Rock of Ages, that great hymn, nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling, naked, come to thee for dress, helpless, come to thee for grace, foul I to the fountain fly, wash me savior, or I die.

[ 31 : 36 ] Can't get more needy than that, can you? And we also see Jesus rejoice that he is a revealer of the father, verse 22. All things have been committed to me by my father, no one who knows the son, no one knows the son except the father, and no one knows who the father is except the son, and those to whom the son chooses to reveal him.

It's a bit bit of it, isn't it? But the point here in this verse, notice that the father and son are mentioned three times here. What's in show is the intimate relationship between the father and son.



Okay, and this shows us that the father's authority, sovereignty, and revelation are all tied to and reside in Jesus Christ, the father's heir.

The father reveals the son, the son reveals the father. What does this mean? This means that Jesus is everything for salvation. Not only is Jesus our king, not only is he the redeemer, the saviour, the keeper, Jesus is also the revealer.

Without Jesus, we have nothing. With Jesus, we have everything. And remember, this is a Jesus who sends us out into his mission.

[ 32 : 54 ] The time is almost up, but I've been talking a lot about how we're called to go, and I began by thinking we may have this feeling of a sense of duty after hearing a sermon like this. like we go because in the same way we think about going and doing household chores, we have to do it, so therefore let's do it.

But I hope that we can be captured by the beauty of Christ, our revealer, our redeemer, our king, our saviour, our keeper, because there is a great joy, there is incredible blessings, and it's a wonderful privilege to be sent by Christ on mission.

Ask yourself this question, does God need you? Does God need you to go for him to make disciples of all nations?

No, he doesn't. God's God, creator of all things, the almighty, everlasting God, the sovereign God, he can do all things. He doesn't need you. What do we bring to the table?

Nothing, except what he has already given to us. God could easily have chosen a different way to do things, but he didn't. He chose us to be sent by him to go and proclaim the good news.

[ 34 : 14 ] Have you ever thought about that? See, I think that when we pray, when we go, when we proclaim the good news, not only are we giving glory to God, but we also get to experience the joy, the blessing, the privilege as being sent for us of Christ.

Other than your name being written in heaven, can you think of a greater joy than seeing someone pass from death to life before your very eyes? From whence in someone going from dead in their sins to life in Christ, without hope, to be filled with hope, to be under the wrath of God, to be filled by the presence of God.

It's a great joy when you see that happening. And we get to witness the blessings of the eternal kingdom of God being worked out before our very eyes. We see God working at building his eternal kingdom.

That's why Jesus says in verse 23, blessed are the eyes that see what you see. You're blessed because of what you see.

You're blessed because of what you hear. See, the disciples are witnessing the culmination of God's salvation plan that began before time itself.

[ 35 : 26 ] And ever since the creation of the world, kings and prophets have seen glimpses of God's salvation. They have seen shadows of a coming Messiah. They have seen shadows of a coming king.

But now, the disciples see these shadows becoming reality. Satan is defeated before their very eyes.

God, a Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God is standing before them. They are soon to see his death, resurrection, exaltation. They are soon to see the coming of the kingdom of God.

They no longer see shadows, but they see the light himself. Jesus Christ says, I am the light of the world. No more shadows. I am here. As followers of Christ, that's what we see today.

We've seen Jesus come. We know he's died for us upon that cross. We know he's raised back to life, exalted to heaven. We know Satan has been defeated. We know the kingdom of God is coming near and has come near.

[ 36 : 32 ] What privilege, what blessing to see that, to see the light himself. And we get the privilege of being used by the almighty creator God in his redemption plan.

Brothers and sisters, what a great joy, what a wonderful blessing, what an incredible privilege it is to be sent by Christ. Jesus says, the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send workers into his harvest field. Go, I am sending you. Let's pray. Our loving, glorious, heavenly Father, oh, what joy is ours, what blessings are ours, what privilege belong to us as being followers of you.

Father, we thank you so much for sending your son. We thank you that he died upon the cross for our sins, so that whoever may believe in him may have life in his name. And we thank you that that same Jesus, our saviour, our redeemer, our Lord, is the one who now sends us into the mission field.

And Lord, that makes all the difference. We thank you that he provides for us, that you will protect us. And Lord, we pray that you will raise up more harvest workers as we go.

[ 38 : 03 ] Lord, the harvests are indeed plentiful. And Lord, we long to see Edinburgh save for Christ. We long to see that when we look out upon Edinburgh and see the thousands of people who are right now lost, that they will be brought near to you.

That they would accept the message of Christ. They would accept the gospel and therefore have their names written in heaven along with our names. Father, help us keep an eternal perspective on our lives.

Father, help us to focus on what is to come. That one day we will stand there with every tribe, tongue, and nation, glorifying and honouring your name before your throne as we see you face to face.

Christ. Oh, Father, may that motivate us today to go out to make even more disciples so our friends, our families, our work colleagues, our neighbours can stand with us as we worship your holy name.

Help us, we pray, to do so, Lord, not out of a sense of duty, but of a love for you and of a sense of great joy that you have given us. we ask this in Jesus Christ's precious name.

[ 39 : 09 ] Amen.