

Session 2

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning, everyone. It's a great privilege for me to be here. Can everybody hear me? When we talk about mission, we just heard some insight into what overseas or cross-cultural mission looks like.

And oftentimes we think that involves language, that involves culture, that involves study. You need to have skills as a speaker or skills as a teacher or insight as an apologist.

But I can say to you from a human standpoint, the reason why I'm standing here today is a Christian named Alan invited me to church. I didn't go to church. I didn't believe in God. I saw no need to do either.

And I encountered this man, Alan, 27 years ago when I moved to Scotland. We shared a flat just off the High Street in the center of Edinburgh on Coburn Street, that windy street that goes down to Waverly.

And Alan was a Christian. And the first thing Alan did was find a church. It happened to be Buclue Free Church, where I've been ever since. And Alan had a personal and a profound and an obvious relationship with Jesus.

[1 : 2 1] Now, I didn't know what the gospel was. I didn't know who Jesus was. But I did know who Alan was. And I could tell that there was something in him that was different and positive and engaging.

So sometimes we think of mission and we think of the challenges, and there are. And we think of the preparation, and there is.

But I would suggest that each one of us here, if we know Jesus, if we love Jesus, then he has given to us the work of mission, whether local or national or international.

And we live in a day where we might be tempted to despair. We might be tempted to say there's so much, so much darkness. There's so much ignorance. There's so many difficulties.

And that's all true. But if the day is characterized by darkness, doesn't that mean that light would be even more apparent? If we live in a day that is characterized by confusion, doesn't that imply that clarity becomes ever more obvious?

[2 : 3 3] So never lose sight of what you can do, not there and then, but here and now. With that brief introduction, I'd like to take you to a very distant place.

If you go as far south as you can and you go as far west as you can in China, there is a monument with a plaque that's written in three languages.

And it's written in the language of Mandarin Chinese, it's written in the language of the Lisu people, and it's also written in English. The English inscription reads this, Today, the Lisu people live in three countries predominantly.

There's approximately 900,000 Lisu people in China, 350,000 in Myanmar, Burma, and about 40,000 in Thailand.

Now, the Lisu population in China is 45% evangelical. By evangelical, we're evangelical. We believe the gospel.

- [4 : 00] We recognize Jesus as Savior and Lord. We recognize the Bible as the word of God. We recognize that salvation is the work of God through Christ applied by the Holy Spirit.
- So these are believers as we would recognize believers. So 45% of the Chinese, the Lisu people within China are evangelical.
- 52% of the Lisu people in Myanmar are evangelical. And 34% of the Lisu people in Thailand are evangelical.
- Now, I hope today that I'll give you some information. I'm not expecting anybody to remember statistics. But remember that this plaque was from the Lisu church in recognition of one man, giving thanks and praise to God for his work.
- So today, if you look at the Joshua Project, and if you've never seen this website, I'd encourage you to go. The Joshua Project looks at the world and all of the peoples of the world and gives you an insight into each of these people.
- [5 : 10] So you can look up any people group. You can look up any nation. And you can see the progress of the gospel in that place and among those people. So these statistics are as accurate as we can get at the present time.
- This is 2017. In 1908, when James O. Fraser went to... Well, he left for China in 1908.
- He arrived and settled in the far southwest by 1910. And that was the first time he encountered the Lisu people. They had traditional dress that was different from the Chinese.
- They had language that was different from the Chinese people. They had customs that were different. But the one thing that struck James Fraser was this, that the Lisu people knew absolutely nothing about Jesus Christ.
- So we are talking about 109 years ago, that the Lisu people were unreached, unpenetrated, unengaged with the gospel of Jesus.
- [6 : 19] And today, let's say 110 years later, these are a people who are predominantly evangelical believers. Now, how does this happen?
- How did this happen? And how can we be a part of what God is doing? So this church and these people...
- Now, James O. Fraser was a missionary with what was then known as the China Inland Mission. It's now known as OMF, Overseas Missionary Fellowship. And this is a missionary organization that is operating in many of the countries of Eastern Asia, involved in work among the Asian peoples and the Chinese people and the Chinese diaspora.
- But let me take you back, because I want us to be inspired. Because as we consider these great figures of the past, we might be inclined to say, that's great for him.
- That's great for them. But what can I do? Or what can we do? Well, just to take you back a little bit. So when James Fraser, he was born in 1886.
- [7 : 31] When he was 20 years old, he graduated. He had a degree in engineering. He also happened to be a very accomplished pianist. And he was going to pursue a career in engineering.
- He was a Christian. And then a friend gave him a leaflet, a pamphlet. And the title of the pamphlet was, Do Not Say.
- Do Not Say. And the subtitle was, The Church's Excuses for Neglecting the Heathen. Now by heathen means the foreigners, the people living in distant countries, but particularly foreigners who do not know the gospel.

And this is a remarkable pamphlet. It's about 80 pages. And this pamphlet profoundly transformed the thinking and profoundly transformed the life of James Fraser and through his life, profoundly transformed the Lisu people group.

So maybe we can begin by asking ourselves, what excuses are we making? What excuses are we making individually?

[8 : 39] What excuses are we making as a church? That we look at this world today, roughly 7.4 billion people on this big planet, and it's growing. We think of the diversity, all different kinds of philosophies, all different kinds of religions, all different kinds of customs.

We think of those areas of the world where there are barriers and obstacles, and there are many. We think of those areas of the world where being a Christian is dangerous. And we're proclaiming Jesus could be very dangerous.

And we can all make excuses individually. I'm too young. I'm too old. I'm not good with languages. I find it difficult to eat unusual food.

It's too far. It's too tough. We don't have enough money. This is a reason. In my own church, the free church, this is a constant refrain.

We don't have the resources. We don't have the people. We don't have the funding. But this pamphlet was reminding us that one day, Jesus Christ will return.

[9 : 50] And one day, Jesus will ask us to give an account. And this pamphlet that Fraser read, and this pamphlet, which you can read, it's there online if you'd like to see it, it's suggested that the excuses that we make now will appear to be very hollow then.

They won't be very persuasive when Jesus gives us the opportunity to make our excuses or to give the reasons for which we have not shared the gospel with our neighbors, nor have we shared the gospel with the distant peoples of the world.

So let's keep in mind this man, James Fraser. Let's keep in mind a people that had no knowledge of the gospel about a hundred years ago.

And that a people today who are characterized by a vibrant and by a vital Christian church, not a perfect Christian church. As much as you have to celebrate in Bruntsfield Evangelical Church, yours is not a perfect church.

Beccle Free Church on the other side of the meadows, certainly not a perfect church. Why? Because we're composed of people. So the Lord Jesus is not waiting to work in the lives of perfect people or in the fellowships of perfect churches.

[11 : 14] If he was, he would have no one to work with and no congregations to work with. But do we have a vision for what God is up to?

Because as you read the Bible, and just a few moments ago, Alistair read two chapters. He read a chapter from the middle of the Bible, Psalm 67. He read a chapter from the end of the Bible, Revelation chapter 7.

If I could read a few verses from the beginning of the Bible, if you look, for example, at Genesis chapter 12. This is one of the profound encounters of the Bible. The Lord said to Abram, go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those that bless you.

And him who dishonors you, I will curse. And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Now, as we read the Bible, there are threads that unite the whole of Scripture.

[12 : 26] The gospel is one of those threads. The message of salvation through faith is one of these threads that unites the whole of Scripture.

Because when God spoke to Abraham, what do we read? We read that Abraham believed God and that God credited his faith as righteousness. So it's all about trusting in God.

It's not about us, what we do, but it's about God and what he has done. Now, Abraham saw Jesus from a distance. We have a much clearer picture, don't we, of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done.

So the thread of the gospel runs from Genesis through to Revelation. There is no other message because there is no other Savior. But I would suggest equally that the thread of mission runs through the whole of Scripture.

It becomes clearer and more focused as we go from old to new or as we go from the beginning of the Old Testament through to the Psalms, through to the prophets, through to Isaiah, that we see a growing picture that God has a care and concern not for some or few, but for all.

[13 : 46] All families, all tribes, all nations, all peoples, and that God chose to work in the life of Abraham, one, that Abraham would become a nation, a nation based on faith.

So wherever you see Abraham, think faith. There is the father of the faithful. So God built a great nation out of one man. But the desire was that not only this one nation would know God, but that this one nation would show God off to the nations that they would desire to come to see God for themselves.

And that's what God is doing in the lives of his people today. He not only is concerned about your salvation, your eternal destiny, he's not only concerned about your welfare, but God wants to show himself off in your life and through your life so that the people you work with, the people that you live next door to, the people within your household, the people that you rub shoulders with as you go to church, or the people that you just have good friendships with, that they want to say there's something about him and there's something about her and there's something about us.

That's different. And when God shows himself off, what does he show off? He shows off his power. He shows off his mercy. He shows off his grace. He shows off his goodness.

We sang a version of Amazing Grace just a few moments ago. God demonstrated his power and his mercy in the life of John Newton, a man whose life was characterized by infidelity.

[15 : 32] He was an unbeliever, a man whose life was characterized by sin and licentiousness. God met him. God changed him. God transformed him.

So when he said, Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind. But now I see that John Newton was testifying personally to the grace and to the power of the gospel.

So as we survey the scriptures, Abraham will be the father of a nation and that nation through him, through that nation and through Abraham that all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

God be merciful and bless us that the blessing that we desire for ourselves in Psalm 67 is an overflowing blessing so that others might see, that others might taste, that others might enjoy, and others might benefit.

And as we come to this final picture in the book of Revelation, we have that there's a multitude, so many that they cannot be numbered, that they are clothed, they're wearing white, they have been made pure, they've come out of the tribulation, they've washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

[16 : 50] And how are these described? A great multitude that no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne, before the Lamb, clothed in white branches, in white robes with palm branches in their hand and crying out with a loud voice, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

All peoples, all nations, all families will be represented where? In glory, in front of the Lamb. So the promise to Abraham and the fulfillment of Revelation, these are the great bookends.

And here we are right in the middle. We are in the middle of God's redemptive plan. And right now, we can say that there is a world and that there are peoples in this world who do not yet know and have not yet heard.

The Lisu people now have heard. They have an indigenous church. They have a growing church that is able to reach its own people and even reach beyond its own people group.

Let me remind you just of those words of the Great Commission, Matthew 28. If you think of Matthew 28, verses 18 to 23, three verses shows how my mind works.

[18 : 14] I often think of food. Think of a sandwich, right? A sandwich, you have a piece of bread, you have something in the middle, you have a piece of bread. This is a sandwich because you have two statements and in the middle you have a command.

Statement number one, and Jesus came and said to them, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. That's who Jesus is. The other half of the sandwich is the statement in verse 20, and behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

So what do we have? We have the power of Jesus and we have the presence of Jesus. So all power, all authority, and his presence is with us from now until forever.

Now you understand those brackets or the bread of the sandwich. You then come to the command because if you look at the command on its own you would say, I can't do it. We can't do it.

This is impossible. But if you have all powerful Jesus and all present Jesus, then the command go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

[19 : 32] Now that command comes now into a much different focus. Because if the power belongs to Jesus, can he do this? Absolutely. If the presence of Jesus is there, will he do this?

Absolutely. All the power, all the resources, all that we need, the wisdom, the grace, the strength, the courage, the comfort, we are not doing this on our own, but he is with us every step, every journey, every challenge.

So if you think of the Great Commission in that way, you realize that it's still all about Jesus. the work of the cross, the work of salvation, is that a joint venture on our part that we give and he gives that we do and he does?

No. It's his work on our behalf and all the benefit comes to us. Now in the work of mission, in a sense, yes, we go, we respond, we proclaim, but it's his work from beginning to end.

It's his power. It's his authority. It's his presence. It's his agenda. All the praise on all the credit and all the glory will ultimately come to him.

[20 : 53] Now when you think to that story of James Fraser, let me give you an insight into what kind of person Fraser was. Now you might say he's an educated man and he was.

He was gifted in acquiring language and understanding a different culture, which he was. So much so that the Lisu alphabet that was adopted by the Chinese government, you see, the Lisu people are one of 55 minority people groups within the People's Republic of China.

The government of China recognized that the Fraser alphabet was the best representation of the Lisu language that has ever been developed. So here's a man with gifts, absolutely.

But listen to his insight into the work of mission. He said, I used to think that prayer should have the first place and teaching the second.

Now I feel that it would be truer to give prayer the first, second, and third place and teaching the fourth. Now this is the challenge.

[22 : 02] We might not all have the gifts to teach. We might not have all the gifts to acquire language. We might not all have the gifts to evangelize or to give an apologetic, a reason, or a response.

But prayer is something that we all can do. Prayer is something that we are all able to do. And in prayer we are drawing upon the resources, the strength, the power of the one who has all power, all strength.

In one of his prayer letters he wrote to his supporters, Fraser said this, he said, I am not asking you just to give help in prayer as a sort of sideline, but I am trying to roll the main responsibility of prayer on you.

I want you to take the burden of spiritual warfare, the burden of warfare, the burden of these people on your shoulders.

I want you to wrestle with God for them. So it's very easy to look at someone like Fraser and to say what a great missionary, what a great example of.

[23 : 20] But I think he would be the first to say and was the first to say that it was not him, but it was the prayers of God's people, but even more, it was the God to whom they were praying.

He was the one who achieved. He was the one who accomplished. He was the one who transformed the spiritual lives of these people. It was not him, but it was God himself.

So there you have the great commission. There you have the reminder of what God has done and is doing. You're celebrating these years, 67 to 2017, 50 years.

Let me take you back to a key moment in that period. It was in 1974. In 1974, a group of leaders from all over the world gathered in Lausanne, Switzerland.

It became known as the Committee for Worldwide Evangelism, and they published a covenant. You see, the recognition was this.

[24 : 24] On one level, by 1974, all the nations of the world, the nation states, had been penetrated to some extent by the gospel.

So there was a perception, among some at least, was, overseas mission has now been fulfilled. Listen to these words.

We affirm that Christ sends his redeemed people into the world as the Father sent him, and that this calls for a similar deep and costly penetration of the world.

We need to break out of our ecclesiastical ghettos and permeate non-Christian society. In the church's mission of sacrificial service, evangelism is primary.

world's evangelization requires the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.

[25 : 25] I think we can celebrate here, Bruntsfield Evangelical Church, Buclew Free Church, Charlotte Baptist Chapel, Corubber's Christian Cloth. We have many churches in the city of Edinburgh that have the whole gospel.

We'll differ on some small points, but that doesn't matter. But we have the message. We have the message of Jesus. But are we aware of our responsibility?

The whole church, that doesn't just mean everyone of Brunsfield Evangelical, but it means all the believers within the city of Edinburgh, within the nation of Scotland, the whole church needs to take this whole gospel.

We don't give the world anything less than what we have, but we need to take it to the whole of this world, to all of its people.

If you look at the Bible, in Acts chapter 1, there were about 120 people who met together for prayer.

[26 : 30] By Acts chapter 2, 3,000 had been added to the church at the end of Peter's Pentecost sermon. Acts chapter 4, we're told that many of those who had heard the word believed and the number of men came to about 5,000.

By Acts chapter 17, when Jason had welcomed some of the brothers into his home, we're told that these men who have turned the world upside down have come here also.

Jason has received them and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar. saying that there is another king, Jesus. So there is a rapid spread of the gospel within the biblical period.

120, 3,000, 5,000. The world turned upside down. Now, I'm a student of history. When I came to this country, I came to study the history of Scotland.

So it wasn't church history, but it was the history of the Scottish people, the political history of Scotland, and it was a comparative study between Scotland and Ireland. If you want more information that can tell you fascinating stuff.

[27 : 45] But having become a Christian, my love for history is still there. And when I read the biographies of Fraser, or read William Carey, or read of Hudson Taylor, or read of Charles Spurgeon, and I'll be referencing some of these folks later today, I love the history.

So let me give you an idea of history, because if you think of 1900, 1900 probably was the high-water mark of Western missionary activity in the nations, overseas, foreign mission activities, probably at its height by 1900, certainly 1900, 1910.

In 1900, Africa had 10 million Christians, and that was about 10% of the population. By 2000, this figure had grown to 360 million Christians, representing half the population.

Quantitatively, this may well be the largest shift in religious affiliation that has ever occurred anywhere. I don't know about you, but I have this perception.

I have lived in Scotland 27 years. You kind of see the church here, and you kind of think, well, I guess that's the way it is everywhere. It's not the way it is everywhere.

[29 : 14] In the world today, the gospel is reaching new people, and the church of Jesus is growing, and in some cases growing rapidly. If I could recommend one book to you, you might be familiar with John Piper.

John Piper wrote, let the nations be glad, the supremacy of God in missions. If you want one book that will fire you up to pray, and maybe even to go, I would say that this is the book to read.

Because Piper will capture the biblical imperative, and Piper will fire you and enthuse you with, if you've ever seen Piper or heard Piper, he's got a great enthusiasm about his preaching, and it comes through in his writing.

But think of this, 10% of Africa, at the height of the Western missionary endeavor, in 1900, 10% of the population was Christian. Today, when many of the Western missionary agencies have withdrawn or reduced, so you see, God is working, and he's working in remarkable ways, and he's developing and growing local churches, remarkably, in the continent of Africa, and to the ends of the earth.

Just to give you another statistic that you might find interesting. In 1900, 2.5% of the world's population were categorized as believers in Jesus.

- [30 : 48] 2.5%. So that meant it took 18 centuries for the gospel to reach 1 out of 40 people. That figure was doubled by the year 1970.
- So 5% of the world's population by 1970. That's remarkable. 18 centuries, 2.5%. 70 years, now to 5%.
- Today, we're probably around the 12, 12.5% to 15%. So you go from 1 out of 40 in 1900. You're now to 1 out of 8 in 2017. There's still plenty to go. But I was shocked by these statistics because I thought in my mind that we would have been seeing, if not a sharp decline, but a steady decline in the expansion of the gospel.
- Why? Because we've seen a steady decline here within the United Kingdom or within Scotland. But no. The work of the gospel, the advance of the gospel, is proceeding, and in some cases, rapidly.
- [31 : 53] But let me give you an insight. You don't need to remember the numbers, but think of the scale here. Remember in 1974, there was a recognition that describing world mission by nations was inadequate.
- In the United Nations today, there are 193 nations in the UN. In the most recent Olympics, the Rio Olympics 2016, 206 nations competed.
- Missiologists suggest that in the world there are approximately 17,000 people groups. Now, these might be distinguished because of language, or by culture, or by both.
- But that's a much different picture, isn't it? 193 nations in the UN, 206 nations in the Olympics. Now, 16, let's say 17,000 people groups.
- And out of those 17,000, 7,000 are in the category of unreached, like the Lisu people in 1910.
- [33 : 02] They did not know the gospel. They had no meaningful engagement with the message of Jesus Christ. They had no scriptures in their language. They had no indigenous church.
- church. They had no significant effort of bringing the gospel to them. So 7,000 people groups today represent over 3 billion people on this planet.
- This afternoon, we're going to be looking at what mission looks like locally. And if we're honest, mission among our own people is tough. Now, in every church there will be some people who come to church regularly who are not Christians.
- But they might come because of family, they might come because of curiosity, or maybe just come because of custom. But at least they're accustomed to church, right? Now, these people know what church is like.
- They have a familiarity at least with what the message of the church is. So as a preacher, they're part of the audience. You don't need to do much work to get them. They're there in front of you.
- [34 : 07] So you can preach the gospel, you can encourage them or exhort them because they're there in front of you. The next step, of course, for you or for me, is how do we reach the Scottish people, the people that live in Edinburgh, work in Edinburgh, are from Edinburgh, how do we reach them meaningfully for the gospel?
- And that's tough. Because these are people that don't go to church. They probably don't read the Bible. They may or may not have any knowledge or background about Christianity.
- Christianity. But when we talk about these 7,000 people groups, these are very different types of people. They have very different languages. They have very different cultures.
- They have a, the distance culturally between them and us is vast. Now you might say the difference between a person who goes to church, believes in Jesus, Scottish person, and the Scottish person who doesn't go to church, there's a gap there, absolutely.

But that's a relatively small gap. You speak the same language, you're from the same culture, you understand the nuances, you understand roughly what people think, what people feel, etc.

- [35 : 14] But if you're trying now to reach a nomadic group in Saharan Africa, they have a very different language than we do, they have very different cultures than we do, they don't have settled communities as we would see them, that is a huge missiological gap from where we are to where they are.

But if we are committed to the command that Jesus gives, and you'll notice in the Bible, Jesus never really does give suggestions.

Jesus never really does offer advice. Jesus tells us what to do. He gives us what we need, but he doesn't give us ten tips for a happy life.

He doesn't give us five insights to a healthy church. He says, I want you to make disciples of all the nations. Remember that pamphlet, the church's excuses for neglecting the heathens.

These 7,000 people, groups, who do not have the gospel, they are geographically remote, they are culturally very different, many of them are hostile to what they perceive to be the gospel.

- [36 : 29] They're not Christians and they don't particularly want to be Christians. There may be restrictions that mean that you and I cannot easily go to those places. Now, those sound like good excuses.

Jesus, the language is really different. Jesus, the culture is very different. Jesus, they don't really want to be Christians anyway. Their countries or their leaders are hostile.

hostile. That excuse, to you and to me, I think we can convince each other. I think we can give each other a fair number of reasons why reaching these 7,000 people groups is beyond our capacity.

We're few, there are many, we're limited financially, the cultural and all these things. We could list a number of excuses, but the pamphlet's title was do not say.

So, 3.1 billion people on this planet have no meaningful connection to the gospel. Does that bother us?

- [37 : 39] 3 billion people. Now, you might say that there are lost people wherever you go. There might be lost people in your family, people that you love dearly, that do not yet know the Lord Jesus.

And they, you know, I once was lost, but now I'm found. So, the Bible does give you this kind of binary category. Amazing grace means you're found by Jesus.

But the, apart from the amazing grace of Jesus, you're lost. But these people are not just lost. They have no meaningful way of being found. Now, does that mean that God is, absolutely, God is not limited.

God can do what he wants, as he wants, how he wants, when he wants. God can do anything he wants. And yet, God chooses to use you and me.

I would choose other people, to be honest. I would choose more able people. I would choose more gifted people. I would choose more enthusiastic people. Jesus tends to choose us.

- [38 : 41] He chooses ordinary people. Why? Because when extraordinary things are accomplished by ordinary people, the credit must go somewhere else. When extraordinary things are accomplished by extraordinary people, then, well, they must have the credit.

He's great at this, she's good at that. No. When we realize that we're not good at these things, and we're not naturally able to these things, and when we realize that it must be Jesus, and Jesus alone who does it, then the credit, the praise, and the honor goes to him.

I'm going to give you one final statistic, which is even more striking. So 7,000 people groups, 3 billion people, unreached.

There are 3,000 people groups. These are often very small, very isolated, very remote. There are 3,000 people that are described in this way, unengaged, unreached groups.

So there's approximately 4,000 people groups, and attempt to reach them. They're on somebody's radar. They're on a mission organization. They're on a church. Somebody is trying to reach these 4,000 people.

[39 : 54] But there are 3,000 people groups, roughly 200 million people. That means 40 people for every Scottish person. So 40 times the population of Scotland.

200 million people, and all we know about them is that they exist as a people group. They have no indigenous church. They have no indigenous believers in Jesus, and nobody is attempting to reach them yet.

So humanly speaking, they're lost with absolutely no way of being found, and no prospect of being found. So as poorly as we evangelize Edinburgh, at least the people of Edinburgh have access.

They could come to Brunsfield tomorrow. They could come to Becloot tomorrow. If they want the Bible, they could get any number of copies of any number of editions of the Bible. But these 7,000 people groups can't easily go to church, and these 3,000 certainly can't go to church.

There's no church for them to go to. There's no Bible for them to purchase. Even if they could purchase it, it just doesn't exist. James Fraser, 1910, comes to China, and he encounters these people, and they're obvious.

[41 : 07] They have different culture. They wear different clothes. They speak a different language. And when he found out that they had no knowledge of Jesus, he dedicated the rest of his life, the next 30 years, to learning their language, to teaching them the gospel.

And God used him and others powerfully, remarkably, to reach this group of people, so that today there is a worshipping church among the Lisu people in Burma, in China, in Thailand.

They know Jesus. They love Jesus. They are passing on that knowledge to their children and passing on that knowledge to the rest of their people. The task is great.

The challenges are many. The resources are few. The time is short. How do we look upon the world?

How do we look upon people who don't know the gospel? How do we look upon the people groups that don't have a meaningful connection or a meaningful opportunity?

[42 : 22] Does that move our hearts? Does that enliven our prayers? Does that elicit a response? Maybe you can't go, but maybe you can send someone.

Maybe you can't speak that language, but maybe you can devote yourself to prayer. Remember Fraser saying, I used to think it was prayer was the first and teaching was the second, but now I'm convinced prayer is the first, second, and third, and teaching is the fourth.

I'm convicting myself here. If worldwide evangelism depended upon the frequency and fervency of my prayers, it would be hopeless.

But if we have a genuine love for Jesus, which we do, every believer has a genuine love for Jesus, and if we realize what Jesus has done for us, and if we realize what we now have, and if we realize what we once were, and if we realize where we are going, and if we understand that one day we will be in that great multitude, Revelation chapter 7, and we will have the white robes, and we will have the palm branches, and we will be in that great multitude from every language, nation, tribe, we know that that's where we'll be.

How can we best use our time now? How can we best use our talents now? How can we best use our resources now? The work of mission is the work of taking Jesus, his message, his life, his death, his resurrection, taking the gospel of Jesus to people who do not yet have it.

[44 : 05] They might be our neighbors, but let's spare a thought, and let's consider what we have to say and what we can do for the three billion people that are unreached.

For the 200 million people that are not only unreached, but not even engaged, can we see those numbers reduced?

Because as many as 7,000 are, the Lisu people are no longer in that group. A hundred years ago they were. Today they're not. What will we be able to celebrate 10 years from now?

What will you be able to celebrate 50 years from now? A vibrant, growing church? Maybe planting new churches within Edinburgh, but will you as a church be able to celebrate and say, we have attempted by the grace of God to reach people in this world who have not heard the gospel and praise be to God.

He has been pleased to use us, to use our prayers, to use our efforts, to use our service at home, abroad, and to the ends of the earth, and the praise and the glory is all his.

[45 : 18] In loving memory of James O. Fraser, 1886 to 1938, how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.

With deepest love, remember you always, the Lisu Church. Can we pray that there'll be more and more monuments of living churches to those who have taken the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ and that many today who are lost will find themselves at that place in glory, in front of the Lamb, with the robes, holding the palm branches, singing the song of the redeemed.

So may God bless us. May God encourage us. May God challenge us. May God inspire us. I tell you this, ordinary people accomplish extraordinary things because we have an extraordinary God, we have an extraordinary Savior, and we have an extraordinary gospel.

May God bless you and us all. Amen.