

# The Church: Mission

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] but today I want us to look at what is it the church does? What is the purpose of the church? And we've seen some of what makes a church and what it does when it meets, but what are we here for?

Do we have a purpose, a goal, or a task? Or to put it another way, what is our mission? And there are many people who will give lots of different answers to what this is, and there's lots of helpful things and lots of good things the church can and should do.

And none of these things are wrong, but most of them aren't the main thing. But I think the best place for us to look is, as Ewan said, the last things that Jesus says.

And the last thing that someone says is usually the thing that they really want you to remember. I'm sure you have this if you ever get sent out to Tesco's or Aldi or the equivalent, where you get given the list of what you need to do.

You'll probably get it in writing, some things underlined. But then just before you leave, you'll get, don't forget. Don't forget the toilet roll because we have none left.

[ 1 : 1 1 ] Don't forget. And it probably rings in the back of your head as you get back in the car before you leave. But you're told, don't forget. And that's what is meant to stay with you. If you forget everything else, remember this.

And here we have one last don't forget. This is one last what Jesus wants to leave his people with, something that is fundamental to who they will be. And he's going to make a claim about who he is as a king.

And he's going to issue them a command as a king. But you might have heard, I mean, I don't know if you've been in the country in the past couple of weeks, but we have a new king.

And he's been given a crown. He's been given authority and kingdom and titles. And that's King Charles III. And we all have a duty as citizens in the United Kingdom that's written in law that we must obey, that we must follow him.

But he has limits. He has limits to this kingdom that he has. And you saw this if you were watching the funeral. Even though he is in his kingdom, the abbey where it was is filled with other rulers and other kings from all over the world.

[ 2 : 2 7 ] He is one of many. And he also has limits placed to them by parliament. And so while he has a lot more authority than me, he's still a man with limits.

But in our passage here today, Jesus makes a bold claim, a unique and an absolute claim about his authority. He says in verse 18 that all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.

He says he has supreme authority over the whole world, over the United Kingdom, over the United States, over China, over Vietnam, over every country. But I want to ask this, is that what we believe?

Or do we think that Jesus has limits to where he reigns? He may rule in heaven or in his church, but what about out there in the world?

As you go into school or into work or anywhere else that you go, where you feel alone and different, does Jesus have authority there? Because I want us to see that Jesus isn't claiming a minor authority.

[ 3 : 36 ] He's not one king amongst many, but he is supreme. To the furthest reaches of space, to the highest mountain, to the closest town, every human, every animal, every planet, he reigns.

And so wherever you go, you go where Jesus reigns. Whoever you talk to, Jesus reigns over them. And I want to look at this passage in the two ways that he speaks.

He first makes this claim to us as a king, and then later we'll look at the command to us as a king. And as you said, we're here at the end. This is the last words of Matthew's gospel.

This is after his disciples have fled. They run away. They lost all hope that Jesus was the Christ, the promised savior, the king to come. And Jesus went to the cross.

He willingly went. He died, and he was buried, and he was sealed in a tomb, and he was guarded by soldiers. How could this have been the king?

[ 4 : 45 ] Well, death couldn't hold him. The tomb couldn't hold him, and the soldiers couldn't hold him. With authority, he walks past all of that. He rose.

He met Mary, Mary Magdalene, who'd come to his tomb. And he tells her, go, go gather my brothers, my disciples, those guys who all run away, go gather them.

Tell them to come. He tells them to go to this mountain, and this is where we begin here in verse 16. These disciples come to this mountain in Galilee. We read, they worship Jesus.

We also do see that some doubted, but this word also could mean hesitate. And we read of this doubt in some of the other gospels, where Thomas, he wants to make sure that this really is Jesus risen from the dead.

He wants to make sure this is a physical Jesus. And rather, be in a worry, that's part of the realism of Matthew's account. They're like us, prone to doubt.

[ 5 : 46 ] They want to make sure. Because rising from the dead, that's impossible without a miracle. And yet, Jesus stands before them.

And Jesus comes to these disciples, who are both hesitant and worshipping, and he says to them, he says, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.

And he's very clear that this authority is God's authority as the only son from the father. And we'll look at it later, but Jesus says to the disciples in verse 19 to go and baptize them into the name, singular, of the father, son, and Holy Spirit.

He places himself equal to the father and has one God in three persons of the father, son, and spirit. And as you've gone through Matthew's gospel, if you've read it, there are various other places constantly through it where you see Jesus' authority demonstrated and declared.

You'll see him walking through and as he goes, he's ruling over creation, feeding people who are hungry, he's healing diseases, and he's teaching as someone with authority.

[ 7 : 04 ] You see him telling people, come, follow me, and they rise up and walk after him. You see him tell people who can't walk to stand up and they do.

He commands the powers of darkness and demons and they obey him. And at one point, his disciples are terrified they're all about to die in a storm in a boat. They wake Jesus and he stands up and with a word, he rebukes it, he rebukes the wind and the waves and there's calm.

And they're sitting there and they're thinking, what sort of man is this that even the wind and the waves obey him? He also makes the authorities, the religious authorities, angry because he claims to be able to forgive sins.

And they know only God can do that. And yet, in all these cases, he demonstrates that he has authority. I encourage you to go and read that and read through Matthew's gospel and you'll see.

And it's the story of the whole Bible where God was going to send someone, he's going to send his ruler to defeat his enemies and establish a rule.

[ 8 : 15 ] what we find is Jesus even lays down his life. No one has the power to take it.

But yet, he rises from the dead. He defeated the last enemy's sin and the power of sin, death. And he proves for all time that his authority is over all powers, anything that can be imagined, whether spiritual or physical, demonic or earthly, or any power that can be imagined, Jesus reigns.

And so, his disciples standing before him fall down and worship. And this is the response. This is the right response to someone like this.

He's not just acting. He is God and he reigns supreme. You might be asking, what does this mean for us? What does this mean? Well, Jesus claims and he has proven to have authority over our lives.

There isn't anyone who can say, I'm exempt or any area of our lives where you can say, Jesus reigns over there but not here. He is a name that is above every name.

[ 9 : 31 ] And one day, the Bible tells us that everyone will see that. No one will be able to deny it and every knee will bow. It also tells us because Jesus reigns reigns in verse 18.

That a response is demanded and we see this in verse 19 to go and tell people and only because all authority belongs to Jesus dare we go out and tell people and only because Jesus is all authority over heaven is there any hope that we have any success when we go and speak.

And so we turn and we look at the second point, his command to us as king. And I know for some of you, you went along and you saw that down in the town square in Haddington, we had a herald.

We had someone who was authorized by the king to come and proclaim the crowning of Charles III. Even though it already happened, it was proclaimed in every town throughout our country and in every village.

And this is what happened throughout the world, throughout time that it seems foreign to us but before you had the BBC with end-to-end coverage, the king had to appoint someone, the king sent someone or sent many people to go through his land and say, you have a new king.

[ 10 : 53 ] He would say to them, you must submit to this new king, you must swear loyalty to him and here are his laws, you must obey him. But it would also usually come with a promise, a promise to protect these people, his people.

And this is what we find in verses 19 to 20. Jesus commissions his disciples to go, as heralds, to go, go and declare this authority and it has four parts to it.

He says, go make disciples everywhere, go herald and baptize them and teaching them and he closes with a promise. And we're going to look at this and he says, in verse 19, go therefore because I reign and make disciples of all nations.

And literally it just reads, as you go out into all nations, make disciples. And they're to go out and make these disciples in all nations so that this blessing and the rule of King Jesus goes out with them and it can flow to all people everywhere, to every tribe, to every nation and every tongue.

And this is evangelism. This is to go out and to, as followers of Jesus, to call other people to follow him. As we have in our Bibles, you go into the book of Acts and you see a few, just as we saw, doubting and worshipping followers who come to recognize Jesus, go out into the world and they call people, come, listen to him, listen to Jesus, follow him.

[ 12 : 26 ] these people are gathered into local churches. They believe. And then this discipleship continues and they continue to speak the word of Jesus all around the world to everyone they meet.

And we have this. We have churches everywhere and we as a church here in Haddington are here because people went. People went with the good news of Jesus. And maybe you can remember if you're a Christian, the person who came and told you about Jesus.

Because if we know who he is, if we know why he came and why he died, we consider ourselves to be someone who worships this risen King Jesus.

Well here Jesus tells us that we too are to go. This is just simply speaking about him, telling people that there is a King as we meet people, as we go out and speak to our friends.

I said, as you follow Jesus, you call others to follow him too. Knowing that there's no street in Haddington, there's no town anywhere here, there's no mounds of earth that you call laws, which still seems really weird, there's no beach, there's no place that you go that Jesus is not there with you.

[ 13 : 46 ] So we speak winsomely, we tell people that there's good news, it is good news. And as you sit next to someone at work, as you meet a friend for lunch, or you go to the school pickup, well, Jesus is there with you too.

He is Lord there. And yes, some go far and wide, but most of us will stay pretty close with this message. And I'm so glad as a church that we support Martin to go to Vietnam, and they're part of that local church that's there, but I'm also glad that we support Robin as he goes and they plant a church in West Slovan.

But I'm also glad as a church that we stand here. I'm glad that we are here so the people of East Slovan can hear too. Because wherever we find ourselves, we have an opportunity by God's grace to represent the king.

And Jesus placed every single one of us, if you're a Christian, he places you where you are with your connections to represent him there.

And as people come and they hear and they respond, well, they are welcomed also into his family, also into this church. And we see that in what he says next.

[ 15 : 06 ] When you make disciples, you baptize them. He says in verse 19, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit. So when people come and they understand the good news of Jesus and they worship him as king, well then, they're also spiritually and publicly welcomed into his family, the church.

This is what baptism is. It's not about what we've done, but it's about what God has done through Jesus. It's about his promises. It's God's purpose is to bring a people to himself in a covenant family.

See, church is a place where people, they go out from, but it's also a place where people are brought into. It's God's design and it's not about lots of individuals scattered, but it's a group of people who are gathered in local churches everywhere.

And this is why we're spending so much time looking at what is the church because it's from the church where this happens because the church is Jesus' body.

It's his kingdom. And so it's natural if someone comes to follow Jesus that they will want to come and join his people.

- [ 16 : 30 ] So what baptism communicates, that we have been united to Jesus, cleansed from our sin, made new by the Holy Spirit, as a sign of God's faithfulness and his promises.
- Jesus tells us as these people come in and are welcomed, well the church also has a duty to equip them, these new disciples. And he says to teach those who are baptized all that I command them.
- We see this in verse 20. Teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you. It's more than just a work of going out and converting people. Actually of bringing them in and teaching them and equipping them.
- It calls us to equip them, to teach them, to ground them in who Jesus is. What is the calling on their life? This is one of the reasons why we gather here.
- It's one of the reasons why we have questions at the end. So we can speak to each other. We can equip each other and help each other and encourage each other. It's why we have our home groups.
- [ 17 : 35 ] It's why we meet up to encourage each other as we reach out and as we speak of friends and loved ones we want to come to know Jesus. Jesus demands his disciples to observe all, to teach others to obey all that I command.
- And this is all his words. This is all the Bible. He is the word of God. Teach them to obey me, to listen to me. And as we look through those passages on eldership, we saw that they especially have a responsibility to equip the saints as all Christians.
- The church is here to equip a whole church to go out. Because it's all of us who go out. And I don't think I need to highlight the fact that speaking to people about Jesus is hard.
- many of us feel terrified of the thought of being there in a conversation where someone asks you about what you believe. Or many of us feel guilty.
- Many of us feel as I speak you're reminded of that time. You're reminded of that opportunity you missed or where someone asks you so who is Jesus? And you can't find the words and you just um, um and we feel guilty sometimes.
- [ 18 : 59 ] I think we need to be reminded of the promise that Jesus gives us with it. He promises himself. He promises that he will be with his people forever.
- And he says in verse 20 and behold I am with you always to the end of the age. Wherever you go wherever his people go there is Jesus.
- Jesus. He's about to be absent from his disciples. He's going back to his father and he promises one day he'll come back for all his people but he leaves them with his promise that he will be with them.
- His spirit will be in them and he's already said that wherever two or three are gathered in his name he'll be there. But here he's saying wherever you go I will be there also.
- So that it's not only when we meet in Jesus' name but when we go in his name he is there. It's knowing that that enabled the first disciples to go.
- [ 20 : 08 ] We can go and make disciples because Jesus has authority but also because Jesus promises to be with it. And I know it's my job it's what I'm training to be to speak to people about Jesus and I find it hard.
- But actually one of the things I find hard is because I feel like I'm going on my own. Sometimes I forget that we go together.
- We sung earlier in a song and in the last song we sung before we came up that in this gospel the church is one. We do not walk alone. we have his spirit as we press on to lead us safely home.

We don't go out into your relationships and the people that you meet on your own. We go out together. We pray and support each other. And also there's some wonderful things to help us, to equip us.

There's a really wonderful book by a guy called Annie Bannister and it's got a great title that says how we can speak about Jesus without looking like an idiot. I mean, that makes me want to buy it because I think we all need a bit of help.

[ 21 : 26 ] How can we winsomely tell people this good news? But we also need to be reminded constantly about what is Jesus' mission. Especially if you're here and you're not someone yet who would call yourself a Christian.

because this good news about Jesus' message and his kingdom going to the nations is not just an afterthought. Jesus goes, oh by the way, just remember to tell people about me when I go.

Well no, this has been the very heart of God. This has been his mission before time began. It is seen throughout the Bible. God's plan has always been, his longing has always been that people everywhere would hear about him.

who would come and have fellowship with him and receive his abundant blessing. This is why he sent his son. This is the mission of Jesus.

He tells us that Jesus says, I didn't come to condemn the world but in order that I might save them. He came to die to defeat death and sin and subdue the powers of the world, all these things that hold us and grip us so we can come without anything to boast in ourselves and dwell with God.

[ 22 : 51 ] See, we all are or we all were rebels to God. We all start our lives as people who don't recognize Jesus as king.

But king Jesus loves to chase these rebels down, not to condemn them, to save them, to bring them in. See, Jesus went out so that we might come in to God's family.

But we now go out so that others can come and share this blessing too. Because the people out there don't know that. They don't know what we share. The joy and the privilege that we have.

But we need to remember that we go as victors. We go as those who are victorious in Christ because Jesus has won. He has the authority. There's always the danger that as a church we could just keep this to ourselves.

That we could grow rich and fat spiritually. That we could have a lovely gathering where we all know each other, we all like each other, and we don't have any people that cause us any bother, and we'll just close the doors and that'll be fine.

[ 24 : 04 ] We'll keep the world out, and we'll keep the word in, and we'll just wait until Jesus comes back. What would happen is the light of our church would go out.

We would cease to be a church. And if you look out at any church that ceases to follow what Jesus calls to hear, they cease to proclaim the good news, to tell of what Jesus has done, to make disciples and baptize them and tell them all about what Jesus has done, and all his commands, and to follow them, well, these churches, they die spiritually, and they eventually close physically.

We have many of them. And it's incredibly sad to see, and it's a warning for us not to go complacent. Many of them used to be wonderful churches who sent many people out into the nations, and many people were brought in.

because a church is a gathered people of God who are united and they live in a place. But they're meant to be a city on a hill, a beacon of light in a dark world that compels people to come in, that draws people to come in.

See, where the people of God go out and where they speak of him, they're constantly filled with the life of God. They thrive and the people grows.

[ 25 : 36 ] And this is what happens in the book of Acts. A few men and women go out and countless people are brought in and they're encouraged and they're built up and the blessings abound. And you can see this in countries in the world and many of them are being persecuted and yet the kingdom grows.

And it will happen here. It will be hard. We feel weak. We feel probably should find somebody else to go out.

Isn't there an elite group? We get tired. We get discouraged. It doesn't go well. We've spoken many times and Jesus doesn't send you out alone.

It's not you against an unbelieving world. It's not you going out into work or school alone. It's all God's people together by his spirit going out.

Come into this church and hopefully you're loved, cared for, and equipped, and supported. And so we go out and then we bring others in and they're loved and they're cared for and they're brought in and they then will be sent out.

[ 26 : 56 ] This is what a church should be. And we've seen this even in the past couple of weeks. We've seen someone come to living faith in this church. We want more.

We want more being saved here. We cry out do it again Lord. We rejoice in people being saved and we say Lord do it again. Save our neighbours. Save our families.

Lord we want and we long that the people that we know to come and receive your blessing. And this drives us back to pray together and to come as a church and say to the Lord of the harvest that the workers are few but the harvest is plentiful.

There's many around us we know and we see that we'll be saved. There's many in Vietnam, there's many in West Lothian who will be saved by God's mercy.

But as we pray to the Lord of the harvest as we pray for him to send workers, remember God will answer that. God will send families like the Parisians. Churches will be planted like Robyn's doing.

[ 28 : 04 ] But also as you make that prayer know that God will send you too because you will be the worker in the harvest. God will use you as part of this church to speak to the people that he's placed around you.

Even though you feel weak, you will go in power. Because the harvest is indeed plentiful and we, his church, are the workers. So let's pray to this Lord of the harvest.

Let's pray with longing and expectation that soon many more will be in here with us and many more will be going out with us too. So let's join and pray. Lord, we thank you.

We thank you that even though we feel weak, even though we feel helpless, you have given us yourself, you have given us your power and you have given us this people.

Lord, we thank you that each and every single one of us who are one of your people are needed, are valuable and together we make up a body.

[ 29 : 09 ] No one is lacking. All of us together go. Lord, help us. Help us each individually as we go out into this week. Lord, it is hard, but you have won.

This is your world and you are king. Lord, give us words, even quiet words in season. Help us when we have those opportunities to not feel that we need to say everything, but just to say that we are a Christian and we have hope.

Lord, help us to point people to you and help us as a church to be those people. Bless us and keep us. And Lord, we long that many more would come and receive what most of us know.

That we, that they would know what we know, the blessing it is to be part of your people.  
Lord, go with us now we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.  
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