

GOSPEL EDGE

DATE: SUNDAY, 24TH OF MAY 2020 | SERIES: NATION CHANGERS - PART 2

MARK 16:15-18

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

ACTS 16:25

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.

NOTE TO LEADERS:

- Please remind your group of the online prayer meeting at 6pm this evening (Tuesday) - broadcast live on YouTube and Facebook.
- Next Tuesday, the 2nd of June at 7pm, Steve will be chatting with Rob Hoatson, Founder of Thirsti Water. The interview will be streamed live on YouTube and Facebook.

START TALKING

1. What was your greatest take away from Sunday's message?
2. What do you miss most during this time of lockdown? What has been your biggest blessing during this time?

START THINKING

1. Read Mark 16:15. What responsibility did Jesus give to His disciples? What can we learn from this?
2. In Acts 16, we read about Paul and Silas being beaten and thrown in prison. Despite their situation, they praised God by praying and singing. This nationwide lockdown has felt like a 'prison' to many of us. In what way has the lockdown impacted your faith or your desire to share the Gospel?

START SHARING

1. Read Mark 16:15. On Sunday, Peter spoke about four things we can do right now to share the Gospel:
 - a). Pray
 - b). Help
 - c). Preach
 - d). Expect God to work
 Share about a recent occasion when you acted on God's nudge to do one of these four things. How were you prompted to do something? What did you do? What was the outcome?
2. When Sir Edmond Hillary first failed to climb Mount Everest, he commented: "I'll try again because this mountain is the same size tomorrow, but I'm still growing." Our current lockdown situation has presented opportunities for us to grow. In what area of your life do you feel God is nudging you to grow? How are you following those nudges so that you emerge from lockdown having grown in faith/character?

START PRAYING

Thank you, Lord, that the Gospel is alive and unchanging. We pray that our lives would be a reflection of the Gospel through our words and actions. Make us mindful of the daily opportunities we have to pray for others and share the Good News.

START DOING

When you budget for groceries this week, consider including a Nation Changers relief voucher to help feed the needy. As little as R50 will feed one person for 10 days. Find the Nation Changers banking details and Zapper code [here](#).

SUMMARY

OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

In the last two months, we have undergone some massive changes as a nation, and although most of these are challenging, they present new opportunities for the Gospel. In 1 Peter 4:10 we read: *"Just as each one of you has received a special gift [a spiritual talent, an ability graciously given by God], employ it in serving one another as [is appropriate for] good stewards of God's multi-faceted grace."* Sometimes we fail to see the multi-faceted nature (the possibilities) of God's grace.

We may feel like the spread of the Gospel has been limited by the lockdown. But the Biblical mandate is to "go", and the Gospel doesn't stop working because we're in lockdown. *"And he said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.'" Mark 16:15-18.*

That word, "into" is a mandate:

- Into the world
- Into the city
- Into the streets
- Into connection with a neighbour

We may see it as an "out there" mandate - making it feel like it's for someone else - but there are things we can do now:

1. We can pray

"be unceasing and persistent in prayer;" 1 Thessalonians 5:16 (AMP). Pray for the Gospel's effective working in our city. People are also more open to being prayed for than ever before - be open to opportunities to pray for friends, family, colleagues, clients... their response may encourage you to offer to pray for others more often.

2. We can help

Just because people aren't working doesn't mean they don't need to eat. If you can pay your staff, you should. *"Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it."* Proverbs 3:27. We need to keep leaning into this idea that we have a BIG God - He is able to do way more beyond what we can fathom.

John Ortberg said: "When we wake up in the morning, what happens if we live with a small God? We live in a constant state of fear and anxiety because everything depends on us. Our mood will be governed by our circumstances. We will live in a universe that leaves us deeply vulnerable. When we have a chance to share our faith, we shrink back... what if we are rejected or cannot find the right words? It all depends on us. We cannot be generous because our financial security depends on us." But it doesn't depend on us, it's about Christ in us, working through our lives.

3. We can preach

You may say, "I'm not a preacher" or "how do we preach now?" In Acts 16:25, we read about a time when Paul and Silas were imprisoned: *"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them".* God uses our prisons and lockdowns as possibilities.

What looks an impossibility to us can actually become our story.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'" Isaiah 52:7.

Now is a time when connection is more important than ever before. We're a people of the Good News. People are reading our lives through what we do and say. There are opportunities to build bridges - even when we think there is nothing to say people are listening. In times like these, every one of us becomes a "preacher" through what we do and say.

4. We can expect

The supernatural at work in our city - this is possible! If we step up and do the things that Scripture speaks of, God is able to work through our lives in miraculous ways. Now is the time to do something - if you want to walk on water, you need to get out of the boat.

Even failure should not put us off. When Sir Edmond Hillary first failed to climb Mount Everest, he commented: "I'll try again because this mountain is the same size tomorrow, but I'm still growing."

Our current circumstances present a chance for us to grow, so that when we return from this lockdown as Churches, we have a Gospel preaching army ready to go "into".