

# Monday Communion Service

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[ 0 : 00 ] Acts chapter 14 and we're going to be considering the verses that we read there from verses 21 to 28.

Well, we're coming, as we all know, with the service to the close of our communion season. And I think it would be true that all of us who have been able to participate in this weekend will be able to share my testimony that we have been well fed and greatly blessed over the weekend.

And we are grateful for the servant that God has brought among us and for the word that he has preached to us. And we are grateful and so we should be.

And it is appropriate that even this evening we could give expression to that gratitude, even with our presence at this service. But I think we would appreciate that our gratitude should find expression not only with our presence at a service that carries the name of Thanksgiving service, but rather our gratitude will be measured by the manner in which we seek to serve God out there and not only participate in services in here.

Important though that is. Indeed, one of the dominant themes of the preaching this weekend, though many helpful themes were covered, but one of the dominant themes has been the challenge to go.

[ 1 : 42 ] We were reminded on Sunday morning that even in celebrating the Lord's Supper, which we often consider, and in a measure it's a valid perspective, that this is very much a family gathering the Lord's Supper, when God's people gather around the table.

It's for us as God's people, and so it is. And yet we were reminded that the language that is used when Paul speaks of the Lord's Supper, particularly the language of how we are proclaiming the death of Christ till He comes, has a missionary impetus.

So, though it is true that the Lord's Supper is an occasion for the family of God to gather and to remember and celebrate what Jesus has done for us, there is intrinsic to it that missionary obligation and challenge, for we are proclaiming, not to ourselves, for we know already, but rather we are to proclaim to those who do not know the death of Jesus and its significance and the opportunities that it provides for them, forgiveness of sins and friendship with God, eternal life, all of these things thanks to the death of Christ.

And so we are challenged to proclaim it. Indeed, I'm sure those of us who were at the table on Sunday morning will remember the manner in which the minister not only was responsible for leading that part of the service and ministering the sacrament, at the end of the sacrament there was a particular challenge.

And we were told, as we have enjoyed, as we have been fed, so now what were we told? Now go. And I'm sure we are mindful of that commission that we were given to go and to proclaim and to announce and to share the good news.

[ 3 : 41 ] To go and be doing. And I want to meditate on a passage that has lessons for us concerning our duty to go. We were given that commission and we want to be faithful to it.

And I trust that some of what we share this evening, briefly will help us in seeking to be faithful to that commission that we are given constantly, but we were given particularly this weekend.

Well, as we turn to the passage there in Acts chapter 14, Paul and Barnabas had been chosen by the church at Antioch to go and to do a mission.

And as we've read the passage, we find that the particular mission that they were given was largely what we might call urban mission. They visited the larger towns or cities of their day.

It is true that if we were to consider the population centers in those days compared to our own great cities, they would have seemed very small in comparison. But in the context of the time in which they lived, they were the cities.

[ 4 : 52 ] They were the great cities of their day. And it was to those cities that they were sent, to Lystra and Iconium and the others that are mentioned, several mentioned in the passage that we've read.

And the passage that we've read is located at a time when they are returning to report on the work that has been done. So they had been sent, they had done the work that they had been sent to do, and now they are returning to home base to report to the church on what they had done, on the progress that had been made.

So that's more or less the context of these verses in Acts chapter 14. And I want to just pose and seek to answer three questions that we can find or develop our thoughts around this evening.

First of all, when we think of the work of the gospel, the first question, well, whose work is it? Whose work is it? And we'll think of that in a moment. Then to consider, what is the work?

What does the work consist of? What is it that we are to do? And then thirdly, what are some of the features of the work? Now, particularly the second and the third questions will not find in this passage exhaustive answers, but they will find at least partial answers that I think can be helpful for us.

[ 6 : 17 ] But the first question, whose work is it? And I think in the passage we find three answers, three complementary answers to the question, whose work is it?

Gospel work, missionary work, this task of going into all the world, to the towns and cities of this world. Whose work is it?

Well, there are three agents, if you wish, involved, working together, complementing one another. The first answer to the question, whose work is it?

Is that it is God's work. There in verse 27, it's very interesting, the manner in which Paul and Barnabas express themselves as they give their report to the church at Antioch.

We read, on arriving there, they gathered the church together. And then what do we read? They gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them. They reported all that God had done.

[ 7 : 17 ] They are the missionaries. They are the ones who had been sent. And as they gather the church together, you could reasonably imagine that the believers there would have said, well, we want to hear what Paul and Barnabas have done.

What have they achieved? What churches have they planted? What have they done? And yet they are careful to emphasize and highlight to the gathered church there that what they are to speak of and what success they may have had was what God had done.

They gathered the church together and reported all that God had done. God is the one who is with us. But not only is he with us, he is the one who is working.

He's not simply there as a comforting presence to encourage us and to maybe instruct us or to strengthen us. He is the one doing the work.

I'm somewhat reminded of what was being shared with us yesterday morning concerning the angel who came and strengthened Jesus. Well, the angel was there to strengthen Jesus, but the angel wasn't actually doing the work.

[ 8 : 26 ] But when we think of our work of mission, it's not just that the Lord is there to strengthen us and to help us. Helpful as that would be and important and wonderful as that is, but he himself is doing the work.

On Saturday morning, a reference to that, if you wish, in that sense was given as we considered Jesus' template for mission and on the basis of Luke chapter 10.

Some of you may remember, and I'll just read what the first verse of Luke chapter 10 says, After this, the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.

Now that was a particular historical context, but the point that was made was that not only was Jesus sending them out, well, off you go and do the work, but he was sending them to those places where he too was going to go.

He wasn't simply the sender who remained passive at home base. No, he was going with them and before them and he would be there with them doing the work.

[ 9 : 31 ] I'm also reminded of something we noted when we began our study of the book of Acts, of this book in chapter 1. And you'll remember Luke as he introduces the book, and we can maybe just notice that in Acts chapter 1, the manner in which he does so.

There in Acts chapter 1 and verse 1, Luke writes, In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach. And the point that we made was, well, why does he use this language?

Well, the implication is, and now in this second book, I will tell you about what Jesus continued to do. Luke isn't saying, well, yes, in the gospel, Jesus was working, but in Acts, well, now it's the apostles.

Jesus is in heaven, seated on his throne, and, well, he's not involved anymore. No, in this book, I'm going to tell you what Jesus continued to do. And as we do the work of mission, we are involved in a work where God is at work with us, not only accompanying us, but it is his work.

He is working. And that is, I think, fundamental for us. It provides us with our guarantee of success. And though we use the word not in the sense of all the results that maybe we would want, but certainly what God would have achieved, will be achieved, because it is his work.

[10:54] And indeed, knowing that it is his work and that he is at work should stir us with great expectations because we are not depending on our own abilities or on our own passion or on our own faith or on our own gifts or our own perseverance, and the list could go on, but rather our confidence is in God and in his ability and power and will to do all that which he determines to do.

Whose work is it? It is God's work. Paul and Barnabas reported all that God had done. And of course, when God works, his work is a beautiful work.

It is a marvelous work. It is an awe-inspiring work. We think right back to the beginning of time and of creation and we see God's great creative work and of course, it was a perfect work and a beautiful work and an awe-inspiring work.

And his work of redemption as it was executed in the person of Jesus but also as it is applied in the lives of men and women even today is a beautiful work.

It is an awe-inspiring work. It is a glorious work that God does. And this is what the missionaries, Paul and Barnabas had experienced as they went to these places.

[12:12] We read there in verse 21, they preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. This is the work that God was doing. Winning disciples, drawing men and women to faith in Jesus Christ, saving men from their sin and bringing them to form part of the family of God.

And it was a glorious work. It was a beautiful work. It was a tremendous work. It was a beautiful work. It was a beautiful work that was being done. And there can be, I think, for us as Christians, nothing more glorious, nothing more beautiful, nothing more satisfying than to see the work of God in a sinner's life.

Indeed, in ourselves as poor sinners. But in others also who are brought to faith and to see how God works. And of course, His work is a personal one. And it is, although there are common features in all, yet the manner in which that work is carried out is different in every one.

And it is a wonderful thing to witness that work. And we give thanks for the measure in which even in our own time and even in our own congregation, we have the privilege to witness God working in that way, bringing men and women to faith in Jesus Christ.

On the Saturday morning, Barry Douglas from Gilcompton was sharing some of their experiences as they have sought to reach out to Union Street. And it was inspiring and very moving.

[13:38] And indeed, brought a tear to many eyes, and rightly so, as he spoke of how one of the beggars who used to sit outside the church was eventually, and I won't tell the whole story, but was brought in to hear the message on the lunchtime services and in due course was brought to faith.

after many times when he had talked and talked and talked, the phrase that sticks in my mind is when he came again. I can't remember if it was Stuart or Craig. It's not perhaps that important, but there were two names mentioned, but one of those names, and having come many times to just talk and to tell of all his trials and troubles, he came on one occasion and he said, Barry, I don't want to talk anymore.

I just want Jesus. I need Jesus. And he was brought to faith. And isn't that a wonderful thing? Isn't that a glorious thing? And we see folks like that and we may be wondering, doubt if that can happen, but this is what's happened just in this past year in our own city.

And the fact that it's in another congregation makes it no less wonderful, no less tremendous, for it is one work, the work of God. Whose work is it? It is God's work. Paul and Barnabas reported all that God had done.

But that is not the full answer. It's maybe the fundamental element of the answer, but it's not the full answer. We can also say, secondly, that this work is church work.

[ 15 : 05 ] In verse 26, we read, from Italia, they sailed back to Antioch where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. The work of the gospel is not the work of God and a few self-appointed lone rangers who will do the work.

No, it is church work. It's the church that had sent Paul and Barnabas. We think of Paul, the great apostle, and we say, well, surely Paul didn't need a church to send him. Surely God himself commissioned him and he could do his own thing as it were because he had a direct line to God and he could do what he had to do.

But even Paul, in the work that he was doing, was doing it having been sent by a church. In this case, the church at Antioch. Not only had he been sent, but he was conscious of his responsibility to return and to report.

He couldn't say, well, I'm too busy doing mission work. I'm too busy planting churches and I don't need to worry about a home congregation or the leaders of the congregation. I can just report to God.

I'm accountable to God and to God alone. No, he returned to report on what had been done. He had been committed to the work by the brethren. By the congregation and he was accountable to them.

[ 16 : 22 ] And the work of the gospel is church work. That is what God has determined. It is through his church that the work of the gospel is to be carried out.

We read, in fact, just in the previous chapter of how they had been sent. There in chapter 13, we read in the church at Antioch at the beginning, there were prophets and teachers and then the names are mentioned.

And then in verse 2, while they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Who are doing this? Well, this is the church. The church sends the missionaries and the missionaries return to give account of the work that they had done in the name of God but also in the name of the church.

And sometimes we disparage the church and we are frustrated maybe by the manner in which the church isn't what we think it should be. And we say, oh, the church is just an obstacle.

[ 17 : 21 ] The church just gets in the way of the real work. Well, that is not as it should be. The church is the means that God has appointed for extending His kingdom. Whose work is it?

It is the work of the church. And this work of going out into all the world is church work. And it is the work of this church, of this congregation. There is great blessing and I think great merit in the manner in which we organize ourselves as a Presbyterian denomination and the manner in which we can support one another.

And we believe that it is a biblical form of government though we don't consider it to be in the hierarchy of biblical truth or of doctrine at the very pinnacle of that hierarchy.

Nonetheless, we are persuaded that it is biblical. Yet, in this matter of going out and preaching the gospel and planting churches and doing mission work, I wonder if sometimes we have felt that, well, that's something that Edinburgh does.

That's something that the Foreign Missions Board does and we're not really too responsible for that. And maybe it is time for us to consider, well, what about us as a congregation? And there will be occasions when we won't be able to do it alone.

[ 18 : 37 ] We'll have to do it in cooperation with others and that is a good thing. But the work of going out into the world with the gospel is church work. It is the responsibility of local congregations, be they alone, as it were, or in cooperation with others.

It is church work. But then thirdly, in answer to this first question, whose work is it? It's God's work, it's church work, but also we can say it's our work. In verse 27, the phrase that we'd already commented on concerning the manner in which Paul and Barnish have expressed themselves as they report, reported all that God had done, but then it doesn't finish there, does it?

They reported all that God had done through them. All that God had done through them. It was God's work, yes, but God worked through them.

And God is pleased to work through us. We are His instruments in the, we might say, almost daring language of Paul, but perfectly legitimate as we know, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

But in 2 Corinthians 6, in verse 1, how does he describe Christians? We read there in chapter 6, in verse 1, as God's fellow workers.

[ 19 : 57 ] We urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. But this description of Christians as God's fellow workers, it seems almost overly bold to speak of ourselves in that way, as God's fellow workers.

God's slaves would seem appropriate, perhaps. God's servants, but God's fellow workers. As I say, it seems overly daring language. And yet, that is what we are.

That is the manner in which Paul describes us. And we stress by inspiration of the Spirit. Paul and Barnabas, fellow workers of God.

And they had a job to do. They had a job that they had been given. They had a job, as Paul stresses on another occasion, prepared in advance by God for them. And they had a job to do. And I have a job, and you have a job, and maybe even more importantly, we have a job to do. This partnership, if you wish, between God and His fellow workers finds a very beautiful expression in the prophet Isaiah and chapter 26.

[ 21 : 04 ] And we can just notice that and move on. In Isaiah chapter 26 and verse 12, we read in the following way, or this manner in which God works with us is expressed by the prophet.

Isaiah 26 and verse 12, Lord, You established peace for us. And then we read, all that we have accomplished, all that we have accomplished, You have done for us.

You see, the prophet is speaking of what the prophet and the people of God had accomplished, and they had been involved in a very meaningful way, and yet they recognized, what we have accomplished, You have done for us.

And it is ever so. Whose work is it? It is God's work. It is church work. It is our work. But then briefly, what is the work? What is the work that we do?

Well, we can identify in this passage three answers. And again, as I stressed at the beginning, we don't claim that in this passage we have an exhaustive list or description of the work of the gospel.

[ 22 : 09 ] But there are elements, fundamental elements, that we do find in this passage. What is the work? Well, it is, in the first place, preaching good news. In verse 21, they preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples.

To preach the good news, to verbally announce the truth of the gospel, this is at the heart of gospel work, of mission work. Some of you will remember, I think it was on the Saturday morning, John shared what he described as one of his pet hates.

And one of his pet hates is that quote attributed to Francis of Assisi that you may be familiar with.

Go into all the world and preach the gospel and if necessary, use words. Now, though, there is something that we could maybe rescue from that regarding the need to not only preach words.

Nonetheless, John described that as one of his pet hates. Why? Because certainly it can be abused, that quote, saying, well, it doesn't really matter what we say. All that matters is the way we live.

All that matters is the ministry that we can provide and the way we can help people in need and then without words we can preach the gospel. But we cannot preach the gospel without words.

[ 23 : 22 ] The gospel is made up of truths that find expression in words. We have to announce truth and this is what Paul and Barnabas did. This is the first thing that is highlighted.

They preached the good news. Now, that preaching must be accompanied most assuredly by acts and by deeds and by lives that are lived to the service of others.

most assuredly but at the heart of what we do there must be this verbal announcement of good news. Now, the manner in which we announce that good news can be manifold and varied.

Indeed, it's worth stressing that the word here that is translated preach the good news is a single word in Greek and it need not be understood exclusively under the word that we take as preaching which is, you know, somebody behind a pulpit in a suit.

It's announcing, it's proclaiming, it's sharing these words, this good news. This is at the heart of the work that we do. Words are not optional and indeed what words that we have to announce.

[ 24 : 28 ] The good news of the gospel, what Jesus has done that we might know forgiveness of sin, friendship with God, fellowship with one another and be fellow workers of God.

The preaching, the verbal declaration of the good news is God's primary appointed means for the salvation of sinners. So, the Bible assures us.

And so, what did Paul and Barnabas do? What did their work involve? Well, they preached and they preached and they preached. And we must do the same, bearing in mind that when we use the word preach here, we're not limiting ourselves to one particular form of proclamation.

And not only do we announce and proclaim and preach, but we must do so believing that what we are announcing is indeed good news. That it is indeed, as Paul expresses it in another occasion, the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

This is the gospel. And so, as we would proclaim this good news, it is worthwhile and helpful to sometimes just ask ourselves the question, well, do we really believe that?

[ 25 : 39 ] Are we really persuaded that this is so? The story is told and I was told it as a true story but I couldn't vouch completely for it, the authenticity.

But the story is told of an actor who visited a church and the sermon was being preached and the content of the sermon was orthodox, it was true, it was faithful to the scriptures, but it was preached in a manner that really would make anybody listening wonder if the person who was preaching it really believed with no real passion, no real conviction.

Now, we are more than conscious that passion and conviction can find expression in different ways, not just one style of preaching, but beyond a question of style there didn't seem to be real conviction in the one who was announcing what he said was true, but the manner in which he said it really wasn't very convincing.

And this actor who was just visiting at the close of the service, he approached the preacher and the reason I have my doubts as to the total authenticity is that you would have had to have been very bold to say this, but the story goes that he said to the preacher, he said, well, I'm an actor.

I tell lies as if they were the truth and you tell the truth as if they were lies. Well, it was a very harsh, perhaps, or very in-your-face thing to say, but it does make us ponder as to the manner in which we announce the good news, even in our conversations with others.

[ 27 : 20 ] Is the manner in which we speak and proclaim and share, is it something that carries authenticity and conviction that this is indeed good news that we have and that we proclaim?

What is the work? Well, it is preaching good news, but it goes beyond preaching good news or involved in preaching good news. There are other elements and the work also involves making and strengthening and encouraging disciples.

Verses 21 and 22, we're told that they won a large number of disciples. Then we're told that they returned to Lystra and Iconium and Antioch.

Having been there and moved on, they now return. Why do they return? Well, we're told in verse 22, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith.

The work does not end with conversion. Paul and Barnabas were not some evangelistic show that went from place to place and then moved on indifferent to the lasting impact of their work or their preaching.

[ 28 : 23 ] No, they were concerned that not only there be converts, but that there be disciples. That was their goal. That was their task. That was their work to build and to draw together and to grow disciples.

Conversion is not the end. Rather, it is the beginning. We've noticed there and highlighted how Paul and Barnabas returned to the places where they had been because they recognized the importance of this continuing work and this discipleship, if we can use that word, certainly involved teaching and instructing in the faith.

But I'm sure it also involves simply encouraging them and being there with them and stretching out a hand to help or offering a listening ear. Even the manner in which they were told that they were encouraging them to remain true to the faith speaks of implicit that the struggles and the difficulties and the temptations to throw in the towel and to abandon the faith because of so many troubles and a moment later on that is mentioned explicitly.

But Paul and Barnabas are there discipling these converts that they might remain true to their calling and grow in their faith and mature in their understanding and obedience.

So, not only preaching good news but making, strengthening and encouraging disciples. And one other element that we'll just mention in the passing that we can mention in response or in answer to the question what is the work?

[ 29 : 59 ] And it is this organizing churches and training and appointing leaders. Then in verse 23 we read Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and with prayer and fasting committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust.

They appointed elders in each church. They wanted to organize these churches that they might be fruitful churches and mature churches and organized churches and that they would have a mature and spiritual leadership.

And there is no doubt that this appointing of elders was not a haphazard task but rather it would have involved discerning those who had the necessary and requisite gifts. Those who had been taught and responded to the teaching and had shown evidence of understanding and wisdom. And so Paul and Barnabas appointed elders. The manner in which they did so is not clear. A simple reading of that verse might suggest that they with the authority that had been delegated to them were able they themselves at this if you wish genesis of a congregation simply appoint a suitable man.

But it's possible that the word appoint does carry within it some process whereby others were involved. We know that on other occasions the congregation were involved in electing.

[ 31 : 17 ] well that's really of not great significance for our purposes. What is of significance is that Paul and Barnabas realized that an integral part of their work was not simply to preach the gospel was not simply to work with individuals but rather to organize and plant churches and appoint leadership of those churches.

Now when we think of that task and we think well what about ourselves? How do we do that? How good are we at doing that? It's difficult to answer that question because we don't do it. So we can't say if we're good or bad at it we simply don't do that.

And we don't need to do it because we don't plant new churches. So if you don't have new churches you don't need to worry about the leadership of new churches. You don't need to worry about organizing them because they simply don't exist. I had an opportunity last week of going to Dunblane for a meeting with representatives of the United Free Church a commission given to me and a couple of others by the Ecumenical Relations Committee.

And the question arose how many new churches had they planted in the last 15 years? One of the other ministers asked them that question and they said well I don't think we haven't planted any. And then well what about us as a denomination? Well I don't think we have either. And so when we think about this work and if we are going to analyze how we're doing at this work it's difficult because it's something that we simply don't do or in any case have done very little of.

[ 32 : 48 ] We're certainly grateful for some church plants that there have been across our denomination and the onus is upon us to pray for them that God would indeed prosper that work.

But this is integral to gospel work. Organizing churches appointing leaders for those churches. God grant that this is a work we would be doing in our own work as a congregation.

What is the work? But finally a third question. What are some of the features of the work? And again as with the second question what we have here is not an exhaustive list but some features that appear before us in this passage.

And again we'll limit ourselves to three things that we can say. Features of the work. The first thing that we can say is that it's difficult work. It's hard work. Indeed the Christian life is a life that is can and often is difficult with hardships.

What does verse 22 say? That Paul and Barnabas return to these places strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to reign true in the faith. We've already commented that implicit in that is difficulties but then it's explicit.

[ 33 : 58 ] What do we read? We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God. Now I think this reference is particularly to the individual believers the new converts and the many hardships that they were facing but it was true of Paul and Barnabas as well in the work that they were doing.

Many hardships in their missionary labors. Many hardships in their travels. Many hardships as they faced opposition. Many hardships of many kinds. And they see that as entirely to be expected.

They see it as something entirely normal in their Christian service. We must go through many hardships. It doesn't say we may go through or it may be our portion.

No, we must go through many hardships. That is part of what it's about. So the work is not an easy work. It's not a simple thing. It's not plain sailing.

There are many hardships to be endured. And it's good to know that so that we're not discouraged when we maybe launch out and seeking to go and to speak and to share and to witness and we're rebuffed and we're rejected and nobody's interested and there's apathy that meets us.

[ 35 : 09 ] This imposing wall of apathy that can be so discouraging. Well, there are hardships and so let's not be surprised. And as we're not surprised, so let us not be overly discouraged.

And indeed, a reason why we need not be discouraged is because in this passage not only is it stated explicitly that hardship is indeed part of our Christian walk, but the work that we do, though it may be hard, is doable.

There's a particular word that encourages us in that respect in verse 26 when we're being, we're basically, it's being explained to us why it is that they're returning to Antioch.

We read from Attalia, they sailed back to Antioch where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work and then it states for the work they had now completed. Now that word completed is encouraging.

They had completed the work. Yes, there had been hardships. Yes, there had been difficulties. Yes, there had been opposition. Yes, there had been so many things, but they had completed the work. It was doable.

[ 36 : 16 ] And God will not ask us to do that which is impossible for us to do in His strength. God knows what it is He would have us do. And He gives us a work that can be completed.

It may not be completed in the timescale we had envisaged. It may not be completed in the way that we would have anticipated. But the work that God gives us is a work that can be completed. How important for us to discern what it is He would have us do.

Because as we do what He would have us do, then we will experience what Paul and Barnabas experienced. The time will come when we can look back with satisfaction and gratitude and say, Job done.

Job completed. And then maybe move on to another task that God would give us. Hard work, certainly, but doable. And then, finally, this work, a feature of the work, certainly, as it is reported to us here, is that it was fruitful work.

And that has very much connected with what we've just said about a work that could be completed. But it was a fruitful work. In verse 27, we're told how they reported all that God had done through them.

[ 37 : 26 ] And then we read, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. At the beginning of the passage we've read of how they won a large number of disciples.

And so, when God's people are faithful in going and in doing, in persevering and in sowing in tears, so, as the psalmist also reminds us and God promised us through the psalm, he who sows in tears a reaping time of joy and joy he shall or they shall.

So, the work of the gospel is fruitful work. And so, let us be encouraged even if it is difficult and even if there is obstacles and frustrations in the way. That is as it must be.

But the work is one that will bear fruit as God does the work with us and has strengthened us and owns the work that we do. Some features then of the work.

Well, as we come to a close, we are, and it is a dignified description, we are fellow workers of God. And as fellow workers of God, let us be working.

[ 38 : 39 ] Let us not even consider throwing in the towel when there are discouragements and disappointments. Let's not be guilty of slacking on the jaw or imagining for a moment that there might be something more attractive for us out in that world out there.

And as we do this evening particularly, think of the opportunity to express our gratitude to God and to give thanksgiving to God and to give thanksgiving to Him for the weekend that we have enjoyed and His ministry to us through His servant and through other means.

If we are indeed grateful, then let us demonstrate that gratitude, not only by our presence here, good and important though that is, but by our going out as we have been commissioned to do so to announce this good news.

Let us pray. Heavenly.