

## Service Overview

**Speaker:** Stephen Bates, Rachel\*

**Sermon Series:** Having Faith

**Message:** Having Faith to Invite

**Scripture Reference:** John 1: 35-51

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## **Service Welcome** *Speaker: Worship Team*

Good morning and welcome to church. So good to have you all here this morning. We're going to get started today. So, hands up, who came to the art installation cocktail mocktail night last night? Wasn't that amazing? I was there. We were talking before about how much a beautiful celebration it is of creativity and the creator and how it's a beautiful reminder that he created us to be creative. And in the process of creating, we actually have that capacity to commune with him and to be with him. So I'm sure those of you who painted or created works of art for that installation were blessed in the process of creating. And we were certainly blessed to see what you did. So thank you to those who put their time in for that.

So now we're going to worship God, our creator. We're going to bring our creative gifts through singing to add to this atmosphere of praise this morning. So why don't you stand? We're going to sing together.

## **Worship Singing**

**Song:** This Is Amazing Grace by Jeremy XXX, Phil Wickham

**Song:** Cornerstone by Edward Mote, Eric Liljero, Jonas Myrin, Reuben Morgan, William Batchelder Bradbury

**Song:** Reign Above It All by Ethan Hulse, Hannah McClure, Jess Cates, Paul McClure

**Song:** Great Are You Lord by David Leonard, Jason Ingram, Leslie Jordan

## **Post-Worship Prayer** *Speaker: Reuben*

We just thank you, Lord, that we can come into your presence and meet with you face to face. You are strong and you are gentle. You're kind. And Lord, this morning we open up our hearts and say 'yes' to what you want to do in our lives. We say yes to your ways, and we put aside whatever's in front of or between us. Lord, we come before you. Thank you, Lord, for how you've really reached out to us and embraced us. Thank you for what you're about to do. In Jesus' name, amen.

## **Introduction, Announcements & Upcoming Events** *Speaker: Reuben*

Good morning, and a big welcome to those who are joining us online. My name is Reuben. I'm one of the pastors here and it's really good to have you here. How good was the worship? There was just a sweetness in the worship, you know, just such a gentleness that I really felt. And yet, God is so big and so strong at the same time. It's hard to resolve how he's all those things at once.

This morning, Steve and Rachel\* are going to be sharing the word with us. And if you walked in this morning, you would have passed quite a few artworks. Well, for the next two weeks, they're all going to be on display in the basement, as we've got our art installation. Has everyone seen the art already? This is the 10th year of the art installation PBC. So last night was the big opening event. We kicked it off and quite a bit of artwork was sold as well to raise funds for the new ministry centre. So that was really a really lovely night.

But I do encourage you to take your time in the basement, to be thoughtful as you browse the art. And also, try and think if there's anyone else who might really benefit or be blessed in visiting the exhibition, a neighbour, a relative, a person of peace. And I remember Jo's encouragement to maybe have a cup of coffee of them later and ask if there was anything that really spoke to them. I found that really, really useful. Anyway, it's amazing, so please check it out. It's open till the 20<sup>th</sup> of October.

And, finally, we've got a new set of rosters coming out soon. So, if you'd like to volunteer in this church, please make a note on the forms outside, or please come and see any of the pastoral team. Also, for those who are already volunteering, please indicate your unavailability. Also, I just wanted to say that, if you're new to the life of the church, please find your people first. You don't have to jump into getting busy serving straight away. We really want you to find your people first. And then know, perhaps think about serving.

*--- Break as an interview video about Christian Afghani refugees who are now living in Australia plays ---*

### **Prayer** *Speaker: Reuben*

Dear father, thank you for your heart for all of us, for the fullness of your love, and what you've done to reach out to us. Lord, your heart goes out to all those who are suffering around the world. Lord, may we have your heart. May we not be numbed by the pressures of life and the things that we face, but that we feel what your heart feels, that we know this unity in the body of Christ for our brothers and sisters around the world in various situations who are persecuted for their faith. Lord, may we never lose sight of the fact that you, you died for their sins too.

So Lord, we just ask for your peace that passes all understanding to be with them, along with your comfort. And Lord, with the nations at our doorstep, with the resources that we have, with the reach of technology, Lord, enable us to see new and creative ways to partner with your spirit, to be your hands and feet, and to really to show the love of God wherever we might be, whether it's at our doorstep or in these countries.

Lord, we just thank you for what you're doing, and we pray that you'll continue to reveal yourself all across the world, because you are the desire of the nations, and every knee will bow and come to the knowledge of you. So, Lord, we thank you for the continued miracles that we are going to see in this space. Lord, we just pray that you open our eyes and give us a heart for our brothers and sisters. In Jesus' name, amen.

## **Communion** *Speaker: Congregation Member*

We're going to do communion now. Hello. My name is Anna\*, and I have the joy of leading us in communion today. We've been really immersed in looking at what it means to gather at the table, and today we come to gather at the communion table. What a privilege to be invited to the table that Jesus hosts when he shares of himself.

And in preparing for this, I thought of the very first table. Who was invited to that? And if we look at the disciples that were sitting around Jesus, they were far from perfect. They bickered over who would be the greatest, and Jesus knew that they would deny him, one of them three times, in the next 12 hours. He knew that one would betray him for the pieces of silver.

Yet, and because of this, he broke the bread and said, *"Take, eat, this is my body."* *And he took the cup and gave thanks, and shared it with them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."* And he instructs us to do this in remembrance of him. Despite all the disciples' flaws, there was room at the table for them. Despite all our flaws, there is room at the table for us.

All are welcome. You don't need to be of any particular denomination or age or any other criteria. Aside from that, you love the Lord and you come with thanksgiving. So around the room there are tables with juice, bread, and gluten free options. I thought today it might be nice if we eat and drink together. So as you come and get it, come back to your table, and there's an opportunity for you to sit in reverence and to think and to ponder on what Jesus has done for you. So take, eat, and then when I sit, I'll lead us in eating and drinking together.

*--- Break as congregation members gather the elements of communion ---*

Jesus said, "This is my body, broken for you. Take. Eat." Let's eat together.

*And then he took a cup and gave thanks and shared it with them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."* Let's drink in remembrance of him.

Heavenly father, as we come before your cross, we see ourselves and our sin and all that keeps us far from you. We can lift our eyes to you, and all that fades away, because of your love, your mercy, your grace. And we just thank you for that. As we lift our eyes to you, help us keep our eyes focused on you. Thank you for your sacrifice. In Jesus' name, amen.

## **Bible Reading: John 1: 35-51 (NIV UK)**

<sup>35</sup> The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup> When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, 'Look, the Lamb of God!'

<sup>37</sup> When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> Turning round, Jesus saw them following and asked, 'What do you want?'

They said, 'Rabbi' (which means 'Teacher'), 'where are you staying?'

<sup>39</sup> 'Come,' he replied, 'and you will see.'

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

<sup>40</sup> Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. <sup>41</sup> The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah' (that is, the Christ). <sup>42</sup> And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas' (which, when translated, is Peter<sup>[a]</sup>).

### **Jesus calls Philip and Nathanael**

<sup>43</sup> The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, 'Follow me.'

<sup>44</sup> Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. <sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and told him, 'We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'

<sup>46</sup> 'Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?' Nathanael asked.

'Come and see,' said Philip.

<sup>47</sup> When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, 'Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.'

<sup>48</sup> 'How do you know me?' Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, 'I saw you while you were still under the fig-tree before Philip called you.'

<sup>49</sup> Then Nathanael declared, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.'

<sup>50</sup> Jesus said, 'You believe<sup>[b]</sup> because I told you I saw you under the fig-tree. You will see greater things than that.'<sup>51</sup> He then added, 'Very truly I tell you,<sup>[c]</sup> you<sup>[d]</sup> will see "heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on"<sup>[e]</sup> the Son of Man.'

## **Sermon: Having Faith to Invite** *Speaker: Stephen Bates, Rachel\**

**Stephen:** Welcome. We're jumping into a new series, and the series is, what does having faith in Jesus Christ look like? I think my first thought when it comes to having faith is very much what we just experienced. Having faith means sharing your faith in a country where it's unsafe to do so. It could cost you your life. It's like missionaries going to places where Jesus Christ hasn't been heard about. It's like Peter walking on water. That's what faith is. And all of that is true.

But faith in Jesus Christ also looks very ordinary. It takes place in the ordinary, everyday things of life. And so over the next four weeks, there are going to be four stories from the Gospels where people acted with faith in very ordinary ways. They had faith to invite, faith to ask, faith to act, you know, simply to do something, and faith to give.

And today we're going to start from John's gospel. But before we have that read, I need to introduce myself and also Rachel\*, who is standing up the front with me. I'm Stephen, I'm one of the pastors here, so welcome to Parramatta Baptist Church. Rachel, can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

Rachel: Hi, I'm Rachel, and I'm currently at Bible college doing a gap year called The Bridge. It's been a real blessing to get to go there and develop as a disciple. I've really grown over this year, which has been awesome. I'm also an intern here at PBC, and it's been great getting to come alongside the pastoral team and be developed as a leader as well. So, I currently coordinate our Sunday morning youth group for Years 7 to 9. And I also am blessed to lead at Arise, which is our youth program on a Friday night.

*--- Break as the Bible reading passage is read aloud ---*

**Stephen:** So Rachel and I are going to unpack this passage. I've given Emily the more difficult one intentionally. But it begins with John the Baptist, who had a publicly public ministry before Jesus did, and he also had followers. John the Baptist had his own disciples. And in the beginning part of this passage, John the Baptist is with two of his disciples. Andrew is one of them. We know, and we suspect it is the author of the gospel, John himself, who is the other, and John the Baptist says to these two disciples, when he sees Jesus, says, "Look, the Lamb of God."

Now, this is not the first time that John the Baptist had said this to his own disciples. He'd said it before. He'd pointed out Jesus to them a number of times before, and said other things about Jesus. He'd said, firstly, that Jesus was much greater than he was. So, John the Baptist says, "I'm not worthy to untie his shoes. There is one coming greater than me," pointing to Jesus. John the Baptist also recounted what happened at Jesus' baptism, that when John the Baptist baptised Jesus, the spirit of God came and rested on Jesus, along with a voice from heaven as well.

And most amazingly, John the Baptist, with his disciples around him, points to Jesus and says, "This guy, he's the chosen one. This one is the Messiah." And so it's not surprising that when Andrew and the other disciple hear John the Baptist say, "Look, the Lamb of God," they leave John the Baptist and they follow Jesus.

Now Jesus doesn't ask them to follow him. They just do. And you've got to understand, they're not being unfaithful to John the Baptist by following Jesus and leaving John the Baptist. They're not being disrespectful to him in any way. And they're not just jumping on the bandwagon of like, the latest and greatest rabbi in town or anything like that. They're actually listening to John the Baptist.

They're hearing what John the Baptist is saying about Jesus, and they understand the significance of it, and they respond as they should by following Jesus. They know very little about Jesus, but they know that they must follow him. It's a bit creepy, isn't it? When someone's following you?

Anyway, they're following Jesus. Jesus turns around and says, "What do you want?" (The tone of voice is up for debate). Or perhaps a better phrase, it could be something like, "What are you looking for?" And the question cuts right to the heart of their motives in following Jesus. They could have answered, "Well, we want to know whether you're the Messiah or not," but their answer is a really good one. They say, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" They're asking for an invitation for lunch or dinner, aren't they. "Where are you staying?"

And so they're not presumptuous in demanding of Jesus by going, "Tell us, tell us if you are the Messiah or not," they don't plunge into a theological discussion, no, like "Can the Messiah come from Nazareth or where will the Messiah come from?" It's got nothing to do with that. They seek permission to spend time with Jesus, and they do. So they meet with him in private. And I love Jesus' response to them. "Where are you staying?" He says, "Come and see," this being an invitation for them to come and spend the day with him.

And they discover that they have found what they're looking for in Jesus Christ, the Messiah. And so the first thing Andrew does is find his brother Simon to tell him, "We've found the Christ. We've found the Messiah." And Andrew brings Simon to Jesus. And there's this beautiful image here, isn't there? "Let me show you. Let me share with you who I have found."

Now, we don't read as much in the gospels about Andrew as we would about John or Peter. He doesn't have the big and the bold personality of John the Baptist, nor of Simon Peter. But when we find Andrew in the Gospels, we find him inviting people to come to see Jesus. Andrew has the faith to invite others to come and to see what he has found, because he found the question or the answer to Jesus' question, "What do you want? What are you looking for?" And the answer was simply, "You, Jesus."

**Rachel:** And as the passage continues on into verses 43 to 51, it's important to remember it's flowing from Andrew, and the other disciple discovering that Jesus is the Messiah. And then, as Steve talked about Andrew immediately seeking out Simon to share this great news, the very next day, we are told Jesus leaves Galilee and finds Philip, who he calls to follow him. Now the Bible doesn't tell us what Philip said to Jesus in that moment, but we can see through his actions and his declaration to Nathaniel in verse 45 that he recognised that Jesus was the Messiah, the one sent by God to fulfill the law.

And the prophecy in the Old Testament, and this declaration, there is this amazing image coming through of what it actually means to be a witness to others. Philip found Jesus, and not only did he have a willingness to go out and share with others who Jesus was, but he had an excitement and a

real joy in finding Jesus. So he wanted to seek out people like Nathaniel to share this with so that they, too, could share in the joy. So Philip stepped out in faith and shared with Nathaniel this hope he found in knowing Jesus of Nazareth. And you expect Nathaniel to celebrate when he hears the news. I mean, Nathaniel is an Israelite, right? These people have been waiting for God to send someone to save them. They have been calling out. And yet, Nathaniel responds quite skeptically. "Nazareth, can anything good come from there?"

I don't know about you, but I wonder how I would respond if I was in that situation. Well, Philip doesn't get defensive or even frustrated by Nathaniel's response. Instead, he sees Nathaniel's question and he extends an invitation. And this invitation is one that we're all able to extend. It's an invitation to come and see who Jesus is. Philip is inviting Nathaniel to search and discover the character of Jesus for himself, and it's when Nathaniel approaches Jesus with an openness to learning that he is revealed as to who Jesus is: Rabbi, son of God, King of Israel.

As Nathaniel is approaching Jesus, Jesus demonstrates his omnipresence. That is, he is all knowing and all seeing, a characteristic of God that he could only have if he was indeed the Messiah. Jesus greets Nathaniel as an Israelite in whom there is no deceit, and then goes on to tell him, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree, before Philip calls you." Both seem like random comments, and yet they both link back to the power Jesus holds. Jesus is not saying these things to flatter Nathaniel and to say that he is free of sin, for we have all sinned, but he's actually revealing his power. Jesus is saying, "Nathaniel, I know who you are because I am the Messiah that you have been waiting for. I know that you are an Israelite in whom there is no deceit, because you are opening to examining the claims I am making."

And so Nathaniel becomes a believer after seeing a glimpse of Jesus's power at work. But God used Philip to call him to approach Jesus. But before Jesus leaves Nathaniel, he leaves him with hope that he will see even greater things than what he's already seen of Jesus. That he will see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. Jesus is pointing towards the resurrection and the signs that will lead up to it that are about to unfold.

And we know this because although Jesus is telling Nathaniel that he will be the one to see this image, Jesus is actually referencing a passage in the Old Testament. In Genesis 28, the Bible talks about Jacob dreaming of a stairway, or in other translations, a ladder. It says he had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. Is this sounding familiar to the last passage? And it goes on to say that there above it stood the Lord. And he said, "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham, and the God of Isaac."

So what does the ladder or stairway represent? Well, it can be easy to say it symbolises being able to reach something higher than you. And don't get me wrong, a ladder or stairway can do that. But is that its one primary purpose. A stairway can take you up, but you can also walk back down a



stairway, and that's really important to remember in the context of this passage. You see the stairway that the Bible is discussing. Resting on the earth and reaching to heaven represents the relationship between God and His people being reconciled. To be reconciled with God means to be in right relationship with him, to not only be washed clean and forgiven of your sins, but to actually go to him and repair the broken relationship. This beautiful image of a stairway reveals to us the back-and-forth movement between heaven and earth, the communication and the relationship between God and his people.

It was Jacob who saw this vision of a stairway back in Genesis. But the disciples are also promised what he saw—a reconciled relationship. And now that Jesus is here, he's informing Nathaniel that the stairway Jacob saw is now the cross. Through Jesus's death and resurrection, he opens up a path for us not only to be free from our sin, but to also be in constant relationship with God.

**Stephen:** Nicely explains and highlights just the need to fully understand the Old Testament, to fully understand the Jewish context in which the New Testament is written. So yeah, what stood out to you from the passage? And just in the way that the disciples responded to Jesus, I'm interested in hearing that.

**Rachel:** I think what stands out to me is how the disciples followed Jesus's command to both come and see for themselves the character of Jesus and what that means for their lives, whilst also still inviting others to do the same. In the first passage, Andrew seeks out his brother Simon Peter to excitedly tell him that he has found the Messiah, but they're not stopping there. He takes his brother to Jesus, and in later verses we see Philip do the same thing. He tells Nathaniel that he has found the one who fulfills the law and the prophets' writings, and then invites him to approach Jesus for himself.

I like the way that the disciples bring people to Jesus. Everything that they do is not through that or in their power or will, it is through Jesus. And in the same way, they recognise that when telling others, about Jesus, you don't need to know all the answers. In fact, it's impossible for us to, nor do you need to be an expert at evangelism. Extending an invitation to come and see Jesus allows those who don't know Jesus as Lord to build a relationship with him and discover the endlessness of the power he holds.

**Stephen:** I think for me, going back to the first section that we read as well, what really stood out to me was the way the two disciples actually did leave their existing Rabbi, John the Baptist, and they actually understood that they were to follow Jesus. When John the Baptist said "Look, there's the Lamb of God," they didn't just say to John the Baptist, "Oh, what does that mean? That's a really interesting fact. Can we talk about that at our next intern session or anything like that?" They just had this knowledge that that their response was to follow Jesus.

And they didn't really know who he was at all. But that didn't stop them. They were willing to trust what John the Baptist had shared with them about Jesus. And then find out for themselves whether he was the Christ or not. So I said, they had that heart for exploring, not just like, "Oh yeah, whatever, that's good for you," but actually jumping in. And I do like the way that they sought to know Jesus. They didn't go and quiz him, like, "I'm going to ask you 15 different questions, and if you don't get them all right, you're not the Messiah." They actually just spent that time with him relationally, to discover whether he was the Messiah.

I was listening to something yesterday, and it was somebody sharing about their journey to faith. They were a highly intellectual, super, super smart person. And I actually made the connection that, to actually know someone (you can research them all you like), but in the end, the people you know, your friends and you actually need to step into a relationship with someone to fully know them, regardless of how much you might want to, you know, stalk them on Facebook or whatever. You actually never know someone until you actually engage into a relationship with them.

And I do like the fact that the first thing Andrew did, he went and got his brother. He just goes find Simon, brings him to Jesus, and, Simon gets a new name, becomes 'Peter' out of that. Now, as a follower of Jesus Christ yourself, what do you take away for yourself about this passage? How does this shape the way that you see your faith and how you invite people?

**Rachel:** I think for me, there are two main takeaways that really stood out. The first is that we're all invited to come and see who Jesus is, just like the disciples in the first passage followed Jesus and spent the day with him, learning from him and seeing how he lived. We are extended that same offer. God wants all of us to turn to him and spend time growing in our own personal relationship with him. So are you willing to take up Jesus's command to come and see who he is for yourself? And what does that practically look like in your life? Whether you're currently a follower of Jesus or if you're still exploring, maybe it looks like sitting in scripture, or maybe sitting in creation, whatever it may be, are you willing to take that first step?

The second thing was, as disciples, we are called to share the invitation to come and see. In the same way, Jesus invites both Andrew and Philip to come and discover who he is. And then they go out and share this news with others. We too should follow their example and be sharing the invitation to come and know Jesus.

But I think sometimes we can be a bit scared to extend this invitation. We can be afraid that people won't respond positively, maybe even be skeptical like Nathaniel was. But it's important to remember that when we invite people to come and see, we're not inviting them to come and see how much we know about Jesus, but instead come to Jesus for themselves. And therefore, when sharing the Good news, it is not through our own strength. God is with us every step of the way, and we do not save anyone through our own power.

But we can extend the invitation for them to learn about and join in a relationship with the Lord. Even if someone doesn't respond positively at first to you sharing the gospel with them, it's important to remember we will never fully understand how God is working in their life.

Look at the story of Nathaniel. He went from being so skeptical to being a devoted follower. And I think when I reflect on this, it actually also makes me reflect on my own life and how I'm living this out. I think back to my childhood friend, who I really wanted to come along to youth group. So I asked her every single week, "Can you come? Do you want to come?" But her mum was quite against church, so she wasn't allowed to come. So for well over a year, I committed to praying for her. And every single week I would ask if she could come. And the answer was always no. I asked and asked until I stopped and when I stopped, it was then that her mum contacted us and said, "Can my daughter come, please?" My friend is still not a Christian, but she is a long-time friend and I do hope to continue to walk alongside her. And she's still is exploring faith. I hope to continue inviting her to come and see Jesus for herself.

**Stephen:** I think for me, it reminds me to have faith that God is actually at work in people's lives, and to be confident that when I invite them to something to just to explore the Christian faith, that God is already there and already been at work in their lives. The reality is, I actually have no hesitation in sharing with other people the things that I really have discovered and love. So I have people in this church who, when I discovered good gelato, I text them and I let them know, and they do the same to me and say, you know, "I have discovered Anita's Gelato in Chippendale," amazing. But I, in turn have discovered C9 in Crow's Nest, which is equally amazing with a Vietnamese restaurant across the road, which is brilliant.

So the things that we discover and love, we share that with people, right? So why would it be any different with Jesus? Why would it be any different? When we see something amazing, we share it. And my sense is that people are looking for meaning more than ever, and they are increasingly open to exploring faith in Jesus Christ. But the question is, who is going to be the person who has the faith to invite them?

A few weeks ago, Kathy and I took my dad on the metro into the city. We had a family function in the city, and it was a sad day at the metro, it was absolutely crowded. And we're on our way home, and the metro is amazing, it just takes off so quick. So my dad is blind. I have to get him seated really quickly. So I got him on the train, and this young guy moved across, and I positioned my dad to sit down, and he can't see. So he's doing this, and this young guy takes my dad's hand and helps him to his seat, and sits down next to him. My dad keeps holding his hand, thinking maybe it's mine. I'm not quite sure. I think he just held his hand, but then began to talk. He said, "Oh, thank you for doing that." And this young guy, Year 12, Castle Hill High, I don't know his name, but big, big shout out to him. He beautifully engaged my dad in this conversation, and my dad kept holding his hand.

Anyway, it was okay for him. He wasn't embarrassed by that at all. My dad's not embarrassed, but you know, the young guy wasn't embarrassed by that at all either. And they had a conversation, and I was part of it as well. "What have you been doing today?" And this Year 12 student has been to Sydney Uni open day because he's Year 12, looking at options, and I just made comment that that was the uni I went to. He asked me, "And what did you study?" I told him, and he said, "Oh, that's what I'd really like to get into. Are you still working in that area?"

And then like, you're never quite sure what's going to happen when you say, "No, I'm a pastor of a church," but, you know, I'm used to that now. And he goes, "Oh, that's really interesting. I have a friend of mine who says I should read the Bible. Do you think that's a good idea?" And you laugh, but I didn't laugh, this is what's happening, right? There's a guy in his life is encouraging him to read the Bible. And I said, "I think that's a really good idea." He said, "I don't really know how to."

So we had this conversation around how to read the Bible, where to start, and all of that. And then we got to talking about uni and other stuff, and it's a 30 minute trip. He turns to my dad and said, "We're you always a Christian?" And, so proud of my dad, in 30 seconds he gave his testimony. He said, "I when I was in military service, there was a guy, you know. I wasn't a Christian, but this guy was, and he shared with me about Jesus and I came to faith then. And he goes, "Oh, it's really interesting." And he looked at me, and said, "What about you?" I said, "Well, my parents were Christians, but at 19 I came to faith as well."

And he said like, "Okay, that's fine," and then we went talked about something else. And then he asked a random question, "Are there young people at your church?" And I said, "Yeah, there's lots." He said, "That's really interesting. My friend says there's lots of young people at his church, too. That surprises me. I thought only old people went to church."

You know why I'm telling you this story, right? There is a generation looking for meaning. Yeah, they are looking for community and they're trying to make sense of this crazy, mixed-up world. The question is, do you and I have the faith to invite them, to invite them to find faith in Jesus, to meet him? Do we have the faith to actually say, "I'm a Christian? Come and see what I've found. Come and see who I've found." Do we have the faith to invite them to discover who he is?

You know, the easiest way, as we've been saying, is just simply, "Would you like to read the Gospels with me?" It's actually not that hard, and you won't get a bad response, mostly. "Would you like to read the Gospels with me? Find out who Jesus is?" I'm so encouraged that Andrew knew very little about Jesus, but he knew enough to invite his brother Simon to meet him. And whatever you know about Jesus, don't get into this mentality of "I don't know enough." Like, that's rubbish. Whatever you know about Jesus, and if you know that he is worth knowing, then that's all you need to know.

And that's all you need to step out in faith. That and the faith to believe that the little you know is all that's needed to invite someone else into the story of discovering Jesus. Wrap it up for us, Rachel.

**Rachel:** So who in your life can you invite to come and see Jesus for themselves? And what does it mean to actually walk alongside them in discovering Jesus? Maybe it does look like stepping out in confidence and faith to invite them into a Christian space, like youth or church. Maybe it means reading the Bible with them, or committing to praying for them, and actually going out and seeking open doors and aiming to have conversations with them about faith, no matter what it may be. Are you willing to step out in faith and invite them?

### **Post-Sermon Prayer** *Speaker: Stephen Bates*

Let me pray. Oh father, my heart is that the love that we have found from you and the love that we have for you, your son, Jesus Christ, would just spill out into the everyday aspects of our lives. And rather than being something that we see as scary or inappropriate, that we would understand that sharing our faith, inviting others to come and to discover who we have found, is actually the most normal and natural thing that we can do.

So, Lord, I do pray that in each of the places where you have sent us, that we would find and see those around us whose hearts are also ready and open to have a conversation about Jesus, and may we have the faith in that context to simply make that invitation, "Would you come and see who I found?"

Lord, we thank you for your word. Lord, we pray there would be so much more than just a historical document that we read out of, but that this word is alive today, and that your spirit would bring it to life in our lives and that we would be obedient to it. And may this be to your glory, Lord, we ask. Amen.

### **Worship Singing** *Speaker: Worship Team*

Amen. Thank you Steve. Thank you Rachel. I love what you said that we're not inviting people to see how much we know about Jesus, but to see Jesus. That was great. And the pressure's off right? Pressure's off. We're just sharing the hope that we have, hope and joy when we have that. It's no effort right, to share that with other people?

So, Lord, as we sing this next song, Jesus Messiah, would you just reveal yourself to us more and more so that we know this hope? Let us be filled with your hope, filled with your glory, filled with your joy. Lord. Please stand.

**Song:** Jesus Messiah by Chris Tomlin, Daniel Carson, Ed Cash, Jesse Reeves

### **Post-Worship Prayer** *Speaker: Reuben*

Thank you for your invitation, Lord. Thank you that we don't have to have it all together, or that our knowledge of you doesn't have to be complete, but that we can come, Jesus, just as we are. Thank you for your open arms, Lord. Lord, we just say yes to your invitation. We want to invite others into

that invitation too. So won't you use us this time? We open our eyes, speak to us. Show us the ones that you really have a heart for. Lord, this week, don't let them go. Continue your work among your people. Lord, as we go forth from this place, would you bless us? Would you with renew us? Refresh our minds that we may really carry your heart, really be full of that abundant life that we know you offer us? We bless you, Lord. We give you glory. Amen.

## **Conclusion** *Speaker: Reuben*

I just want to invite any of you who have felt like you don't have it all together and you can't enter into God's presence. There's going to be a prayer team upfront with lanyards, and I invite you if in particular you've just felt this need to have it all together.

But that's not the way God is inviting us in. You don't have to be okay to come into his presence. He is inviting us as you are. So if that's you, please come forward. But we'd love to pray for anyone as well. If there's just things over you, things that you're dealing with, we just want to stand with you in prayer.

So have a good week everyone, and we'll see you again.

## **Online Outro** *Speaker: Kathy Bates*

Hey, thank you for joining us online today. We pray that you have been blessed and encouraged. And if there is something from today that you would like us to pray into with you, don't hesitate to let us know.

If we haven't met you, we'd love to hear from you. And you also welcome to come and join us in person as well. To know more about our church, please go to our church website and you can also find more details about who we are through our newsletter. And you can subscribe to that through our website as well.

God bless you and may you have a great week.

*\*Names have been changed to protect privacy.*