

# Numbers Chapter 9 v 15 - Chapter 10 v 36

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Preacher: Peter Robinson

[ 0 : 00 ] Good evening. Welcome to all of you. It's good to see you. It's good to see Shirley with us after her adventures this week. And we trust and praise the Lord that you're feeling much, much better.

Well, we meet, of course, on the first day of the week, on Sunday, because it is the day that our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead. And just listen to these words from the end of Luke for the disciples as they met with Jesus.

This is after he had been revealed himself to those two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They went back to their friends and told them all about it. And while they were still talking, we're told, about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, Peace be with you. They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost.

He said to them, Why are you troubled? Why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself. Touch me and see. A ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.

When he'd said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it, because of joy and amazement, he asked them, Do you have anything here to eat?

[ 1 : 14 ] They gave him a piece of broiled fish, took it, and ate it in their presence. He said to them, This is what I told you while I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms.

And there's that sense, isn't it? With joy and amazement. It was too good to be true that this Jesus was risen from the dead. But it's not too good to be true. It's truly good that it is true.

It's good for us that we know that our Lord Jesus is alive. And our first hymn reflects that joy. I know that my Redeemer lives. What joy the blessed assurance gives.

Let's stand and sing 270 together. Let's stand and sing.

For the wonder of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you indeed for his death for us. But Lord, we thank you too for the victory that he conquered death on our behalf.

[ 2 : 41 ] Just as he died for us, so he is risen for us. Just as he suffered for us, so now he reigns for us. And we bless you and thank you that we have a living Lord Jesus.

One who walks with us and shares with us. One who is with us and has promised never to forsake us. We thank you that as we go out into a new week. With all that's ahead of us, Lord.

Unknown to us, but known to you. We thank you that we do not go alone. We go, Lord, with the assurance that Jesus gave to his disciples. I will not leave you as orphans.

I will be with you. And so, Lord, we ask again that even this evening as we meet in your name, our Father, we long that the Lord Jesus might be present amongst us.

That by his spirit we might know him speaking to us and ministering to us. We might know him dealing with our hearts and our lives and drawing from us worship and praise and adoration.

[ 3 : 41 ] We ask, O Lord, that this time may be indeed a hallowed hour, a special time. And we, O Lord, we meet with you. Thank you for those events and occasions that we read of.

Like that one in Luke, when your disciples, your people were together. And there you were in the midst of them and spoke with them and blessed them. And though, Lord, now we do not see you with a physical eye, yet by faith we know and believe that as we gather, Lord, a small number here, you are with us still.

You are with us, O Lord, to bless us and do us good. You are with us, O Lord, to deal with our doubts, as some of them doubted and struggled. Lord, so we pray that you would increase our faith.

That we may rejoice in and know for certain, for ourselves, that we have a Redeemer, a Savior, and he lives.

He lives and he works and he acts on our behalf. Thank you, though, Lord, you cried out from the cross, it is finished. That wonderful work of salvation, of paying for our sin and purchasing eternal life.

[ 4 : 49 ] We thank you, O Lord, though you sit at the Father's right hand. You are not idle, but you are still the Lord of your church. You are still, O Lord, the Savior of your people.

You are still the Lord who has promised and said, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And so we praise you that we know that you are building up your people in these days.

And we'll continue to do so until that day you come again in glory and power and judgment. We pray, O Lord, that as we march towards that day, as we head towards that day unknown to us, but known to you.

We pray, O Lord, that we might ever walk in the presence of the Lord Jesus. That we might be, Lord, in step with you. And that, Lord, we might be ready for that day when you come.

So, Lord, prepare us and meet with us and help us now. For we ask it all, our Father, in the name of your dear Son. Amen. Well, we're going to be looking together at back in Numbers.

[ 5 : 52 ] We were back in Numbers a few weeks ago. And so we're back in Numbers. If you'd like to turn there, Numbers in chapter 9. We're going to read from Numbers chapter 9, verse 15, right through to the end of chapter 10.

But we're going to break it up into two readings this evening. So if you've got one of the Red Church Bibles, then that's page 145, page 145.

And we're going to read from verse 15 through to the end of chapter 10. But we'll actually read into chapter 10. And I'll stop in chapter 10.

If you remember, in fact, I think it was, well, three weeks ago, wasn't it, that we were in Numbers and we looked at the Passover and it's then that we shared in the Lord's Supper then.

And we're going to be sharing in the Lord's Supper as well in a moment. So Numbers chapter 9, verse 15. On the day the tabernacle, the tent of the covenant law, was set up, the cloud covered it.

[ 6 : 55 ] From evening till morning, the cloud above the tabernacle looked like fire. That is how it continued to be. The cloud covered it and at night it looked like fire. Whenever the cloud lifted from above the tent, the Israelites set out.

Wherever the cloud settled, the Israelites set up camp. At the Lord's command, the Israelites set out and at his command, they set up camp. As long as the cloud stayed over the tabernacle, they remained in camp.

When the cloud remained over the tabernacle a long time, the Israelites obeyed the Lord's order and did not set out. Sometimes the cloud was over the tabernacle for only a few days.

At the Lord's command, they would set up camp and then at his command, they would set out. Sometimes the cloud stayed only from evening till morning. When it lifted in the morning, they set out.

Whether by day or by night, whenever the cloud lifted, they set out. Whether the cloud stayed over the tabernacle for two days or a month or a year, the Israelites would remain in camp and not set out.

[ 7 : 59 ] But when it lifted, they would set out. At the Lord's command, they set up camp. At the Lord's command, they set out. They obeyed the Lord's order in accordance with his command through Moses.

The Lord said to Moses, make two trumpets of hammered silver and use them for calling the community together and for the camps to set out. When both are sounded, the whole community is to assemble before you at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

For only one is sounded, the leaders, the heads of the clans of Israel are to assemble before you. When a trumpet blast is sounded, the tribes camping on the east are to set out.

At the sounding of a second blast, the camps on the south are to set out. The blast will be the signal for setting out. To gather the assembly, blow the trumpets, but not with the signal for setting out.

The sons of Aaron, the priests, are to blow the trumpets. This is to be a lasting ordinance for you and the generations to come. When you go into battle in your own land against an enemy who is oppressing you, sound a blast on the trumpets.

[ 9 : 05 ] Then you will be remembered by the Lord your God and rescued from your enemies. Also at your times of rejoicing, your appointed festivals and new moon feasts, you are to sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings.

They will be a memorial for you before your God. I am the Lord your God. We'll stop there for now and come back to that passage a little later. Well, let's...

So turn back, if you would, to Numbers and Chapter 10. I'm going to continue our reading in just a moment. Just to again remind you that the September notice sheet is out.

Very grateful thanks to Pam and Alan for that. Tells you what's going on on the back, particularly in a couple of interesting articles in the middle too. And as a special welcome to our friends from Westcliff Congregational Church.

There's a picture of the chapel on the front there as well. Now, as you can see, we are going to share in and celebrate what we call the Lord's Supper or the Lord's Table during our service this evening.

[ 10 : 15 ] And if you know that you have trusted the Lord Jesus as your Savior, if you know that he has died for your sins and you're seeking to love him, to follow him, then we welcome and encourage you to share in this bread and this wine.

There's nothing special about them in themselves. They're simply the things that we buy in the supermarket and eat every day. But Jesus gives us an instruction, a command that we are to remember his death in this way, to remember his body.

He is the bread of life who was broken for us, to remember his blood that was poured out at the cross when he died to cleanse us from our sin. And so it's imperative that we have that faith ourselves personally before we take of the bread and the wine.

And it encourages our faith, strengthens our faith, and so encourages those who take part. So everything else is in the news sheet for the notices for the week.

So let's get back to this reading. And we're going to carry on from verse 11 of chapter 10 of Numbers, page 146. And please be patient with me with the pronunciation of some dangerous, difficult names as we get on into the rest of the chapter.

[ 11 : 37 ] On the 20th day of the second month of the second year, the cloud lifted from the tabernacle of the covenant law. Then Israelites set out from the desert of Sinai, traveled from place to place, till the cloud came to rest in the desert of Paran.

They set out this first time at the Lord's command through Moses. The divisions of the camp of Judah went first. Under their standard, Nashon, son of Aminadab, was in command.

Nathanael, son of Zuar, was over the division of the tribe of Issachar. And Eliab, son of Halon, was over the division of the tribe of Zebulun. Then the tabernacle was taken down, and the Gershonites and Merorites, who carried it, set out.

The divisions of the camp of Reuben went next under their standard. Leazar, son of Shador, was in command. Sheolmuel, son of Zurishaddai, was over the division of the tribe of Simeon.

And Eliasaf, son of Duel, was over the division of the tribe of Gad. Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the holy things. The tabernacle was to be set up before they arrived.

[ 12 : 53 ] The divisions of the camp of Ephraim went next under their standard. Elishamah, son of Aminahab, was in command. Gamaliel, son of Pedazor, was over the division of the tribe of Manasseh.

And Abinadab, son of Gideonai, was over the division of the tribe of Benjamin. Finally, as the rear guard for all the units, the divisions of the camp of Dan set out under their standard.

Ahizah, son of Amishaddai, was in command. Pagiel, son of Ochran, was over the division of the tribe of Asher. And Ahirah, son of Enan, was over the division of the tribe of Naphtali.

This was the order of march for the Israelite divisions as they set out. Now Moses said to Hobab, son of Reel, the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We're setting out for the place about which the Lord said, I will give it to you.

Come with us, we'll treat you well. The Lord has promised good things to Israel. He answered, No, I will not go. I'm going back to my own land and my own people.

[ 13 : 59 ] But Moses said, Please do not leave us. You know where we should camp in the wilderness. You can be our eyes. If you come with us, we will share with you whatever good things the Lord gives us.

So they set out from the mountain of the Lord and traveled for three days. The ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them during those three days to find them a place to rest.

The cloud of the Lord was over them by day when they set out from the camp. Whenever the ark set out, Moses said, Rise up, Lord. May your enemies be scattered.

May your foes flee before you. Whenever it came to rest, he said, Return, Lord, to the countless thousands of Israel. Well, let's sing once more together, and then we're going to look together at this passage of Scripture and seek to apply it for our own day and for our own lives.

So let's stand and sing 775, that wonderful hymn, and guide me, O thou great Jehovah. Let's get back to Numbers, and to chapter 9 and into chapter 10 together.

[ 15 : 13 ] Numbers is, as we've said before, when we look at it, it's one of those passages, perhaps one of those books in the Old Testament that we may skip over, particularly perhaps at the beginning, because there's all those names and laws and other things like that.

And perhaps it may even be that some believers may say, well, what's the point of studying Numbers? What's it really got to do with us today? This is something, surely, which is maybe interesting historically.

It tells us about things that we knew nothing about. It talks about a different place, a different time, a different age for our own. And I can see how it would be interesting to read it in some ways, because there's some interesting stories that we're going to get to, particularly as we go on.

And that could be of use to us. But, of course, there's more to it than that. In many parts of the New Testament, there are references made to the events in Numbers.

Jesus refers to them himself and other New Testament writers. And, of course, we believe, don't we, that this is part of Scripture. This is the Word of God for us. And 2 Timothy 3.16 tells us that every Scripture, all Scripture, is God-breathed, useful for correcting, for teaching, for rebuking, for training God's people.

[ 16 : 39 ] And I hope that that's what we found as we've gone through it together. And I hope that's what we'll find again this evening. It may be you think, well, that's a large passage to read. And, indeed, it is.

But I felt it was important to read all of that and for us to look at it together, because I believe that we have a lot to learn here as individual believers, but also particularly as a local church.

When we look at the people of God in the Old Testament, what we're often looking at is a sort of a mirror of ourselves. Different clothes, different positions in the world, different ways of doing things, but ultimately we are looking at the people of God, the Old Testament church.

And perhaps most of all, we see the similarity in numbers in the reality that, like God's people of old, we are also on a journey.

Now, it's a well-established cliché, isn't it, that life is a journey. But for the believer, and particularly for the church, that is also the case as well.

[ 17 : 47 ] We are traveling together. We are moving together. We are one people, one body. And we are going in one direction.

And that sense of togetherness is very strong in the Old Testament, and particularly here in the book of Numbers, as well as in the New Testament. And we live in such an individualistic society today that we forget that.

We think that it's about me, but it's not. The church of Jesus Christ is about us. And so we find again and again when Paul writes, he doesn't speak about I.

He does sometimes, but usually he speaks about we. We've come to know this, and we are doing this, and we are about that. And I think our loss of understanding the corporal sense of the church, the body of the church of Jesus Christ, has been very detrimental.

And so I believe there's a lot for us to learn about how we are to conduct ourselves, how we are to live as God's people, as a church, just as God's people did here.

[ 18 : 53 ] Now, some of the observations I'm going to make this evening, and probably in the future, will be, we might say, glaringly obvious. But I hope that others will, with the New Testament's light upon them, help us more practically.

One thing that's absolutely certain is that as the people of God journeyed in the wilderness, they were aware of God's presence leading them.

They were aware of God's presence leading them. We have that from verse 15 through to verse 23. I'm going to break this up into several parts. That was because they had the cloud, remember?

Verse 15, on the day, the tabernacle, that's this great tent and series of tents. When that was finished, it took about a year for them to make and to construct.

And when it was finished, the cloud covered it. God's presence came upon the tabernacle. And that was to give them that visible representation of himself.

[ 19 : 53 ] And when the cloud lifted off the tabernacle and moved, they moved. They went where the presence of God was. And it was essential to them that they knew that they were in the very presence of the Lord.

And so we find this repetition that goes through this passage. If the cloud moved, they moved. When the cloud stopped, they stopped. And it's repeated again. It's drummed in, isn't it, here?

That this was so essentially important. It was the Lord himself who led them by his spirit. We might say by his presence. Now, I think it's fair to say that you would all agree.

I hope that as a local church and as any church of God's people, it is vital that we are led by the Lord. It's vital for us as individual believers, but it's vital for the church.

Paul speaks very much in the New Testament about God's people walking in step with the spirit and being led by the spirit. In Galatians 5.25, he talks about the Holy Spirit in that way, that we must be in step with him.

[ 21 : 02 ] And in one sense, one of the most important things for us as Christians and as a church is to seek to be those who recognize and long for the presence of God.

There's a terrible situation that takes place later in the Old Testament in Ezekiel where we're told that the presence of the Lord left the temple. He wasn't there. There's somebody who's once said about a church.

I wonder if the Lord's presence left that church, if anybody would notice. Well, we need to be very aware of and very much concerned with the presence of the Lord because we need him to lead us.

Now, we don't have the cloud. We don't have the visible symbol of God's presence. But, of course, we have God, the Holy Spirit, and he dwells within every believer. That is absolutely essential.

In fact, of course, we cannot be a follower of Jesus unless we are born of the spirit of God. We cannot be a Christian unless the spirit of Christ lives within us and dwells within us. And we are to be those who are ever seeking to follow his leading.

[ 22 : 11 ] Holy Spirit is not a power. He is a person. And so Paul talks about how it's possible to grieve the Holy Spirit in Ephesians chapter 4. That's something that we must not do.

We must be very careful not to, by our lives or our decisions or by our choices, grieve the Holy Spirit. Rather, we should also be careful that we do not block out his voice.

In 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, Paul warns about quenching the spirit. He's talking about God's words speaking to us and how important it is we do not deafen our ears to him and therefore quench in one sense.

You imagine the candle giving you light and snuffing out the candle. We must be careful that the light of the Holy Spirit who directs and guides us is not quenched.

So as a church, as believers, we are to be those who are led by the Lord. How do we do that? Well, there's lots of ways that that happens.

[ 23 : 15 ] But we're going to move on from that. We receive God's instructions and we are to understand them. So the first thing is that God's presence leads us and then God's instructions teach us or speak to us.

Now, here's an interesting section, isn't it? Chapter 10, verses 1 to 10. These silver trumpets that are to be made. Two of them are to be made, the Lord says, and they are to be blown at certain times when the camp was to be gathered before the Lord, when they were to set out.

They were to be blown in special ways for the leaders to come and then when they were in battle and so on and so forth. These trumpets relayed the instructions of God to the people.

They called the people to act and respond in various ways according to what God wanted them to do. And we know that there were different types of blasts, weren't there, and different sounds.

Verse 7, to gather the assembly, blow the trumpets, but not with the signal for setting out. So they were different tones. Perhaps they were different toned instruments. But when one blew, they did one thing.

[ 24 : 27 ] When two blew, they did something. It was God's way of speaking to his people. That meant, of course, that even if you were on the outskirts of the camp and you couldn't see the cloud of God's presence, then you could hear God's commands wherever you were.

So I imagine they were pretty loud. What does that have to say to us? Well, in 1 Corinthians chapter 14, Paul, the apostle remarks on how important it is that a trumpet makes a sound, a clear sound.

If the trumpet does not make a clear sound, how will we be prepared for battle? And he may have been thinking about these silver trumpets here in numbers. Or he may have been thinking about the Roman army that, of course, he knew very well.

Even up until today, as you know, armies still use trumpets or bugles to pass on instructions. To call them to advance or call them to retreat.

Even with all the high-tech things we have, trumpets are still used. Paul was addressing a problem in the church in Corinth. It was a problem where everybody was speaking.

[ 25 : 42 ] Some were speaking in their own language. Some were speaking in another language. The result was confusion and misunderstanding, especially about what was God's will. What was God saying to the church?

It couldn't be, it wasn't clear. It was muddled and muffled. We need to know God's will. If we're to be led by the Lord, if we're to seek to know his presence amongst us, then we need to know what his will is.

We need clear instruction from the Lord. I believe that God does that through those he sets apart to teach his word.

Like a silver trumpet, those who teach the word of God are to be those who are to pass on God's instruction. There's that episode, or rather that teaching of Paul in Ephesians chapter 4.

Listen to this, verse 11. So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, and become mature, attending to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

[ 27 : 01 ] And he says, goes on to say, this is important because, then we will no longer be infants tossed back and forth by the waves, blown here and there by every wind of teaching, by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

Pastors, teachers, preachers are given by Christ to the church so that the church may be led and guided in God's will and not be like a ship blown here and there from one teaching to another teaching and possibly even onto the rocks of false teaching.

God has given us trumpets. Sometimes they are loud. Sometimes they are quiet.

But the important thing is that God's will is made known. And God has purposed that to be through the preaching and teaching of his word. But we also recognize as well that in the church, as we see here, God's people have differing jobs to do.

Although there was unity amongst the people of God when they moved forward and were directed by the Lord from place to place, there was also God-appointed divisions. That's when I read through those list of names, the four divisions, which were east, south, west, and north in the camps.

[ 28 : 32 ] And you notice that in those different divisions, there were different jobs to be done. But there was order. As the church went forward in the Old Testament, they went forth in order.

Verse 28. This was the order of march for the Israelite divisions. As they set out. Now, I've already said that God has given in his church men to serve in positions of leadership, to instruct, to teach his will.

But everyone in the church has a particular place in which God has purposed that they should serve him and the church. And so we find verse 17 here of Numbers 10.

Then the tabernacle was taken down. The Gershonites and Merorites who carried it set out. And later on, verse 21, then the Kohathites set out carrying the holy things.

They each had this role, this vital role in the service of the Lord. And so it is indeed in the church of Jesus Christ, just as there are those who are pastors and teachers.

[ 29 : 37 ] So we read later on in that same chapter of Ephesians 4. From him, that's Christ, the whole body joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work.

Each person depended upon another person. And so indeed there again in Numbers 10.21, the tabernacle was to be set up before they arrived.

So those who went first set up the tabernacle so when the Kohathites came with the holy things, the altars and other stuff like that, it was already to be put in place. If they hadn't done their job, they couldn't do their job.

There was an interconnection. There was a reliance, a dependency, upon one another. And it is utterly foolish for us to think that somehow one role is unnecessary, one thing is disposable, or that one person's service is better or more important than another person's service.

But we do think like that. And Paul answers that in 1 Corinthians 12 with great clarity of understanding. He says, Of course the eye needs the hand, and the hand needs the eye.

[ 31 : 02 ] And neither should we be envious of somebody else's particular service or ministry. For every single person is given a gift and an enabling from the Lord.

Again in 1 Corinthians 12 verse 4, there are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. So if as a local church, we are to continue moving forward in the will of God, led by his Spirit, taught from his word, we have each of us a purpose, a job to do, which is essential to the whole.

We are not individuals, not building our own little kingdom here or there, or doing something for ourselves alone, or even just for one on two. We are to do those things together for one body.



Perhaps you may still be thinking, what is it that God wants me to do? What is his role for me within this local church? Well, pray about it. If, once you've prayed about it, you may have some idea or thought, come and speak to myself or one of the elders about that, that we might seek together to be useful in the Lord, to build one another up as the Lord enables us.

There's two more things just as we briefly run through here. So we've seen that it is God's presence that led, it is God's instructions that are taught and it is God's people that have differing roles.

[ 32 : 40 ] But then we get to verses 29 and following. It appears that as the Israelites are about to set off on their journey into the wilderness, Hobab, who we're told is Moses' father-in-law, doesn't want to go.

Some reason or other, he doesn't feel as if he's part, perhaps, of God's people or has no right to their blessings. Moses says to him, we're setting out the place. The Lord has said, I'll give it to you.

Come with us. Treat you well. The Lord has promised good things to Israel. He answers, no, I will not go. I'm going back to my own land and my own people. But Moses said, please do not leave us.

You know where we should camp in the wilderness. You can be our eyes. If you come with us, we'll share with you whatever things the Lord gives us. God's church is to gather people in.

God's church is to grow numerically. God's church is to bring people along on the journey who were not part of it to begin with.

[ 33 : 49 ] Moses is here, isn't he? He's doing all that he can to convince Hobab to give up his homeland and throw in his lot with God's people. He persuades him of the great blessings that God has promised.

And they could be his if only he would join with the local church, with the church of God's people and join in the journey. He says, no, I won't go. But Moses perseveres, doesn't he?

He doesn't give up. Please don't leave us. Now, whether or not Moses genuinely believed that he needed to depend upon Hobab or not, I'm not sure because ultimately he was depending on the Lord.

But he uses persuasive language, doesn't he, to bring Hobab into the covenant people of God. He makes him feel like he's needed and wanted.

He won't take no for an answer. And I think it's fair to assume from what we read that he was successful in doing so. For verse 33, so they set out from the mountain.

[ 34 : 50 ] It doesn't say that Hobab argued again or said no or went away. I think we can assume that it worked. And Hobab threw in his lot with God's people and went with them into the wilderness.

Now, dear friends, we are to endeavor to persuade others to join the church. And you know what I mean by that. We are seeking to persuade men and women to come to Christ.

Christ. Because to be part of the church of Jesus Christ is to be part of Christ. It's not talking about joining a club or a social activity or in any other way some sort of external organization.

We're talking about the spiritual body of Christ. And we're to persuade men and women as Moses did to Hobab to join our happy band.

That's exactly what Paul did. Did you know that? As he went throughout his ministry and his missionary journeys we read that he went to persuade people. Acts chapter 18.

[ 35 : 52 ] Every Sabbath he reached in the synagogue trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. Now we know it is the work of the Holy Spirit that opens closed hearts. We know it is the work of God to save the lost.

but we have a responsibility in evangelism to persuade to convince to urge to plead. In fact Paul again goes on to confess to the church at Corinth his chief desire.

He says in chapter 5 of 2 Corinthians since then we know what it is to fear the Lord. We try to persuade others. Dear friends as believers we can become too easily disheartened in evangelism.

We can say well I've given that person a tract or I've spoken to that person about Jesus and they've said no I don't want to go with you. I don't want to follow Christ. We say well we've given them an opportunity it didn't work that's a real shame we give up.

Moses didn't and I think there's a lesson there for us. We're to persevere. We don't need to speak again and again to people even if they have no interest or respond to our evangelism we're to keep on persuading we don't know how long it will take for them to come through but we trust and believe that God will bring people to himself that the church will grow and men and women will be converted and saved.

[ 37 : 19 ] But of course there's one last thing here isn't it and above all else this is how the church is to grow to move to journey. if we finally notice how God's blessing must be sought God's blessing must be sought verses 35 and 36 whenever the ark set out Moses said rise up Lord may your enemies be scattered before you may your foes flee before you whenever it came to rest he said return Lord to the countless thousands of Israel.

We know that Moses was a great man of prayer don't we? we know at times he interceded on behalf of the people when they sinned and he prayed to God please don't destroy them please go with us and so on.

He prayed for God to go before the church whenever they took a step forward to scatter his enemies who would certainly be God's people's enemies too. Whenever the Israelites stopped to camp in a place he called down God's presence and blessing to be with them.

In other words from beginning to end every step of the journey was covered with prayer. Everything that God's people did Moses sought the blessing and the help and the leading of God.

Whatever he thought of Hobart and what he could do he utterly relied upon the Lord. And so I stress to you dear friends at the close of this passage pray.

[ 38 : 51 ] Pray for the church pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ pray for his direction and leading pray for me pray for the elders and the church officers and the members pray for those who we seek to reach with the gospel.

When pray pray pray and pray and when you've done everything else pray pray for the Lord's because without the Lord's help we can do nothing.

And again dear friends just as I close let us remember as we rejoice in God's faithfulness his keeping and sustaining of this company of God's people it is not because we are better than anybody else or more godly or more faithful or even more prayerful it is purely because of the goodness of God that we are still here.

If it had been up to me or any one of you the church would have folded and closed a long time ago but God has a purpose in all things and his purpose is to take his church forward to lead us in that journey through hard times a wilderness but to bring us out into the blessings of the promised land.

So let's pray together and then we're going to come to sing and then we're going to come to the Lord's table. We thank you our Father that when we come to you we come to the unchanging God the faithful God the reliable God the trustworthy God.

[ 40 : 38 ] Thank you that you do not change and in your dealings and your goodness to your people of old we see again Lord your dealings and goodness to us.

How we thank you O Lord that you did not leave them in the wilderness or forsake them and though they fell as we shall see and sinned against you yet you persevered.

And we thank you O Lord that you are the one who has kept us as individual believers and as a local church. And our desire and longing O Lord is that we might follow you and be led by you.

That we might be a people bound together by your Spirit with one heart one purpose one prayer that you O Lord would work in us and through us to the glory of your Son.

That we might not be stagnant that we might not Lord be stationary but that we Lord might be moving in step with your Holy Spirit led by your word taught O Lord through those that you gift serving one another with the gifts that you've given us and seeing others added to the number joining with us who once said no and sought a homeland here on earth but now seek that homeland in heaven.

[ 42 : 05 ] Lord equip us and help us in this work you've called us to. Keep us walking in step faithfully with you for we ask these things all for the praise and the honour of Jesus.

Amen.