

MOWBRAY COME SEE SERMON SERIES

SUGGESTED DATE	SUGGESTED READINGS*	THEME
Feb 2 (Candlemass)	Malachi 3:1-5 Hebrews 2:14-end Luke 2:22-40	Why do mission?
Feb 9 th	Isaiah 58:1-12 or 1-9a 1 Cor 2:1-12 or 1-end Matthew 5:13-20	What can we offer? Christians are distinct!
Feb 16 th	Genesis 1-2:3 Romans 8:18-25 Matthew 6:25- end	Be confident - what is your story?
Feb 23 rd	Exodus 24:12-end 2 Peter 1:16-end Matthew 17:1-9	Focusing our prayer on Mission

* Readings based on Lectionary

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Week 1

THEME - Why do mission?

READINGS

Malachi 3:1-5

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

⁵ Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

Hebrews 2:14-end

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Luke 2:22-40

²² When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the

Lord'), ²⁴ and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.'

³³ And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

SERMON POINTS

- Taking Jesus to where people are. Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the Temple for the rite of purification. This is where people were gathered and where there were people who needed to see Jesus for themselves.
- There are people who are waiting to meet Jesus. Simeon has held on to God's promise that he will see the Messiah before he dies, and that promise is fulfilled. Anna, on seeing Jesus, instantly knew that he would bring redemption.

There are people in our communities who are waiting for someone to tell them about Jesus.

- God sends messengers (Malachi 3:1). God sends messengers to prepare people so that they recognise Jesus when he comes. God continues to send messengers to make Jesus known.

- God came, in Jesus, to help us, humans, and not angels. Came in human form so that we could understand and relate to God who comes like one of us.

God sends us to take good news of Jesus to people as one of them. Not to be someone special, but, like them.

- Coming of Jesus like refiner's fire/ fuller's soap. Coming to faith in Jesus washes us clean of all impurities, enables us to leave behind all the things that have left a stain on our soul/ conscience. Taking Jesus to people gives them the chance to accept Jesus and know that same cleansing.

CHALLENGE

Reflect on the promise in Malachi that we can be made clean with fuller's soap. What does it feel like, knowing that all the stains in your life have been washed away?

Now imagine what you can offer to someone when you help them to come to Jesus and know this for themselves.

It was when Jesus was taken to where people were gathered that some of them recognised him. What are the places that you go to? The different people that you meet in the course of a week? Who is there who you might invite to a Come & See event?

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Week 2

THEME - What can we offer? Christians are distinct!

READINGS

Isaiah 58:1-12 or 1-9a

Shout out, do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!
Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

2 Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practised righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgements,
they delight to draw near to God.

3 'Why do we fast, but you do not see?
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?'
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast-day,
and oppress all your workers.

4 Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.

5 Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?

6 Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;

when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?
8 Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator[a] shall go before you,
the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard.
9 Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.
If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
10 if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.
11 The Lord will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.
12 Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

1 Corinthians 2:1-12 or 1-end

Proclaiming Christ crucified

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. 4 My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

The True Wisdom of God

6 Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. 7 But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But, as it is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him'— 10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts

bestowed on us by God. **13** And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

14 Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are discerned spiritually. **15** Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.

16

'For who has known the mind of the Lord
so as to instruct him?'

But we have the mind of Christ.

Matthew 5:13-20

Salt and Light

13 'You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

14 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

The Law and the Prophets

17 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. **18** For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. **19** Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. **20** For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

SERMON POINTS

- There is a near polar opposite of the Kingdom of God, displayed by Jesus, compared to the world + culture around us today. The reality of the world around us is disease, sin, selfishness, conflict, individualism, materialism.... Jesus' life and teaching shows the contrast of the realities of the Kingdom of God - healing, forgiveness + hope, peaceful fellowship and hope, overflowing generous hospitality... To be salt and light in the world today is to follow Jesus in a way that advertises the kingdom to others that they might be drawn in. Our lives can show a different reality to the prevailing culture.
- The function of salt is to bring out flavour, to bring out the best of the food its in. Chefs describe that only a small amount of salt enhances the agreeable

flavours, diminishes the undesirable ones and intensifies the complexities. Do we affect others positively, drawing out the best? Do we preserve purity, defend godly values in the situations we are in? Christians are salty when, for example:

- we draw conversation in the office or staff team away from gossip into positivity and encouraging chat; when we share wise things, or have the wisdom to share nothing
 - we are peaceful but fair and forthright in the face of aggression and abuse, e.g. a Christian police officer, or we speak against injustice on behalf of the vulnerable or voiceless
 - we serve the community through charitable causes, giving finance, time and energy to food banks, especially when this is sacrificial or costly
 - when we demonstrate the fruits of the spirit in the opposite situation, e.g. peace in conflict, joy amidst suffering
 - *you might want to insert an example of someone known locally*
- Have we taken heed of the warning in this passage of what happens if we lose our distinctiveness?
 - Let your light shine before others - a torch lights a path, a lighthouse guides to safety. Come and See will be a great opportunity to be visible to others in your faith, to illuminate Jesus by inviting people to events where he will be shared.
 - How we feel about inviting others to events might be a barometer of how much we want to show or hide our light?
 - If we feel reticent about inviting people, does that reveal an embarrassment or insecurity about our faith? This could be a great start for discussion together over coffee to help encourage each other in our inviting
 - If you can't wait to invite people then be encouraged about your light shining bright!
 - Did you know a lit candle can be seen from 3.6 - 30 miles away! You may feel that you don't have much to offer; are only a small congregation, a single person in a work place, that what you have doesn't go very far - but actually a tiny light travels a huge distance! Do we tell people that we pray for them? Do we offer to pray for those in trouble? Do we offer generosity or hospitality to others? Seemingly small acts shine brightly in a culture which tends to expect something in return and nothing for free.

CHALLENGE

Come and See gives you a wonderful chance to practice being salt and light - we've got a great opportunity to invite people to events and share what our faith is about. Who will you invite to an event near you?

Do you feel like you might be hiding your light - why not try doing just one new thing as part of this mission that reveals it.

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Week 3

THEME - Be confident - what is your story?

READINGS

Genesis 1-2:3

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ² the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³ Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶ And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' ⁷ So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸ God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹ And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. ¹⁶ God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷ God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.' ²¹ So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in

the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.’ ²³ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.’ And it was so. ²⁵ God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’

²⁷ So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’ ²⁹ God said, ‘See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.’ And it was so. ³¹ God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. ² And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

Romans 8:18-25

¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰ for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Matthew 6:25- end

²⁵ ‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor

reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸ And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” ³² For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ ‘So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

SERMON POINTS

- Do not worry (Matt). This isn’t saying that there won’t be difficulties in life - there will be (cf Rom - sufferings of present time), but that God is with us even in the midst of those sufferings.
- Do not worry = have confidence. We can have confidence about God’s care for us. See the example of the birds of the air and the flowers of the field. They were created by God and loved by God. God saw that they were good.

Creation - human beings also made by God. Made in the image of God and God saw that they were ‘very good’. Have confidence that God sees us as ‘very good’ and will care for us.

- Be confident - we have a great story to tell. The story of the God of creation, with the big vision and the attention to detail. The story of Jesus death and resurrection - the first fruits (Rom’s) with the promise that death has been defeated and there is something bigger and better still to come.
- Be confident - in our own stories of faith. The story of how we came to know Jesus for ourselves. The stories of what God has done/ is doing in our lives.

CHALLENGE

Do you have any concerns about sharing your faith story? Talk to the person next to you about that concern.

What are the stories of how God has been at work in your life? Practice telling that story in a way that is easiest for you - this might be by writing it down or it might be by telling someone you trust/ another member of your church.

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Week 4

THEME - Focusing our prayer on Mission

READINGS

Exodus 24:12-end, 2

The Lord said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.” So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. To the elders he had said, “Wait here for us, until we come to you again; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them.”

Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

2 Peter 1:16-end

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honour and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Matthew 17:1-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly

there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

SERMON POINTS

- Going up the mountain - God led Moses up the mountain where He spoke to Moses. Jesus led the disciples up a high mountain that they might gain insight into who He is.
- We need to seek the high places, places in our lives where we can be close to God e.g. church, prayer space at home, holy places, thin places.

We also need to be in the right place within ourselves, a place where we leave distractions behind: worries, concerns, sinfulness, pride, self-doubt etc

- Wait patiently for the Lord: Moses waited a week to be called into the cloud and then was there for 40 days and nights.

In Luke's version Peter rushes in wanting to build dwellings rather than waiting on Jesus.

- Be ready to act upon what God says: Moses wrote the law on the tablets of stone and took them to the people and follows up by teaching them the laws and how to follow them.

Following the transfiguration we see Jesus driving out demons and follows up with teaching.

- Before we engage in mission we need to spend time with God, we need to understand what He is doing work with Him. What is on the heart of God for your community? What is He asking you to do? How will this work practically? How will you follow-up mission.
- What is our destination? Moses was given the law to bring the people back into line with God so that they could reach the promised land.

Jesus' revelatory journey up the mountain was a key point on the journey to the cross and the disciples understanding of who Jesus truly was and is.

CHALLENGE

When deciding how we will reach out during Come and See have we truly spent time in the presence of God considering what we should be doing and who we should be targeting our mission at as a church and as individuals.

If we have a clear direction from God, do we know what actions we will take and what follow-up we have to ensure we can take people on a journey firstly to point where they can see Jesus and then onwards as they work out a their path to salvation and the Kingdom of God.