

Philippians 1:3-6 - Partnership & Thanksgiving Service

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Preacher: Steve Palframan

[0 : 00] Great, well let me give you all a very warm welcome to our evening meeting. It's great to have you with us tonight. This is a slightly unusual meeting for us. And so if you're looking around and thinking, I don't really recognise very many people in this room, don't worry because the person sat next to you is also thinking exactly the same thing as they look around the room.

It's great to have so many guests with us tonight. We have guests from the Christian Answer team. I have to apologise, I have been corrected today for calling it the Christian Answers team and have been corrected that there is only one Christian answer and it's the Lord Jesus Christ.

So I apologise for getting that wrong. But the Christian Answer team have been coming to West Kilburn for a number of years, over 50 years I think, and have been at High Park Speaker's Corner. So if you're not sure in the room who's been on that team, you can look at the people who are red and sunburned and looking slightly exhausted. They've been down at High Park Speaker's Corner all day today. So we're thankful for you guys being with us this evening.

And also a very warm welcome to friends from Nashville First Baptist Church and especially to Thomas and Elizabeth who are stood at the back. Welcome to you guys. It's great to have you with us. It's great to have you with us. If you don't know Thomas, Thomas was the founding pastor of Redeemer Queen's Park.

[1 : 17] And we're going to be hearing a bit more about that story a little bit later. It's also good to have Andrew Gordon with us. He is here somewhere, but I can't. Oh, there he is. See him? So I want to call Andrew a veteran Northwest London pastor, but I feel if I call him that he might be cross with me.

But Andrew, we are very grateful for you being with us this evening. We're going to hear a little bit from Andrew about gospel ministry in the Northwest. So let me just tell you a little bit about the plan for our time together.

This is not a normal Sunday evening service for us. Normally on a Sunday evening, there are about 30 of us or so. But with so many guests, we thought it would be good for us to do something a little bit unusual.

And so what we're going to do tonight is we're going to tell a bit of the story about West Kilburn Baptist Church. We're going to talk a little bit about the merger that happened between West Kilburn and Redeemer Queen's Park. We're going to hear from Thomas. We're going to hear from Andrew. We're going to listen to God's word.

We're going to sing God's praises together and we're going to have opportunity to pray together as well. So that's what's going on. I'm going to invite Louise, who's one of members of our joint leadership team to come and open our evening in prayer.

[2 : 25] So Louise, over to you. Amen. Let's bow our heads and pray. Father, we come before you today with grateful hearts, thanking you for your unfailing love and your faithfulness.

Lord, we praise you for the way you work through ordinary people to accomplish your extraordinary purposes. You choose us, you guide us, you empower us to be instruments of your grace in this world.

Lord, thank you for the ways you bring us together as one body. We are each different in our giftings, yet united in you. Help us, Father, to see how you are moving through one another, encouraging, serving, teaching, and loving, so that you may, your will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Lord, as you work through us, shape our hearts, grow us in unity, that we may be bound together in peace and understanding. Strengthen our love for one another so that it reflects your perfect love. And that we may be able to serve selflessly. And that we may be able to serve selflessly. And that we may be able to serve selflessly. And to build each other up in faith. Father, thank you for your faithful.

[3 : 39] As we look back, we can see the many things that we've been able to witness being accomplished through the church, through the work of the church. But Father, let's not forget that you are the one building your church.

We give you praise. We give you honor. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen. Amen. Well, I'm going to try and get various different people up at different points in the service.

I should have introduced myself, by the way. So my name is Steve. I'm one of the leaders of the church here and the full time pastor. And so that's who I am. But Reece is one of the guys who was one of the original church members of Redeemer Queens Park.

So Reece, I just want to tell us a little bit about where you're from, how you ended up in London and that kind of thing. That'd be great. Come and use this microphone. Yeah, thanks Steve. So I'm from South Carolina.

That means something to some of you. Doesn't mean something to a lot of you. So in the southeastern part of the United States. So I grew up there. And my wife, Caitlin, and I got married at a university.

[4 : 43] And yeah, we were there kind of living life. And God really laid, I think, missions on our heart in a way that was really local. Just that, you know, he had given us coworkers and neighbors and people around us that he wanted us to love.

And then he kind of began to transform that over time to thinking about maybe doing that same thing somewhere else. And so as we were praying through that, he put London on our hearts. And so long story short, that's kind of how we ended up here.

And how's that been? So like what's been the best part of that? What's been the most challenging part of that? I thought these were going to be easy questions. Yeah, okay.

Sorry, well, I don't know. I can go for it though. Yeah, yeah, yeah. There's a lot of both of those, to be honest with you. I mean, I think looking around this room, we see a lot of faces that we didn't know that some of them didn't know Jesus before we were here.

And like some of them we had a hand in and helping introduce to Jesus. Some of them we got to see other people do. We got to see Jesus change a lot of lives, I think, is kind of the best part. Maybe that's an easy question.

[5 : 50] I mean, the hardest part, there are certainly challenges of being away from family, of kind of trying to fit in, or learn to fit in somewhere that was new.

You know, I think God has really even used those really difficult times. So, just as a reminder that actually nowhere here is our ultimate home, that everything that is here is temporary, and that he's actually kind of, I think, helped us realize that in a really sweet way.

So, yeah, some practical challenges and some really good things he's done. That's great. Rhys is going to read God's word for us, and then I'm going to preach. So, go. Philippians chapter 1, verses 3 through 6.

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Well, I wonder if you've got a Bible, you might want to hold that open. We are going to have a look at that together in a few moments. But I want, before we look at it, just to tell you a bit of a brief story about the church here.

[7 : 15] So, in 1864, Kilburn was on the sort of rural edge of an expanding city. So, London at the time was rapidly expanding out of the center.

They were building railway stations, which were helping people move further away from the sort of smelly, dirty center into rural parts like Kilburn, which is hard to imagine.

They had newly built the Kilburn and Maida Vale station. And so, Queen's Park in the Kilburn area was expanding rapidly. You can imagine that there was a real buzz of activity around the place at the time.

So, developers were buying up land, laying out new streets. People had put together designs for a new park, Queen's Park, in this little corner of London. And they had planned a new London underground station as well.

And in the midst of all of that, there were a group of local believers who constituted together to begin what they described as a Calvinistic Baptist church.

[8 : 16] After about three months of gathering, there were about 28 members of this young church. And a man called Thomas Hall was the pastor. They met, not in this building, which wasn't yet built, but in 29 Canterbury Road, which was his home.

And as the church continued to grow, so did the need for a church building. And they acquired the site here on which we are sat and on a lease and drew up drawings for a building and laid a foundation stone.

In June 1865, so less than a year after starting the church, Thomas Hall applied to what was called the Baptist Building Fund for £1,000 to complete the church building.

It was an ambitious project. So, there was no other non-conformist church in this part of London. And there were about 5,000 people living in the area.

And this church of 28 set about building a chapel with a seat, what they said was 400 people.

Right? Maybe people were smaller back then. But if they thought they could fit 400 in here, I don't know what they were thinking.

[9 : 29] The money came through from the Baptist Building Fund. The £1,000 was given to the church to build the building. And the money was later paid off, mostly paid off at least, by a guy called Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who gave them some money in order to finish off paying the loan and add the back hall and the balcony that you are seated in this evening.

The church grew by 1868. So, four years after starting, the church had 120 members. And in the years that followed, they were teaching about 300 children in their school classroom behind me, presumably on a revolving rotor rather than all at the same time.

Now, a couple of things really strike me about the story. One is the mix of people involved. There's some of the paperwork, the original paperwork for the loan is in my office upstairs.

And it tells you that it was secured by four local men who basically put their own assets against the loan in order to secure it. The first one was called Billius Bayswater, who was a retired local builder. Now, his social standing was so low that it didn't afford him the word Esquire after his name on the official document. As far as I can tell, you didn't really need very much to have Esquire after your name.

[10 : 42] Everybody else does, but not Billius. He was a man of no rank, no standing, but still he was willing to put all that he had to secure the loan to build this building that we're sitting in, sat in this evening.

Isaac Hunt was the local greengrocer. He added his name to the list. Henry Peoples was the local plumber. He's perhaps the reason the baptistry still leaks to this day.

And Stephen Moslin worked as an agent for the local gas company. At Thomas Hall, the pastor wrote of these men, he said, this was a mission church without prestige, patronage or wealthy support.

He wrote that many chief of sinners became Christians through the ministry of the church in the early days. In other words, the church was started by ordinary, regular local people who loved Jesus, invested all that they had and put it on the line so that other people might hear about him in this building this evening.

It was never going to be, and it was never intended to be, another metropolitan tabernacle or a Westminster chapel. It wasn't built as a flagship city centre church drawing Christians from across the city.

[11 : 55] Rather, it was born out of the sacrificial generosity of men and women. Men and women that most people would just walk past on the street, who had a passion for the people of London, and who were conscious that non-Christian people would not walk to the city centre or get a train to the city centre to find out about Jesus, who they weren't interested in.

But the other striking thing is the ambition of churches at the time to work together to see other churches started. If you read the history of the time, Charles Spurgeon was really the kind of mastermind behind all of this, generating money and enthusiasm to see that churches were built in neighbourhoods all across the city, with a passion to reach people with the gospel.

Yet he knew and others knew that those local churches wouldn't start themselves, and that without local churches like that, the city wouldn't be reached. Thomas Hall himself was a well-connected Baptist minister. He had not long moved to London.

He used to preach twice a week at Exhibition Hall to a thousand men at a time. And so coming here with a very small group of people to start a local mission church was a very humble thing for him to do.

His references on the loan describe him as a self-deprecating, humble man who has started a church at considerable personal sacrifice. He didn't work on his own, though the men who vouched for him personally on the loan application are close associates with Spurgeon.

[13:21] He was obviously intimately involved in lots of different Baptist networks at the time. And the local roots of the church weren't to despise what was going on in the more famous churches in the city.

In fact, they worked together, coming together to see the work of the gospel take hold in London, really realizing that you're never going to reach the city with hub churches and you're never going to start mission churches without the support of hub churches in the city center.

Thomas Hall lists some of those who helped him. Lady Rowling, Lady Slay and her daughters, Mrs. Windham of Blanford Square, Miss Garden of Gloucester Terrace.

They're all mentioned in his notes. I know nothing about them. You can Google them and find out later if you like. But it seems to me that these two things, right? Considerable personal sacrifice for the spread of the gospel and a willingness to partner with others for the sake of the gospel, mark this church right from the very beginning.

And when you come to Paul's letter to the Philippian church, you find that's exactly what's going on here as well. In fact, it seems from just these three verses that were read to us that you cannot have one without the other.

[14:35] In other words, you cannot have this passion for sacrificial gospel ministry without also a desire and a hunger to work with other believers. So if you look down at the verses, you realize, don't you, that Paul could not be more thankful for the Philippian church.

Look at what he says in verses three and four. I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy. If you look at all the every's, the all's and the always in those verses, it's incredible, isn't it?

Every time I remember you, in all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy. I think it's hard to think, isn't it, how Paul could be any more enthusiastic about this group of Christians.

He can't thank God enough for them. But just think with me, what is getting him so excited? What is it that means that he is so thankful for them? Well, look at verse five. It says, doesn't it?

Because of your partnership in the gospel from this first day until now. Now, I think I thought I'd understood that, right? Because I think you read that and you go, OK, this makes sense, right?

[15:38] Paul is overwhelmingly thankful for the Philippian church because they've partnered with him in gospel ministry. That makes sense, doesn't it? Paul has this ministry that he wants to get on with. The Philippian church are partnering with him.

He's thankful to them. So we assume that Paul is like, you know, those children who are writing thank you letters to their great aunt who sent them money. And it goes, you know, something like this, dear Aunt Betty.

Thank you so much for the five pounds you gave me for Christmas. I spent it all on sweets. I stuffed my face. I had a great time. You are helping me live my dream. Please send me more money as soon as possible.

Maybe ten pounds next time. And I will buy even more. And maybe you sort of think, well, that's perhaps what Paul is saying. These Philippian church have been sacrificially generous towards him. He's really thankful because they've let him get on with what he planned to do.

I don't think that's what it means at all. Paul is not thankful for the Philippians because they got on board with his gospel project. In fact, as you read the rest of the book of Philippians, Paul seems fairly ambivalent, doesn't he, about the personal generosity towards him.

[16:43] Rather, it seems, if you look down at your Bible again, that the reason Paul is so excited is that their partnership with him in the gospel work is evidence that God is doing a good work in them.

Verse six. In other words, their partnership with Paul means that Paul is confident that God is at work in them. Perhaps you could illustrate it this way.

Imagine you have a friend who breaks their leg. And so they're on crutches and they can't walk. And a few months later, they send you a message and they say, would you like to go for a walk with me?

Well, obviously, you're really excited, aren't you? Why are you really excited? Well, not just because it's miserable going for a walk by yourself and you want the company. No, you are excited because their desire to go for a walk is evidence that their leg is healed.

And that's it here. Paul's excitement at their partnership in the gospel is evidence that God is at work in them. It's not that they're funding his pet mission project.

[17 : 44] I don't think that would elicit such an excited response from the apostle. Rather, it's as he looks at them, he goes, God's at work amongst you. Look at what God's doing in you. I know what God is doing in you because you are now partnering in the gospel with me and others.

Here's the principle, right? Gospel partnership is evidence of gospel life. Gospel partnership is evidence of gospel life. And we know that.

That's the Philippian story. Self-sacrifice for the extension of the kingdom driven by a work of God in the hearts of the people that empowers them to live in a way that is completely inexplicable outside of a work of God.

I want you to notice this evening with me that that is not just the Philippian story. That's the story of West Kilwin Baptist Church. That's the story of how this church got here.

It's actually the story of every gospel church around the world. You heard it in Reese's story. We're going to hear it some more in Thomas's story about traveling here from the States to start a gospel church in the community.

[18 : 44] Where men and women have rolled up their sleeves and unselfishly involved themselves in gospel ministry. Counting everything as a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Jesus Christ.

Partnering together to see gospel churches started and people reach for Christ. And when you see that right when you see that going on and you think what God is at work. Look at that partnership in the gospel that is inexplicable outside of a work of God.

What do you do when you see that? Well, I thank my God every time I remember it. In all my prayers for all of you. I always pray with joy. That's what you should do. You should thank God.

And that's what we're trying to do this evening. On the 22nd of March, 2024, I received this WhatsApp message. Hi, Steve.

Please forgive the unsolicited WhatsApp message. My name is David Brown, resident of Queens Park and interim pastor and elder of Redeemer Queens Park. I believe, you know, that our founding pastor, Thomas West, has now moved on.

[19 : 46] And so I'm leading for the time being. It would be great to connect and get to know each other as we endeavor to minister to our area. All the best. David. Following his message, the two of us began meeting together regularly and sharing what was going on in our churches and praying for one another.

At that time, I'd been the pastor of West Kilburn for about 12 months. I'd arrived here to lead what we hoped would become a church revitalization. In the church, we'd seen some growth and encouragements, but we were just on the cusp of spending every penny that we had purchasing the freehold of this building.

If you're an American brother or sister this evening, you don't understand freehold or leasehold. Thomas would gladly explain it to you later, I'm sure. Right. So basically we owned the building, but we didn't own the land.

And we were 40 years off of being kicked off the building and out of the land so that we wouldn't be able to meet together. And so we were about to spend 500,000 pounds, which was money that had come from a legacy gift.

And it was all the money we had in the bank to purchase the freehold here. At the same time, Redeemer was without a pastor. Thomas had returned to the US and the church didn't have a building or an office and would struggle sort of navigate the way forward and how it would be able to sustain long term ministry.

[21 : 02] So David and I just met. That's all we did. We prayed about the challenges. We talked together, asking that God would help us to see a way forward. It struck us fairly early on that we

could probably help each other out.

We had a building. Redeemer Queen's Park needed a place to meet. Redeemer was spending money on rent and we were without any money. And so they could help us keep going.

So that's what we did. Redeemer met here on a Saturday. West Kilburn met on a Sunday and they rented the building office and that helped us keep going. At the end of the summer, 2024, the idea of the merger of the two churches was first floated.

And there was much to commend it, right? These two churches were theologically very similar. Our desire to reach the community was exactly the same. Neither church were really in a position to carry on with ministry in the manner in which they'd been doing it before.

But we were conscious that if we were going to merge these churches, it would be considerable gospel sacrifice for everybody involved. Because they were so different to one another culturally.

[22 : 06] As someone pointed out to us in the very early days, merging two churches, what you get if you bring two churches together is a third church that nobody chose to go to. And so all of a sudden, everyone is unhappy.

And they say, well, you really need to think very carefully if that's what you want to do. And so we put it to our churches. The leaders prayed about it and thought about it, saw the Lord over it and put it to our two churches that we we considered it worth the gospel sacrifice for the sake of local people hearing about Jesus.

That we gave up some of our cultural preferences and perhaps the familiarity of our church or maybe the kind of youthful dynamic of our church in order to bring something healthy gospel shaped together where we could see new people reach for Christ because there was a sustainable gospel ministry in the area.

And encouragingly and remarkably, that's exactly what both churches voted to do. Considering really that people hearing about Christ is more important than our personal comfort or personal preferences, that losing for the sake of others gaining Christ is worth it.

In the language of Philippians one, people sacrificially partnered in the gospel, not because they were good people, but because verse six, God was at work in them in a way that he'd only just begun and he promised to complete.

[23 : 33] And what do you do when you see that? When you see sacrificial partnership like that, you thank God, don't you? Since the merger of the two churches, lots has kept changing.

Since the church is merged, we've had six baptisms. We've welcomed 23 new church members and 16 church members have moved on to other churches, either in this city or another city in the UK or even in other countries.

We've seen dozens of people come through the door to hear about Christ. We've got a Christianity Explore course going on at the moment, which is hugely encouraging. Is that our doing? That's not our doing, is it?

It's God's doing. Praise him. Because gospel partnership is a sign that God is at work. And so we give him all the praise and all the glory. I'm going to pray. We're going to stand and sing together, but let me pray.

Heavenly Father, how we thank you that you are at work in us and that we see that work in an eagerness to work together for the sake of the fact that we are at work in us.

[24 : 38] And that we thank you that we are at work in the moment of the sake of the fame of Jesus Christ, that many more might come to know him and find eternal salvation in him alone. How we thank you that we here stand on the shoulders of men and women down through the generations who have done just that.

And we praise and thank you and give you all the glory in Jesus name. Amen. All right, Angie.

So, Angie, since me arriving in Northwest London, Andrew has been a great friend. So I called you a veteran of gospel ministry in this part of London, which might be a bit unfair, but you did say to me once, Steve, you is well out your depth, man, is what you said to me, I think.

Yeah, that's half of it. What I didn't tell you was, I'm out of my depth as well. Oh, okay. And I've been knocking around for a few decades. Right. Well, there you go. We're both out of our depth, but praise the Lord that he's gracious, right?

Yeah, that's right. And just tell us a little bit, you've been working in this kind of corner of Northwest London for a long time. Yeah. And it's been quite a hard place to do gospel ministry, hasn't it? So can you just describe that, like over the years and why you think that's been the case and what's

been the challenges of gospel work in this part of London?

[25 : 56] Yes, I think it's hard to put your finger on it precisely, but London Borough of Brent, where most of Northwest London is, is number one, number two, most ethnically diverse place in London.

Okay, either number one or number two, says the Guardian newspaper, and they cannot be wrong. Okay, so what that means is there's lots of different religions. And I think as well, there's groups of people who the church has struggled to make contact with over many years.

There's some people we've been able to touch, but others we've been unable to touch at all. Yeah. And so just as your kind of overview of churches in this part of London, what are the kind of sizes of those churches and how many are there of them, that kind of thing? What are your sort of take on that?

I think about, say, 10 years ago, there were a number of congregations, they were very, very small, struggling fellowships. I went from here, having been a sort of West Kilburnite, to Wilsdon, and there was eight people. Okay, my family came, and we increased it by 50%. Yeah, revival. Yeah. So, many of them were struggling. There were one or two growing. But in the last few years, a number of things have happened, a number of people have come on board.

[27 : 35] There was a situation once where a London leader, a big London leader of, okay, I'll say it, FIC, our denomination, he had a map.

I was at a meeting, he had a map of London, and he was telling us what he knew about these areas. And he came to our area, he pointed out and said, I know nothing about this area.

I know nothing about Northwest London. Northwest London did not attract, or didn't seem to, the great gospel pastors or anything like that. Just you and me. And Thomas West, and he came as well for a bit.

There you go. There you go. There you go. So, it's always been, up until recently, some brothers have come, the Lord has raised up some new gospel workers.

And I can see there has been growth in a number of fellowships, here at Kilburn. I mean, most of the people I don't even recognize. Which is good. Actually, it's a good thing, isn't it? To come back, it's good to recognize one or two people. Yeah? It's good that you recognize Vidar, isn't it?

[28 : 38] Yeah? Good, yeah. Jane Vidar, yeah. Liz, where I can see her. Great. Yeah, it's good that I can recognize myself. But isn't it better, like, I don't know half of you? Yeah. Isn't that great? That means some growth is happening. Yeah. And a lot of us, the Lord has used yourself, Bob Kane. Yeah.

Yeah. And also in other fellowships, like Stamble. Yeah. There's been some growth there as well. Yeah. Great. Yeah. Great. If you sort of had a wish list for how to support gospel ministry in Northwest London, what would be, what would be the things on the list that you think, this is the ways that, these are the things that people could pray for us?

These are the ways that maybe people could consider supporting us. What would be the things that you would put on that list? I think number one would be come and see. Come and see. See what's going on. We can show you what's going on. The Northwest London, I think, is the most frustrating, yet fascinating place in all of London. One of the most. I think it's one of the historical mission fields. Because you've got people coming from every nation and you've got all sorts of views. For example, I used to be in contact with one of the main atheists on the South Kiliman estate. So much so that I said to him one day, you're like that Richard Dawkins, aren't you? And his answer was, who's he? Yeah. Certain things can bypass you. So come and find out what's going on.

Can you give to what's going on? I think financial resources are a major thing. Because through that, workers can come. Yeah, you can develop workers who can take the work forward.

[30 : 25] I think one of the problems has been without the resources, people eventually get old, retire, and then the work just gets a reset back to normal. It needs people willing to also come and live.

Come and live. Okay, Northwest London is a big thing, really. You've got urban Northwest London, which is here. You've got suburban Northwest London. You've got city centre, Northwest London as well, haven't you?

Yeah. So actually, there's massive variety. Variety in people, variety in opportunity. You could be talking to someone who in their own country would never hear the good news. It's amazing.

I was hearing about an East African country. I won't say what it is, which country, you'll guess. East African country dominated by Islam. And I was told by a mission expert, there's next to no converts

in London.

I went to a church in Acton, and I saw a guy from that community. And he was sitting there. He was wearing a sort of Chelsea track suit, but I forgive him for that. Yeah, I forgive him for that, for wearing that. But I said to him, I said, I was so amazed to see him. I said, what are you doing here? Imagine saying that to someone. You come to church, what are you doing here?

[31 : 49] And then he pointed to a guy who helped him, who had been his spiritual father. It was a working class English white guy with tats up his sleeves, who was sitting there looking absolutely anonymous. Yeah. And this brother said, this is the guy who's helped me to faith. And this is the guy who helps me today. Yeah.

It reminded me of a lesson that I've learned again and again at West Kilburn. There are no small people with regards to the kingdom of God. Francis Schaeffer said, there are no small people. It's the people you think are nothing. Yeah. And you may be a person who thinks, ah, I couldn't add nothing to anything going on. No, you are the kind of person who God can use. Yeah. Thanks, guys.

Thanks, Andrew. I'd love to talk to you for longer, but we'll talk afterwards. Thanks, Andrew. Thank you. Thomas, will you come and join us? Thank you.

Well, you almost got a round of applause before you'd started. It was really remarkable. Thomas, it's great to have you with us. Thank you so much for being here and bringing Elizabeth with you and your team of folks. I just wonder whether you could tell us a little bit, because you probably won't know most people in the room.

Just introduce yourself and tell us when you came to London and what the kind of plan was behind Redeemer and that sort of thing. That would be really great. Thank you, Steve. Thanks for having us tonight as well. Thank you very much.

[33 : 22] Good to be with you all. Hello. Greetings from the church in Nashville as well. Nashville, Tennessee. That's in America. Glad to be with you all tonight. From the American South, from Montgomery, Alabama, went through a place called Auburn for university and Raleigh, North Carolina for seminary studies.

And during that course of time, you know, we're reading the Bible. You read the book of Acts. There's this constant push, isn't it, from where the gospel is to where the gospel is not.

And I was a university minister for seven years in the States. And I would sit with lots of college students on the university campus. And you're asking the question, you know, are you willing to go wherever Jesus says go and do whatever Jesus says do?

I think this is pretty basic discipleship. And there came a day when the Lord started to impress that question on my wife Elizabeth and I's heart in a particular way. There's some other things that kind of put London on the map for us.

My dissertation studies wrote on a recently dead English guy. And that kind of helped to bring it all into focus. And the vision was, let's go over to London and see if we could be of any help.

[34 : 30] Came over on a couple of different kind of research trips. Really just listening and praying and asking the Lord, is there anything for us to do here? And we landed in a church in the west end of London on a Sunday afternoon.

And somebody turns to my wife Elizabeth and says, what are you doing here? And she just said, we're trusting the Lord has something for us. We sent a call to planting the church.

And they said, oh, you need to go check out Queens Park. And we said, okay, like why? And they said, well, Green Leafy Park. It's a really great primary school there. And there's really no gospel churches.

So we took the tube up, got off, and kind of turned left into the neighborhood and said, maybe this is it. And, you know, worked through other network leaders and such. And that really led to coming across with a small team of friends from the states.

Really looking to plant a church in Queens Park. Trying to help out with the evangelization of Northwest London. So much of what Andrew brings to us so plainly and so clearly right here, we experience through just a little bit of research.

[35 : 35] So aspiring to come over and plant a multicultural evangelistic outpost to help out with Northwest London. And then kind of COVID happened, right? Yeah.

Yeah, so that was hard. So we moved over in June of 2019, just in time for COVID to get ready. Yeah. And we were over here for just about five years.

Tell us just, as you look back on that time, what are some of the highlights of that? What are some of the great encouragements? I don't know, lots of it was hard as well, wasn't it? Like you say, COVID and things. But there were some real encouragements.

Some of them are sitting in the room as well, aren't they? So tell us that. I mean, we can name names. I mean, this is really encouraging. Getting to, yeah, I mean, we got very involved with Salisbury Primary School.

And the sense of skepticism turning towards a little bit of intrigue to have an opportunity to share with different people at the school was really encouraging.

[36 : 36] Friends that we got to know, some of Shepard's Buddies and Shepard's Buddies' parents even being here today. Like this is just beautiful to see. Getting to know Eddie, a local barista in the community as well.

Getting to live life in a community and being able to share with people across time was hugely encouraging. Some of the gatherings that people in this room helped come together and sacrifice their time and energy to put on.

It seemed pretty impactful to some people like carol services and Easter egg hunts. Through the school, really trying to reach out into all the different nooks and crannies of this area.

Some really encouraging things there. But nothing comes close to watching people who were far from Jesus come to learn about Jesus and put their faith in Jesus and start following Jesus.

It's the best. Right. Now, maybe you could save yourself and Elizabeth having the same conversation several times. Just tell us a little update about where you are and what you're doing now and how it's going.

[37 : 37] That would be great to hear. Thank you very much. Received a call to ministry to a church in Nashville, Tennessee. Legacy Church. A church, 205 years old, in need of revitalization and a fresh wave of life.

My wife Elizabeth and I would go around saying it's going to take something pretty special to pull us out of London one day. And it was with great tear to the heart to leave one community you love and go to another community that you learn to love and get on with.

And some beautiful people from that church are here today. Getting to move across back to the American South was actually so helpful. And we have so much to give God thanks for.

And we do when it comes to the church in London. And then when it comes to the city of London. London is a place for teaching us about what it means to be a true follower of Jesus.

And getting to know some wonderful brothers and sisters in the church here, like the other elders we got to run with. They're now part of the joint leadership team. Brothers like Andrew Barnett, Luis Lopez, and their families. Getting to learn from other kingdom leaders.

[38 : 44] Getting to see people from all different backgrounds and walks of life coming through. And you learn a lot about what it is to be a follower of Jesus when you get to follow Jesus with people from all different sorts of backgrounds and cultures and walks of life.

And that's really been a great blessing to us that we've taken over to the church there in Nashville. So we're in year two and a half of pastoring Nashville First Baptist Church.

It was a place that probably peaked in about 1970 and in different ways kind of over the years. And the Lord's reviving us and turning us into a new season. And we're very grateful about that.

Great. And how are the family? Yeah. Our daughter, Perry Elizabeth, is 12. She's doing really well. Our son, Shepherd, is 10. And both of them are enjoying Nashville.

Right. And how can we pray for you? And for the... Because obviously we're in a kind of church revitalization here as well. Two and a half years, you've probably fixed every problem. Yeah. I would have thought by now.

[39 : 40] Just like you. Everything's fine. Right? So nothing to worry about here. Everything is fine right now. Yeah. Right. So tell us how we can be praying for you. The ways that you would imagine that you need prayer, you need support, and you need care right here, we need it as well.

We're... For all the differences, we're pretty much pretty similar. You could pray for our congregation. We're located right downtown, as they say, or city center.

We're trying to be an evangelistic outpost to a community that's rapidly changing. The high rises are coming in. The rent's very expensive. And we're trying to reach out to our city in a fresh way.

Everything's changing around us. And, you know, we don't want to change for change's sake. But we need to get on with it to reach our neighbors in a fresh way. So you could pray. You could pray

for our evangelism, that the Lord would give us both wisdom and favor for how to reach out to our neighbors and to share the love of Jesus with them.

Thanks so much, Thomas. That's great. Thank you. Thank you. That's great. I appreciate it. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. So I'm going to introduce you to Martina, who is going to come and join me at the front here.

[40 : 58] Martina said to me today, she said, are you just going to ask me questions or you're not going to prepare my answers for me? Are you sure you're ready for that? So come on, Martina. Martina is one of our newest church members.

Baptized. Yeah. And you were baptized earlier this month. Martina, I just wonder whether you could just tell us a little bit about the story about how you became a Christian and how you found your way to this church.

listen and everybody has to leave before half past seven so we've got we've not got to launch so how did tell us just a story about okay how you came to west kilman baptist church how you ended up here um just use the microphone so shepherd and i'm saying it like that because that's how i heard his name the first time shepherd um was friend his friends was friends with ramona's son he was friends with my son this is how god is amazing and anyway but all here because the kids um so ezekeiel was coming to know that my sister told me about the friday club and i was like oh my god there's a church that's doing stuff for kids how cool right because no way does that these days apart from on a sunday and then um i was at home with matthew we were going to our old church and then we were supposed to leave the house and then all of a sudden matthew was like oh my back's hurting i'm not taking all these kids to church on my own i'm not doing it and then i remember tear and i was like oh they come on fridays and every baptist church i've been to they like kids so if i go and it's a bad vibe we're just gonna leave in it and then we came and then steve was like oh sorry there's no children's church and i'm like oh my god he's actually apologizing for it and then he had these little um clipboard stuff and i was like they came in for kids and my children weren't complaining if you lot have met my younger four so i went home and i was like oh matt i went to a nice church you know you should come and he's like oh babe he just took membership he had just taken membership at our other church in it and he was like oh i don't know about that and i was like well the kids don't like going to the other church at all and he was all right in it at the very least that it'd be for the kids oh prior to that we weren't actually saved so that's another thing in it our oldest is 22 and then because you know you grew up in church i don't think i paid attention to the fact that my mom had actually taken effort to raise me that way i thought it was natural so i kind of missed that bit and so we were like oh we definitely want the kids to have it and then matt came and he's like yeah we're going there and i was like oh what are we going to tell the old church he's like oh we'll just keep going for a bit and see anyway we weren't going to that bit and here we are anyway then um oh i found the gospel because i thought i knew it but i didn't shout out abby because he actually we went to one of those mid group um things and then they were like what you want to pray for and i'm like i don't know these people to be telling them my business let me just pray for health because you know and then abs was like oh do you have unforgiveness in your heart and i'm like what who's this brother to be asked anyway i was like no i don't i'm a well i am a very forgiving person and then he was like and i could see everyone was looking at him like you're gonna run this girl from the group she just came and then you know if you know abs this man is yeah he's fierce for the lord in it you can't put him off anything he was like okay but what about yourself have you forgiven yourself and i'm like i'm a new creation i'm a christian now of course i have um actually i went away and i really thought about it and i realized there was a lot i was actually still carrying and then matthew was like well you're kind of denying the work of the cross if you're still feeling guilt and shame and that kind of was my actual real introduction to the gospel and then i don't know if you'll have heard steve in it but for me he really through god in it i'm not going to give him the glory but through god yeah no free working through romans i didn't even know you could stay in a book for so long but i really found the gospel through that and um yeah i love was gilvan in it i'm here so great um i'm afraid to ask you another question but i get him anyway but i i think just tell us um what are your hopes and desires for the community around here so if you i mean you're you've been here a long time like tell us like you know you look at your kids friends at school and you look at your neighbors and the people that you've grown up around

how what do you what do you want us to be praying for for for kilburn um what was your name again and andrew yeah as andrew said in it like northwest london is an amazing place i've grown up

here i've always loved my area i want people to understand like being a christian is not probably what most of them grew up in um and i think there's a lot of church hurt with a lot of young people they feel like christians are hypocrites they're fake they say one thing they do another and i feel like coming here you just realize that's not the gospel um and i think it's just really important that we're pushing things like we've got a mosque there right there it's like that god thought he could really come and challenge our way we've got to be doing stuff in the community like it's very real the threat is real we're losing a lot of our young people and i love young people very much so i would love to see west kilburn spread out more and actually give people i got um and that you guys want to set up the social media don't give me a job list okay wait wait wait yeah so i feel like yeah that's what i want to see i just want to see more people actually understand what it is to be a christian and how easy well it's not easy but it's easy it's not as hard as the weight of doing a tick box that's great thank you martina thank you that's great so what we'd love you to do now is just turn to the people around you and pray for some of those things that you've heard so you could pray for northwest london you could pray give thanks for martina's new life that she's found in the lord jesus and for others like her you could pray for thomas and for the ministry of national first you can pray for the christian answer team who are also down at high park speakers corner tomorrow um so just turn to those around you you may not know who they are don't worry and don't spend ages giving them your life story just pray and pray for those things for about five minutes and then we'll sing together as we close well it just remains for me to say on behalf of west kilburn baptist church which is redeemer and the old west kilburn um thank you all for coming uh some of you have come a very long way and some of you come not quite so far and we represent many many churches here tonight so thank you for coming joining in our uh our worship our celebration to god for what he is doing let me just close in prayer for you we do give you the glory father we do recognize that the power of the gospel the work of the gospel the salvation of souls the building of the church is your work and your work alone because of your son jesus and through your holy spirit thank you father for each person in this room and the parts in our various churches we've been able to see you working see you moving by your spirit see you building your church lord jesus we thank you that when you said i will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it we're testing me tonight lord that you spoke the truth and we thank you you that you are doing that go with us now lord make us fruitful make us uh holy make us walk after you make us be true disciples as we hold out the word of life to those around us in jesus name amen