

Sunday February 5, 2023

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

The writer of Psalm 47 says these words,

"Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. ²For the LORD Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth. ³He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. ⁴He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. ⁵God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets. ⁶Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. ⁷For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. ⁸God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne."

Let's pray. Father, we want to come today to offer our praise to you. We need you to quieten our busy minds as we come humbly, struggling to understand the enormity of who you are and your love for us. We know Lord that you have always been here, the beginning and the end. Your creation reminds us that you are all powerful, that you hold the stars in your hands. You give us life and breath; you sustain us, pursue us and redeem us. You are the truth in a world full of lies, light in darkness, the giver of hope through grace. You offer us wisdom, comfort and healing through your overwhelming love.

We come today to claim forgiveness, forgiveness that we don't deserve. We allow ourselves to be pulled away from the truth that you have given us. We stray in so many directions and fail to stop and remember you. We forget that you are eternal, and focus instead on the here and now. We are sorry for not doing what we should do, for allowing our pride, self-centredness and sinful nature to guide the way we live. And yet, in spite of all this, you continue to love us as you always have. Help us to remember that this morning and open our hearts and minds to your leading. Amen

Song – The Glories of Calvary [The Glories of Calvary • Official Lyric Video on Vimeo](#)

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|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Lord, You're calling me to come | 2. Sinners find eternal joy |
| And behold the wondrous cross | In the triumph of Your wounds |
| To explore the depths of grace | By our Savior's crimson flow |
| That came to me at such a cost | Holy wrath has been removed |
| Where Your boundless love | And Your saints below |
| Conquered my boundless sin | Join with your saints above |
| And mercy's arms were opened wide | Rejoicing in the Risen Lamb |

Chorus.

My heart is filled with a thousand songs
Proclaiming the glories of Calvary
With every breath, Lord how I long
To sing of Jesus who died for me
Lord, take me deeper
Into the glories of Calvary

Bible Reading – Isaiah 61:1-11 (NIV)

"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of

beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy, instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendour. ⁴They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. ⁵Strangers will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work your fields and vineyards. ⁶And you will be called priests of the LORD, you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast. ⁷Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours. ⁸"For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing. In my faithfulness I will reward my people and make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the LORD has blessed." ¹⁰I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

Announcements 5/2/23

Focus for February – Vision. As we start our year we want to explore together what God is calling us to do in 2023 any why. That is why we have set apart TODAY as vision Sunday. We will preach on this vision and we will be running workshops throughout the day applying that vision to key aspects of our ministry. Please join us when you can. All workshops will be held at Charlestown.

12:00-12:45pm	Vision for Kids work	Jon
1:00	Break	
2:00-2:45pm	Vision for Mission	Stephen
3:00-3:45pm	Vision for Pastoral Care	Jo
4:00-4:45pm	Vision for Evangelism	Stephen
5:00-5:45pm	Vision for Youth Work	Jon

Regular Activities of our Church have now all started up again. It would be great for us all to look at what is being offered (Kids Church, Senior Youth Bible Study (SYBS), IMPACT Youth, SPARKLERS Playgroup, Home Groups, Just Older Youth (JOY), Special Religious Education (SRE), Young Adults Fellowship (YAF), and see what best fits you and your family to come along to and also where you might be able to serve in the days to come.

Small Groups. It would be great if everyone could CONSIDER joining a small group this year for teaching, fellowship and Christian encouragement. We have groups for men, women and mixed, meeting weekly and fortnightly, at the Church and in homes, live or in ZOOM, weekly or fortnightly. Hopefully there is one that will work for you and your family situation. See Stephen or Jon for more details (or find last week's email from Stephen!)

Children's Worker (approx. 8-10 hours a week). We are currently looking for a person who is willing to be our Children's Worker from term 2, 2023. This is a paid position and is for 10 hours a week. It will involve overseeing our kids work, training our children's volunteers, and helping, supporting and encouraging those who are involved in these ministries. For a full job description and for details of our remuneration package see Jon or Stephen. Applications close 1/3/23.

Studies in Discipleship: In 2023 we are starting a weekly home group focused on discipleship for Christians of any age. If you would like to know more please chat with Stephen Taylor or John and Miranda Harris.

Men's Event | Saturday 18th February 9am-12pm A bushwalk in Glenrock State Conservation Area. Bible talk and encouragement in God's creation, swim optional with a steep return walk. Contact Colin Wright or Stuart Blanch to confirm and carpool. A handout with a map and more details will be available closer to the event.

Breaking the Silence Training Full course 12th Feb or top-up training 19th Feb. Please refer to email for those involved and RSVP to Liz Hyslop on gehyslop@optusnet.com.au

Small Groups. It would be great if everyone could *consider* joining a small group this year for teaching, fellowship and Christian encouragement. Below is a list of all the groups we are running with contact details of those who will be running them.

When	Type	How often	Where	Who
Mon 7:30pm	Ladies	Fortnightly	Eleebana	Sally 0406 937 634
Tue 9:30am	Ladies	Weekly	Hall	Linda 0422 014 250
Tue 10am	Mixed	Weekly	Cardiff	Doug 0419 491 981
Tue 7:00pm	Mixed	Weekly	Charlestown	Ross 0420 934 270
Tue 7:30pm	Mens	Weekly	Cottage	Simon 0404 942 544
Tue 7:30pm	Young Adults	Weekly	Charlestown	Jon 0435 456 701
Tue 7:30pm	Mixed	Weekly	Charlestown	Steve 0407 455 276
Wed 10:30am	Mixed	Weekly	Swansea	Stephen 0426 829 080
Wed 1pm	Ladies	Weekly	Hall	Kaylene 0402 805 014
Thu 7:30pm	Mixed	Fortnightly	ZOOM	Alan 0478 292 107
Fri 10am	Ladies	Weekly	Hall	Kerry 0414 171 642
Sun 4:30pm	Years 9-12	Fortnightly	Hall	Alan 0478 292 107

Bible Reading – Matthew 22:1014 (NIV)

22 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: ² “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. ⁴ “Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’ ⁵ “But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. ⁶ The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. ⁷ The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. ⁸ “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. ⁹ So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ ¹⁰ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. ¹¹ “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ¹² He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless. ¹³ “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴ “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

Pastoral Prayer Points

First of all, then I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions (1 Tim. 2:1-2a).

Pray that we would cherish the gospel. Pray we wouldn’t assume the gospel and then lose it like has happened so often in church history. Pray we wouldn’t slide away from the wonder of the gospel of grace. Pray that we wouldn’t be ashamed of it, but speak it with confidence and assurance.

Pray for the Prince of Peace to bring about meaningful reconciliation between Jewish and Arab leaders. Pray for Christian leaders to boldly live out the gospel in spite of attack and betrayal. Pray for demonstrations of love and concern for Palestinian exiles.

Song – Be Thou My Vision - [Be thou my vision - \(with lyrics\) - YouTube](#)

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| <p>1. Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light</p> | <p>3. Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise
Thou mine inheritance, now and always
Thou and Thou only first in my heart
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art</p> |
| <p>2. Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord
Thou my great Father, and I Thy true son
Thou in me dwelling and I with Thee one</p> | <p>4. High King of heaven, my victory won
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O ruler of all</p> |

Sermon – Invited or chosen? - Stephen T

In 1971, Shah Reza Pahlavi of Iran gave a four-day celebration commemorating the Persian Empire's 2,500th birthday. A celebration that is probably the most amazing party ever staged. The focal point of the event was a huge banquet feast, the banquet hall being a gigantic silk tent lit with over a \$1m worth of coloured lights! The guest list matched the occasion: the Shah invited more than 600 dignitaries from 69 nations, to join him over the four-day event. The cost to the Shah's estate for this festival? Just over \$100 million US dollars! And that was back in 1971! Today it would be worth almost a billion dollars!

What a party! I wonder what it would have been like to go to? Well in Matthew 22, Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like that sort of a party. So, I wonder if you and I will be on the guest list for that party to end all parties? And if we are on that guest list, will we RSVP with a yes to God? Of course, we will! Who would want say no to that? Actually, many will!

Slide 2

For Jesus says *"Many are invited, but few are chosen."* So, the question we will look at today is are we one of the chosen ones? And the challenge is will we be the ones who are sending out the invitations far and wide so that they too can be a part of the chosen ones as well?

Slide 3

1. The Invitation (1-3)

"Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: ² 'The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.'"

Jesus goes on to describe an ancient king, preparing for the wedding banquet of his son. This is not a funeral wake but a full-on wedding celebration, a party not to be missed. The creme de la creme of society are all invited. The palace is prepared. The fatted calf has been cooked. Everything is ready. So, the king sends out his servants to bring in his guests.

Now a bit of background information will be helpful here. In that time and place, there was a two-stage process of being invited to a wedding. The invitation was actually sent out well in advance of the banquet and everyone sent back their RSVP. Which makes sense because before electricity and refrigeration you really had to make sure you knew how many people you were catering for. Then, those who had said "yes" received a courtesy reminder on the day of the banquet itself. So, this is not the first invitation that these people have received. It's actually a last second reminder, of the biggest bash going around.

Slide 4

Now don't forget this is a parable. So, the details of this story are important. The Kingdom of heaven Jesus is saying is like a party, in fact it's like God throwing a wedding banquet for his son. It will be a time of feasting, of joy, of laughter. It will be something so good that you don't want to miss it. One day everything will be ready. God will have prepared the whole event even down to the minor details. In the meantime, the invitations go out for the time of celebration is near.

Now no-one would want to miss out on the party of a lifetime, would they? No one would refuse an invitation if their Creator God personally invited them to the biggest bash in the history of the universe, to the wedding supper of his Son Jesus, would they? This is bigger than the Olympics, even bigger than the soccer world cup! It's bigger than an invitation to the Lodge or to Government House or even to Buckingham Palace. So, it's strange that in the parable, straight after the invitation, Jesus describes...

Slide 5

2. The Rejection (4-7)

"But they refused to come."⁴ "Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.'⁵ "But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business."

Can you imagine it? One goes off to his field, there's some weeds I need to dig out. Another goes off to his business, there is a new contract I want to seal. While others catch up on their filing, clean out their sock drawer, or decided to walk the dog.

It's not as if these things don't need to be done, sometime. But not now. They have the chance of a lifetime beckoning here. The King's son, and it might even be the heir to the throne, is not going to get married every day of the week. The food is ready. The fun is just about to begin & the guests are consumed by everyday things. They have got their priorities wrong, horribly wrong, haven't they? Don't they realise what they are missing? They continue their everyday routines and turn their back on the honour of being with the King.

Slide 6

But some are not just dismissive of the king's invitation, they are outright rude. *⁶"The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them."* They reject the king's gracious invite and do so violently. They are not content with ignoring their king, they actually want to defy their king. They reject their king. They want to hurt their king.

Now what would be the equivalent of that today? Imagine Anthony Albanese inviting a whole stack of people to dinner at Parliament House and hearing that some had decided instead to go to a Jets soccer game instead. Others had preferred to catch up on some gardening, while one person even volunteered for an extra shift at Maccas. But some invitees are not just dismissive of the PM's invitation they actually were rude to the couriers and there is a report of one couple actually shooting the messenger.

What an insult! But once again let's remember this is a parable and it all means something. God has this celebration planned for his people and he sends out his prophets, his priests, his supporters out across the land of his people and they don't want to have a bar of it. Some no doubt accepted God's invitation, but many paid no attention to what their Creator was inviting them to do. Work, family, sport, sleep, leisure were far more important than God. And some don't just ignore God, they oppose God. They killed the priests, they stoned the prophets, they abused God's messengers. They reject what God is offering them.

No wonder the king in the parable is angry. *"He sent his army & destroyed those murderers and burned their city."* And this is a warning on what was actually to come. God did allow the Roman General Titus to come to Jerusalem and he completely destroyed it. Over a million people were killed. A million of God's people, the Jews were wiped off the map. Because they had rejected their God. And because they had neglected their King. And both of those responses are tantamount to saying to God, I don't want to take what you are offering you. I would prefer to go my own way.

Slide 7

Which is a warning to us all of us here today. As preacher JC Ryle once wisely pointed out *“Open sin may kill thousands but indifference and neglect to the gospel kills tens of thousands.”* So friends it would be naive of us to think that God would not be angry with any of us when we find excuses for not putting him first in our lives. If he is inviting us to be a part of his kingdom and we put our own family before our heavenly Father, the business of making money before the business of extending his kingdom, our phones before our prayers.

Slide 8

So how does the King respond? He has a wedding banquet prepared & not enough guests to enjoy what he has arranged? It reminds me of what happened to New York socialite, Nicole Contos. She was scheduled to be married in a Manhattan church. She showed up, 250 invited guests showed up, but the groom didn't. He took off for Tahiti where they had planned to honeymoon. So, there she was with a \$100,000 reception and no wedding. What did she do? She said, “The food is ready, the drink is ready. We're gonna have a party.” And that's exactly what she did and the King in Jesus parable does something similar.

Slide 9

3. The invitation, the rejection and the Declaration. (Verses 8-10)

⁸ *“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come.*

⁹ *So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’* ¹⁰ *So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.*

Go back into town and invite everyone to come. Tell Woodie, to come. Tell pretty Tony, to come. Tell fast Fannie, to come. Tell sweet black, to come. Tell Ned the wino, to come. Tell one leg Larry, to come. Tell wheel chair Willie, to come. Tell hot pants Paula, to come.

In other words, it doesn't matter whether you are beggar or a billionaire, you drive a Roller or sleep outside of a roll a door. The King wants his wedding hall to be full. And so, the servants went out into the streets and gathered all that they could find, both the good and the bad and the ugly and soon the wedding hall was filled with guests.

Once again this is a picture of God inviting us to his heavenly banquet. If the Jews don't want to come, then God will send out his invitation to the Gentiles. If the religious don't have time for God, then God will make an offer to the atheist. If the good are not interested, there is always the bad. If the rich aren't going to come, then there is always the poor.

Slide 10

Do you get the point? Heaven is not just for the good, the moral, the rich, the religious. In the end, everyone has an invitation to heaven. God doesn't just so love **the Church** that he sends them his only Son. He so loved **the world** that he gave us his one and only son. God isn't just interested in the middle class; he is also interested in the poor. Not just the wife, husband and two kids, but the single mum, the divorced, the street kids, those in prison. God doesn't just care for the Jew or the Australian, he cares for the Palestinian & Iranian.

In the OT the invitation went out to the Jews. They were to be God's special people and to call the nations to join them at the party that God was throwing them. But they rejected him or neglecting him, so God opens up the offer of eternal life to all people. And the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, says that when we get a glimpse of heaven we will see people from every nation, every colour, every language group, there in heaven.

And who is to send out this invitation, but none other than God's servants, the Church.

We are the ones who are given the task of delivering God's invitations to the world. And we are to do that boldly and to remove all hindrances to them coming in. Neglecting God has fatal consequences. Rejecting

God means coming under God's just judgement. Nothing is more important than getting this invitation out. God's preparations are almost complete. The time of great joy and feasting will soon be ready. Let's make sure everyone knows!

Slide 11

4. The invitation, the rejection, the resolution and the Expulsion (Verses 11-13).

But like many of Jesus parables there is not a happy ending, but instead a sting in the tale. *"But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ¹² He asked, 'How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?' The man was speechless. ¹³ 'Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

At first, you might wonder how any of those who accepted the king's invitation could have been expected to come properly attired. They had been rounded up from every part of the land, and many of them had been taken off the streets. Even if they had time to dress properly, they didn't have any clothes appropriate for a royal wedding, would they?

But commentators tell us that in that day and time the king supplied the wedding garments himself. So, all the guests had to do was just put them on. And this man was not willing to even do that. He thought he could do it his own way. That what he brought to the party would be good enough for the king. No, it isn't says, the King. The invitation may be for anyone, it may be an act of pure grace. But you do need to show some gratitude. You do need to change your ways to be a guest of the king. You do need to acknowledge your King's instructions and respond accordingly.

Slide 12

Likewise, anyone can come to heaven at the invitation of the King. But you can't do it your own way, but only his way. And you can't be unchanged by God's mercy. The apostle Paul says in Galatians *"All of you who have been baptised into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ."* And Isaiah the prophet also says *"For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in robes of righteousness."*

Friends don't do what that man did. If you want to feast at God's table of grace you have to come on His terms not yours. You have to put on Christ. Don't come in your own goodness, the Bible emphasises you have to put on the righteousness of Christ. He gives you the clothing, and by faith we daily dress ourselves in this wonderful gift of grace.

It reminds me of a story about a guy called Ken who was a labourer on the Alaskan Pipeline. He spent a year or so up there, made lots of money and then he came back home and went to visit his old Church. The first Sunday he walked through the doors and sat in the back seat and he looked just like Grizzly Adams - beard and all. But at the end of the service there was an invitation to come back to God and this man responded and became a Christian.

The next Sunday he came back to the services but not one recognised him, he was dressed up & had no beard! When he was asked what caused him to shave and dress up he said, 'Jesus changed me on the inside and I want people to know it - so I changed the outside.'"

Slide 13

Do you hear what this parable is saying to us today? Yes, the invitation is available to all but once you have accepted the invitation, God changes the inside and we need to bit by bit change the outside. We need to become more and more like Jesus. We need to take off the old self of sin and put on the new self of righteousness. For we can't afford to stay the same. We show our gratitude by becoming, over time, someone that reflects his son Jesus.

But there are some who are in the Church today who are not converted. Some who think they will make it to heaven who are not clothed with Christ, who are not wearing the robe of righteousness. Don't be that person. Allow God to make you more like Jesus today.

And what is one thing that reflects Jesus? It is a love for the lost! A desire that all people come into God's kingdom. You see you can't be saved by grace and then not want that grace to extend to all people. You can't have Jesus at the centre of your life and then walk by on the other side when your friends and family are going to hell. You need a heart for the lost.

Slide 14

5. And that leads to fifthly, the Question (verse 14)

¹⁴ *"For many are invited, but few are chosen."* Are you invited or are you chosen? For many are invited, in fact all our invited. But only a few are chosen. Many are invited but some are too busy with their everyday lives to get back to God with an RSVP. Many are invited but some are too angry with God for what he allowed to happen to their spouse, their family, themselves that they don't want to have a bar of what God is offering. Many are invited but some want to do things on their own terms, the Frank Sinatra way, I did it my way, and so are not open to accepting what Jesus has done for us. Many are invited, but few are chosen.

So, are you invited or chosen? Have you embraced God's invitation or ignored it? Have you been saved by grace and now are you being changed by grace? That's the question.

But there is another question implicit in this passage. Once you have been chosen, are you out there sharing God's invitation with others? Are you hoping, praying that the next person who hears the God's news about Jesus will not just be an invitee, but a chosen son or daughter of God? Are you ready to go to the highways and the byways to ensure that every person in your family, in your street and ultimately in your world, knows how wonderful God's invitation on their life really is? And are you supporting the Churches effort to get that good news out there, or have you failed to comprehend how amazing God's grace really is?

Friends these are important questions. These are our great challenges. This is what the Church is here to do. So today as we think about our vision for the year we want to start out on the right foot. We want the Kingdom of God to grow. We want the chosen to accept God's gracious invitation. And we know to do that we all need to be bold and remove all stumble blocks out of the way so that everyone, everyone has the chance to respond. A chance to come to the party that God has invited us all to.

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But let me end with a story taken from Tony Campolo's book called "The Kingdom of God is a Party." In chapter one, he tells the story of a trip to Honolulu in the mid 80's. He arrives and needing breakfast at 3:30am local time, he ends up in a greasy diner ordering a donut and a coffee; and while consuming this wholesome breakfast in walks 8 or 9 prostitutes.

The place is small, Campolo is surrounded & he thinks the best thing for me to do is to get out of here. Then he overhears one of them say, "Tomorrow is my birthday; I'll be 39." Somebody else tears into her. "So?? Whadya want me to do about it?? Want me to throw you a party, bake you a cake, sing "happy birthday???" The first shot back, "Come on! I've just never had a birthday party my whole life"

What do you think Campolo does next? Well, he hangs around till they leave, then asks the guy who runs the place if those people come in every night. They do, so Campolo asks if he could throw that one prostitute a big birthday party that next night. They get excited about the idea, make all the arrangements – Campolo decorates the diner, the chef bakes a cake, somebody gets the word out on the street. This is how Campolo describes the scene:

"By 3:15am every prostitute in Honolulu was in the place. It was wall-to-wall prostitutes ... and me! At 3:30am on the dot, the door of the diner swung open and in came Agnes and her friend. When they came in, we all screamed, "Happy birthday!"

He writes, Never have I seen a person so flabbergasted, so stunned, so shaken. Her mouth fell open. Her legs seemed to buckle a bit. As she was led to one of the stools along the counter, we all sang "Happy Birthday" to her. Then, when the cake was carried out with all the candles on it, she lost it and just openly cried." She couldn't blow out the candles. She couldn't cut the cake. In fact, she was so overwhelmed that she asked if she could just keep the cake for a little while. The gruff chef said, "It's your cake. Go ahead." And so Agnes picked the cake up and carried it home as if it were the most precious thing imaginable.

There was a stunned silence. Not knowing what else to do, Campolo said; "What do you say we pray? & he did. He prayed for Agnes, for her salvation, for God to turn her life around. At the end, the chef turned to him with a trace of hostility in his voice & said, "You never told me you were a preacher, what kind of church do you belong to?" Campolo replied "I belong to a church that throws birthday parties for prostitutes at 3:30am in the morning."

Slide 16

Friends that is what the Kingdom of God is like. It is like God throwing a party and inviting all comers. But those who think they are worthy chose not to come. They get caught up in other things, home, work, family, whatever. But those who know they are not worthy say yes. And God clothes them with Christ. And he sends them out to call the lost. And together we all enjoy eternity with the Lord. In fact, we get to marry the Son. And enjoy God's good provision for all eternity. What a gospel! Go and make sure everyone knows this good news.

Song – Facing a Task Unfinished - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOpt_bulJxY

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|--|---|
| <p>1. Facing a task unfinished
That drives us to our knees
A need that undiminished
Rebukes our slothful ease
We, who rejoice to know Thee
Renew before Thy throne
The solemn pledge we owe Thee
To go and make Thee known</p> | <p>3. We bear the torch that flaming
Fell from the hands of those
Who gave their lives proclaiming
That Jesus died and rose
Ours is the same commission
The same glad message ours
Fired by the same ambition
To Thee we yield our powers</p> |
| <p>2. Where other Lords beside Thee
Hold their unhindered sway
Where forces that defied Thee
Defy Thee still today
With none to heed their crying
For life and love and light
Unnumbered souls are dying
And pass into the night</p> | <p>4. O Father who sustained them
O Spirit who inspired
Saviour, whose love constrained them
To toil with zeal untired
From cowardice defend us
From lethargy awake!
Forth on Thine errands send us
To labour for Thy sake</p> |

Chorus: We go to all the world
With kingdom hope unfurled
No other name has power to save
But Jesus Christ The Lord

Closing. *“¹⁰ I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.” (Isaiah 61:10)*