

Sow The Word

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 August 2026

Preacher: Chris Wylie

[0:00] Well, welcome to day two and welcome to those of you who maybe are here for the first time hearing me just here for this morning.

! Last night we had a long message and so thank you after a long message last night thank you for sticking around for another message. Thank you for persevering with me.

Now let's see if I've got this working. Yeah, all right. Now speaking of persevering, that's something I was not very good at when I was younger.

Let me paint a bit of a picture of what I was like when I was younger. So I tried learning the piano and well who knows one day I could have been a concert pianist but then I gave up.

And today I can only play one song with one hand and if you need proof I can play that one song for you later. When I was a little bit older and when I thought I was a little bit cooler, I tried learning the guitar and I actually bought a red electric guitar secondhand.

[1:10] I could have been a cool worship band leader. But guess what? Then I gave up. And in the end I sold the guitar and today if you were to test me I think I can probably remember about three chords.

Maybe that's still enough to play some songs, I don't know. And then when I was even older, before I came to Malaysia, I came to Malaysia in 2002 in my preparation for that, I began learning Malay. I knew that was going to be helpful for my life so I tried and I bought some books. I even had some cassettes that I listened to. Yes, cassettes, that's how old I am. And I found a Malaysian in the city where I was living who was willing to do some conversation with me.

And so I tried and I could have been fluent in Malay. But guess what? I gave up. Now I only chakap sikit sikit saja.

Even though I do really need to learn Malay because now I want to apply for PR, permanent residence in Malaysia. So now I've got the uphill challenge of trying to learn at my age.

[2:19] Can you relate to my frustrating experiences? Have you tried something, given it a go, found it difficult and then gave up? Perhaps just take a minute to talk to the person next to you.

Think of something that you've tried doing, you've tried learning, but in the end you gave up. Share your sad story with the person next to you. One minute. Okay.

It sounds like we've all had those kinds of experiences, right? Yesterday we started to talk a little bit about what it means to follow Jesus and what it means to become fishers of people, the way that Jesus himself fished for people.

And you know what? Even if King Jesus was here this morning giving the talk and reminding you to get out there and fish for people and you might be all pumped up and ready to go, you might very soon find it's much harder than you thought.

Maybe you'd give it a try, find it hard and give up. Just like I did with the piano, like I did with the guitar, like I did with Malay. But I don't want you to think I'm a total failure.

[3:39] So let me at least tell you about one success I've had in my life. And this was in my secondary school where I learned to juggle. Well, no, not with fire actually. But yeah, juggling with three balls.

I did learn, I did successfully manage to do that. And I think you can't say something like that without proving it, right? So I am potentially going to make a great fool of myself now.

Oh, no, no. Let me try it, let me try it. Okay, okay, okay. And then this way. Okay, I think that's enough. Okay.

Now, what was the secret of my success with juggling? Basically, practice and perseverance. I practiced and I practiced and I practiced.

I had to train my hands and my eyes and my brain. And even though it wasn't easy and I dropped the ball a million times, and I still drop the ball sometimes, but my perseverance and my patience paid off in the end.

[4:43] And if we're going to follow Jesus and if we're going to be fishers of men, as he calls us to be, if we're going to sow God's word in people's lives, it's going to call for plenty of patience and perseverance on our part.

Otherwise, we might just give up. But it will be worth it in the end. Let's take some time this morning to learn from King Jesus himself about sowing the word.

And if we learn the right lessons, then we won't feel like giving up when we serve him in the world. Even if we don't succeed at first, we will persevere. But before we get to that lesson, let's just take one step back and understand an underlying principle here.

And it's to do with this. That God is changing history with his story. Everybody loves stories, right? Right? I mean, you all love reading novels, don't you? Put your hands up. You love reading novels, don't you? Oh, well, I know Brian does. Oh, not so many. Okay, so maybe we don't all love stories.

[5:59] But there's more to stories than novels. So who likes reading comics or anime? Okay, there's a few other hands coming up now. Or who loves playing video games that have a storyline?

Ah, there's another bunch of people. And who loves watching movies? Oh, okay. I think we've covered everyone by now. So it is true, isn't it, that everyone loves stories in some form or another. I think we're wired to love stories. And I wonder if you've ever had an experience where a book or a movie or some kind of story that you've been engrossed in has had such an impact on you that it's actually in some way changed you.

Have you had that kind of experience? There are stories that we can read or hear that affect us very deeply. And we feel different at the end of the story.

We begin to think differently because of that story. We might even begin to behave differently because of that story. Now, just to give an example, the movie Lord of the Rings.

[7:05] I'm afraid I don't have the patience to read the three books, but I have seen the movies. I've seen the extended versions of the movies. And one of the great impressions that the movie made on me was the relationship between two of the key characters, Frodo, the two hobbits, Frodo and Samwise Gamgee.

Sam is Frodo's best friend, and he's the only one actually who remains faithful to Frodo to the very end of his journey to destroy the ring.

In fact, if it wasn't for Sam, Frodo would really never have made it, I think. You can see them in this picture where Sam, really towards the end, is even carrying Frodo to the place where he must destroy the ring.

Because Frodo is just too weak to keep walking. Now, how does that change me? How does that affect me? Well, it shows me what true friendship can actually look like.

It challenges me. What kind of friend am I? Am I someone who will carry the burdens of my friends? How far will I go for them? It becomes an example that I actually then want to aspire to.

[8:16] What does the Bible say about love? It says, love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud. It does not dishonor others. It's not self-seeking.

It's not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. Samwise Gamgee, the hobbit, fleshes out in my mind what that kind of love would look like between two people, two friends.

And his story, their story, makes me want to be more like that too. That's the power of stories. It puts flesh on truth, as someone has said. Stories put flesh on truth.

Now, why don't you take another minute to talk to the person next to you and tell them about a story that you've read or seen or even played in a video game and it has somehow impacted you deeply, changing perhaps the way you think or even the way you behave.

[9:16] Just take a minute to share a story that's impacted you like that. Okay, thanks for sharing that. I think we really are wired to love and appreciate stories.

And guess what? God loves stories too. God's word is full of stories that he uses by his spirit to change us. Does anyone know what percentage of the Bible comes in story form or what we might call narrative?

Have a guess. What percentage of the Bible is actually written in that style of story? Any idea? Oh, 90 is a bit high.

30 is closer, but probably more like 40, depending how you measure it, 40 to 50%. It's certainly the most common form or genre of writing in the Bible, if you like.

At least, yeah, almost half the Bible is stories. God wants us to hear stories. He uses stories in our lives. And we can say more than that because the Bible as a whole is a story.

[10:31] That is, all 66 books fit together and tell us the biggest story of all. I hope some of you have done the Equip Bible Overview course.

Has anyone done that? Bible Overview with Equip? Quite a few of you, yeah. And anyone read a book called God's Big Picture by Vaughan Roberts that takes you through the story of the Bible? These are fantastic resources and tools that help us to see how the Bible holds together from Genesis to Revelation, from creation to corruption to new creation.

This is the great story that we've been given. And at the center of that story is Jesus, God's King. He's the one who was promised in the past. He appears in the Gospels.

He will return in the future to wrap up all of God's story. It's the biggest story of all time. And when we follow King Jesus, we don't just get to learn that story.

We actually get to enter into it. We get immersed in it. We play a part in it. It becomes our story. God is changing history through his story.

[11:38] It's a wonderful thing. So we just need that foundation before we continue. And knowing that, it really shouldn't surprise us that Jesus himself, in his ministry, when he kicks off the kingdom of God, he uses stories.

He trains his followers by telling them stories, by helping them understand the biggest story of all. Jesus told lots of stories. And in Mark 4 alone, we've just read part of Mark 4, not the whole chapter. But in Mark 4, there are five stories, or parables as we usually call them. But there are five stories that we can read about, but actually he told even more than that.

I mean, I hope you've got your Bibles open. Mark chapter 4. I will be referring to lots of verses here. So in chapter 4, verse 2, it says that Jesus taught people many things by parables.

And if you go to the end of chapter 4, in verse 33, it says, With many similar parables, Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand.

[12:44] He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his disciples, he explained everything. If you like stories, then you are in good company with Jesus. Jesus loves stories.

And he loves stories because God is changing the world with his story. So now we're going to dive into the first story, perhaps the first story that Jesus ever told, which is the one that was read to us earlier.

And let's look particularly at verses 1 to 9, first of all. Let's see how Jesus told this story. He's teaching people by a lake. It's the Sea of Galilee. There's a huge crowd around him.

He's probably getting pushed closer and closer to the water's edge. And his feet are starting to get wet. And his disciples get a fishing boat, probably a boat that belonged to one of them.

And so now he can stay dry and not be crushed by the people. And he starts telling a story to the audience who are crowded around. Jesus is in a fishing boat, but he's fishing for men.

[13:44] He's telling a story about farming. A story about a farmer who went out to sow his seed. Now what do we know about this farmer? The farmer is generous with his seed.

Generous to a fault, perhaps. Some might say he's too generous. Some might even say he's careless. You see, he tosses the seed here, there, everywhere.

Some seed falls on the path. That's no good, because the birds can easily see it and snatch it up.

Some seed lands on rocky ground. Well, that's no good, because it can't grow any roots.

Some seed ends up in a patch of thorny weeds. And that's no good, because the weeds are going to suck all the nutrients out of the soil. And just as we're beginning to think that this farmer doesn't know a lot about farming, actually.

Doesn't know anything about growing crops. And we're thinking he should give up and get a new job. Just then, Jesus says, oh, yes. And some seed fell on good soil, and it came up and grew and produced a crop, some multiplying 30, some 60, some 100 times.

[14:57] What a great result. It's a bumper crop. And suddenly we realize, ah, this farmer isn't so bad after all. He just needed to persevere.

Well, there you have it. Jesus' parable about a farmer sowing seeds. That's a nice story. But probably we're thinking, hmm, I don't think this farming story is going to change the world. Perhaps like the crowd who are listening to Jesus, all this talk of seeds and crops is starting to make you feel hungry. Now your mind's wandering away from this talk, and you're thinking, hmm, I wonder what we're going to get for lunch today.

But let's slow down. Let's take more time with this story. Let's persevere. Let's be patient with this parable. Good things come to those who wait.

In other words, before I encourage you to sow the word like Jesus, which I'm certainly going to get to eventually, my question to you is this. Are you persevering with hearing?

[16:01] I mean, sure, you've heard the story. But are you sure you've understood the story and understood it the way Jesus intends it to be understood?

God is changing the world with stories. Are you letting this story change you? Or are you rushing away before it's done its job? Ayah, Pastor Chris, just a story, ma.

Okay, lah, done. John, makan. But slow down. Look again. Do you notice how Jesus begins and ends this story?

It's very easy to miss this because we like the story part and we miss the beginning and the end. Look at verse 3. What's the very first thing that Jesus says? Listen.

Look at verse 9. What's the last thing Jesus says after the story? Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.

[17:04] So here's the thing. Anyone can listen to a story, but not everyone really listens and learns. Anyone with ears, if they're not deaf, can hear someone speaking.

But not everyone really hears what's being communicated. Now, as a dad, I know this. I live in an apartment in KL. Not a very big apartment. There's six of us. We're never more than just a few meters apart, actually, at any given time.

And yet, somehow, mysteriously, after dinner, when we're clearing up and the dishes need washing, and I say, Luke, Luke, Luke.

Or I say, Isabel, Isabel, Isabel. All I can hear is crickets. Why is that?

Now, it's not fair to say that it's just my kids who have a hearing problem. I do as well. And I know that because sometimes I listen to audiobooks in the car.

[18:06] It's a great way to spend your time if you're stuck in traffic. I know you don't have that problem in Kuching. You come to KL and see what happens. You can get through entire books on one journey. Audiobooks are great.

But I could be listening for just five minutes. And I've, you know, traveled a few meters in the traffic jam. And I suddenly realized that, actually, I've got no idea what the person just said.

Because somehow the words went in and they came out. And I didn't get it. I'm sure many of you have that experience. Maybe some of you are experiencing this right now during the camp, listening to me.

You're suddenly thinking, hey, hang on. What did Pastor Chris say two minutes ago? What are we talking about again? It's okay. I won't take offense. I'm just like that. So what does it look like to listen and hear well?

What does persevering with hearing look like? Well, we can compare two types of people in verses 10 and 12. You see, when Jesus told this parable, he was surrounded by a huge crowd.

[19:11] I mean, they were almost pushing him into the lake. But afterwards, who is with Jesus? Look at verse 10. When he was alone, the 12 and the others around him, blah, blah, blah.

We've gone from a bustling, huge crowd to just a small group of a dozen plus people. And here's the difference.

The huge crowd, they heard the story and they went home for lunch. But the small group stayed on and what? Verse 10 again. They asked Jesus about the parable.

Now, sure, the disciples don't quite get the story. But they heard it. They wanted to understand it. They don't walk away. They wrestle with the meaning.

They look for answers. They persevere. And they come to the right person, of course. They come to Jesus. And so Jesus says something amazing in verse 11.

[20:14] He says, the secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. Just let that sink in for a minute. Jesus can say that because he is God's king.

He's the one who can unravel the secrets of the kingdom. He's the one who unlocks God's story because he is at the very center of it. If you stick with Jesus, if you persevere with hearing his word, guess what?

You will understand the secret of the kingdom of God. Imagine unlocking the mystery of life, the universe and everything.

How cool is that? And that's what Jesus offers us if we persevere. But on the flip side, there's a warning here too.

Jesus says to those on the outside, everything is said in parables, which is to say some people just hear the stories as stories and nothing else.

[21 : 16] Even God's story, the biggest story of all, remains to them just a story. Interesting, maybe, but unimportant.

Entertaining, perhaps, but inconsequential. If we end up treating God's word like that, if we don't persevere with hearing, what will happen?

Jesus warns us in verse 12. They may be ever seeing, but never perceiving, ever hearing, but never understanding. And if that happens to us, we won't grow in faith.

We won't keep repenting of our sin. And worst of all, according to Jesus, we won't be forgiven. As Jesus puts it, otherwise they might turn and be forgiven.

Yesterday, we were reminded that King Jesus is calling us to repent and believe and follow. Well, it's God's word that continually works in us by God's spirit so that we repent and believe and follow Jesus.

[22 : 18] As we persevere and hear God's word, really hear it, then our faith will grow. Our repentance will deepen and our resolve to follow Jesus will go on and on every day.

Friends, we can be quick to share God's life-changing word with the world, but God's word has to be changing us first. Before Jesus changed the world, he wanted to change his own disciples first with his word.

And that meant teaching them to persevere with hearing God's word, to wrestle with the meaning, to come to Jesus for true understanding. Of course, it would have been easier for the disciples to just say, yeah, thanks, Jesus, for the story.

Hey, they're going for lunch. We'll see you later, yeah? But they didn't. They persevered with hearing. And so the word went on changing them. I can tell you it was a very slow process for the disciples, but it's happening.

Now, what about you? Is the word doing that in your life? I'm sure lots of you grew up in church. Lots of you spent many hours in Sunday school when you were younger, perhaps, hearing great stories of the Bible, from the story of creation to the animals of Noah's Ark to David and Goliath to Jonah and the whale and Jesus in the manger and Jesus on a donkey.

[23 : 46] When we hear all those stories, it can be easy to think that God wrote a very nice children's book for us. It's full of fairy tales and fierce giants and funny animals.

But we need to grow up. I don't mean to be rude when I say that, but we need to grow up in the sense of getting serious about the Bible.

Yes, it's full of colorful characters. But these are not fairy tales. These are true stories. These are life-changing stories. Each story is part of that bigger story.

And so the challenge to you is this, that even if you think you know the stories of the Bible, read them again. Read them again. Read it afresh.

Take it seriously the way it is intended. Persevere with hearing God's word. Ask questions when you don't understand. Wrestle with the Bible.

[24 : 46] Persevere. Don't give up until you get to grips with it or until it gets a grip on you. Let me show you how I used to read my Bible when I was younger.

It would go something like this. Oh, I think I want to read the Bible today. Okay, I'm going to close my eyes. And... Ah, okay. Here is God's word to me.

And it says, To you they cried out and were saved. In you they trusted and were not put to shame. Oh, okay. Thank you. Thank you for your word to me, God. I was doing that for years.

I had a Bible just next to my bed. And... That's how I read it. Until one day, I grew up. And I started in a sensible place.

Which, for me, at that point, was Genesis 1 verse 1. And I read chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3. And like any great book or any great story, I got sucked in.

[25:48] And I couldn't stop reading. Until after a few months, I got to Revelation. And I realized that this is one book. And it makes sense.

And it changed me. Now, if you don't start with Genesis, why don't you start with Mark? Since we're going through Mark. Thank you, Nicholson, for your promotion of Mark earlier in the interview.

Yeah. If you haven't read Mark for a while, why not go back to Mark chapter 1 after this camp and just start reading it through chapter by chapter. It's only going to take you about an hour and a half or less to read the whole thing.

You could do it in one sitting. It's probably faster than watching a movie. And it will change your life.

Well, my first question to you then is, are you persevering with hearing?

Knowing that this is God's word. And God's word will change us. He's changing us through his story. And then what? Because hearing is not the only thing we need to persevere in.

[26:54] Secondly, are you persevering with sharing God's word as well? And now we need to wrestle with the content of Jesus' parable. Imagine this sad experience. You're back at school.

You're studying for exams. You've bought those revision books. I'm very familiar with these. My kids are using these all the time. And you power through this revision book.

And you cover all ten chapters. And you answer every question. And then you turn to the back. And you realize, oh, the answer key is missing. And there's no way for you now to check all your hard work in answering those questions.

Did you get it right or not? Who knows? Well, actually, thankfully, I don't know. This is a tip for parents. You don't need the answer key anymore these days. All you have to do is scan all the pages, plop them into chat GPT, and it will throw back the answer key in about ten seconds.

It's amazing. But that's another story. But I'm sure when most of us were back in school, there was no such option. Without the answer key, we were utterly lost.

[28:00] Well, Jesus didn't want his disciples to be lost. He didn't withhold the answers from them. And in verses 14 to 20, we come to the part where Jesus gives the answer key to his disciples.

It is a reward, if you like, for persevering with hearing. Because they stick with Jesus, because they want to understand, because they ask him about the parable, Jesus indeed explains it to them.

God's like that when we persevere with his word. And as he explains the sower and the seed and the soil, we realize that this story is perfect for people who not just need to persevere with hearing, but also need to be trained to share the good news with the world.

You see, Jesus wants his disciples on mission with him. He wants you and me on mission with him. So we have to pay attention. We have to see what we can learn here for ourselves. Number one, what is the seed?

Of course, the seed is the word. That is the word of God. That's in verse 14. And the different soils that the seed lands on, well, that's people, isn't it? Different people.

[29:07] There are four types of people in this story. I think there are more than four types of people in the world, but it just helps in a story to simplify things. The world is full of different types of people.

But there's one thing that all four people in this parable have in common. Do you know what it is?

What is it that all four groups of people in this parable have in common?

Take a minute to look again if you're not sure. Heart? Something about heart? Keep looking.

Receive, yeah. Or they hear, don't they? They hear. They actually all hear the word. This is not about people who don't hear the word. This is about people who hear the word.

And of course, that straight away is challenging, isn't it? Because it's about people like you and me. This is not about other people out there. It's as much about us as anyone else.

[30:13] But the only thing, so that's what they have in common. How did they hear the word?

They heard it because someone took the trouble to sow it in their lives. Jesus, of course, is the ultimate sower.

He sowed the word of God in the life of his disciples for three years. But Jesus then passes on that mission to his disciples. His disciples must become the sowers. Jesus' disciples must sow the word of God in the lives of others.

How? By passing on the stories of the Bible. By passing on the biggest story of all, which is the good news about Jesus. That's what we need to do. We need to pass on God's story.

We need to pass on the gospel. How should we do it? We should do it generously. Some might even say carelessly. In other words, share with all who will hear.

Be generous with the gospel. Will everyone respond? Will everyone be changed? No. Apparently not. So should we give up when it doesn't work out?

[31 : 13] Absolutely not. What should we do then? Persevere with sharing. And eventually the word of God will find good soil.

It will end up in someone's head or heart. And it will start to take root and grow. And Jesus says in verse 20, There are some who will hear. And who will hear the word and will accept it.

And produce a crop. And in some cases it might be 30 or 60 or 100 times what is sown. Their life will be changed forever.

Because you sowed the word of God in their hearts. And because God gave the growth. The change could be as dramatic as the difference between a dry, barren piece of land and a lush durian plantation.

Producing wonderful Musang King fruits. Does that happen quickly? Well, ask a farmer. And you'll know that nothing happens quickly in farming.

[32 : 18] Some days it looks like nothing is happening at all. But one day the harvest comes. And it's all worth it. Someone recently asked me what keeps me going as a pastor.

He himself was in full-time ministry. And he knew how discouraging it can be at times. But I didn't have to think too long about his question. I just said, look, I know what I need to do.

And so therefore I just keep doing it. That core thing that I need to do, I just keep doing it. And that is preaching and teaching God's word. In season, out of season.

Whatever else is happening, that's what I'll keep doing. It's not to please people, but it is to please the Lord. And I don't always see spectacular results from that ministry. But God just wants me to persevere and trust him for the results.

And I do thank God for little encouragements along the way. Because there are times when his word really does produce amazing fruit. And so perhaps for your encouragement, I want to share one story of one particular person.

[33 : 25] Her name is Sophia. You see, Sophia was someone I didn't know very well. The connection was that she was a former tuition student of someone in my church, a wonderful lady in my church who's been tutoring children for many years now.

And at the same time, sowing God's word in the hearts of these young people. And so this church friend invited Sophia to join an online course that I was teaching on Mark's gospel.

This was just after COVID. We were still sort of in that period of doing a lot of things online. And Sophia joined this online course. And, you know, I was sharing my screen and I could hardly see who was there in the meeting.

Didn't really get to interact with Sophia at all. But she was there. And it was an online 20-week course expounding Mark's gospel. And showing how the gospel should work itself out in our lives. That's what I did. And like I said, not a lot of interaction. Sometimes you're just talking to a screen. But you just keep going. Well, a couple of years later, I heard, praise God, that Sophia had got baptized in another church.

[34 : 36] Oh, it was amazing. I hadn't really heard about her story after that time that she joined that online meeting. And I was even more amazed to find that as part of her testimony, she explained that she became a Christian halfway through attending this online course going through Mark's gospel.

It happened right then when I was teaching, talking to a screen. And I didn't even know it. The word found good soil in her heart.

It came up. It produced a crop. Fast forward a couple of years and Sophia has now actually joined our church. And she's even part of a team that regularly teaches Mark's gospel to a group of Myanmar workers.

Who are Christians but have not been able to attend church because of the timing of their work. And so she's been teaching Mark's gospel to them week after week as part of a team.

She's also been trying to read Mark's gospel with a fellow colleague at work. And she's been helping to teach some of our evangelistic Bible studies in church.

[35 : 49] More recently, she befriended a lady in our church who has been out of work for more than a year. And who said, I'm just about ready to give up on God. And she's come alongside her and has committed herself to read the Bible with her.

Sophia's testimony reminds me that if we persevere with sowing the word, sharing the word, that it will find good soil. It will produce a crop.

But we don't just have to have testimonies like that to convince us that we should keep preaching and teaching the word. But of course it does encourage us when we see it. And it makes me even more excited about what else God might do if only we would persevere in sharing the word.

So what about God? What about you? What might God do if you persevere with sharing the word? What if you persevere with teaching Sunday school?

What if you persevere with reading the Bible one-to-one with just another person? What if you persevere in preaching week after week? How are you doing with persevering?

[37 : 04] Are you persevering with reading and hearing God's word? Wrestling with it because you want to understand it? That pleases God. And he will bless you as you do that.

The word will take root in your life. It will produce fruit that lasts for eternity. As we think about persevering and hearing the word, just some practical advice. To really persevere in anything, you need to develop healthy, sustainable habits.

I'm still learning that for myself. That would have been true for me learning the piano or learning to juggle, but it's just as true for learning to read the Bible as well. How are your Bible reading habits? Have you set aside time regularly to read and wrestle with God's word and pray for understanding? Have you got that habit locked in? I've tried many different reading plans, different devotional materials over the years.

I guess my way is I like to change things up every once in a while. And so my current plan is just this. It's pretty simple. It's just five minutes of reading five days a week, Monday to Friday.

[38 : 14] And what I do within those five minutes is read part of an Old Testament book and part of a New Testament book. And five minutes may not sound like a lot, but actually five minutes of reading will get you through a couple of chapters in the Bible.

It's enough then for me to then meditate. It leads me into a deep reflection, worship, and prayer. Because I'm reading from the Old Testament and the New Testament each day, in a few weeks I can easily get through entire books and then move on to the next ones.

There's nothing amazing about that plan. There's nothing superhuman about it. Five minutes. It's modest. It's manageable. And I really recommend you find a plan that is just modest and manageable.

Don't be a superhero. Have a plan that you can make a habit, that will encourage you to persevere with reading God's Word. And how are you doing with persevering, with sharing God's Word as well?

I'm a big believer in reading the Bible one-to-one with another person. I've benefited so much from three or four people in my life who've come alongside me and said, Hey, why don't we read this together?

[39 : 24] Why don't we meet once a week and just talk about this book together? And so I've been trying to do that with others as well, knowing how much it benefited me.

In fact, the workshop that we're going to have a bit later this morning is very much on this topic of one-to-one Bible reading with someone else. But I'll be honest, I've also started and stopped doing one-to-one reading a number of times as well.

It's been discouraging sometimes when someone said they just simply don't want to continue or they don't have time to continue. But what do I do? I just persevere and look for another person who might be willing to read the Bible one-to-one.

And eventually God has given me people that I can do that with. And most recently I've been reading the Bible one-to-one consistently now for one year with a person. And so we've gone through 1 Timothy, we've gone through Colossians, we're just about to finish Joel, we're thinking about what to read next.

And those readings have led into all kinds of conversations about life, about ministry. And we always finish with praying for one another in the light of God's Word.

[40 : 30] And I see the fruit of God's Word in the other person's life and indeed in my own life as well. Who could you start reading the Bible with one-to-one? Pray about it.

And I'll talk more about that later in the workshop. It can be hard to persevere in sowing the Word. There can be many discouragements along the way. But like the sower in the story, keep going.

Keep trusting God that His Word will bear fruit in people's lives because the lives of some will receive it, will accept it, and will produce a crop.

In fact, it will produce far more than you ever, ever imagined. Well, let me pray and we've got discussion questions coming up after this.

Heavenly Father, thank you for your wonderful Word. What a treasure you've given unto us in 66 books and yet one magnificent book, one amazing story that tells us everything we need to know, the secret of the kingdom of God given to us, put into our hands.

[41 : 45] Lord, give us perseverance in reading, in hearing, in understanding Your Word. Give us a hunger that grows by the day.

And Lord, give us a passion for sharing Your Word with others as well. And help us to persevere in that as well. Lord, You know. You know how hard that is. You know how many seem to reject it or not receive it.

But Lord, You also know those who are ready to hear it. So just help us to persevere, Lord. Help us to look for those opportunities to plant the seed of Your Word in the hearts of another person.

And we pray, Lord, that You will give the growth, that You will get all the glory as they produce fruit in their lives. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.