

FORMED THROUGH ONE ANOTHER

20 SEPTEMBER 2026

SUMMARY

In this Message, Bruce Downes explores the inseparable relationship between the presence of God and authentic Christian community. Drawing from Mark 3:14, he argues that Jesus did not call his disciples merely to individual devotion but to shared life with one another and then outward mission. The Message challenges the widespread experience of superficial church attendance and calls believers into genuine, transparent, sustained relationships where God actively forms and transforms each person through others. Central to the message is the concept of being a "missionary of His presence," not one who brings God somewhere He is not, but one who makes others aware of a presence that is already real and active. Bruce Downes also introduces the vision of building a thousand **IMPACTERS** communities worldwide, grounded in the conviction that the world can only be reached by people who are themselves being shaped in community, living consciously in the presence of God, and speaking faith into one another's lives.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1. God Is Already Present** We do not manufacture or summon God's presence through worship, preaching, or good deeds. He is already here. Our task is to become aware of and step into that presence and to help others do the same.
- 2. We Are Missionaries of His Presence** A missionary of His presence is someone who makes others aware that God is already with them. This is not a title reserved for the few. It describes every Christian who carries that awareness into daily life.
- 3. God Calls Us Personally, But Forms Us Communally** As the Message states: "God calls us personally but He does not ordinarily form us privately. He forms us with people." The twelve were appointed first to be with Jesus and in being with Him, they found one another.
- 4. True Community Goes Beyond Attendance** Showing up to a church service is not the same as living in Christian community. As the Message states: "Attendance can place us in the same room. Community begins when our lives begin to matter to someone else."
- 5. Other People Reveal Us to Ourselves** Virtues like patience, forgiveness, humility, and generosity cannot be fully developed in isolation. As the Message states: "One of the extraordinary gifts of sustained Christian relationships is that other people begin to reveal us to ourselves."
- 6. Community Is Defined by Four Movements** True Christian community means: to love and be loved, to serve and be served, to know and be known, to celebrate and be celebrated, all centered on the presence of God.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

- Mark 3:14, in which Jesus appoints twelve apostles, calling them first to be with Him and then to be sent out to proclaim the message
- Isaiah 55:11, referenced in the context of Bruce Downes's address at the media conference, describing how God's word goes forth and does not return without accomplishing its purpose

STORIES:

- Bruce Downes describes wearing a coat with its manufacturer's tag still attached, using it as an illustration of the Holy Spirit as the tag that gives believers their true identity, which they must not remove or forget
- At a media conference attended by CEOs and board chairs of major media organizations, Bruce Downes was asked to bring the spiritual word; he challenged attendees with the question of whether they believe in God or believe God, and later announced he would pray for physical healing after sensing God's prompting during the night, illustrating the call to boldness and trust in God's presence rather than personal ability
- Bruce Downes recounts the moment on July 19, 1977, when at the age of eighteen he heard God call him to go to the ends of the earth and proclaim the gospel to every nation, a call he has pursued across 194 of 195 countries
- An eighty-three-year-old man is described as repeatedly contacting Bruce Downes about traveling to the one remaining country the team has not yet reached, even raising the possibility that he might not return, illustrating radical commitment to mission
- Bruce Downes describes setting up phone reminders reading "God is here and I am with Him" for **IMPACTERS** communities in multiple cities, including New Jersey and Melbourne, as a way of building a rhythm of presence-consciousness into daily life
- A humorous account is given of Rosemary chasing Bruce Downes around the house with scissors to remove the coat's tag, which he used to open the message about identity

FORMED THROUGH ONE ANOTHER

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

This guide is designed to help your small group dive deeper into the message.

OPENING PRAYER

Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and open hearts to God's transforming work. Pray the **IMPACTERS** Community Prayer .

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening

Take a moment to check in with one another. What has your week been like honestly, not just on the surface?

On the Presence of God

1. The Message draws a distinction between believing in God and believing God, trusting Him enough to say yes when He asks something of you. How would you describe where you currently sit in that distinction?
2. What does it mean to you practically to be a "missionary of His presence"? Can you think of a moment this week when you could have been more intentional about that?
3. The Message describes setting a recurring phone reminder, "God is here and I am with Him." What rhythms or habits do you currently have that keep you conscious of God's presence throughout the day? What could you add?

On Community

1. The Message asks: "If you miss, would someone call you? Do people know what you are going through?" How honestly can you answer those questions about your current experience of church or community?
2. Think about a time when someone spoke faith into your life during a difficult season. What did that do for you? What made it possible for them to speak into your life at that moment?
3. The Message says that virtues like patience, forgiveness, and humility cannot be truly learned from teaching alone -- they require real people and real situations. Can you think of a relationship in your life that has formed you in a way that no book or Message could have?
4. The Message challenges the idea of self-sufficiency, noting that spiritual maturity includes being willing to receive from others without feeling the need to return the favor equally. How easy or difficult is it for you to let others serve you? What does that reveal?

On Transparency

1. The Message describes transparency as "advanced citizenship," something not everyone is ready for. Where do you feel God is inviting you to be more honest and open within this group or your wider community?
2. Is there something you have been carrying privately that you would be willing to share with the group today, so others can pray with you and speak faith into your situation?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice before your next gathering:

Daily

- Set a recurring reminder on your phone with a short phrase that calls you back to an awareness of God's presence. Use it as a prompt to pause and pray, even briefly.

This Week

- Identify one person in your life who does not know what you are truly going through. Take a step toward letting them in -- not necessarily sharing everything, but opening the door.
- Think of someone in your community whose life you have not asked about in a while. Reach out and ask a genuine question. Listen without rushing to offer advice.

This Month

- Ask yourself the two questions the Message closes with: Who am I speaking faith into? Who is speaking faith into me? If you cannot answer either question, bring that honestly to God and to this group.
- If you are not yet part of a small group or community where people genuinely know you, make that a matter of prayer and take one concrete step toward finding or building one.

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time together by praying specifically for one another. If members shared something personal during discussion, return to those things in prayer. Ask God to make His presence tangible in each person's life this week not as an idea, but as a lived reality encountered through the people around them.