

RUN THE RACE | HOPE CHAPEL

TRAILBLAZERS

Ben Humphrys | Sunday 12 April 2026 | 9AM Gawler

Big Idea: *Jesus is the ultimate Trailblazer — and as his disciples, we follow him as Saints, Servants, and Soldiers.*

Introduction

This message picks up Hope Chapel’s 2026 theme “Run the Race.” Ben Humphrys opens by defining a trailblazer as a leader or pioneer — someone who does something before anyone else — and pointing to Jesus as the ultimate trailblazer.

The book of Acts frames our calling: Luke records “all that Jesus began to do and to teach” (Acts 1:1), and at the end of the book Paul is still preaching in Rome — not the end of the journey, but a gateway to more. There are more trails to blaze, more people to reach.

Acts 1:8 *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

The Greek word for disciple — mathetes — means a learner, a student who learns while following someone. Discipleship is a turning away from our own direction and a turning towards the life and values of Jesus. The Holy Spirit helps us along the way.

Regardless of age, background, or occupation, all of us are called to be trailblazers. We are:

SAINTS

Called & Set Apart

SERVANTS

Transforming from the Inside

SOLDIERS

Fighting for His Cause

1. Saints — Called and Set Apart

Many people picture a ‘saint’ as a deceased holy person with a halo. But Paul uses the word 38 times in his writing, and 29 of those times he is speaking directly to ordinary believers — you and me.

A saint simply means someone who is set apart and called by God. Just as the utensils in the temple were ordinary objects made holy by being set apart for God’s use, we are ordinary people made holy in Christ.

Romans 1:7 *To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.*

1 Corinthians 1:2 *To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.*

Hebrews 10:10 *We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

Two Dimensions of Being a Saint

- Positional — We have already been made holy through Christ’s sacrifice. This is not based on our education, popularity, or appearance.
- Progressive — We are growing in holiness as we follow Jesus. We learn as we go.

1 Peter 1:15 *But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all that you do.*

Being a saint is not about being perfect — all the disciples made mistakes. It’s about being a disciplined follower who is learning the ways of God. The grace of God makes us holy; discipleship is how we live that out.

Paul’s heart was this: there is no greater honour and privilege than to be called by God and to live a life that brings glory to him.

2. Servants — Transforming from the Inside

Mark 10:43–45 *Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

Servanthood was not a concept the disciples took to easily. When a Samaritan village refused to host Jesus, James and John asked, “Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven?” Jesus had to remind them: we are not here to destroy people, we are here to save them.

Luke — the writer of Acts — is a great example of a servant. He was a doctor, a historian, a writer. Not one of the original twelve, but incredibly impactful. Luke likely kept Paul alive through shipwrecks, beatings, and illness, enabling him to keep preaching.

Paul’s Network of Servants

Paul is often celebrated as the great apostle, but he constantly celebrated those around him. None of his mission would have been possible without:

- Barnabas — who took Paul in when no one else would, and encouraged him
- Timothy, Silas, Tertius, Luke — who helped write and carry his letters
- Aristarchus — who helped during a riot

- Tychicus — who carried letters between churches
- Epaphroditus — who brought gifts while Paul was in prison
- Lydia — who gave accommodation and financial support

In God's economy, no one is greater than anyone else. Every person serving to preach the gospel is equally valued.

The Leaven Principle

Luke 13:20–21 *To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until it was all leavened.*

Servants act as leaven — they pioneer transformation from the inside. A small amount of yeast changes everything. Servants influence culture simply by showing the grace of God through practical, active help.

Florence Nightingale (1820–1910) is a great example: an Anglican who quietly transformed nursing into a respected profession, used statistics to analyse health outcomes, and advocated reforms that added 20 years to life expectancy. She wasn't a prime minister — she was a servant.

3. Soldiers — Fighting for His Cause

Whenever we move forward, we will face opposition. Jesus never took on a physical fight, but he always stood against ideas and ideologies that opposed God's values.

When Jesus called Matthew (a tax collector) and celebrated with sinners, the Pharisees complained. Jesus' response:

Luke 5:31–32 *It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

At another banquet, a sinful woman washed Jesus' feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. The critics disapproved. But Jesus said: "No one else welcomed me like this woman." He turned to her: "Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Being a disciple means doing what is right and standing up for others — not waiting to be entertained, but ready to march.

2 Corinthians 10:4–5 *The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

Our Weapons as Soldiers

- Declaring the Word of God — living and active

- Praying with faith that can move mountains
- Standing firm knowing that if God is for us, who can be against us?
- Preaching the good news of grace and salvation
- Praise and worship that brings down walls and breaks chains

We are not fighting against people — we are fighting against the powers behind them. Disciples are soldiers who blaze a trail of the goodness and grace of God.

Conclusion

We are his modern day heroes — Saints, Servants, and Soldiers.

Called and set apart for his plan and purpose. Agents of transformation. Soldiers fighting for his cause.

We follow Jesus who is the ultimate pioneer, the ultimate Trailblazer. He has called us, gifted us, and empowered us. He leads us by his Holy Spirit. We are being made holy — not perfect, but learning to be like Jesus, following the way he lived.

As Easter celebrations close, the question is: where to from here? The answer is: blaze a trail. Not on our own — following Jesus, who has gone ahead.

So let's be true saints in the world. Let's be servants — not burning down villages, but going to find the incredible people in them and serving them with the grace of God. And let's be soldiers, knowing the power that is with us is stronger than what is against us.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

Use these questions personally during the week, or with a small group.

1. Ben said a disciple is someone who turns away from their own direction and turns towards Jesus' way of life. What is one area of your life where you sense God asking you to turn?

2. As a Saint, you are already set apart by God — positionally holy in Christ. How does knowing this change the way you see yourself this week?

3. Who is your 'Luke' or your 'Barnabas' — someone who serves quietly behind the scenes in your life or community? How could you acknowledge or encourage them?

4. The leaven principle says that servants pioneer transformation from the inside. Where in your everyday life (work, family, neighbourhood) could you be the leaven this week?

5. James and John wanted to call down fire. Honestly, is there a situation in your life where your first instinct is to judge rather than serve? What would it look like to respond like Jesus instead?

6. What is one stronghold — an argument or barrier — that you're facing right now? Which of the soldier's weapons (prayer, worship, God's Word, proclamation) do you most need to pick up?

Key Scriptures

- Acts 1:1–2 | Acts 1:8 | Acts 28:30–31
- Romans 1:7 | 1 Corinthians 1:2 | Hebrews 10:10
- 1 Peter 1:15 | Mark 10:43–45 | Luke 5:31–32
- Luke 13:20–21 | 2 Corinthians 10:4–5