

Acts 13

by Bill Gallatin

In Acts 13, Bill Gallatin explores the pivotal shift in the early church's mission from Jews to Gentiles, emphasizing the power of God's grace and the importance of prayer and fasting.

Duration: 1:21:59

Scripture: Isaiah 53:1, Isaiah 61:1, Matthew 6:33, Acts 13:40-41

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Bill Gallatin teaches from the Book of Acts chapter 13, starting with verse 1. He begins by emphasizing the importance of faithfully sharing the word of God and allowing it to penetrate hearts. Paul's message to the Israelites and God-fearing Gentiles highlights the history of God's chosen people and His faithfulness to them. The sermon also touches on the importance of diligently seeking God and His plan for our lives, rather than just seeking temporary spiritual experiences. The sermon concludes with the pastor sharing about a gathering of outreach pastors who sought the Lord's guidance for the upcoming year.

Transcript

This tape is recorded at Calvary Chapel of the Finger Lakes, taught by Pastor Bill Gallatin, studying in the Book of Acts, Chapter 13, beginning with verse 1. We ask you, Heavenly Father, to enable us to share faithfully your Word tonight. And we ask your help, Holy Spirit, that each heart might be encouraged, strengthened, and enlightened with your truth. Lord, you've promised us that your Word shall not return void, that it would accomplish all that you sent it forth to accomplish.

And Lord, your great love can be manifested tonight to each heart who's come here to sit before you at your feet. We're your children, Father, and we desire to be fed, to be encouraged, and we thank you that you're so willing and so loving. So encourage, edify, exhort, comfort, grant salvation.

Lord, there may be someone here tonight who truly hasn't opened their heart yet to you. They're being drawn in their mind, their intellect, their thinking, and beginning to see that you are the Lord and Savior of mankind. They're beginning to see through the blindness that Satan's had upon their lives for many years that you really are a God of love.

And there is no other way. And so we pray, dear Father, for whoever that is, that you might set them free tonight to experience your saving grace, to know that all sin can be forgiven once and for all, never to be

brought up again. The justification is free through Jesus Christ.

In His name we pray. Amen. Before we read chapter 13 or get into it, we are at that point in the book of Acts where now the apostle Peter is going to kind of go by the wayside, so to speak.

He's been the prominent apostle to this point with James in Jerusalem. But now we've had the conversion of the apostle Paul. And everything's going to shift to Paul's life.

Now, we know that Paul has revealed that he was given the ministry of the gospel to the Gentiles, or to the heathen. And so God, by allowing persecution in Jerusalem in the early portions of the book of Acts, is now, through the persecution, forcing the saints out in a spoke-type pattern, away from the hub Jerusalem into the uttermost parts of the world. Now we know and see that the Spirit of God is going to be moving to the Gentile regions of the earth.

And we're going to pick up the life of Paul now as circumstances through the operation of the Holy Spirit and the providence of God move Paul up toward Europe. And God moves him through the major trade routes of the Mediterranean, where all the peoples of the earth and the cultures are mixing and crossing each other in major cities, so the gospel can be transmitted. And at the same time, Paul has this desire to reach his own countrymen, the Jew.

You remember when he wrote the book of Romans. His heart ached. He was willing to be damned if it would save his brethren, the Jew.

He had such a burden being a very devout, orthodox Jew himself. And to have the blinders taken away and realize that the whole Old Testament speaks of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and the joy and the release, the excitement of it, and to see what blindness concerning Jesus Christ does to a life, no matter how religious. And again, we're going to find out that the greatest persecutors of the Christians, just as it is today, are devoutly religious people as they see Christianity a threat to their religion.

They were never resisted or persecuted by the sinners, so to speak. But it was the organized religious people of the different countries they went into that actually were united with the local government, wed together politically and religiously for power. And then when the gospel began to invade that, you can be sure Satan reared up his ugly head.

The serpent went to work. And we're going to see the actual confrontation of Satan now to try and stop the gospel from reaching the Gentiles and eventually getting into Europe, which eventually spread. And you and I sit here tonight because of what we're going to read about in Acts chapter 13.

Because of the Lord sending Paul with the gospel to the heathen or the Gentiles, you and I sit here tonight. Satan was not able to stop it. And there's a text that's just one of my favorites that shows that no matter what he tries, it can't stop the spreading of the gospel.

In fact, the more he persecutes, the more the gospel spread, the more the church grows. As Jesus said, the gates of hell will not prevail against my church. Now, you see a lot of dead churches.

That just means that Jesus isn't running things. It isn't his church. You see a lot of dead people who claim to be born again.

They can't even stay awake in a Bible study. I mean, they can't even lift their arms in a praise session. It's just usually because they don't belong to Jesus.

They're just very religious. I don't see how you can not be excited and have this life and how Satan can prevail against an individual who truly is yielded to Jesus Christ. As we'll find out, remember, John says, greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

My little children, it says you have overcome them. Who's them? Well, the demonic spirits, the principalities and powers, the spiritual wickedness behind the false prophets and the governments of the world that try to hinder a life that's radically sold out for Jesus Christ. And not ashamed to proclaim Jesus Christ or live for Jesus Christ outside of a Bible study or a church gathering, but every day of their life.

And here's the Apostle Paul and the members of the early church. Now, before we start, look at Galatians chapter one. I'll show you.

Now, some fourteen years after this portion of the book of Acts, Paul's writing to the Galatians. Now, in chapter 13 of Acts, the Galatian church hadn't even begun. But it's through Acts 13 and Paul reaching this area that a church was planted and believers began to grow, experience Christ, and then it got a foothold that Satan could not drive out.

And so now you have this whole area of Galatia, which is today Turkey, where there was a thriving church and Paul writes the letter to the Galatians. That was established some fourteen years later after Acts 13. And notice what he tells them.

He reveals to them in verse 15 of chapter one. When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His grace. Wonderful to know that I can't earn my salvation.

I don't have to be discouraged. I can't earn my salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ is willing to grant it in His love and His grace.

He will grant anyone here tonight true salvation if they desire it. And Paul discovered that he was separated from his mother's womb, that God had His hand on his life even at the birth. You remember that God spoke to Jeremiah as the call came upon Jeremiah's life and he felt that he wasn't ready.

He was frightened and usually when a person is frightened and not sure of themselves, they are ready. They have been prepared and all the self-confidence is driven out. When you realize, Lord, this is so awesome.

Who am I? Like Moses said when he was ready and then tried to get out of it. You know, when he realized this is bigger than I thought. You don't just walk up and smile and talk about the Bible and then go home and relax.

There are things that go on behind the scenes that no one knows about. The spiritual battles, the buffeting, the betrayal, the real warfare in preparation and everyday life that no one even has a clue that goes on. And he discovered that and he realized, Lord, without You I can't make it.

I realize I'm nothing apart from You. And God said, Jeremiah, it is proved that conception and there's a person that exists even before the sperm in the egg and God's eyes. He said before you were formed in your mother's womb, before daddy's sperm hit the egg, I knew you.

I named you and I have called you unto a purpose for me to be a prophet. Doesn't matter what the Supreme Court or the medical experts in Harvard and Princeton and Yale and all the medical schools, what they're trying to tell people when real life begins. God says it begins in the womb.

It begins before eternity. He tells us in Ephesians that before the world began, before the foundation of the earth, I knew thee. I ordained my son to redeem thee before Adam even fell.

Nothing caught God by chance or off guard. The fall of man. The deception of Satan.

God knew all about it. He has foreknowledge. He's omnipotent.

And He loved us so much that even before we came into existence, whether you are sitting here tonight because of a rape or an adoption and you don't know who your earthly father is, your heavenly father has known you from before the foundation of the world. And so don't hang your hat on all of your poor background and oh, I didn't have a chance. God's saying tonight you can know your real father in heaven and have eternal life.

And my saving grace and the work of my spirit in your life can heal all your past and you don't have to worry about it anymore. And make excuses for your failure today because you had a bad upbringing or because of who you are, what happened to you, or you don't know who your parents were, or you didn't have a lot of money. God says today you're here and you're going to have a new beginning.

I've known you before the foundation of the world. What does it matter how you came into this life? The important thing is how you go on out. And so what does it matter where you used to live? It's important where you're going to live after you leave your body.

God's got a wonderful place for you for eternity. And it says there will be no remembrance of all the pain, all the ravages of sin. God has such a wonderful way to heal everything through his grace and his love.

And so Paul experienced this revelation. He realized as he began to grow more. Now Paul didn't know all these things on his conversion experience.

One week after he got converted on the way to Damascus, he just loved God. And from that moment on he couldn't get enough of God. You know, he just needed more and more and more.

And God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. And he grew in knowledge and grace and began to understand the whole purpose of redemption and his own existence. And he had this marvelous hope that God has a plan for my life.

God has a plan for every life here tonight. But many people don't come into that awareness of it or desire to find out. They just want goosebumps once or twice a week and then they go their own way.

The Bible says God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. And if you dig deep into the treasure house of his work, it says he reveals things that are even more important and greater than gold and silver that perish in this world. Things that can never be taken away from you.

The riches of his revelation is truth and his own person, his own presence continually. His own revelation, you can understand and be aware of his voice. And know just as quickly as Abraham when he called, you can say, here am I. No matter what your circumstance, what you're going through, you can recognize God's voice through all the confusion and the babble of this world.

And you can say, here am I. You know his voice. You're aware of his presence at all times. And you never have to be lonely.

Paul went on to say in verse 16. As he called me by faith to reveal his son in me. Interesting.

He revealed his son in me. That I might preach him among the heathen or the Gentiles. The heathen.

Here's this mighty, devout, brilliant, one of the greatest minds of all mankind. The secular world acknowledges it. One of the five most brilliant minds that have ever existed in mankind.

The apostle Paul. That he might go to the heathen. The Gentiles.

That shows you how much God loves us. Loves you. To use one of the most brilliant minds that he ever created.

To develop the gospel of grace and bring the revelation and truth and balance to the world. He was preaching that you and I would be saved. And yet to do it in simplicity.

As Paul said to the Corinthians. I didn't come to you with enticing words. But I came to you in simplicity.

He didn't come to some. It's interesting he went from being a theologian to just a Christian. Bringing a simple truth of grace.

But he said, I was shown that I am the priest of the heathen. And immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood. So immediately he went to the heathen.

Into Damascus as Jesus Christ ordered him. And began to preach. Now in chapter two again notice what he tells us.

Concerning he and Peter. In verse seven. He said, but contrary wise.

When they saw that the gospel. Of the uncircumcision. Or the Gentiles.

The heathen. Now people get a negative feeling when they hear. That there are heathens.

Do you realize that we were all heathen? I don't know if there's any Jewish people here. That know Jesus Christ. But it looks like you all look pretty much like you're a heathen.

I'm a heathen. Now some people take offense at it. All that means is you're a non-Jew.

You're a Gentile. It doesn't mean you're some you know crazy person that eats raw meat. It just means you're a non-Jew.

And the heathen did not circumcise. And so he is stating here. They saw that the gospel.

Of the uncircumcision. Or the heathen. Or the Gentile.

Was committed unto me. And the gospel. Of the circumcision.

Was unto Peter. Peter was called. To the proud Jew.

Now isn't this amazing? Here's this brilliant man. With an I.Q. quality. Atop the charts.

Make Einstein look like an idiot. God doesn't use him. For the proud Jew.
He uses his brilliant mind. For the Gentile people. Of the world.
Who are considered. Just the offspring. Of you know.
The human race. In the Jewish land. Now the proud Jew.
The elitist. The educated. Who is the.
Who preaches the gospel to them? An illiterate fisherman. Now God has ways. I'll tell you.
I love the way God does things. Just the opposite of what you and I would think. Just a Galilean.
A Galatean. A dumb Galatean. Let's go to Acts chapter.
13. We see Paul now. And the whole book of Acts changing.
And the microscope of God. Turning some more. And we're going to just highlight.
The rest of the book of Acts centers around. This. Brilliant.
Mind. That God had molded and shaped. To be the apostle.
To the heathen. Or Gentile. And as you look.
If you have a good Bible. You can follow the maps. Of God begins through Providence.
Moving him up toward Europe. Now that we're in the text. church.
That was at Antioch. That's up. Near the Turkish border.
Northern Lebanon. Syria. Certain prophets and teachers.
As Barnabas and Simeon. That was called Niger. Notice how quickly.
The church. The aspect of the church. In just a few short years.
After Pentecost. I've got been bringing people in from all over. The known world.
Then in the Middle East. And again. Just the beauty.
God's church. Notice. They were not all Jews.
You have prophets and teachers. Such as Barnabas and Simeon. And it's very possible.
If you look at Matthew 27 verse 32. That this Simeon is Simon or the man who the Roman soldiers as
Jesus was carrying his cross to Golgotha. This captain with one of his fears and he had to help Jesus
Christ and the very act of helping Jesus Christ.
He saw something just like the Roman soldier when he saw how Christ carried himself on the cross.
Behold. This is the Son of God.

Well, it's very possible. But this Simeon or Simon is the very person who saw Jesus Christ and had to help him carry his cross. And we know he's a black man.

Niger means black and where you get the word Nigeria comes from. And so immediately because of Philip preaching to the Ethiopian who went back to Ethiopia. You can see the gospel all over the northern portion of Africa and God using already creating prophets and teachers, not just in Jerusalem, but now in Africa.

And so you have Niger and Lucius of Cyrene, which is the area of Libya today. And Menaeen, which had been brought up with Herod, the Tetrarch and Paul. So God's even saving people in this terrible Herod, the Tetrarch family.

In other words, God is trying to reach everybody. He can save whoever he wants and plant his people in some of the most despicable families and some of the most evil situations. You'll find a servant just like the young servant girl who was taken captive, taken back to Syria.

You remember, and she began, became the handmaiden to the Syrian General Neiman, this great powerful Syrian. Why would God allow a young little teenage girl to have her family butchered and then taken prisoner into Syria, into Damascus? And if you look at the amazing story with Elisha, how God used this to spread the good news of his love, the God of the Jews of the Old Testament to the Gentiles in Syria. And here he's dying and all the wizards and all the false prophets and all the false gods of the Syrians can't help Neiman.

And all of a sudden this beautiful little Jewish girl has no resentment or bitterness. She's serving there. And she says, well, there's the God of the Jews where I come from.

He can help you with your leprosy. You go on with this story and all led to the salvation of this mighty general, one of the most powerful generals in the known world at that time. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, if you want to really learn a lot about fasting and the New Testament has much about fasting, you can make a little reference if you'd like to see the power that fasting will bring into a life, read Isaiah chapter 58.

We'll be getting to that on Sundays a few months from now, Lord willing. Maybe spend a Sunday morning on the power and what fasting will do to break the chains that bind people, free people from the power of Satan. And so many times the early church would come into a situation seeking direction and go into a fast.

If the willing fast and begin to minister notice they ministered to the Lord so often. I think we make the mistake we come to the church to be ministered to and we walk out without a blessing. We forget that God commands worship.

God loves to be ministered to. He loves thankful people. One of the things that stirs God's anger the most quickly is unthankfulness and murmuring.

Much in the Bible about that. They ministered to the Lord. It's a wonderful thing to minister to the Lord, to deny myself and say, Lord, I'm willing to fast.

You know, you're more important in my flesh and I just want to sit in your presence. I just want to fast and worship you and wait for the Holy Spirit just to begin to move upon me and begin to move upon my thinking, and I can begin to respond to your great love for me and fall more in love with you. Benefits,

tremendous benefits, and learning to minister to the Lord, not just waiting for the Lord to minister to me.

And so as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Now as they're sitting, praying with each other, just waiting on the Lord, probably with some Old Testament scriptures of the New Testament scriptures weren't in circulation yet. Paul hadn't written any letters yet, worshiping the Spirit of God began to move among them and God revealed to them that he wanted Paul and Barnabas to go up further and go over to Cyprus, one of the main trade routes for all the Gentiles who ruled, crisscross each other in the Mediterranean from the east to the west to Africa, up into Europe, and then from there up into Turkey, and so that quickly the Spirit of God began to lead them and direct them and instruct them as they were just ministering to the Lord, worshiping the Lord.

Now, how did the Holy Ghost do it was an audible voice more than likely through the word in some way. In some way, their knowledge of the word in the Old Testament and the tremendous knowledge of the Old Testament, especially Paul, even the Galilean Peter, as you look at the book of Acts, you see how much of the Old Testament rolls out of these men so they knew the word of God. They read the scriptures and they prophesied much and all the preaching of the gospel in the book of Acts was from the Old Testament concerning Jesus Christ and multitudes got saved.

They didn't even have the New Testament in circulation yet. The revelation they had was from all the areas of the Old Testament that had Jesus Christ in it. And they led multitudes to the Lord by knowledge of Jesus in the Old Testament.

Powerful, powerful truths concerning Jesus Christ all throughout the Old Testament. Interesting, the beginning of this month, all the outreach pastors, we all got together, some of the guys down from Pennsylvania, Ohio, the outreach is in this area. We just decided, let's just get together and seek the Lord, just minister and wait upon him.

See what God would tell us concerning 1998. And so we got there and we had nothing planned. A couple of guys had guitars, Ken Lane, Calvary Chapel, Syracuse, Tim from there in Franklin and there were about 50 of us.

So we just sat down and we began to get into the word and just pray and worship. To be honest, we didn't fast. They prepared meals for us at the castle and it still led to.

But as we began to worship, the Holy Spirit began to move immediately and just minister to each guy in their own particular church as their certain issues began to encourage. And I remember the last day we just started Monday and by Wednesday afternoon, the Holy Spirit was moving so powerfully, we began to pray. Anybody want to turn before we came back to our churches? It's amazing.

The night before someone said, you know, the Lord spoke to my heart that brother so-and-so and brother so-and-so are supposed to get together and do something in the James area. And I just kind of hit it. My heart is saying that there were two brothers that have gone out and they're teaching home Bible studies.

And at this point, you know, it isn't taken off. They're still removing boulders and rocks from the soil and learning about the area. But I just kind of hit my heart.

Oh, great. You know, I kind of sense that. But you don't want to say anything.

You don't want to influence anybody. You want the Lord to really speak to them in the word, if anything. You don't want to, you know, think that you're trying to manipulate someone.

You really want God to lead them in incursion. The interesting thing is that the day before we left now, this is the night before the last day we were laying hands on people and they both came up and said, Pastor Bill, God has spoken to us. Now, this is the day after that someone else had gotten that word.

The two brothers that were supposed to do it, Chris Gardello and George Dunham in the James Town area, but several miles apart, they both came up together. God has spoken to them. The text in Acts that God has spoken to us.

We are to get together. He wants us to do something together to confirm it exactly as the book of Acts. And they were so excited.

You know, they were just aglow with the Holy Spirit because they knew in their hearts God had spoken and all we were doing. No Bible studies. Nothing.

People were just coming forth with scriptures, you know, in the word. We pray together. We worship more.

Just spontaneous. It was great. And God began to speak in a powerful way, and it just so happens that George and Chris God spoke to them the same text this time.

I want you to do something together, and then you were excited. You don't know. Well, maybe as you minister to the Lord, maybe turn the radio off instead of trying to get one of the great guys on the station to minister to you.

Why don't you the next time maybe just say, Lord, I want to minister to you. I just want to sit before you and tell you how much I love you, Lord, how thankful I am for my salvation, how thankful I am, Lord, for all the things you've done for me over these past few years. Oh, I'm married now, Lord.

There for a while. I didn't think I'd ever get married, Lord. I'm so thankful.

My one son is saved now, Lord. I just want to minister to you. I just want to worship you.

You might be surprised how the Lord responds to that and maybe gives you some new direction. One thing for sure, because God designed love and designed us to respond to love. He really responds to love for him.

Responds in a great way. So God has picked these two men, and when they had fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them and they sent them away. In other words, they just ratified what God has done.

No special power anointing upon them, so to speak. They're just ratifying and agreeing together what they saw God do because God spoke the Holy Spirit directed, and so they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost departed into Seleucia and from thence they sailed to Severus. So they left Antioch, went down to the coast of the Mediterranean there on the Lebanese-Syrian border, the main port, and then went out that main shipping direction, went right to Cyprus.

And that's that little island right beneath the underbelly of Turkey in that portion of the Mediterranean, which is a very important spot for all the shipping lanes. And so you have all races of people from all cultures, all countries mixing there through these ports, these great ports, you see, on Cyprus. And so

they're going there to convert people, you know, plant a church, share the gospel, and then when people are coming out, they're going to be confronted with the gospel by the same people on Cyprus, and God's moving by His Spirit, spreading the good news of Jesus Christ.

Now, if He does that today, it could be situations change and all of a sudden you're forced to move to another state because it is closed down, that section of the factory working that, well, we're sorry because we're closing the department, we're moving it to Arkansas. I'm sure you'd want another state than Arkansas, but it just so happens that, you know, the taxes are low and the other guy's not there now, so... And God, maybe, you see, through the circumstances, it puts you somewhere else and you get to share your faith, your reality and the love and the beauty of Jesus Christ, what He's done for you, you see. So many times, I think, we pray, we say, Lord, use me, and then we pick a spot, and God says, I want to use you, and then all of a sudden we think, well, I'm going to notify my employer probably next summer, I'm going to let the money build up, and next June, I think we're going to take our scrap of faith, we'll have a nest egg, and we're going to move to New Mexico.

And in three weeks, you get laid off, and the only place you have to go is Alaska. Lord, I don't want to go to Alaska, I thought you wanted to be used. The need's in Alaska.

I need you in Alaska. I need somebody in Alaska. And maybe God's answered your prayer and you want to be used, and now all of a sudden you don't want to do it, and God's opened the door for you, for tremendous blessing.

You think, well, I thought that God lets you kind of pick and you desire and you enjoy it, and then you pray, Lord, make me willing, because he does say he'll make his people willing in a day of his power. I've had to do that in my own life, that all of a sudden I see the providence of God moving in an area that I didn't want for myself. I don't have that in my plans, Lord, and God says, yes, but they're my plans, Bill.

But Lord, you said that, you know, we'd be willing and I'd enjoy it, and David said, I'd delight to do thy will, O God. I don't delight in this place, Lord, and the Lord says, well, I also say that I can make my people willing, Bill. So there, you see, comes the prayer.

Am I willing to pray? Am I willing to be made willing? And it's amazing how he can do that. And the blessings begin to roll in. And so they're on their way to get to Cyprus, and when they were at Salamis, that's on the eastern end of the island, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews, and they had also John to their minister, young Mark.

Now, at this time, Mark's probably in his twenties now, you remember some ten to twelve years earlier. We know that Mark is the author of the Gospel of Mark, who kind of was tutored by Peter for a while. He's a, you know, a cousin to Barnabas, and in the beginning, and Mark has a certain little cry bar he inserted in his Gospel of Mark at the arrest of Jesus Christ about this young lad who, when they went to arrest him, ran away, and he had nothing but a robe on.

And he was out there, you know, watching the whole thing, and when they came to arrest Jesus Christ and everybody scattered, they grabbed this young man, and he ran away naked. And many of the scholars feel that it was young Mark when he was about twelve years old or thirteen years old, but now it's ten years later, and he's a young man. He is still with, you know, his life is just, because he's a relative to all the early saints and things going on in his house all the time, exposed to Christianity, you know, and knowing that God had a call on his life, now he's with them as an older man, or a young man.

And when they had gone through the island unto Paphos, now Paphos is the city on the extreme western tip of Cyprus, where the main trade route goes through that city. All the ships that go up to Europe go from Antioch, all the trade routes come up from Egypt and Africa into Jerusalem, up into Lebanon. They come down from Syria, Damascus, down to the coast in Antioch, and then over to Seleucia, and then from there over to Paphos, and from Paphos your shipping lines go off over to Italy or Greece or up into Turkey.

And so you can just see how God's going to use all this to spread the gospel. So when they had gone through the island of Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet. Notice, all prophets aren't true.

Peter said in the last days there would be many, as there were false prophets in the Old Testament, there would be many false teachers, and they will gather many. They will draw multitudes, their crowds will be huge, so they'll make merchandise out of you. They usually get the crowds in such a way and get them all hyped up, and then it's usually a big play for the money.

Peter said they'll make merchandise out of you in the last days. It's one of the signs of the last days, false teachers. And so they found this certain sorcerer or magician, knowing the mysteries of the East, Eastern mysticism.

They worship the stars, they would take drugs to alter their conscience and open themselves up to demon spirits. They channeled and would have demonic powers. So now here you have Satan stirring things up to hinder the gospel.

So you've got Satan, demon spirits, evil spirits, versus the Holy Spirit in the church. And here's the first confrontation in the Gentile world, so to speak. Watch how this plays out, the power and how wonderful it is to be filled with the Spirit of God.

You never have to fear no matter where He sends you. So they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus, or the son of Joshua, a very common name, Joshua or Yehoshua, which in the Greek is Jesus. Very common name.

Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man who called for Barnabas and Saul and desired to hear the word of God. And Elymas, the sorcerer, for so is his name interpreted, or by interpretation, withstood them. In other words, the Bar-Jesus was the Jewish and Elymas is the Greek of this man's name, the sorcerer.

He withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Now here's an important man in the government. If he gets saved, you see, Satan says, well, this thing could spread.

I kind of control things now through the government, by the laws and the religion of the state of the land, and I can...sorcery is legal. It's just an alternate religion, so to speak. Nothing wrong with it all.

We want to be tolerant, all faiths are allowable. Even the worship of Satan and sorcery, the occult, maybe they're even teaching it in a public school. And so Satan sees this as a threat.

Light is coming, the truth of the gospel, and so if this powerful man in the government gets saved, Satan says, well, you know, I'm going to lose some territory here. I might lose control of the public schools. Then Saul, who is also called Paul, and here's where his name changes, his conversion, his name was changed from Saul to Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him and said, Oh, full of subtlety and all

mischief, thou child of the devil, Paul wasn't about hurting his feelings, was he? That wouldn't be politically correct if you said that to a government official today, would it? Thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee.

Now, Satan's hand was upon him and he had, you know, he mystified people, maybe making predictions, so many that one or two might come to pass. You can make so many general predictions for the whole year, you know, like Jean Dixon. She makes her predictions for 19, you know, 98 and of all the people and one or two might get close.

They all get divorced, right? So if you prophesied that something was going to get divorced, it's pretty, pretty good to happen. He says, Now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness, and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

Amazing power when someone tries to hinder the gospel when the fruit of God moves tall. Now, it's interesting now, Satan was using him to blind people to the truth and the Lord uses Paul to actually blind him. And if people aren't careful, they miss the grace of God in this.

Now, two things could have happened. One thing this sorcerer better be thankful about, that it wasn't Elijah, that it wasn't the age of grace, because if it was the Old Testament, that guy would have been a piece of bacon, an infant, he'd have been snuffed. You remember when Ahab sent the soldiers looking for Elijah after he returned from his experience in the cave with the Lord, and he sent out fifty men with the captain, and they find Elijah sitting on the knoll of a hill, and the captain says, I'll tell the men of God, if you are, come down here.

And Elijah said, If I be a man of God, let fire fall from heaven and destroy you all. And before he even got out of his mouth, wham, and they were gone, there's just a hole in the ground. Well, the news got back, and so the king sent another fifty, go find that guy.

And so the next guy, the captain of fifty, with his fifty soldiers, and they find Elijah, he's still sitting in the same spot, he says, I'll tell the man of God, come on down here. And Elijah says, If I'm a man of God, let fire from heaven fall and consume thee. Kaboom! Another hole in the ground, and they disappeared.

The king sent a third captain with fifty guys. He found Elijah. He said, Did we talk about something, sir? Can we discuss this as gentlemen? Well here, you have two examples of God's grace.

Now, first of all, he only blinded the guy for a season. He could have blinded him permanently. And he didn't kill him.

He let him live. It may be in his difficulty, he may reconsider what he's doing with his life. Many times God puts his hand upon us, and we don't see the love in it.

He hasn't killed us. He hasn't permanently destroyed us, and it's like he's giving us an opportunity to think things over. Do you really want to continue the direction you're going? Aren't you tired of it yet? And I'm sure that this guy, thinking of all the power and the way he would mesmerize people, influence people, all of a sudden, that quickly, God can take it away from you, and you're helpless, and he's got to have someone lead him around now, maybe push him in a wheelchair, or change your bandages, or like Nebuchadnezzar, just all of a sudden, a nervous breakdown in an instant, and seven years of your life are just gone, just a chapter out of your life, because God just allowed it to get your attention.

And yet, he didn't kill. He's saying, do you want to think about where you're going, what you're doing, your attitude? You see, God is willing to forgive. He's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

He does love, but he's more glorified in forgiving and restoring than destruction. That brings him much more glory. So he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand, this powerful, arrogant, demonic-inspired person.

Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. I guess so. Now, what took place here? What was the confrontation? This is so encouraging.

Turn to 1 John chapter 4. This is what John wrote, actually played out to show you and I that you have nothing to fear. Look what John writes. Now, John's writing this some 30 years later.

He says in chapter 4, Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.

And this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now already it is in the world. You are of God, little children. You have overcome them.

Who's them? The demonic spirits energizing the false prophets. You have overcome them. Why? Because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

When Paul made his confrontation with his demon-inspired sorcerer, the greater power, the very one who created the demon that was inspiring this man, could just like that bring it to naught. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. So it shows you, you never have to fear Satan.

You respect him. Always keep Jesus Christ between you and him, and realize that when Jesus Christ comes and dwells within you and seals you with his holy spirit, it's permanent, it's forever. And greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

And you don't have to fear. And that's why Paul could speak the way he did, why he wasn't afraid. He didn't say, oh, there must be hinders here, let's just pack it in and leave.

He dealt with it instantly on the spot. And now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia, and John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. So, young John Mark went back to his home, back actually probably to Joppa, the port of Joppa, and Paul and Barnabas went north, right up to the underbelly of Turkey, which is Pamphylia.

And now you see God is opening the door in Europe, the heathen, the Gentiles. But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, sat down, and after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue, sent unto them, saying, You men and brethren, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, say on. You remember in Isaiah 61, 1 and 2, when Jesus, who had grown up in Nazareth in his local synagogue, as the custom was after the rabbis would read the scripture for that day, would open up to the people, say, Do you have anything to share, add to the text, or give them an opportunity to share some portion of scripture? And Jesus stood up, you remember, and opened up Isaiah, the portion in red Isaiah 61, 1 that speaks of him.

And he said, This day is the scripture fulfilled in your eyes, your ears. And so Paul is given the opportunity. And it's amazing what he does, probably just a great, you know, sermon preaching the word, much like Peter did on the day of Pentecost to the Jews.

Now Paul has got Gentiles in the midst, he's in the midst, he's in a Gentile world. And this is interesting, that's Paul's background, he is a Turkish Jew. And so God has sent him back to the area, knowing his background.

He knows the culture, knows how to relate to them, because he was educated in that culture. Notice what he does now, this great message reminding the Jews of their heritage, and then bringing them right to the point of Jesus Christ. Now an interesting thing, too, if you look at all the instances where God gave the apostles opportunity to share their faith with the devout Jews, they never really attacked the Jews.

They just shared the scripture pertaining to Jesus Christ to try and open their eyes. I think too often in the church, people go out on the attack. Always on the attack.

Rather than just giving the truth concerning Jesus Christ, giving the light and allowing that to penetrate. Then Paul stood up and, beckoning with his hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience. The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm brought he them out of it.

They got their birth as a nation, as they went through the Red Sea, a type of the water breaking, and here's a people being born, a whole nation, as God had them bound for four generations in Egypt. And about the time of forty years, suffered he their manners in the wilderness, all the grace and the patience of God with the murmuring, complaining people. Forty years of murmuring and complaining to such a degree that most of the parents perished on the way.

And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land of Babylon. This is very interesting to me, Satan had seven nations or kingdoms aligned to stop Israel from taking the rightful place. If you look at Revelation chapter 13 verse 1 and Daniel prophecies, you realize the greater power that Satan is going to use is the beast, the seven nations that will be aligned at the end of the age.

It's got ten heads, but there are seven nations to try and stop Israel from taking the rightful kingdom on this earth, the return of Jesus Christ. It's interesting to me, too, now the most prominent seven nations in America, whenever they gather together for the economies of the world, the G7 powerful nations on earth that always gather together once a year and discuss the interest rates in Wall Street in the economies of the world, and it's called the G7. After that, he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years until Samuel the prophet.

He's given a tremendous Bible study. He's taken through the whole Old Testament quickly. And afterward they desired a king and God gave unto them Saul, the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

And when he had removed him he raised up unto them David to be their king. To whom also he gave testimony and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart which shall fulfill all my will. Wonderful to know that God would say that about David and David wasn't a perfect man, but David knew how to repent.

And notice what God says, a man after my own heart, because when he is convicted of his sin he repents. Doesn't mean you have to be perfect. That gives me hope, because it's so far from perfect.

And I fail, I make mistakes, but I know that God is saying, oh Lord Jesus forgive me, forgive me. And God is so forgiving. Of this man's seed have God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Savior Jesus.

Now he goes all the way back. Notice again the knowledge of the Scriptures of Paul goes all the way back to Genesis 22 verse 18 where God gives the promise of Abraham's seed that will bless all the nations of the earth. And that seed is in the singular, specifically speaking of Jesus Christ.

The promise is going to come out of the loins of Abraham. Then God brings Isaac, then Jacob and the twelve tribes, and then David out of Jacob, of the tribe of Judah. Of this man's seed have God according to his promise.

But the promise is all the way back. Actually the promise goes back to Genesis 3 verse 15 where God says Satan you caused man to fall, but by the seed of the woman I'm going to crush your head. And when John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel, and as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he.

But behold, there cometh one after me whose shoes of his feet are not worthy of this. Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever even among you seareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning them." It's amazing.

You can sit in a church, in a synagogue, and hear the word taught over and over again and have a closed heart and it cannot penetrate. Every Saturday, every weekend they'd go to church and did nothing for him because their hearts weren't open. And yet in their reaction, God, no matter what Satan tries to do to stop the redemption of man, God's always using the wrath of man to bring himself praise, as the psalmist says.

And then Paul tells us in Romans chapter 8, 28, he works all things to the good. No matter what happens, whether it's a failure or a plot, God works it to the good. For those who love him and are called according to his purposes.

So no matter what you're going through right now, if you love God, if Christ is your Savior, no matter how difficult it may be right now, you trust, you have hope because God's going to work it to the good for you. He's going to work it to the good for you. I can remember when we first began to pray, we felt God was leading us to build a radio station.

Everybody says, you're nuts. You don't know anything about radio. I know.

God does well. He's leading. We had people leave the church, write me letters.

You're doing it for your own ego. You're wasting God's money. Who knows anything about a radio station? They did the same thing when we started at Christendom.

They did the same thing when we started Sunday services. And so we felt led to just to start praying. And God began to give us the faith and open more doors and more doors, just like everything else he does.

And my gosh, before you know it, it was happening. And God honored it. I remember we went to the town hall.

Satan was going to use the Macedon town hall, because that's where we're going to build the station and the tower. Several hundred thousand dollars it would have cost us. But that's where the FCC gave us allowance to build.

So sure enough, the planning board and all the people were just against it. We knew what was behind it all. And they said, you can't build your tower.

And we were one of you know, we've been allowed to purchase the construction. So we gathered together and we filled the town hall. There was no more room in the meeting place.

People from all around saying why Christian radio would be good for the young people and for the surrounding area. And they went through the motions to hear what we're saying. And the place was packed, standing room only.

They had no real valid reason to reject our desire for the permit to build the station where the FCC said we could, over there in the Macedon area in Palmyra. It was spiritual. And everybody gave their reasoning and parents stood up, you know, just how excited they were.

And it would be good for the surrounding area. Good, decent music. Good teaching.

You know, things that would help the young people and help the community. And they went through the motions of listening and voted it all down. Oh, we're on the gym.

Oh, man, that's a victory. Well, in closing the door and building that station over there, the engineer who was putting it together for us, doing all the plotting, used to fellowship with us. Just so happen he has 40 patents of Nassau.

His name is Bob. And he looked at the computer and looked at the map. He discovered that the FCC made a mistake.

And the original boundaries and limits of where we could build the station, there was a tower on a hill right over here by Victor. And it was within a seven-mile range of the building here. And according to the law, if it's within seven miles from the source of the power, you can put your station right there, at that spot.

In other words, rather than build in Palmyra, we could do it right here in the church. And we already had a tower on a hill, the highest tower in the area. We saved \$300,000.

Now, if God hadn't allowed the zoning board to slam the door in our face, we'd have had to go over there. We'd have put the tower up. We already had it projected.

We had the spot. We'd have had to get all kinds of, you know, spend all kinds of money building a studio over in Nassau. We saved all kinds of money.

It's right behind the wall over there. And it spreads all over. It's just so simple.

All we did was put the equipment in a room over there. God worked it to the good and saved us hundreds of thousands of dollars. Now, maybe God has closed the door on you in some aspect of your life right now,

and all you see is that it hasn't gone my way and I'm upset.

God doesn't love me. Or it's Satan. Well, even if it is Satan, so what? I can guarantee you, if you'll soften your heart and humble yourself under the hand of God and submit to his providence in the way things are working out against your will or wishes right now, you're going to look back and go, Oh, Lord, I'm so thankful.

Man, Lord, how'd you figure that out? I never would have thought of that, Lord. When you look back on it, I can guarantee you he's working all things that you're going through right now to the good. That's his promise.

So no matter what the Jews were doing to hinder the gospel in their rage and anger against even the Messiah that God sent and they crucify them, they still played right into the hands of God for the redemption of man. Though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they pilot that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in the sepulcher.

But God raised him from the dead. You just can't keep a good man down. I mean, Satan, I'm convinced Satan doesn't have a hair on his head.

He's probably over all these years. So frustrated. He is.

Oh, he's done it again. No matter what I do, God turns it around. I thought I had Bill Gallatin in it.

He got out of it again. But the Lord, I thought I had him in the palm of my hand in this temptation and he got out of it. I thought he was going to be just so discouraged he'd quit.

And he didn't. So many times in our lives, he thinks he's got us and God just kind of just goes, watch this and does something so little and you just slip right out of it. You know, if God promises you'll protect us from the snare of the power, God is so powerful, so wonderful.

And he was seen many days of them, which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are as witnesses under the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings are that the promise which was made under the fathers. God has fulfilled the same unto us, their children, and that he has raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second from the art.

My son, this day, have I begotten me? And when it says I have begotten, it is not me. He brought him into existence for being. It speaks of the resurrection begotten from the dead.

Remember, Jesus Christ is always existed. He's the everlasting son that the Old Testament speaks of. It says that the only begotten son doesn't mean it's the only son that God had, even though he is the only son, the beloved son.

But the word begotten means begotten from the dead. Resurrection, the resurrection term, not coming into being and as concerning that he raised him from the dead, not no more to return to corruption. He said in this way, I will give you the sure mercy of David.

Wherefore, he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer by an holy one to see corruption. Others are rolling out of Paul. Isaiah, the psalms for David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep.

Notice the believer doesn't just doesn't die. He just thinks the body just lies down because the spirit will go to be in the presence of God and the body just rests in the grave, waiting for the resurrection to be united together with his redeemed spirit and soul. Paul said, You know, I'm going to be fixed.

I don't know what to do, but I have this desire to depart and be with the Lord. And yet God says there's still the need for me to be down here with the people. And yet I know that the absence from the body is to be present with the Lord.

And so David's spirit and soul went into into paradise, but his body's lying in the grave. Wherefore, he saith or David, after he had served his own generation, fell on sleep and was laid under his father's and saw corruption. In other words, the body.

But he whom God raised against saw no corruption. That's very interesting to me that Jesus was in the tomb for three days and his flesh didn't begin to decompose. And you look at the account in John 11 of Lazarus.

Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin. You can have all of your sins forgiven tonight if you ask Jesus Christ to forgive you. And by him, all that believe are justified from all things, no matter what your sin has been, no matter what you've done in the past.

God has devised a plan to the death of his own son to justify you. He punished his son that he might forgive you and not destroy you to give you eternal life to forgive you of all sin and to treat you as though you never committed a crime. That's what justification is to treat you as though you didn't do it.

There's no record of it. No record of it. Not hidden in a computer somewhere.

No record of it. Your sins and your iniquities will be blotted out, Jeremiah said. Your sins and your iniquities will never be remembered again.

As far as the East is from the West, as he cast our transgressions behind his back, and the East and the West never meet. You know how far away your sin is cast when you put your faith in Jesus Christ and ask God to forgive you. And it's from all things.

There's no such thing as mortal, temporal, venal, cardinal, or I don't know, the label that some groups put on sin as though some was worse than others. No. Sin is sin.

It's all the same. And all is forgiven, because God sees the precious blood of his son upon your life. We're redeemed by his blood.

All things from which could not be justified by the law of Moses. Paul brings up beautifully in Galatians, chapter two and three, that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified through faith in Jesus Christ. So Paul, not Paul, takes them from the law and take them.

And here's this wonderful transition into Habakkuk and starts quoting Habakkuk where Habakkuk finishes his prophecy in chapter two, verse four, that the just shall live by his faith. In Ephesians 2, it says you're saved through grace by faith, but that's not of yourselves. It's the gift of God, which any man should boast.

Even the faith to believe is a gift of God. He wants to save you so much. It's faith.

But it's faith in what God has done, not in what I can do. What God has done for you through Jesus Christ. Because through the works of the law, my own self-effort to be righteous, no flesh will be justified.

The law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, to bring us to grace. Paul brings up clearly in Galatians. So then he calls us now beware.

Therefore, let that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets. Behold, you despisers and wonder and perish for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declared unto you." In other words, you see, he quotes Habakkuk. Habakkuk prophesied, just as Isaiah has prophesied, that because the Jews were hard in their heart, as Isaiah said in Isaiah 53, who has believed our report? Jesus brings it out and quotes Habakkuk and Isaiah in John chapter 12, and he declares himself the light of the world.

To enlighten people that come out of darkness, who've been blinded by the God of this world, Satan. They can see the light of the world and see the light of the eternal truth in Jesus Christ. And he warns them, don't harden your heart.

The more you reject the truth, the blinder you become, the duller your hearing is, the more difficult it becomes, the older you get. You keep rejecting, rejecting, rejecting, putting your faith in Jesus Christ. Saying, well, there may be some other way.

And so Paul says, beware, because you bring yourself under a delusion and it gets more difficult, and more difficult, and more difficult. And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. Boy, they liked what they were hearing, never anything like this before.

And when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes, Gentiles who had converted to Judaism, followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. We want to hear more. And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

Now, Paul and Barnabas, being obedient, going where God directed them, noticed the anointing and the success as God blessed them for their obedience. When the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Immediately, we're losing control here.

We're going to lose people from our religion, our hold on them. They should have been rejoicing. Multitudes are coming to the knowledge of Messiah that they claim to know, and they claim to be telling the people about.

When Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing you put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. As Isaiah prophesied in chapter 11, verse 10, 42, verse 6, about this Messiah, my servant will be a light unto the Gentiles. This root of Jesse, Isaiah prophesied that they would reject him and he would become a light to the Gentiles.

For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Remember in

Acts chapter 16, verse 14, when Paul was up to Philippi and the first convert there is a woman named Lydia, a very wealthy woman, and they didn't have enough to have a synagogue, but they, according to Jewish law, if they had ten or more people, they'd meet by the riverside on Sabbath and just have like a prayer service.

And Paul found out about it, went there and said he preached the gospel, shared Christ, and the Lord opened her heart and she believed. As many as were ordained to eternal life. Now, what if there's someone here sitting tonight and you say, well, I'm probably not ordained.

I haven't gotten much out of this. Well, if you have that attitude, you probably aren't. But if you're desirous to know Jesus Christ, you see, that's the opposite side of God's election and predestination of foreknowledge and sovereignty.

You need to respond and you'll find out you're ordained. God makes it possible that you can be ordained, but you need to respond. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women and the chief men of the city. So these were Jews, actually Gentiles that were converted to Judaism, were powerful in the city. Again, the Orthodox Jews, to stop the spread of Christianity, went to the magistrates of the city who were Jewish converts from the Gentile people and said, you know, these guys are screwing up all kinds of trouble.

This is a cult and they're going to just make all kinds of problems. And notice how a devout and honorable person who is very religious can be used as an instrument to hinder the truth of the gospel as they defend their old dead religion. And sometimes even claiming to believe the same way, but you can tell they're not born again.

And so it worked. And yet God used it to get Paul and Barnabas to continue moving up into Turkey, you see, spreading the gospel. God uses many times the tribulation and the persecution to keep us moving.

We want to settle down. I just want a great big giant Bible study here. I don't want to move ever again.

God says, no, we're going to get another little town, another little community, another little town, and I want to use you. And so it worked. The Jews stirred them up and the authorities persecuted Paul and Barnabas and expelled them out of the coast.

Get out of town. Get out of here. We're not giving you a permit to preach.

You can't pass off tracks in our shopping centers. There's a zoning law here. You can't build a church.

No Bible studies in this neighborhood. There's a parking law and any other thing they can think of to solve it and just move you on. And so they shook off the dust of their feet against them and came and I got them exactly as Jesus said to do.

They didn't argue and strive. They said, OK, you know, off they went into another place. You know, it's interesting how the government subtly stops through Christianity.

I don't know if you're aware of this, how the government works, but remember all the hoopla about the Pope being in Cuba? The spread of Christianity? I don't know if you're aware of this, but there's been tremendous communist oppression and just a squashing of the true gospel in Cuba ever since Castro took over. Much like red China on a larger scale. So what God has got all throughout Cuba is what is called the

house church.

Spirit filled believers that have house churches and it's exactly like the book of Acts. And there's all over Cuba pockets of spirit filled believers and active small groups, house churches. You might be surprised.

I don't know. You might be aware of this, but at the same time to show you how things can work and how people aren't aware of things. When the Pope entered Cuba and they made the big deal and had his picture up there, all the people gathering, you know, as the government said, come to the plaza at the same time that the Pope was going around giving masses, the government was closing down all the spirit filled house churches and the Protestant evangelical churches at the same time.

Not one mention of it in the newspapers. In other words, if we were in Cuba when the Pope came, the government would have come and red pegged our building and it would have been illegal to gather here. That was going on the exact time that the Pope was in Cuba.

So what did they do? They when they legally forced them out of town, they shook off the dust of their feet against them and came in again. Exactly as Jesus said. Now, notice when you're in God's will and again, the gates of hell will not prevail against my church.

Jesus said, greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. Now, the whole group says the last word and the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost. The more the persecution, the more they eat, the brighter you shine.

It's not like taking a, you know, a real gold or silver and you buff it and the buffing goes on in that resistance. There's a physical line. It begins to heat up and the greater the buffeting, sometimes the more brilliant to shine.

And so no matter how they're being persecuted, the spirit of God is just infusing into them greater strength and greater power, greater joy. A Christian loses his joy because he does nothing. They're so afraid, well, I might fail.

And so they don't try anything to protect themselves from failing. God says, step, step, and I'll honor it. And so they hold back and won't do anything because they're afraid to go.

I'll be safe. At least I won't fail. I won't do anything.

And invariably that person loses all their joy. You've got to have the life of God flowing through you. And there's that constant joy and infusion of new strength, new vision, new revelation.

And your heart stays on fire for Jesus Christ. And you go from strength to strength. My heart goes out to people that I have seen come to Christ in this church.

People that came to Christ with me in California 25 years ago. And today they're backslidden. They're neutralized.

They have no more joy. It's because they've been nullified by doing nothing. And instead of more in love with Jesus Christ, more excited about Jesus Christ, they're struggling to even stay alive.

Just struggling. You know, I wish I could get excited again. You see, you never have to get unexcited.

Jesus Christ is so wonderful. The Holy Spirit is the well that's so deep you never run out. You've got to continually drink.

And there's something wonderful about the Lord when he draws us into that relationship and that love. He creates a thirst that he'll fill the thirst. And I need more.

And so he gives more. Wonderful. No matter how you're persecuted or threatened.

It says the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost. Shall we stand? Lord, what a delight it is to serve you, to acknowledge you, to be used of you, to experience your love. The joy that you bring to us through the Holy Spirit.

Lord, how wonderful to know the greater is he that dwells within us and he that is in the world. That we never have to fear. Lord, we ask tonight that you might give us that fresh filling of the Holy Spirit.

That we might bring you glory the rest of this night, even tomorrow. That as Satan seeks to tempt and nullify, Lord, you're working it to the good. Lord, you'll deliver.

You'll strengthen. We praise you for that, Lord, that it's not left up to us. That we can work out our own salvation with fear and trembling because it's you that works within us to will and do of your good pleasure.

We thank you for that, Lord. So here we are. We're weak, but yet, Lord, we are made perfect in your strength.

So strengthen us, Lord, tonight that our lives would bring you much glory. That our lives, our obedience, our open acknowledgement of you, our worship of you would magnify your holy name. Lord, we're not worthy to unloose your shoe ratchet.

How thankful, Father, that you've asked us to delight in salt. What a privilege. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Thanks for listening. We hope that Jesus revealed more of himself to you through this teaching.

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