

(Acts) You Can't Keep God's Man Down

by Brian Brodersen

Paul and Barnabas face opposition on their missionary journey, but they continue to preach with courage and boldness, adapting their message to the people they are reaching out to.

Duration: 54:44

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 14:14-19

Topics: "Perseverance", "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the hardships of life but assures the audience that one day it will be over and they will be in heaven. The speaker shares a story about young men who are dedicated to serving Jesus and how they prayed together before going out to spread the gospel. The speaker highlights the mission field in Long Beach and encourages the audience to have the same mindset of spreading the gospel in their own communities and beyond. The sermon concludes with a prayer for God's salvation to reach others and a call for the audience to be actively involved in advancing the kingdom of God.

Transcript

The 14th chapter here in the Acts of the Apostles, we are continuing to follow Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. And in our study last time, we saw how they had come to Pisidian Antioch and how they had preached in the synagogue there. And there was sort of a mixed reception coming from the Jewish element in the synagogue, but the Gentiles who were there in the synagogue, they begged that the apostles might preach these words to them again.

And so the following Sabbath day, the whole city was gathered together to hear the message. And this caused the Jews to become envious, and so they stirred up the people and basically they raised up a persecution against Barnabas and Paul and they expelled them from their city. So they drove them out of town, basically.

And as they left, they shook the dust from off of their feet and they just carried on with their business, rejoicing as they went and they came to Iconium. Now, Iconium was about a 90 mile journey from Antioch, and so they traveled, obviously, for quite some time traveling by foot. But they come down to Iconium and it says that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews and spoke and so spoke that a great multitude, both of the Jews and of the Greeks, believed.

But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. Therefore, they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided, part sided with the Jews and part with the apostles.

So, you know, you look at this situation here as they're traveling along in their missionary journey. And here are two men, and I'm sure there were probably others that were tagging along with them at this point. But what are they doing? They're going from city to city and they're proclaiming the good news.

They're going about telling people about the love of God for them and about the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ and about what God has done to save them from eternal damnation. And yet as they go about bringing the good news to people or seeking to bring the good news to people, they're finding that there's opposition wherever they go. You know, that's still true today, and yet I think that sometimes we forget that that is really the case.

But for as many people as are going to listen to the gospel, there's just as many or more that are going to oppose it. They're going to resist it and they're going to come against it. And yet that's no reason to stop preaching it.

You see, these guys didn't stop preaching because of the harassment. They actually were more determined by the opposition. And so we read here that the you know, where it says the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren.

Therefore, they stayed there a long time. You would think that they would have gotten out of town because after all, you know, they stirred up the people against us and they're attacking us. But yet Paul and Barnabas were brave men.

And as the opposition came, rather than running from the opposition, they just dug in their heels and they said, no, we've got to stay and we have got to help these young Christians to get established. And they did do that. And not only did they help them get established in the faith, but they set a glorious example for them to be bold and courageous when it comes to the ministry of the gospel.

And that's what it takes to be a Christian. Really, it takes courage. It takes boldness.

And I think we're going to find that more and more as time goes on. A lot of other people in the world have found that out already. A lot of people in our world tonight have been living under adverse circumstances because of their faith.

And yet we haven't had so much of that. We've had little bits of it here and there, of course, but it could be that things will intensify more and more as time goes on. And we've got to be courageous.

We've got to be bold and we can't be discouraged or detoured from our task simply because opposition comes to us. When I was living in London, we were going out on the streets and doing evangelism on the streets. And many times we were harassed when we went out.

And one time we were not merely heckled or have things thrown at us like we had, you know, on numerous occasions. But one time we were actually attacked physically and it was a pretty hostile situation. It was violent and the Lord protected us for the most part.

We had a few cuts and bruises and things, but nothing real serious. But, you know, when we regrouped and we got together. There was all this sort of confusion in our minds as to why did that happen and did we not pray enough or were we somehow out of God's will, did we maybe, you know, show up at the wrong place at the wrong time or, you know, all these kinds of things go through your thinking process and you're you're reevaluating what you're doing, you know, and even to the point where we're saying, Lord, are you telling us not to go out there? And as we were all sort of discussing this and debating and trying to get a perspective on what God might be trying to speak to us through this, the Lord really spoke to me and said, this I'm not speaking to you about anything.

This is the devil. This is opposition. And so get right back out there where you were and keep doing what you were doing.

And we did and we never had another incident like that. But, you know, there was that that moment, though, where you start to look at everything and think, well, wait a second, what's going on? Because I think a lot of times we forget that there is a real battle going on, that there's a real warfare, that there is real opposition to the gospel. And we shouldn't forget it because the pages of the New Testament are full of it.

And as we go through this history here, this is what we're seeing. We're seeing opposition wherever these guys go. But yet we're also seeing, as I said, their courage and their boldness.

So they're sticking with the disciples in Iconium. They're ministering to them. And God is working in the midst of this hostile environment.

He's working in an extraordinary manner and signs and wonders are being accomplished through the apostles at this time. But there was a division in the city. Part of the city sided with the Jews who were opposing the apostolic message.

And yet part of the city sided with the apostles. They were embracing their message and they saw that it was a good message. And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews with their rulers to abuse and stone them, they became aware of it and they fled to Lystra and cities of Lycaonia and to the surrounding region.

And they were preaching the gospel there. So they were bold men. They were courageous men, but they weren't stupid men.

And that's another important thing to note. They knew when it was time to get out of town. They had realized at a certain point that, OK, it's no longer wise to be in this situation.

We need to get out of here because, of course, getting killed isn't going to do anybody any good at this point. They're supposed to be spreading the gospel. So recognizing that things are becoming too intense and that there's a plot brewing to kill them, basically to stone them.

Now, stoning was in that day what lynching would have been, you know, back 100 years ago or so. And in our culture here, it was a mob mentality that would drive them to attack and to kill people. And they happen to do it with stones.

And that's what they were planning to do. But word came to them. And so they fled and they went about a 20 mile journey to Lystra.

And then Derby was a neighboring city in the area of Lycaonia. Now in Lystra, they come to Lystra and a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting a cripple from his mother's womb who had never walked. So they've come to Lystra.

We don't know how much time they spent there before they get to the preaching. But now they begin to preach the gospel. Lystra was.

A place that. Would have been, you know, somewhat like the Wild West, it was on the outskirts of civilization, so to speak, and so it would have been a pretty rugged place. And it's another thing we see about these guys, they went to the rugged places, they didn't just go to those, you know, cultural centers where everybody was sophisticated and civilized and you didn't have to worry about any kind of opposition.

They went they went to the outskirts. They went to the places where there wasn't a whole lot of law and order. They went to the places where you could easily get yourself in trouble and not necessarily easily get out of it.

And, you know, one commentator I was reading, who's somewhat of a sophisticated person himself in the denomination that he comes from, he's high up in that denomination and he's very proper and all. And, you know, he was sort of pondering the whole thing about them going to this place. And he himself, as a commentator, was asking, well, I wonder why they went to this place.

And I almost got the impression that if he was determining the outrage, he would have skipped it because it wasn't civilized enough. But, you know, the simple answer is they went to this place because the people needed Christ. They didn't sit around and, you know, discuss whether or not the people were civilized enough so they wouldn't be under any threat or anything.

They went because the people needed the Lord. And that's that missionary spirit that the apostles had. And that's that great spirit that we've talked about before and seeing people going out and taking risk and just not really being concerned for their own welfare necessarily, but just saying we've got to get the gospel to these people.

I pray that God would give us that kind of heart to pray that God would give me that kind of heart. And so here they are. They're in Lystra.

They're preaching. And here's this man. He's been crippled from birth.

He's never walked. And this man heard Paul speaking and Paul observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, stand up straight on your feet. And he leaped and he walked.

Now, how is it that Paul discerned this? I think it was exactly that it was the discerning power of the Holy Spirit upon Paul as he was preaching. He sees this man and God is speaking to him that this man can be healed. And so Paul calls him out and he's healed instantly.

Now, when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, the gods have come down to us in the likeness of men and Barnabas. They called Zeus and Paul. They called Hermes because he was the chief speaker.

Now, here's an interesting bit of background information. In this particular region, there was a legend that at one time. The gods had come to visit these two gods, Zeus and Hermes, had come at one time to visit, but they were not received by the general population.

But as the legend goes, there was an elderly couple that received them and treated them kindly. And in the end, they destroyed the entire population that had refused to welcome them. And they blessed this particular couple by making them permanent pillars, you know, turning them into trees or something to that effect.

And this you know, this was part of the mythology, part of the the the belief of this superstitious idolatrous community. And so what you see happening here is. This miracle takes place and the people are thinking, oh, my, the gods, they've come to visit us again.

And Barnabas was probably a good looking man and, you know, of impressive stature. And so they determined he must be Zeus. And Paul, because he was the one that was speaking, Hermes was the in the Greek mythology, he was the sort of the mouthpiece for Zeus.

If you would translate that into the Roman deities, it would have been Jupiter and Mercury. But this was actually a city that was predominantly Greek. So Zeus and Hermes.

So that's what they concluded. They concluded that the gods had come down to us in the likeness of men. And so the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates intending to sacrifice with the multitude.

Now notice that they cried out in the Lycaonian language. Evidently, the apostles didn't really know what was going on, but all of a sudden they are being treated as deity. They're being hailed as the gods.

They don't know the language, so they don't necessarily know what's being said. But before they know it, the people are gathering around. The priest from the temple has come and now they're about to offer sacrifices to them.

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, so evidently they found out through some means what was going on, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude crying out. Now, tearing their clothes, that was a pretty much an exclusively Jewish practice. And it was it was a sign of grief.

It was a sign of, you know, just a deep expression of of their disapproval of what they were doing in tearing their clothes because, you see, they were being hailed as gods. And to the Jew, that was not merely a misconception, but it was a blasphemous thing. And so they're expressing their disapproval of what they're doing by by tearing their clothes and running in among the multitude, crying out and saying, men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God.

So notice the boldness of the apostles here. First of all, they seek to correct them, we're just men, but then they say we're trying to get you to turn from these useless things. It's not a very nice way to refer to their religion, but it was a very accurate way to refer to it.

And, you know, sometimes we need to not worry about being so nice. Obviously, we want to use tact, we want to use wisdom, but not to the point where we don't call things like they are. And I think today there's a lot of pressure in the culture and there's a lot of pressure on Christians to, you know, just sort of downplay

the differences in religion and to just sort of agree that every religion has its, you know, valid points and and every religion has some element to it that is acceptable and good and and so on and so forth.

And and yet there comes a point where we have to just call it like it is. And and that's what they did here. That's what Paul did.

And that's what some are doing today. And I applaud those that are doing that. Franklin Graham did that not too long ago, and he's been criticized ever since.

I was reading an article the other night where he's wanting and poised really to go into Iraq and to help with the relief effort and all of that. And, you know, not only are some of the Muslim leaders very hostile to him, suggesting that he would he would even do that because after all, he's the one who stood up and said the Islamic religion is an evil religion. It's not a religion of peace.

And so they're all up in arms. But there are Christian leaders standing up as well. And they're saying, oh, well, you know, he probably shouldn't go in.

He's not the one to send in because, you know, we need to send somebody in this more politically correct is basically what they're hinting at. But I like the way he ended the interview. He said, I'm not being sent by the United States government.

I'm not going to be withheld by the United States government. I'm being sent by the Lord and I'm going. And so God bless him as he goes.

But, you know, he's taken a bold stand and there comes a place where we have to do that because they are useless things. And not only are they useless things, but they're damning things. These these religions aren't neutral.

It's not like, you know, if you believe this, you're just it's just not going to be a good thing for you to believe in the sense that it's not going to bring you some great benefit in life. It's it's more serious than that. If you believe this, it's going to destroy your soul eternally.

And so it's beyond useless, it's damning. And so he calls them to turn away from their idolatry and to turn to the living God who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, he did not leave himself without witness in that he did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

And with these things, they could scarcely restrain the multitude from sacrificing to them. So they finally were able to convince them that it wasn't easy not to sacrifice to them. But I want you to notice something here.

Paul's message here is a message that's considerably different in one sense than the message that he had given in the synagogue. In our previous study, we looked at the message that he gave in the synagogue and it was a message firmly rooted in the scriptures. He took them through the scriptures, of course, because that was their point of reference as Jews and as proselytes.

But here he's talking to people who have no scriptural point of reference and not to say that he didn't bring in the scriptures or he didn't, you know, bring in the gospel. Of course he did. But he uses a point of

reference that they would have been able to embrace themselves.

It was the the the point of of creation itself. And creation is an excellent point of reference, and sometimes we're dealing with people who have absolutely no biblical background whatsoever. They know nothing about the Bible zip, period, even in our own.

Christian America. There are lots of people that know nothing about the Bible, I was talking to a guy a few weeks ago and we were talking about the Christianity 101 class, and he was telling me that he was going to do something like that where he was going. And so we were talking and and I was explaining to him that I'm trying to just, you know, cover the basics and give people an understanding.

And then I was talking about how when I first became a Christian and came to church here, I didn't know a whole lot about anything. You know, it was a learning experience, but I did have some background because having grown up in a Catholic environment, at least I knew the Bible characters and so forth. And he said to me, I don't know if I told you guys this already, but it was hilarious.

He said to me, he said, yeah, you know, for the first few months when I was at the church and Pastor Chuck was talking about Abraham, I kept asking myself, now, why does he talk about Abraham Lincoln all the time? He couldn't quite figure out how Abraham Lincoln fit into the biblical history, and he finally discovered eventually that he didn't. It wasn't Abraham Lincoln that he was talking about. But but, you know, I mean, this guy lived in Orange County.

And so, you know, we tend to take it for granted. We think people know this stuff. People don't know this stuff.

And these people didn't know anything about any of this. And so, Paul, he begins to speak to them. Where they could relate and identify, he speaks to them about the God who created everything about the God who providentially had been blessing them and taking care of them and showing them kindness, even though they were living in idolatry and creation is a good it's a good starting point.

If you end up with somebody that just doesn't have the slightest clue about anything else. It's a good place to start in. I mentioned this book a few weeks ago, the *Headhunters* book I'm reading about a couple of missionaries who went down to the jungles of Ecuador and reached out to the Ashura people.

And and that was their foot in the door was that the Asuras, they believed in a creator. They believed that there was some great God somewhere who made everything. And so when the missionaries came and they said, we want to tell you about the God who made everything.

Oh, they said, we'd like to hear about him. We have at least the concept that there is such a being, but we know nothing about him. And it was that was sort of the foot in the door.

And so I think here with Paul, we learn that in speaking to other people, what we need to do is look for that entrance into their life, that interest into entrance into their heart. We need to to seek that that way in. And sometimes it can be through, you know, again, the scriptures can go right in, sometimes you might refer to something like creation, sometimes you might even it might even be your own personal experience, your own testimony, your own background that God would use to open the door and pave the way for you to begin to lay out the gospel.

And of course, that's where everything has to go. If we if if we just talk to people about creation and let them know there's a creator, then we haven't done them the kind of service that we need to do because they need to know that the creator is also the redeemer, because that's where connection with the creator happens when we understand redemption. And so Paul sets a good example for us here in that.

And so they restrain them with this. But verse 19 says, then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there. So now remember, they were harassed in both places.

And evidently, the the Jews in Antioch and Iconium, now they've hooked up together and they've got sort of a posse out there tracking these guys down. They they're not content that they've left their vicinity. They want to track them down and destroy them.

And so they came to Icke, they came to Lystra and having persuaded the multitude. So somehow they got in and they began to influence this multitude that had just been seeking to sacrifice to these guys because they thought they were gods. But notice they persuaded the multitude and they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.

So they stoned him and they stoned him to such an extent that they thought that they had killed him. And that's exactly what they were intending to do. You see, it was the mob mentality.

And these people came in and who knows what they said to get the, you know, to get the fury up. But whatever they said, it worked. And the next thing you know, these guys who previously were being hailed as gods in the likeness of men, now the chief speaker, Paul, he's being stoned and he's being left for dead.

No doubt behind all of this, the hand of Satan was there working, manipulating, causing this kind of mentality among the people. And that's always that the ultimate source behind these kinds of things. It's Satan.

It's him working there behind the scenes and stirring people up. That incident that I mentioned earlier that happened with us in London that time, it was one of those kinds of things where we were in this environment. And for about seven or eight minutes, there was just sort of a frenzy that began to be worked up among some of the people.

And interestingly, there was a Rastafarian guy who was sort of leading the whole thing. And I'll tell you, to this day, I look back and I think that guy was demon possessed because it was almost like he was controlling people through his thought pattern rather than even saying anything to him. But he was standing there and he was chanting and he was doing all this weird stuff.

And as he was doing it, all of a sudden, it's like these people just came out of nowhere and surrounded us all of a sudden. And there we were. And, you know, the the temper started to flare in the and, you know, the pitch got high and and all of a sudden I thought, man, this is the devil.

It was certainly the devil. And it is the devil because he doesn't want the gospel to be preached. He doesn't want the word to go out.

He's got the world right where he wants it. He's got everybody right in his. Pen is cage, he's got him held captive and he wants to take them all to hell.

And so when we go out and we start to bring a message that can liberate people, he comes against those things. You know, I think of the situation going on in the Middle East right now and, you know, as we prayed initially tonight, I am looking beyond it and really seeing this is this is a demonic thing as well. And I think we need to be conscious of that and pray.

Because this regime. Is Satan's regime. In a real blatant sense of the way they murder and torture and abuse people, and you think, you know, when you go back to the Second World War, you go back to Hitler and, you know, these these men are demonically energized.

This isn't just human depravity, although that's certainly a factor. It's not merely human depravity. This is demonic control.

And this particular regime is demonically energized. And, you know, with Hitler, they couldn't kill him. All these plots on his life and he would escape sometimes by a few seconds he would escape.

And you think it was that demonic energy that, you know, kept him going. And I think the same is true with the present situation there. And so we've got to remember that behind all of these things, Satan is at work to what does he do? He destroys people's lives and he destroys people's souls eternally.

That's what he wants to do. So the more people he can kill before they can hear the gospel, the happier he is. And that's what he's been doing.

And so here the chief spokesman, Paul, he wants to take Paul out of the picture. And so they stone him and they drag him out of the city. Now, Paul.

Later on, he mentions some of his experiences in writing to the Corinthians and the second letter to the Corinthians in the 12th chapter, the 11th and 12th chapters there. He talks about his adventures as an apostle and he pretty much talks about his suffering. But he talks about being stoned.

And of course, this was the occasion. Now, there he also talks about having an experience of of being caught up into the third heaven. He says, I knew a man in Christ 14 years ago, whether in the body or out of the body, I don't know, but such one was caught up into heaven and he saw inexpressible things.

And most people believe that Paul was describing his own experience. I believe that. But many people believe as well that the incident was this very incident right here, that Paul actually was dead in a sense or had, you know, temporarily an out of the body experience where when he was dragged out of the city, he was caught up into heaven.

And yet it wasn't his time and the Lord sent him back, and so there he is. They dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and headed for the hills, got out of town.

What did he do? He rose up and he went back into the city. This guy was unstoppable. I mean, you would think that after a situation.

Occurred like that after an experience like that, if you got out of it, if you survived it, you would get out of town as quick as you could. Paul goes right back in. He was unstoppable.

He was unstoppable because he knew who he was serving and he wasn't worried about himself, he was concerned to get the gospel to people. And so he goes right back in to the very place from which he had

just been dragged out. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derby.

And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch. So they spent some time in Derby. They preached the gospel there.

Evidently, there's no persecution at this time or it's not mentioned here by Luke anyway. But then what do they do? They go right back to where they had come from. They go back to Lystra.

They go back to Iconium. They go back to Antioch. And what are they doing? They're strengthening the souls of the disciples.

So, again, you see the courage of these men, they go right back to the very places from which they had been driven out and they come back in and they take up the ministry there. And I think with both of them, what you see really is not merely human courage, but you see confidence in God. They were trusting the Lord.

They knew that God was calling them to remember they had the prophetic word when they were back in Antioch and Syria. Separate to me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work that I've called them to. They knew they were on a mission from God.

And I'll tell you, that goes a long way when you're facing opposition. So if you have any plans to step out and do anything for the Lord, let me give you just a piece of advice before you do it. Make sure the Lord's leading you to do it as much as you can.

Now, sometimes you can't be 100 percent. Well, sometimes I don't think you can ever be 100 percent certain, because I think there's always an element of faith, but there's going to be a relative certainty when God's calling you to do something. And here's the thing that you're going to find when you have that kind of conviction.

You can face the opposition much better than if you don't have that at all, because if you don't have it, you get out there and the minute you get opposition, you think, oh, no, what am I doing out here in the first place? Maybe I'm not supposed to be here. And then you head out. But you see, these guys knew that God had called them, and therefore, when the opposition came, they could stand firm in their faith and say, we're going to trust the Lord because he called us to do that.

Again, when I was living overseas, there were many times when the opposition was so intense. And there was a great temptation to just pack it in, but I could always fall back on the calling. I knew God had called me to it.

And because I knew what God had called me to, I could persevere until we accomplished what God called us to accomplish. But that is something so important when we step out, we need to seek the Lord and we need to ask him to really, you know, give us. Not 100 percent certainty because he won't, but to give us enough so that we can have that kind of confidence that the Lord is in this thing and therefore come thick or thin, you know, whatever comes, I'm going to I'm going to stick it out until the Lord accomplishes it.

And that's, I think, a real key here with these guys. So they were strengthening the souls of the disciples as they went back. Exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying.

We must, through many tribulations, enter the kingdom of God. That's the reality right there. The feel good message that's been passed off a lot of times for the message of Christianity just simply is not the truth of the matter.

You know, more and more today churches are popping up. With a feel good message, have you noticed that? And I just think it's so unfortunate, it's so sad because they're not really helping anybody. I'm getting some invitations in the mail these days, you know, for a new church that's a few miles away from where we live.

And, you know, they've got the slick brochure and they are assuring us a grand old time if we'll come down and visit them. We're not going to be disappointed. We're not going to be discouraged.

We're not going to feel guilty or miserable or anything like that. We're going to be happy campers after we spend forty five minutes with them on a Sunday morning. They're guaranteeing it because they're going to give us principles on how to be successful in life and that sort of thing.

And, you know, I'm sorry, that is not the biblical message. This is the biblical message right here. We through much tribulation must enter the kingdom of God.

Let him preach that one on a Sunday morning. That's the message, because it's true. And people giving this impression that, you know, you become a Christian and and you apply these principles, that's the whole thing, you know, you just apply these principles of success rooted in the Bible.

Ancient proven principles. To make you a better person, to make you feel better about yourself, to make you more. Efficient at.

You're attaining your goals and things like that, you know, it's just it's just not biblical, it's not the biblical message, the biblical message is that life is hard. But don't worry, we're going to heaven, that's the biblical message, life is hard, but one day it'll be over and we'll all be in heaven and then we won't remember how hard it was here. But, you know, I just think of even what we prayed about before the service tonight.

You know, here are these young guys, they're going out on the road there. Hey, they're going out to serve Jesus. They're not out there.

In Las Vegas partying. They're not out there doing their thing, they're out there for the Lord to get his gospel out. And before they got on the road last night, they all huddled together and they prayed.

And yet there was an accident. And we look at that and we think, well, how do you how do you understand that sometimes you just don't understand it, you just have to say, Lord. We don't understand this, but we do believe that you're working and we do believe that you've got a plan and we do believe that there's opposition and we do believe there's a devil.

And we do believe that through much tribulation, we must enter the kingdom of God. And so we just keep going, we just keep pressing on and we keep trusting and praying. And so that's how they encourage them.

They said to him, look, it's going to be tough. But. Yet, as Jesus said.

In the world, you will have tribulation, it's it's a certainty. But be of good cheer, I've overcome the world, you see, that's the message we've got to grab onto. I've overcome the world.

That's the that's the point there. We're overcoming the world. I think the problem with us so often and I know I battle with it myself is we were holding on to the world.

We're trying to settle down here, we're we're looking at this life as I want to be comfortable, I want it to be easy, I want it to be pleasant, I want it to be enjoyable. Now, I'm not saying we should sit around and say, you know, I want my life to be miserable. I want to have the most difficult life possible.

I don't think God's calling us to do that, but at the same time, realistically, we have to just look at life and say life is tough. But this life is not the life we're to be consumed by, we're to be consumed by the life to come. And when that becomes our passion, when that becomes our focus, when that becomes the thing that we're really all about, then whatever happens here, OK, it happened.

But yet, Lord, we know that this isn't the end of the story. We know this isn't where the glory takes place anyway. We know it is coming in the future in heaven.

Aren't you glad we're going to heaven? I mean, isn't that such a wonderful thought that and, you know, it's real. It's not some, you know, dream that we have that's an unreality, but it is a reality. And Jesus rose from the dead to prove it, and he ascended to heaven and he's given us his word that he's going to come back.

But it's really going to happen. It's really going to take place. We're all going to be there one day and we're going to be there forever.

What a great thing. And so when they had appointed elders in every church. And prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

This is an interesting thing from the standpoint of ministry. They appointed elders in every church. Now, this whole journey.

From start to finish, lasted. At least two years, it might have lasted a bit longer, maybe even closer to three years. And who knows how long of a time it was between, you know, visits, obviously getting back to Antioch, they would have been gone from there.

Pamphilia, they would have been gone from there the longest. So they come back maybe a year and a half later or whatever. But as they're coming back through their appointing elders, as they're coming back through, they're looking in the fellowships and they're looking at the people that God is raising up and gifting to lead those ministries.

And then they're appointing them. And you see with these men, they were very dependent on the Holy Spirit when it came to the church, they they were not, you know, saying to the people, OK, now look, you guys form a committee and you find out who's the most educated among you, who's the most capable in administration and, you know, who's the most likely to succeed and you appoint them your leader. No, they weren't doing anything like that at all.

Tragically, a lot of churches are doing that very thing today. But they were looking for the spirit of God's hand upon people. That's what they were looking for.

And those ones that they saw the Lord gifting, they then would appoint them as the elders. You see, they were simply. Sort of ratifying what God had already done, it wasn't them taking a person and saying, OK,

we want this person to be in leadership.

Oh, God, I hope you bless this. Rather, it was Lord, we recognize that your hands upon this person and we just are acknowledging that and we want to publicly acknowledge that. And that's really what ordination is all about.

Appointed, ordained, same thing really here. You could translate this and they ordained elders in every city. So a person who's ordained, there's two possibilities with ordination.

You might be ordained by a committee. By a board of elders or something like that. And you've got your ordination certificate, there's no question about it, you can pull it out and prove you're ordained, you might even have one in your wallet, I'm an ordained minister.

But that's not necessarily proof of true ordination, you see, because true ordination comes from God and you can have all the people in the world lay their hands on you and pronounce you're ordained and give you certificates and sign their name on it. That that doesn't necessarily do it. But when God puts his hand on a person, that's all the ordination that's necessary.

When God truly has his hand on someone, that's the issue with ordination. And then those who are also seeking God and trusting the Lord and believing his word, they just recognize that they see that. And that's the way we operate within our ministry of Calvary Chapel.

Where, you know, sometimes people will come and they say, well, you know, how do you become a pastor in Calvary Chapel? How much education do you have to have? Do you have to go to the Calvary Chapel Bible College? Do you have to attend seminary? And the answer is you don't have to do any of those things. Maybe you maybe you have done them and maybe that's been good for you, but but that's not really the requirement. What we're looking for is whether or not God's hand is on someone and God's gifting is there and God's anointing, and that's something that comes from the Lord.

It doesn't come through men. You know, you can't even be anointed because you're related to a really anointed person. But sometimes people think that way.

They think, oh, well, you know, of course, I'm anointed. It's in my veins, you know, flowing in my blood. No, that's not that's not what ordination is.

It's God putting his hand on someone and gifting them, calling them, empowering them to do. A specific task, and in this particular case, it was to lead these fellowships, the elders, the elders are the spiritual leaders of the church. And the elders and the pastors are the same thing, so that's what they were doing, they were appointing men to be pastors over these churches.

And so they prayed and they fasted and they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. Now, when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Atalia.

Now, on the way in, they're just retracing their steps. They're going right back the way they came right back to the same places on the way in. It doesn't appear that they preach the word in Perga for whatever reason.

And I think we talked about the different theories about why they didn't, that it wasn't for Paul, it wasn't healthy, and so he wanted to move on from there. We don't really know, but whether they preached it on the way through and Luke just didn't mention it, they did preach the word on the way back in Perga. And he doesn't give us any details.

And they went down to Atalia and there from there they sailed back to Antioch in Syria where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. Now, when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them and that he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. So they stayed there a long time with the disciples, and so they spent a couple of years out spreading the gospel, planting churches.

They come back and it's a time of. I think. You know, just a time of getting their batteries charged up again, a time of really just plugging back into the fellowship in Antioch, being part of the leadership as they were, but there they were for a long time serving the Lord there.

But really, it's all, you know, in preparation to go out again, they're going to go out again and we'll we'll see that as we carry on here. But as we close tonight again, this whole portion to me is just so thrilling because of the adventure that these guys are on the adventure of getting the gospel out. And that's the great adventure in life.

If you're looking for an adventure. Look no further. Get the gospel out to people.

That's an adventure right there, wherever you do it. You know, I was talking to one of the guys today, a friend. We were here at the men's breakfast this morning.

Great time, by the way, with Vince Evans. What a fantastic brother. But we were talking about just some of the communities, just some of the local areas, and he's doing a seeking to establish a new work in the Long Beach area.

And he started telling me these things about Long Beach that I didn't realize, sort of giving me some statistics and talking about the multi-ethnic, multicultural mix there and all of that. And boy, as he was talking to me, I just thought we've got a serious mission field 30 miles up the road. And, you know, there are so many opportunities.

And let's have the same mindset that these men had, that whether it's. On our jobs or in our neighborhoods or to our families or in our particular community or up the road 30 miles or across the country, a thousand miles or across the ocean, five thousand miles. Lord, we want to do our part in getting the gospel out.

Send us or help us to send others or Lord, we just want to be part of it. That's the adventure of the Christian life. If you're bored as a Christian, you're missing the point.

You're really missing the point. There's no way. That you ought to be bored as a Christian, if you are, it's because you're missing the adventure of the Christian life and that adventure is spreading the gospel.

So let's do that together. Let's pray. Father, we thank you, Lord, for your salvation, the salvation you've given to us freely, the salvation that we enjoy, Lord, the salvation that gives us hope and strength and grace day by day.

And Lord, we know you want to bring this salvation to others, people around us, people up the road from us, people across the nation, from us, people around the world. And so, Lord, we want to be part of it. We want to be involved.

We want to, Lord, be part of the grand adventure. Of advancing the kingdom of God in these days, and so, Lord, however. You would have us involved.

Lord, we know that not everyone sent, but some are so send out those who you want to send. We know, Lord, that some are senders. And so inspire them to send others.

We know, Lord, that some stay home with the stuff. And yet receive the same reward. Lord, some you want to send across the globe and some you want to send across the street.

So, Lord, wherever you want to send us, we want to go. We want to be your hands and your feet and your mouth, your eyes, your ears. So, Lord, use us, we pray.

And thank you for this book of Acts. And thank you for these great men that have left us such a challenging and encouraging example. So bless, Lord, we pray.

And again, we pray for all those other things that we previously prayed for tonight. Lord, the family, Mark, Lord, the war in the Middle East, Lord, be working in all these things, we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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