

The Complete Transformation - Part 2

by Danny Bond

God transforms a person's life through faith in Christ, fervent prayer, faithful disciples, fellowship with the saints, physical refreshment, spiritual endearment, and fervency in speaking.

Duration: 41:05

Scripture: Matthew 12:34, John 13:34-35, John 15:12, Acts 4:20, Acts 9:20-21, Romans 1:16

Topics: "Faith Transformation", "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a powerful testimony of a man named Rolla who was on the verge of killing his family. As he paced around with a gun in his hand, he turned on the TV and came across a sermon by Pastor Chuck Smith. The message about God's love and the offer of a new life resonated with Rolla, and he fell to his knees, experiencing a transformation in his heart. The speaker then encourages the audience to have a fervent and fearless faith that can make a difference in the world, citing the example of missionary Jay Hudson Taylor. The sermon emphasizes the importance of sharing the message of Christ and the impact it can have on others.

Transcript

Last time we began to look in detail at how God transforms your life when you come to salvation in Jesus Christ. And we are looking at the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who became the great Apostle Paul. In the process of studying his conversion and the events that surround it, we find the elements that are there when God completely transforms a life.

And may I say it is his intention in salvation to, in every way, transform your life. Jesus is not something you add to your life, like a bumper sticker on your car or a baseball cap on your head or a golf shirt that has some Christian little ditty on it. Jesus Christ is God.

We find Paul, right after his conversion, in the synagogues, and what is he preaching? That Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is God. And so he is not something you just add to your life.

He is God Almighty who comes into your life to be Lord of your life, and he transforms you from glory to glory, and how I thank God for that. You today, if you've been a Christian for any length of time, thank God you're not what you were. And if you today are burdened by some things that are bothering you, thank God the Lord will continue to work to transform your life.

And if you feel like you will never be able to change ever in a certain area, know this, when you go to heaven, you will be forever changed in that area, and it will never bother you again. So ultimately, it is a complete transformation. Let's read over the text.

In Acts chapter 9, we'll begin with verse 18, following on where Ananias came, that wonderful disciple, and laid hands on Paul, welcomed him into the family of God. God filled him with his spirit. Acts 9, 18, immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once.

And he arose and was baptized. So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

Immediately he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the son of God. Then all who heard were amazed and said, Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem and has come here for that purpose, that he might bring them bound to the chief priests? But Saul increased. I love this statement.

Saul increased all the more in strength and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving, proving that this Jesus is the Christ. Now, after many days were passed, the Jews plotted to kill him. But their plot became known to Saul, and they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

Then the disciples, or it could be rendered his disciples, then his disciples took him by night and led him down through the wall in a large basket. And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were afraid of him and did not believe that he was a disciple. That includes the apostles, by the way.

But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles, and he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road and that he had spoken to him and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists.

Those are the Grecian Jews that he used to belong to, that group. He disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him. When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.

Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace and were edified. That's an amazing statement to me. Once they got Paul out of there, everything calmed down.

Here we have the elements in this passage that are brought about in a complete transformation. Last time we looked at how it begins with faith in Christ, fervent prayer, faithful disciples are brought into your life as Ananias to Paul, ended with this idea that God has a fantastic plan for your life. Then three more thoughts I want to give you today, and that is complete transformation comes about as you are in fellowship with the saints and then with fervency and speaking about Christ after your conversion and then ultimately fearlessness in suffering as you move forward in the Christian life.

Jesus said, if they persecuted me, they will persecute you. So let's begin today by this thought that Paul immediately after his conversion entered into fellowship with the saints in verse 18. Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once and he arose and was baptized.

And then he stayed some days with them. His fellowship with the saints began with a public commitment to Jesus Christ. He had been blinded by Christ for three days.

We read that something like scales fell from his eyes and immediately he received his sight or he received his sight at once. Just a quick thought there. It was Christ that blinded him.

He saw Jesus. He didn't have a vision. Jesus Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus.

He saw Jesus. He saw him in his glorified state. And Jesus unleashed so much glory to his vision that he said in his testimony later that the glory he saw was brighter than the noonday Syrian sun.

The glory was so bright that it somehow sort of fried his eyes. What I want to show you then before we move on is that it was the Lord who blinded him and when the Lord was done and wanted him to see when he was done with that time of meditation and reflection, when he was done and he wanted him to see immediately, he could see again. When God is done immediately, it's over and you move on.

That's how the Lord works. Then he was baptized. This is significant because of what it meant was the immediate loss of all Jewish relationships, friendships, the immediate loss of family and friends.

The cost was huge. Absolutely huge for him to be converted. Everybody knew him and to go out to be publicly baptized immediately.

He immediately then lost family. They would have disowned him. The Sanhedrin would have excommunicated him.

And all of those people in the Sanhedrin were tremendously wealthy. So the loss would have affected his wallet as well. We know that because during his life, as he goes about and ministers, the church at Philippi would gather together money and send it to him.

And so the loss was tremendous and immediate. However, immediate loss of all Jewish relationships, but immediate gain of all Christian relationships. That is the beauty of becoming born again.

You have all these friends so-called that you lose and then you have all these new friends that you gain and you find them to be so winsome and wonderful. You will find the greatest friendships you've ever had in your life come after you're born again because there are people who have the Lord and his love inside of them. So here he is.

He gets baptized. And I don't imagine it was a huge crowd because they were afraid of him, but he gets baptized. So there are those that are willing to help him get baptized.

Can you imagine what a time of rejoicing it was for him and for them? I don't know about you, but throughout my Christian life at times I've watched different people. And you have your eye on different celebrities, people in Hollywood, rock stars, whatever, musicians, actors. And occasionally we have these discussions where we politicians, where we say, oh, wouldn't it be great if the Lord could just save him? Can you imagine what he could do to him or if the Lord would just save her? Well, you know what? This is the ultimate incident of that kind of discussion.

Can you imagine wouldn't it be great if the champion of Judaism could be converted and become the greatest evangelist anybody has ever seen? And that is exactly what God did. So there had to be great rejoicing that day when he was baptized. A great time of a new beginning.

What he did is he went out publicly and got baptized when Jesus Christ taught, if you confess me before men, I will confess you before the father. If you deny me before men, I will deny you before the father in heaven. That is a phrase that's often used in crusades at the altar call.

In reality, if you search it out biblically, it's really more applicable to water baptism. That's where you say my old life is dead and gone. And I am publicly professing I am living a new life now dedicated to Jesus Christ.

It is an outward sign of the inward reality that the old life died. The old man is dead, as Paul wrote in Romans six, and the new life is risen in Christ and you want the whole world to know. It's directly tied to what Jesus said.

You deny me before men, I'll deny you before the father. You confess me for men, I'll confess you before the father. So he's baptized.

Public commitment. The next thing that I see here, which could be easily overlooked, is in verse 19. He says, so when he had received food, he was strengthened.

When he had received food, he was strengthened. This is critical because God is about to use him to preach. There are those times and he's been fasting.

There are those times when the most spiritual thing you can do is eat. I love that principle. There are those times when the most spiritual thing you can do is eat and get physical refreshment.

Let me complete the thought. Get physical refreshment. Because you are no good to God if you are all run down and all worn out.

Take care of yourselves. A lie to the prophet when he went toe to toe with the prophets of Baal. At the end of that day, and after they slew hundreds of them, and God showed that he was God, you can imagine how tired he was.

And then he had to flee from Jezebel who wanted to kill him. So he had to run like the wind. He gets out into the desert and he sits down under a broom tree.

You all know what broom trees are, don't you? It's where brooms come from. So he sits down under a broom tree and he's so tired he falls asleep. An angel comes and nudges him and wakes him up.

Now you might expect the angel would give him a lecture about running from Jezebel or something like that. Instead, the angel nudges him, wakes him up, and he's got a little hibachi going. And he's grilling up some food.

It says that he gave him some cakes, I guess angel food cake or something. And he gave him some water. Hey, you would say that too if you were up here doing this.

He gave him some water and some food, and then he told him to go back to sleep. And he went back to sleep, he woke him up again, he fed him and gave him water again, and he rested again, and then he went on his way. The most spiritual thing Elijah could do at that time was to eat and drink and sleep and get refreshed.

You need to do that in your life. Take care of yourself so that you're a fit vessel for the Lord. Physical refreshment here as well as his public commitment.

Then I love this. Spiritual endearment, Acts 9, 19. So when he had received food, he was strengthened.

And then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. All of this is part of the Lord preparing him to preach. Do you realize how critical the fellowship with the brethren was at this point? I mean, this man has sent so many people to their death.

This man has caused families to be plunged into poverty by sending the breadwinner to the death. This man had so much that nodded him immediately after coming to know Jesus Christ. So to have the brethren there, to spend time with the brethren, however many there were, he desperately needed that encouragement.

The fellowship of the brethren is so critical to all of us. He's now newly born again. He needs the encouragement.

And he needed to just spend some time with these people to see Christ in them. Jesus Christ is so infinite. His glory is so magnanimous and infinite.

Do you think for one minute any one of us can contain all of him? Hi. I'm so filled. I've got almost all of Jesus.

Spend time with me and you'll find out. No. The truth is we have this treasure in earthen vessels, but we can only contain a little bit, really, of the infinite God.

He doesn't just give the same light to each one of us. He manifests himself to each one of us in a unique way. Each one of us are as unique as our fingerprints.

And thus, we get to know more of Christ as we get to know each other. He spends time with the disciples in Damascus to get to know the Lord a little bit more. So far, what he knows of Jesus Christ is this.

He was going down the Damascus Road. He appeared to him with blinding light. He fell in the dirt.

He was led by the hand into Damascus. He's blind for three days. Now the Lord wants him to know more.

How loving he can make people because he had been such a hateful man. The fellowship with the brethren. One other thought on that.

One true sign of a truly transformed life. Let me put it this way. One true sign of a born again life is that you love the brethren and you want to spend time with them.

First, John 3:14 says, we know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren, because we love the brethren. Then he says this. He who does not love his brother abides in death.

Those individuals that never want to go to church do not love the brethren. If they say they love the Lord, but they never want to be with God's people, especially in a living church where the people know the Lord. John says, then they don't love the Lord.

They abide in death. We know we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.

He wanted to be with the brethren because he'd become truly born again. Let me ask you a question. Does your friend or your spouse have to drag you to church? You say, you know, I don't want to go, but I'll go for you.

Then you don't love the brethren. If you don't love the brethren, you don't love the Lord. If you love the Lord, you love the brethren and you want to be with them.

You delight to be with them. Why? Because you're getting to know Jesus Christ more through each one of them. So first, he has fellowship with the saints as he's able to see again.

And the Lord's preparing them to go out and preach. Now we come to his fervency in speaking. His preaching as he goes out to preach is very prompt and very practical.

In verse 20, immediately he preached Christ where? In the synagogues. That he is the son of God. When the saving grace of God fills your heart, know this, it will often be on your lips.

When the saving grace of Christ fills your heart, it will often be on your lips. Because out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. So immediately he goes to the synagogues to preach.

And we find this throughout the whole book of Acts, actually. That when someone is born again, they want to tell about it. Listen to this.

In Acts chapter 4, verse 20, Peter and John were preaching there and they told him to stop. And they said, for we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard. When you see Christ in your life, when you hear Christ speaking to your heart, you cannot help but speak the things you are seeing and hearing.

You want to tell people about it. It is a sign of true conversion. It is a sign of true fellowship with the Lord.

And so he goes straight to the synagogue. Now, his natural inclination was to tell his fellow Jews first. He writes to the Romans that Jesus Christ came to the Jew first and also to the Greek, the Gentiles.

Can you imagine? Get this picture in your mind. Here they are in the synagogue. In walks the chief representative of the Sanhedrin.

He is the Pharisee of the Pharisee, the Hebrew of the Hebrews. He is the most educated Jew of his day. This man knows the scriptures better than anyone living.

And he comes into the synagogue. Can you imagine the leader of the synagogue? Here comes Saul of Tarsus. Saul, hello.

How are you? Can I get you a little something to drink? Here, take the scroll. Take the place of teaching. You can just see it scurrying around.

We've got him here. Let him teach. Let's listen to what he has to say.

And let's hear him denounce these Christians who may be in our midst hanging out with us this day. He's come here to Damascus to bind them and drag them away. And he's going to start in my synagogue.

Can't wait. Go for it, Saul. Go on up there and go for it.

And you can just see him beaming. I intend to. I fully intend to.

And he gets up there and he opens up the word and he starts to preach immediately, not against the Christians, but immediately that Jesus is, in fact, the son of God. Can you imagine the ruckus? It actually says here that they were amazed. They were amazed.

Verse 21. All who heard were amazed and they said, is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem? And has come here for that purpose that he might bring them bound to the chief priests. They are amazed.

You know why? How do you explain that? He's on his way on official business to arrest people, take them back to Jerusalem, send them to court, have them tried, sent to their death. And instead, he shows up in Damascus and he goes to the synagogue and he himself is converted and he is preaching that Jesus Christ is the son of God. How can you explain such a radical change so fast? You know what? You can't.

You cannot psychologically explain that. The only explanation is God would have to do that. Thus, it only further proves his message that he preached that Jesus Christ is God.

He's standing there as living evidence. That is the only answer for the change in him. That's why they are so amazed.

They just simply couldn't comprehend it because it's incomprehensible unless you factor in the power of God. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus is a message to all of us that the true salvation that comes to an individual is done in the end by God alone. And there is no other explanation for that fully transformed life.

See, when someone is really converted and they really do love the Lord, we're not talking about the bad examples of Christianity out there. We're talking about what is in the Bible normative Christianity. That is a heart aflame with the fire of God.

When you have that, you have a fully transformed life. There is no other explanation for it. To even encounter it fills you with hope.

Hope that you can change. Hope that God might want to love you, too. I have a friend out in California.

His name is Mike McIntosh. And he pastors Horizon Christian Fellowship. Sherwood, who worked for years with Billy Graham as a journalist, wrote a book about Mike's life.

It's called For the Love of Mike. And the account of his life is amazing to read. How messed up he was.

He was so messed up. I'll just give you a little tidbit. He was so messed up because one night he was taking handfuls of LSD.

He took handfuls of LSD. He was so high on LSD and his friends came up to him and they thought they'd pull a trick on him. What they did is they put a bag over his head and then they pretended they were shooting a gun.

And they go, Mike, we're blowing your head off. Boom! And Mike, in the state he was in, on countless tabs of acid, LSD, it was real to him. When he came down off of the LSD, he went around for the next several years believing that one half of his head was blown off and that he was dead.

That's pretty messed up, wouldn't you say? So he ended up immediately in a mental institution. He couldn't tie his shoes. He could not feed himself.

He had to be taken care of. They said, you're going to be like this, a vegetable for the rest of your life. I love this story because it's true.

One night he went to a prayer meeting. At the prayer meeting, some of the brothers felt led to pray for him. You know, you come up for prayer.

You tell what you want. Hi. What would you like prayer for? Well, half of my head is blown off and and I'm dead.

And I just want the Lord to do something about that for me. Do you think he could? So they laid it. And he at this point, he could ride a bicycle around.

So he'd zoom around town on his bicycle, dead and with half his head blown off. And so he said, do you think the Lord could do it? So they do anything. So they laid hands on him and he said to tell the story himself.

He said that what he saw in his mind as they prayed for him was like an arc of electricity, a flash of light that went from one side to the other. And he could have feel the side of his head either went from one side to the other. And immediately the feeling came back into his head.

Immediately his brain was normal. Immediately he knew he was alive and immediately he was completely healed. And he has never been like that since he fully committed his life to Jesus Christ.

And he has lived his life traveling the world, preaching Christ to anyone that will listen. And he's led countless thousands and thousands of people to the Lord. That is a complete transformation.

And that is what God is in the business of doing. Pastor Raul Reese out in California is a dear friend of mine. In fact, he's the one that convinced me I should come out here and start this church.

His account, his testimony is another radical transformation. He was sent to Vietnam for nearly killing an individual at a party one night. In those days during the Vietnam War, if you were busted for different crimes or whatever, they'd give you a choice of prison or Vietnam.

He was sent to Vietnam. He was a point man. He saw so many people killed, buddies blown up with landmines, hand grenades.

He was involved in killing so many people. Finally, he got to the point where he had just a few weeks left before his term was up and he was going to be able to go back to California. And he just hit the point.

He thought, you know what? Every single day I see my buddies blown up. I'm not going back out there again. So he went to his commanding officer and he shoved a rifle in his face.

And he said, if you send me out there again, I'm going to blow your head off. I'm not going out there again. I'm going home alive.

And he said, you're going home. All right. They put him in handcuffs and took him away.

Arrested him, sent him back to California, put him in the mental institution in California, put him in a little group where he's sitting in group therapy every day with all the people that were crazy, you know, from the war. And the only thing about him is that he just didn't want to kill people anymore and he wanted out of

there. He wasn't crazy.

They had him in a straitjacket and the Lord got him out of there. And he started back with his Kung Fu, started a Kung Fu studio. He got in a fight with Sharon, his wife, one night.

He was still full of rage and hatred. One night he's met his wife, Sharon, and Sharon loved the Lord with all of her heart. Sharon is the dearest Christian you'll ever meet.

And they got in an argument and Sharon left. So he got his guns out. He got all set.

He got all set to kill his family when they came home. He's pacing around and she didn't come back. All of a sudden, he thought, you know what, I just can't stand this pacing.

So he turned on the TV set. He thought, I'll just watch TV for a minute. He's got his gun in his hand, he's pacing.

And Pastor Chuck Smith is on the TV and he's just preaching along and he's, and the Lord loves you. He died for you. He wants to give you a new life.

And Raul is going, what is with this guy, man? I'm going to shoot the TV set, you know. And he thought, but if I shoot the TV set, I'll have to pace without it, you know. And so he started to watch.

And just as he began to listen, he said, something happened to my heart. I fell to my knees. I threw down my gun and I began to weep.

He gave his heart to Jesus Christ right there. And he has walked with him every day since. God is in the business of greatly, greatly transforming Christian lives.

He's not done with you yet. He's going to continue to change you and mold you into the image of Jesus Christ. I'll tell you one thing.

Talk about getting to know Christ more in other Christians. In the difficulties I've gone through in my life, Raul Riis was at my side the whole time. I have never known such love in a human being.

As I came to know in Raul Riis. This man who was a killer is now the kindest man I know. Tenderest man I know.

I came to discover in my difficult times a love in another human being that was put there by Jesus Christ. Thus, I came to believe that it's possible to become more loving as a human being than I ever dreamed. And that's after decades of walking with Christ.

God wants to do the same thing with you. And he wants to do the same thing with me. He wants to put his love in our hearts so we stop bickering with each other.

Stop being petty with each other. And start worrying about the things that are really important and really vital. If we start to become as concerned about our sins that make us ungodly and un-Christ like as we are about all the things we bicker and argue about.

Guess what? We'll become so godly, so loving that our whole life will change. And those that are nearest and dearest to us are going to get on their knees and thank God for bringing about the change. Believe me.

And it's the only way to live. They will know that we are his followers. How? By our love.

One to another. So he's filled with his love. He's so fervent.

He preaches and they are amazed by this conversion. Let's go on to the last thing. Fellowship with the saints.

Fervency in speaking. Finally, fearlessness and suffering. As he went forward now and began to grow stronger in the Lord.

And as he is putting together the truth of the Old Testament, which he knew so well, between verse 21 and 22, it is believed he went to Arabia for three years. He told the Galatians that after he was converted, he did not commune with man, but went up to Arabia for three years. Then he came back to Damascus.

It's believed that happened between verse 21 and 22. Then he was in Damascus many days and preaching. And then he went on up to Jerusalem.

While he was three years in the Arabian desert, God was taking him back through all the scriptures. And when he came out of the desert, he was a changed man. The theology you find in Romans, I believe, was formed in the desert during those three years as he went back through the scriptures.

That's the theology of salvation. Knowing Christ personally, the theology of the second coming of Jesus Christ that he preaches to the Thessalonian church came out of that desert. The theology of the church you find in Ephesians came out of that desert.

So God took him away and then he brought him back and then he unleashed him on the world is effectively what he did so that he became irrefutable. He proved to you from the Bible that Jesus was Christ. So he was irrefutable.

When he became irrefutable, guess what? That's when the devil determined to eliminate him. And that's why you begin to read kill, kill, kill. Look at verse 23.

After many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. That was the devil. But you see, there's always God, too.

And verse 24, their plot became known to Saul and they watched the gates day and night. What to kill him? Verse 25, then the disciples or could be rendered his disciples that he'd brought to the Lord, took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket. You know what I like about that? That is to me one of the most touching things in the whole passage.

I'll tell you why. Because it's a handful of people that went beyond contemplating the problem. There is a plot to kill him.

It becomes known to him. He shares it with the brethren. And, you know, that some sat back and went, oh, my, what are we going to do about this? And others actually went to him.

Somebody went and found a basket. Well, someone else was sitting off on the side going, oh, my, what are we going to do about this? Somebody went and found the basket. I am so touched by that because they found a way to get him out of the city.

Someone had a house that had a front door. You could go in and a window. You could go out of out the side of the wall and down and somebody opened that door.

There's a small group of people that did more than just contemplate the problem. Let me just say this, because I don't want to belabor the point. I think if you are gifted with a huge intellect, you run the risk of being an armchair quarterback in the body of Christ where you'll sit and analyze the problem to death.

While people who may have less of an intellect than you do would just go pitch in and do something about the problem. If you had a choice of which one you'd rather be, I'd rather have less of an intellect and more of a servant's heart. I'd rather be the guy that went and found the basket than the guy who had 18 plans outlined on paper of how they could keep him alive.

And I'm saying that because fresh in my mind is an individual that I worked with for years. And every month or so we would meet and he'd get out his notebooks and he'd show me all these outlines of all these plans that he had of all these ministries we could have in the church. And he never did anything.

I'm serious. He never helped as an usher. He never helped in the parking lot.

He never helped with tapes. He never helped in children's church. He never picked up cigarette butts from the carnal people outside and smoked after church.

Never did anything. And you know what the sad thing about that was? He was walking permanent potential. That's what he was, walking permanent potential.

God might call you just to find a basket, just to open a door. It begins just by serving one another. Oh, there's a problem? Let's pitch in.

What can I do? And so they helped him. They saved his life, really. He went up to Jerusalem.

He gets away from the plot to kill him. He goes up to Jerusalem. Man, talk about a welcome coming to the Lord.

He's born again. He goes out to the desert. He comes back.

He's irrefutable in his preaching. And so the Jews plot to kill him. He escapes from that near-death experience.

He goes up to the brethren at Jerusalem. And you know, he's thinking, oh, it's going to be so great. I'll get to see Peter and James and John and all the fellows.

And we're going to have such a great time. I can't wait to get there. But when he gets there, in verse 26, Saul, when he had come to Jerusalem, tried to join the disciples.

And they were all afraid of him and did not believe he was a disciple. So they wouldn't let him. The original language says he kept on trying to join the fellowship.

And they wouldn't let him in. Hi, please. You know, I'm back.

It's me. Honest to God. I love Jesus.

No. This is a plot. And they wouldn't let him in.

Terrific. Talk about hardships. You know what? This man, everything about him was unique and different.

In the book of Acts, you find people filled with the spirit as apostles lay hands on them or are present. This man is converted by Jesus Christ with no apostles present. He's empowered by Jesus Christ for unique service for his entire life.

He ends up doing more than all the other apostles put together. He answered to Christ, not the other apostles, because Christ himself called him. He's unique in every possible way.

And he is an enigma in every possible way. He is so different. And it's Christ that made him so that they couldn't understand him.

They wouldn't let him in the church. I thank God there was one man who said something must be done about this. And his name is Barnabas.

And so verse 27, Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and said, look, he met the Lord on the road. Tell him what he looked like. And I'm certain Paul said, well, he was very glorious, irrefutable once again.

And so finally, they let him into the fellowship. He's there for a little while now. He fills in in Galatians.

He says he went up to Jerusalem purposefully to meet Peter. He was there only 15 days. And then, as we read in verse 29, he's speaking boldly, disputing against the Hellenists, and they attempted to kill him once again.

Verse 30, when the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus. And another place he fills in that the Lord appeared to him in Jerusalem and he said, I want you to leave immediately because they're going to try to kill you. And I don't want you dead.

I want you to leave immediately. And I'm going to send you far away from here to reach many people. That's where he got his commission to be the apostle to the Gentiles from Jesus Christ himself.

Once again, then the brethren, when they hear about the plot to kill him, they send him out to Tarsus. First, they don't want to let him in the church. Then they want to ship him out.

All of that is to say this. When you come to Christ, he has a plan for you. You're going to need the fellowship of the brethren and some are going to be very, very loving with you.

And those are the ones God will use in your life. You will suffer. The devil will hate you.

The more biblically literate you become, the more effective you become, the more you will be able to prove from the scriptures. Jesus is Christ. Can you today walk out of this building and show from the scriptures? Jesus Christ is the son of God.

You should be able to give an answer to every man for the hope that lies within you. And God will seek to teach you in his word and draw you to his word to do that. In the end, it will be faith in Christ.

It will be fervent prayer. It will be faithful disciples helping you. It will be a fantastic plan.

God has for your life. It will be fellowship with people that know Jesus that will strengthen and encourage you. It will be an on fire heart that's fervent in speaking about Jesus.

And it will be a fearlessness that faces suffering that will add up to your life being completely changed. Completely changed. I don't know about you, but I want to make a difference before I leave this planet.

Do you want to make a difference? Where would you be if nobody cared about making a difference in your life? Where would you be? God wants you to give the gift away. You ever heard of a man by the name of J. Hudson Taylor? He went to China as a missionary. And when they cut off his support from England, he stayed on and lived by faith alone.

No paycheck coming from anywhere. And God provided for him. He is the father of missions in China.

And in the end, he became a giant in the faith. You know what he said before he died about making an impact by the giants in the faith? This is what he said. This is what I'll leave you with.

All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on him being with them. All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they believed that God would be with them every day of their life. Do you believe God will be with you? Good.

Then live like it. Believe in a great God and then attempt great things for God. Step out.

Let him lead you. You make your difference for Jesus because nobody else can do what he wants to do through you. Father, thank you for this great salvation, for this time in your word.

Holy Spirit, work your great transforming work in every life. Draw us, Lord, unto yourself and we will run after you, drawn by cords of love. May the love of Christ constrain us, Father.

May we live for you, Lord Jesus, because you died for us and now live within us. We ask all these things to bring great glory to your name, for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

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