

(The Book of Acts) Session 08

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon explores key events in the Book of Acts, emphasizing the importance of evangelism and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Acts 8:1

Topics: "Acts", "The Role of the Holy Spirit", "Evangelism"

Description

George Verwer explores Acts chapters 8 to 13, emphasizing the early church's growth amidst persecution, particularly focusing on the conversion of Saul (Paul) and the evangelistic efforts of Philip. He highlights the importance of personal evangelism, the role of the Holy Spirit, and the significance of baptism, while also addressing the complexities of faith and the need for believers to care about the church and the unsaved. Verwer encourages a deeper understanding of the Word of God and the necessity of sharing the gospel, drawing parallels between the early church's challenges and today's spiritual climate.

Transcript

And we're picking up around Acts chapter 8. And I want to, in this short time together, work our way up to chapter 13. And that is not so easy. But we want to just get a little overview of these three chapters.

And we, of course, move from this tremendous time of persecution and emphasis on Peter and Peter's ministry, which we still have here, excuse me, in chapter 8. We then are going to move into 9, where we have the conversion of the Apostle Paul again. My great hope for all of you is that this study will whet your appetite for the book of Acts. I've been amazed as to what I've been learning, even though I've been studying this pretty regularly for 43 years.

In fact, when I first traveled across America, before I ever went to Mexico, I was one year old in Christ, I traveled across America, I was still in business, I sold firefighting equipment. So I was selling fire extinguishers, used to light fires on people's front porch, gasoline fires, and put them out with my little extinguisher. I sold thousands, literally thousands of those extinguishers, especially as I signed up people to become wholesalers, and especially gas stations.

In fact, I once lit a gas fire on a gas station forecourt and was not able to get it out with my little extinguisher. Fortunately, the gas station had a proper fire extinguisher and did get that fire out. I'll never forget another time when a guy was very rude, trying to insult me, saying my fire extinguisher was no better than his own little personal fire hose.

It was rather rude. So I lit a gas fire right in front of him and I said, can you show me how that works? Well, I was still a baby Christian, and I got in lots of trouble. But when I was in Pittsburgh, the mother of my aunt, the mother of my aunt was from the Christian church.

That puts a very strong emphasis on baptism, some of them even baptismal regeneration. She had a real go at me because I had not been baptized at that time. I stayed up the whole night, that night I'll never forget, and read through the whole book of Acts.

And it made a huge impact. I was convinced of the importance of baptism, and that led to my baptism a year or two later. But I was also convinced that it was not linked with our salvation.

And I made at that time my life verse, a verse we're going to look at in our last session in Acts chapter 20. So the book of Acts has been a major book, and yet just reading different commentaries and studying it again has been a huge blessing and encouragement to me. So Stephen was martyred, that's where we finished our last session, and now we move into chapter 8. Immediately, persecution again breaks out.

And verse 1 is a key verse, not only in chapter 8, but to enable us to understand all that begins to happen in the early church. Saul was consenting unto his death, that's how this chapter opens. The apostle Paul involved in the murder of Stephen.

And at that time there was a great persecution against the church, which was at Jerusalem. And they were all scattered abroad throughout the region of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles, very interesting, just the apostles stayed in Jerusalem. I would have thought some of them were risking their lives to stay there.

It doesn't give us all the reasons. It talks about Stephen's burial and the lamentation, the sorrow over him. I'd love to speak to you on the subject of sorrow.

There is a place for sorrow in the Christian life. The Christian life isn't all just joy and praising God. I have sometimes people say at the funeral of a Christian, especially in England, we're just going to have a great celebration.

He's with the Lord, we're going to have a great celebration. But I remember at the funeral of a close friend, a great man of God, sharing that it's legitimate for us as human beings to be sorrowful at that time. Yes, he is with the Lord, but we greatly miss him or her.

And there's another passage in Corinthians that says that we're sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. So though these people could rejoice in the triumph of Stephen going to glory, it says in verse 2, there was great lamentation over him. And then verse 3, as for Saul, he made havoc of the church.

He made havoc of the church, entering into every house, hailing men and women, committing them to prison. Therefore, they were scattered abroad, it repeats that, scattered abroad, and went everywhere preaching the word. We have a lot of different methods in evangelism today.

But I believe as we go back to the book of Acts, we will continue to see the importance of preaching the word of God. I remember 30 years ago, somebody telling me that these evangelists like Billy Graham, and they named a few others, that that would all be ancient history in a few more years. That was not really the way to reach people.

That was 30 years ago. Not only is Billy Graham going strong, but Luis Palau, and Franklin Graham, and Greg Lowry, and a guy named Tibbets, and a whole bunch of other evangelists from all over the world are still going strong. And many unnamed evangelists who mainly work in the context of local churches.

The ministry of evangelism is alive and well in 1999. Despite all that's going on through film, and drama, and music, the ministry of preaching the word of God, it's often combined with those things, is alive and well. It was this scattered group of believers, some of which that eventually ended up in Antioch, that actually started the church in Antioch.

Now some churches are started through very systematic planning, and well-trained church planting groups, but a lot of churches are born very similar to this church here in the book of Acts. In God's providential circumstances. Maybe a division.

Maybe a group of people, not happened so much in this country, persecuted. Some people have been persecuted within their own church. As in the 40s and 50s, so many churches went into rank liberalism.

Those who were evangelical were often persecuted. The lady who prayed me into the kingdom belonged to a liberal Presbyterian church. You probably realize that many, many millions of Presbyterians left the bigger Presbyterian denomination, and became evangelical Presbyterians.

EPC, PCA, Orthodox Presbyterian, all kinds of Presbyterians. But this little lady who prayed me into the kingdom, she was really persecuted in her own church, and had to leave. Well, it's a different situation than we have here, but it has some similarities.

And then we have this tremendous story of Philip. There in verse 5. Philip went down to a city in Samaria, and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they paid close attention to what he said.

With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many. Many paralytics and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in the city.

And then we go into an amazing story about Simon of Saucer. And I don't have time, I spent a lot of time studying this this morning, and decided I don't have time, if I'm going to cover what I want to cover, to go into depth about this unique man. And I think if you get time, it really would be good.

Because it's an amazing story, and it's one that needs to be studied. Look at verse 24. Then Simon answered, Pray to the Lord for me that so nothing you have said will happen to me.

When they had testified and proclaimed the word of the Lord, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages. So those early verses from verse 9 through verse 25, are the first major effort to preach the gospel among the Samaritans. Now the Samaritan people were outcasts.

They were considered sort of half Jew and half Gentile. The barrier between the Jews and the Samaritans, and all the early believers in the church, in the very beginning were all converted Jews. Even the Ethiopian eunuch, who's going to come into the picture in a few moments, he was probably a proselyte to Judaism.

Because later it refers to Cornelius, as the first Gentile believer. So this is an exciting part of the book of Acts, that I'm sorry to have to go over quickly, because it represents the first invasion of the gospel into the

Samaritans, with considerable difficulty, and especially considerable complexity in connection with the Holy Spirit, and how the Holy Spirit firstly worked among those people. John Stock gives several pages to the controversy in regard to how the Holy Spirit came seemingly almost at a separate time than the conversion of the Samaritans.

And that has continued to be a controversy right through the church to this day. You can study that on your own. I sort of don't completely end up in John Stock's camp, but I just know this.

My experience is that the Holy Spirit does work in different ways, in different people, and in different churches. And I guess for some of us, you may feel you have the whole thing 100% solved here. It's okay, I'm not going to judge you.

But for some of us, strugglers who have worked with so many different churches, so many different people, and find it hard to deny something going on simply because it's not exactly the way I was taught that it would happen at Moody, where they, by the way, didn't teach me much about the Holy Spirit at all, back in my day, I still know the reality of it, hallelujah. I can't judge. And John Stock would say that the reality of conversion comes at one time, whereas this passage is used by some to teach that the reality of conversion comes in two times, two different events, the second being the work of the Holy Spirit.

John Stock more or less says that this is just a very unusual situation when the gospel is for the first time going to the Samaritans, and so in God's providence, he allowed something to happen in an unusual way that is not the normal way that it always happens. This just, oh, when I study something like this, it just always reminds me of the fact that there are difficult passages in the Word of God. We cannot deny this.

Why do even our most conservative theologians grind out books that thick entitled Problems in the Bible? I've started to read those books, they give me more problems than I had before I started. But we have to acknowledge that in His providence, God has not allowed the Bible to just be easily understood by flippant study. It takes time, and it's sort of a lifetime adventure to understand the Word of God.

And I know in my own experience, even at my age, there's a lot of things I still wish I had more time. People in my kind of ministry, unlike, say, a theological professor, or even a pastor, we don't have the same amount of time to study the Bible. Every day I have to put in six, seven hours of administration and communication, phone, letter, email, no matter where I am in the world, praise God, for a 24-hour day.

But someone in my position as a leader of a large mission fellowship, despite all the help, I can't get the same amount in the Word of God. And one of the most refreshing things for me at Maranatha this year is that this whole study has forced me to spend more time in the Word of God and studying and commentaries than I'm normally able to do. So leaving that, I want to move on to Philip and the Ethiopian treasure.

He was an important government person. Most of the Samaritans were in a very different situation than this Ethiopian. And notice verse 26.

An angel of the Lord spoke unto Philip. Have you ever read Billy Graham's book, Angels? Have you noticed how many books there are about the devil? There's got to be a new book a week on the devil. Praise God for that great saint who said everyone look at the devil.

Take ten looks at Jesus Christ. Whatever you do in your ministry, don't get over-focused on Satan or demons. What about a little more emphasis on angels? It's almost an embarrassment for the average

evangelical to talk about angels.

Peretti's book got a few of God's chosen frozen into thinking a little more about angels. And now a blockbuster film, I suppose a part of it on the airplane, *City of Angels*. I'm sure we will not take a survey how many have seen that film.

But the non-Christians today are getting caught up with the subject of angels. And here's something we need to understand about today. There's a new move in our culture in which people are interested in spiritual things.

Now in India, it's always that way, isn't it John? Indians are just interested in spiritual things. But because of the emphasis on Eastern religion, because of the New Age, because of a lot of other teaching, a lot of which is dangerous and garbage, people are at least open to spiritual things. And you and I are going to decide are they going to hear Billy Graham or are they going to hear one more tape by Tony Robbins.

Have you ever heard about that guy? Very, very... Did I get his name right? Tony Robbins, this motivational speaker. I was listening to him in the bathtub once and he said it's good to believe these things. Not that he was with me in the bathtub, it was a tape.

But he said it was good to practice these things. He was referring to some Christian truths. Even if they're not true, that's existentialism.

And that's the way a lot of people are. If you understand where our culture is and the way we think, then you'll understand why telling lies in the White House or anywhere else, that's just normal in our society today. *Time Magazine* even years ago had a front page article, *Lies in America*.

And today the way people think, many modern people think, you can believe two contradictory things. I read an email some time ago that said Madonna accepted Jesus. And some little lemon following her for a long time, no big personal deal, just from a distance.

And Madonna, according to this email, accepted Jesus. And with the way she is, probably that lasted several days, and then it would be something else. This is the way our society is.

We are not going to turn the hands of the clock back. And if you and I don't learn how to sometimes approach this and make use of some of the positive things while rejecting the negative things, then I believe we're not going to see many people coming to Christ through our own personal evangelism. Philip was a personal evangelist.

He got even angelic help. The angel said, Arise. That's one of the big problems with God's people.

Just get them started. I remember Alan Redpath, a great preacher of Moody Church. He said, The great problem with the average Christian is just blanket victory.

Just getting the blanket off in the morning and getting up. And I know in my own life, as a teenager, I prayed and cried out to God that I would be able to get up early every morning. And God heard that cry, but He put mostly responsibility back on me.

And I developed every device on planet Earth to make sure that I would get up early and get in the Word or do what God wanted me to do early in the morning. Of course, you're on vacation, so you can sleep in. Don't feel guilty about sleeping in.

That is totally ridiculous. Some of you need to sleep in. My poor wife, I tell you, she needs to sleep in.

She hardly ever has a proper night's sleep. I sleep like a brick. It takes me about three minutes to get to sleep.

It takes her up to two hours to get to sleep. And within half an hour, she's awake again. And I'm just gone.

She can get upset just looking at me. So we have quite a few complexities in our marriage. Now, I'm not sure what that has to do with Philip and the Ethiopian treasure.

And he arose and went, and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority. Hey, this guy was a big shot under Kandase, queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasure and had come to Jerusalem to worship. That's why we're pretty sure he was a Jew.

You know, he wasn't coming to the local, you know, seminar on Jesus. When returning and sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot.

And Philip ran there to him, heard him read the prophet Isaiah and said, Do you understand what you're reading? He said, How can I except somebody explain this? And to make a long story short, Philip explained it, this man believed, and he stopped, and he baptized him. Verse 38, He commanded that the chariot stand still. They went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing. What a conversion! The joy, the thrill, the blessing of personal evangelism. I experienced it within a few months of my own conversion.

It's been a major source of motivation my whole life. Seeing people saved. Getting out and talking to people about Christ.

OM is a huge, giant mission organization, but to David it never started that way. I never had some great plan to start something like this. I just went to the local jail to win someone to Christ.

I just went out to the local street corner and gave out tracts and won someone to Christ. I used to sit in the bus station in Knoxville, Tennessee all the time witnessing winning people to Christ. Now I was a little overzealous, and a lot of people with my kind of witnessing came to Christ even when they didn't want to.

It often wasn't very real, but they at least got me out of their hair, and I went away rejoicing that another soul was saved. I had a lot to learn. I could have had some lessons from Philip, but he wasn't around at that time except for this passage of Scripture.

Then as we move into chapter 9 we have the conversion of the Apostle Paul. I'm just going to presume that most of you have at least read this amazing chapter where Paul, still persecuting Christians, is on the road to Damascus and has this encounter with God. He's stricken blind, and then later he's led to Ananias, and Ananias has the follow-up ministry of helping Paul, and he's then given back his sight.

Just look at a couple of verses. Verse 1, Saul, yet breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest. He desired of him letters to Damascus.

I saw this recently portrayed in a film. Very interesting. To the synagogue, that if he found any on this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

He had a specific job to get Christians, persecute them, bind them up, bring them to Jerusalem. As he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly, there shone round about him a light from heaven. He fell to the earth.

He heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And as the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goads. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what will you have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go unto this city, and it shall be told thee what you must do.

And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but not seeing any person. And Saul rose up from the earth, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no person. But they led him by the hand down to Damascus.

And then you have that amazing encounter with Ananias as the Lord was directing him. He was a little bit hesitant as well. Pick it up at verse 13.

After Ananias gets the vision. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, I've heard about this man from many people, how much evil he hath done to the saints of Jerusalem. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

In other words, he was scared. And I think it's normal in evangelism, even follow up work, it's normal to battle fear. It's normal to battle shyness.

But this is where there are times when you and I, we must roar like a lion. We must at that moment do what Jesus said in every one of the Gospels. Deny self, take up the cross, and follow him.

We must listen to his voice. We must obey his voice. I must confess I'm sure, I know at times I'm not.

I've not obeyed the voice of the Lord when he was trying to push me to do something in the area of personal witness. And I had to learn more about grace and forgiveness because I would have got into phenomenal bondage. More than that, because I was such a free spirit.

I was getting a lot of other people in bondage in the area of witnessing. Witnessing must be a grace-awakened procedure in which the Holy Spirit is leading you, but he will not force you. You have got to cooperate.

It's a bit like tennis. When the ball is in your side of the court, you have to hit it. And I believe a lot of people today, especially those praying for revival, they are sitting around waiting for God to do what he's told them to do.

And I believe a lot of people now, because we've had this heavy revival praying for a long time now, a lot of people even fasting 40 days, and they generally haven't seen that much, maybe a little bit here and there, and different people claiming this and that. But I believe it often leads to unrealistic expectation. And we need to get back to the Word of God, which puts an emphasis on the daily walk with Christ, on denying self, taking up the cross, and following him every day.

We need to make a great focus personal evangelism, befriending people, non-Christians, and sharing our faith, rather than thinking we can just sit back, have one more revival meeting, or ask somebody to pray and fast for revival, and then hope that it's going to come, and everything's going to be changed overnight. Let me tell you, if some big bang revival does come, and I've studied that kind of revival, we've had some of it in Britain, and in this country in years gone by, the very next day you'll have more problems than you had the day before. Revival is not something that's going to resolve problems, and bring in your favorite political figure, and we're all going to live happily ever after as the bars close, and drugs disappear, and alcohol runs down the local sewer.

Thinking about alcohol, have you heard that story of that man who was really against alcohol, and he got up in front of the church, and he said, I'd like to take all the wine in the world, and throw it down the river. He was getting more excited. I'd like to take all the whiskey in the world, Sunday morning service, and just dump it in the river, throw it down the river.

All the booze and beer in the world, throw it down the river. This church wasn't very well organized, and the guy got up after the sermon to announce the closing hymn. He said, we're singing number 259, we shall gather at the river.

That, by the way, is not a major theme in the book of Acts. So Paul was powerfully converted, and Ananias decided to obey the Lord. Verse 16, for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my sake.

Verse 17, Ananias went his way, entered into the house, and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, what a moment in history. That's the first encounter that Paul had with a man of God. Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way, as thou comest, hath sent me that thou mayest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

What a tremendous example also that the filling of the Spirit can come at conversion. Certainly, my belief that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit always comes at conversion. That's why that Samaritan passage is a difficult one.

But the filling of the Spirit can also come at conversion. That was my own personal experience, though I didn't really understand it at the time. And immediately, there fell from his eyes, as it had been scales, he received his sight, he arose, and was baptized.

And when he had received food, and that's something we ought to note really, no matter how filled we are with the Holy Spirit, we're still incredibly human. You know, beware, once you do get excited about Jesus, you want to turn the world upside down, beware of super-spirituality. It is a deadly extreme, I know, because I tasted deeply at it.

I was reading more Andrew Murray Watchman, the A.W. Tozer, and all these hyper-saints, and started to deny almost my own humanity. I've seen a lot of young people overdose and freak out on various forms of super-spirituality. A number of them ended up in cults.

No matter how filled we are with the Holy Spirit, we are incredibly human. You remember Elijah, one of my favorite sermons, I don't know if I've ever preached it, at Maranatha. Elijah calling the fire down.

But then in the next chapter, he wants to commit suicide. And God sends a rescue angel. What does the angel do? Revival meetings? Give him a spiritual kick? No, gives him food.

Ministers to his physical needs twice. He had the blessing twice. And then Elijah bounced back and was able to deal with some of his false thinking.

And then appointed Elijah as his successor. When he had received food, he was strengthened. Then was Paul's certain days with the disciples who were at Damascus.

We find, amazing enough, that Paul immediately started preaching. That was also true in my own conversion, which was not similar to the Apostle Paul, except in the very basic elements of the conversion. But I found that immediately God was leading me into preaching, especially among young people.

Look what it says in verse 22. Saul increased and more in strength and confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ. But we find later, he spent three years in Arabia.

So you might initially get the Lord using you, but that doesn't mean you don't need any further training. It doesn't mean you don't need to stop. And draw closer to God and have more training.

We find later on that Paul ends up having to go to Tarsus, where he actually stayed for a number of years and was more or less, not much is known of Paul after he went to Tarsus. So first he escaped and went to Jerusalem. Jews took counsel to kill him, verse 23.

But there lying in wait was known by Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night and led him down the wall in a basket.

That makes a great scene in the movie. How many have seen Paul the movie? You're not into the movies too much. It's a Christian film, by the way.

One of the greatest tools in evangelism in the world today, by the way, is the Jesus film. More people have watched the Jesus film than any film in the history of the world, including Star Wars. Ah! And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he tried to join himself to disciples, but they were afraid of him.

Practical problems. Life is full of practical problems. And we need people today who will do a Barnabas.

There's a Muslim, maybe in your town, that gets converted, but the church is quite hesitant to really welcome him. Or there's somebody with earrings on all ears and the nose. I had a born-again girl in Sweden come to me the other day.

Two earrings in her nose. You may say, I don't believe anybody can be saved with earrings in the nose. Can you show me the scripture for that one? You know, people saving all kinds of things.

One of my most embarrassing moments in the history of OM was a young girl who was influenced by my ministry. She was young. She was naive.

She wanted to show me something. She brought me outside the OM tent. I'll never forget.

Says, Uncle George, I want to show you something. And lifted up her shirt to show me her new navel ring that she just had inserted. This is 1999.

You say, well, God would never save anyone that has a navel ring. You're going to be surprised in heaven. I know some of you folks are not going to fellowship with anybody in heaven who has a ring in the wrong place.

But you might just, you know, want to think that one through. Especially when you go to other cultures and other countries. So they were a little hesitant about Paul.

And he really wasn't going to get into fellowship. And then Barnabas came along. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, how he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly in Damascus.

And he was with them coming in and going out of Jerusalem. And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, disputing against the Grecians, but they went about to slay him. And so he left town again.

And we find him going to Tarsus. And then we find his ministry comes much later, which we will get into. We then find, as we get into verse 32, more of a focus on Peter's ministry.

And then as you get into chapter 10, we have this amazing story of how the whole church was completely changed, that now they would also go to the Gentiles. Cornelius is the first Gentile to come to Christ. He was already a devout man, very different from Paul.

And yet he still needed conversion. And God, in order to bring this change, had to give Peter a vision. And you have the story of the great sheet.

Liberals are so wild in some of their attacks on Scripture, that some liberals say it wasn't a sheet, it was a sailboat going by. That Peter saw a sailboat going by. And this is where this vision came from.

I tell you, and they accuse us of believing too much in the miraculous. This was a vision that God gave. Peter then shares the vision.

He actually shares this vision twice because he has to persuade the leaders of the church that the gospel now is going to the Gentiles. And that this man, Cornelius, has really been born again. And it's an exciting chapter that, of course, we don't have time to go into.

Peter's sermon to the Gentiles is well worth studying. And the Holy Spirit also comes upon these Gentile believers. We find that in Acts 10, 44 through verse 48.

Look at verse 43 as we bring this to a close. To him gave all the prophets witness, and through his name whoever believes in him shall receive remission of sins. Salvation is by faith alone.

If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be saved. And I believe, though there's many, many different ways of preaching God's Word, we see that in the book of Acts. The bottom line, it is salvation through faith.

In chapter 11, Peter goes on to vindicate his ministry to the Gentiles. He could have ended up in a lot of difficulty. And then we find the church has started at Antioch.

And a great passage for you to study is starting at verse 19. The church in Antioch where people were first called Christians. Now they who were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus in Antioch, preaching the Word.

There that emphasis is again. To none but unto the Jews. They weren't aware of what had been happening in the house of Cornelius.

And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene. When they come to Antioch, spoke unto the Greeks. These were Greek Jews preaching the Lord Jesus.

And the hand of the Lord was with them. And a great number believed and turned unto the Lord. Isn't that exciting? Isn't that what you want to see in your church? In your town? Do you know what bothers me? And you realize I am disturbed about the present spiritual climate in my beloved country.

I am, by the way, a full-fledged American citizen. My burden isn't that more people aren't being saved. My burden isn't that even more money isn't given to missions.

We've seen the exception to that here. My burden isn't even that there isn't more prayer. Though that is a great burden as I made clear.

My burden is so many people don't seem to even care. That's the thing that blows my mind. Now those other things, of course, are our ultimate goal.

Action, reality, prayer, giving, winning people to Christ. But I know that takes time. I know a lot of us have our struggles and hang-ups and we need more discipling and mentoring before maybe we're going to be more effective.

But I will tell you, it is inexcusable when a believer doesn't even seem to care. And I believe the book of Acts, as we've studied it and will continue to do for a day and a half more, should stir us so that never again will we ever be at the place where we don't care about the church, about prayer, about the unsaved, about reaching the world with the gospel and those other great themes we have touched on. Let us pray.

Our God and Father, we thank You for the tremendous conversion of the Apostle Paul. We thank You for that picture of Philip in personal evangelism with the Ethiopian eunuch. And we thank You, Lord, that Peter was led, after having that vision, to penetrate the Gentile world and see the conversion of Cornelius.

And Lord, we have just learned so much from this rapid pilgrimage through these great chapters and long for some of this reality to be a greater practical reality in our own lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Audio: http://archive.org/download/SERMONINDEX_SID18156/SID18156.mp3
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-verwer/the-book-of-acts-session-08/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net