

Book of Acts Series - Part 17 | How to Keep Going

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon explores the challenges and triumphs of spreading the gospel as seen in the Book of Acts, emphasizing the need for perseverance in faith and reliance on God's grace.

Duration: 41:49

Scripture: Acts 13:43-49

Topics: "Book Of Acts"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of feeling jealous of someone who had a brand new Mercedes Benz SUV. He then transitions to discussing the importance of planting seeds of faith in children and adults, as they may remember and turn to God later in life. The speaker emphasizes the power of the gospel and warns against adding cultural elements or syncretism that can dilute its impact. Finally, the sermon concludes with a discussion of the mixed results that can occur when the gospel is preached.

Transcript

We've been following in the book of Acts the story of the birth of the church, the development of the church, the gospel going out, first to only Jewish people and then to Gentiles. And we read about how the gospel went to the first Gentile convert who was Cornelius. Peter brought the gospel to him.

And now we've been studying how Saul of Tarsus, this terrible persecutor of the church, has been converted to Christ. And now operating out of a local church in Antioch in Syria, the very place where all this trouble is going on, Paul and his buddy Barnabas are out on a missionary journey, what is called in the book of Acts, Bible history, their first missionary journey. Usually in the back of a Bible, you'll have a map of that part of the world and they'll have a different color arrow representing where they went on the first missionary journey, second missionary journey, third missionary journey.

So on the first missionary journey, what happened was they went to Cyprus, the island in the Mediterranean, and then went north to what we would call Turkey, but what is called Asia. And they end up in Antioch, but a different Antioch, Antioch in Pisidia, that province, which is also what we would call Turkey. And we read how they went into the synagogue there and the leaders of the synagogue said, Hey, listen, you guys have something to say to encourage us.

And now we have Paul's sermon, which we reviewed two weeks ago. We looked at that and his first sermon as he presented the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And we really want to learn now what is the gospel? Because maybe what you grew up around and what I grew up around in church is not the gospel they were preaching.

Maybe we've added a lot of stuff like culture and white culture and join my church, Brooklyn Tabernacle-ism and charismatic and Pentecostal and all this stuff, black culture, black church, white church, Asian church. And we lose the genius power of the gospel because we have all these additives and the syncretism of combining all these elements have taken away the power of the gospel. So now he comes to the end of that sermon, which we read through.

And now I'll just give you the major point that he offers them in the good news of Jesus. And now we get the mixed results, the mixed results, the mixed results of when the gospel is preached. And this is what happened to Paul and Barnabas.

Let's look. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, I want you to know that through Jesus, the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. And I want to proclaim that to all of you here.

If you're not a Christian, you can have your sins forgiven. If you say, I haven't sinned or I don't believe in sin, then there's really nothing I can say to you. Even God has nothing much to say to you until you come to a realization that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, that we're all imperfect and we've rebelled against God.

But through Jesus Christ, the forgiveness of sin is proclaimed to you through him. Jesus, everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you are not able to obtain under the law of Moses. In other words, you're Jewish.

You're waiting for that Messiah. You're trying to obey the law. But now I proclaim to you, if you'll put your faith in Jesus, you'll have forgiveness of sin and you'll have access to God and you'll be in right standing with God, not because you're perfect, but because Jesus paid the price for you.

Oh, praise God. That's the good news. Then the result, as Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath, which would be the next Saturday.

When the congregation was dismissed in the synagogue, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism, remember what we said? Those were called God fearing Gentiles. Those were Gentile people who were fed up with the 10,000 gods of the Roman empire and the Greek thought religion and all the immorality and corruption. And they were drawn to the monotheism, one God of the Jewish faith and the law and the purity of the law that was given to Moses.

So they would go to the synagogue and worship with the Jews. They were called God fearing Jews are here. They're called divert convert, devout converts to Judaism.

They followed Paul and Barnabas who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. Now, at the end of the service here, we give people a new Testament. They couldn't do that.

There were no new Testaments. We give people the Bible. There was no old Testament printed out that you could hand to people.

They had no church buildings and say, visit us. We're down on 17 Smith street near Fulton. You come and join.

They couldn't do any of that. They just went in a synagogue, they preached. And now these are the first instructions, not how to become a Christian.

We've seen that already before, but now these were the follow-up instructions. They told them to continue in the grace of God. One translation has it that you would cling and stay close to the grace of God, that you would yield continually to the grace of God.

That was their instruction. On the next Sabbath, that would be a week later. Almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.

When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and they began to contradict what Paul was saying and they heaped abuse on him. Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly. We had to speak the word of God to you first.

But since you rejected and you do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. In other words, we'll go to the Gentile people in Antioch. We start in the synagogue, but there's a lot more Gentiles than there are Jews.

And since you're going to heap abuse on us and give us a hard time, we're going to turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us. I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

That's a quote from, I believe, Isaiah 49. When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and they honored the word of the Lord. That word of the Lord there is the gospel.

And all who were appointed for eternal life believed. The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. How did the word of the Lord spread? Because everyone started talking and sharing, not just Paul and Barnabas.

All the people who had received Christ started telling people, I'm a Christian now. What's a Christian? What's that? I believe in Jesus. Who's Jesus? Jesus has never been heard of in that area.

Oh no, Jesus is the son of God. He came. He laid down his life as a sacrifice so we could have forgiveness of our sins.

He brings peace and joy. You can have a new life. He gives the promise of eternal life.

When you die, you'll be with him forever. That word was spreading. But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city.

And they stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from their region. The New Living Translation says they kicked them out of town. So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium.

We'll probably follow that up next week. And the disciples who were left behind, the believers, were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. I want you to just notice that mixed reaction.

That when you share the gospel, you're not always going to get everybody to believe. Nobody could be more anointed than Paul. Some people believe if God really moves, then everybody gets converted.

And if someone doesn't get converted, the devil puts it in your mind, you did it wrong. You didn't do it right. Oh, preachers are attacked with that all the time, especially when they're younger.

But notice that Paul got mixed results. Some were converted and others stirred up a riot and got him kicked out of town. That tells us that when you share Christ, some receive it, some don't.

That's not our business. And nothing's wrong that some don't, as long as you do it with love and you do it right. But then we have to leave it with God.

And you never know what happens when that seed was sown. I just heard from my daughter who has BT kids. She got the testimony of one of her workers there.

And she grew up in a project here and somewhere in downtown Brooklyn. I'm going to give you the outline of the story. And as she was a kid, my friend Bill Wilson from Metro Church in here in the city that has real extensive work with children, they do sidewalk Sunday schools, and they're all over the place with dozens and dozens of buses and telling kids about Jesus.

She would go and they did a sidewalk Sunday school and she heard these lessons and she saw the jumping around and all this. And she was a kid and she heard about Jesus and all of that. And then she grew up and later for all of that.

And then she got involved in a lot of other things. Her life started spiraling out of control, full of emptiness. And then one day, just about, I think, seven years ago, six years ago, at the lowest point, God brought back to her the lessons that she saw in the sidewalk Sunday school.

And she opened her heart to the Lord and came here. And now she's not only a Christian, she's serving our children right now while we're here. Isn't that wonderful how God's word, once it's planted, has power.

And that was such an encouragement to Sue, but it was an encouragement to me, that when you're working with children, you're planting the seed in children and in adults. You don't know what's going to happen. You don't know what's going to happen.

It could be right before they die. They got 30 seconds and they remember what you said, Onika. And they remember, oh, I remember that girl told me that, oh, Jesus, please.

And he'll save them on the spot because the thief on the cross just said, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Today you'll be with me in paradise. That's how much God loves people.

So keep sowing the seed, keep inviting, keep talking. But they got mixed results. I just want to focus on two main things, but on our way there, I want to point out two things, which are sidebars.

Number one, sidebar. Who stirred up the people and what stirred up this negative reaction against Paul and Barnabas? What stirred up the riot in the end that kicked them out of town? Did you just pick that up? Did you notice that little sentence? And when the Jewish leaders saw the crowds, they were jealous and they started to heap abuse on them and slandered them behind their back and said ugly things about them to people and to their face. And then eventually stirred up a crowd and got them kicked out of town.

It reminds me of, you know why Jesus went to the cross. You remember what started it because he spoke authoritatively and loved the people. And because he drew large crowds, the Bible says several times in the gospels, the Jewish leaders were jealous of him.

He had a bigger following than they did. And that turned that poison in their heart, opened them up to Satan himself. So they would plan the death of the son of God.

The Bible tells us when they brought Jesus in front of Pilate, Pilate was a shrewd dude. He understood what was going down. And when he saw the Jewish leaders and he saw Jesus, how innocent he was, the Bible says he knew that they were envious of him.

And that's why that whole thing was going down. He knew Jesus hadn't done anything. He could tell that.

Isn't it something about that wickedness that we get in us called jealousy and envy. It crucified Jesus. Read it carefully.

It precipitated all the movement against them. And now on Paul's first missionary journey, why does he get kicked out of town? Why do they abuse him? Why do they fight what he's saying? They're not analyzing what he's saying. They're not looking at the verses.

Wait a minute. Maybe that was the Messiah. Maybe Jesus, let me look in Isaiah.

Oh, he was wounded for our trans. Maybe I, no, no. Once you get jealousy in you, you can't listen to anything.

Most times when people slander someone else, they're jealous of them. I've watched this all my life and been analyzing it. Most times when you talk about someone and you rip them apart behind their back, the real deal is you're envious of them.

Just listen to people who slander and talk about people behind their back and are always finding fault and have a comment. They're jealous of them secretly. They'd never admit that.

I'm not jealous of her. I'm not jealous of him. No, never.

What do they have? You're green with jealousy. That's why you're talking like that. They were jealous of Paul.

That's why they abused him. That's why they slandered him. Oh, would to God that he would cut jealousy and envy out of all of our hearts.

Because when you're jealous of someone, you're actually mad at God that God gave them something more than you. Some talent, some ability, better looks, nicer clothes, better car. I'm just thinking, I got jealous just on Friday.

I drove to Cape Cod with one of the church who has leased a brand new 2013 Mercedes Benz SUV. I'm not into cars. I don't own a car now, but he drove up four hours on the way back.

I said, I like to drive because I was watching that thing. 400 something horsepower. Thing was cooking.

Listen, if you slide over to the left lane and you go on the thing, the car beeps twice and automatically moves you back. Oh yeah, now I got your interest now, don't I? Ah, you're wondering what's with a car. If

you go on the right, beeps twice and it moves you back to the right.

Oh yeah. Camera right there. So when you back up, you got a picture of what you're backing up into in case there's somebody there.

If you go near the median, just between the lanes, the thing begins to shake a little bit, the wheel, just to warn you, your thing. Oh yeah. On the side view mirror, on the side.

Why? I'm getting into this, right? I told him, I'm going to throw you out of this car right on the highway and just take it home. Side view mirror. If there's a car coming on your left, there's a red light that starts to just flash.

So if you look to see, should you pass the red light tells you you don't pass. And should you even start to turn it goes beep, beep, don't turn. Okay.

But here's the clincher. I was talking and I might've been looking over to him and it was getting late. I got in at one 15 in the morning.

Suddenly I hear beep, beep. And I look on the screen. It says, you seem tired.

Turn over to the side. Everybody just, no, you talk about jealous. So I said, as we were coming home, I said, in the name of the Lord, I claim this car.

Jealousy is a bad thing. Has some, the car has some kind of thing that goes in. And if you talk too much to the person to your right, and you're not looking forward or some, I don't know how it works.

Someone who's brilliant explaining to me later on and actually picks up. If you get glazed eyes and you are not focusing and it'll warn you, keep awake, pull over to the side, rest. Some nerve that car has telling me I'm not ready.

I said, no, I don't believe it. But it was because of envy that they gave them up. Next time you talk about somebody when they're not there and it's not nice, just remind yourself, I'm jealous of her.

I'm jealous of him. Yeah, because people that we feel are below us or hurting, usually don't gossip about them. You feel sorry for them.

Even people who don't know the Lord feel sorry for people who are down and out. No, that's an interesting truth for all of us. Notice this other truth just on the way here to conclusion.

Whenever they were abused, they turned to someone else. They never stayed to argue. The minute you'll find through the book of Acts that they started to heap abuse on Paul, Paul would reason he would preach.

They would say, how do you believe that? He would say, let me show you from the old Testament. And he would quote verses and all of that. The minute people got personal and nasty, fine.

You don't want to receive this message. It's on you, not on me. You feel you're unworthy of eternal life.

You don't want to live forever. You don't want to follow Christ. Fine.

I told it to you. And now I'm leaving. I'm going to turn to someone else.

You never argue and argue with someone about Jesus. No one ever gets converted when you're screaming at them. I said, read, you accept Jesus or I'll knock your head off.

Usually nobody gets converted that way. My friend, Nikki Cruz, who was a gang leader, when he got converted, someone gave him a big Bible and he had it. He wasn't even saved like two days.

And he was the warlord for the Mau Mau gang here in Brooklyn, which went at one time, hijacked the subway line that goes to Coney Island and pistol whipped the conductor and took over the train. And it went express all the way. I mean, express, no stops all the way to Coney Island.

Well, when he got converted, he had this Bible and he went in his old neighborhood and the guy said, what are you, a holy roller and all of that? And then Nikki said, I'm a Christian. No, you're a fool. You're carrying that Bible.

He said, what'd you say? He put down his Bible and had a fight. That's not usually a good way to win people, right? So the minute Paul finds people who are abusive, he turns away. We haven't done that, have we? We like to fight with folks.

It gets personal. We're going to show them. We're going to show that Jehovah witness.

We're going to show that atheist who's mocking Jesus. The minute they got abusive, you gently turn away because there's always someone else you can love and talk to. We don't practice that in evangelism worldwide.

When people heap abuse and they've heard and they don't accept at that time, think of all the people who haven't heard. Turn to them, talk to them. Don't fight with anyone.

What's interesting here is the phrase as the meeting ended and they, some of them believed and accepted Christ. He told them to continue and to cleave to the grace of God. That's not a command that we're not, we're familiar with, are we? What preacher does that? We have it more organized and we're going to fill out a card.

Nothing wrong with that. Billy Graham, we come make a decision for Christ. We're going to take your name.

We're going to follow up. They had none of that. So while we use those things, you never depend on those things because only God can make someone a Christian.

There has to, a miracle has to happen. The others are just helpful if you can use them. But right now in mainland China, which has, is the nation with the most Christians of any nation in the world.

They have none of these things. In some provinces, they're meeting secretly. Other provinces, it's a little bit different.

I learned when I was with my friend Ravi Zacharias preaching in Hong Kong 18 months ago or so. So they're not handing out cards. They're not doing what we, they don't have lights and PowerPoints and all of that.

When you hear church people talk like you can't have church unless you have all of that and a band and drums, like, you know, how are we going to work without proper sound? What kind of sound did Paul and

Barnabas have? In other words, use every advantage God gives you, but that's not what Christianity is about. So he told them to continue. He told them to continue in the grace of God.

Think what that means. Doesn't know when he's going to see him again. And by the way, that was his final message to them.

When he went on to the next town, what could he leave them? No public buildings, no join our church. There was no church. The church was forming.

How were you ordained to anyone to be in charge? I have no idea how these churches prosper. But when I was over there talking to these underground church leaders in Hong Kong and sat with them and ate and just drank it all in and listened, how do you operate? How does it happen there? How is this gospel saving so many people? How is Jesus doing these great things? It's so different than what we're used to. It's more like what happened with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey.

He told them to continue and cling to the grace of God. I want to say that to you, choir members. This week, I want you to continue in the grace of God.

Congregation, look at me, everyone. I want you to continue this week, you that are Christians, in the grace of God. What is the grace of God? What does grace mean? Well, the two definitions that we're most familiar with, one we're most familiar with, grace is God's unmerited favor.

Say that, God's unmerited favor. Say it one more time. He favors us even though we don't earn it.

That's what unmerited means, God's unmerited favor. It's not like you got 99 out of 100 questions right on the test, so the teacher gave you a 99. No, no.

You got 50% right, and he gave you 100. Why? Because he's God. He erased the wrong questions, the wrong answers.

The other definition of grace is this, not only God's unmerited favor, but one of my favorite definitions is God doing for you what you can't do for yourself. That's a great definition of grace, isn't it? Because it not only talks about salvation and forgiveness of sin, but you know what else it talks about? It talks about everyday living. God doing for you today, tomorrow, if you wake up, what you can't do for yourself.

You don't have the power to do it, but he'll do it for you. That's what grace is. Not God watching and saying, all right, let me see how you do it, and I'm going to mark you.

No, God says, no, I'm going to live inside you, and I'll do it for you. It's God who works in you both to will and to do. That's grace.

To the Jewish person back there, God was a judge, not a father. Their spiritual relationship was more judge, and I want to perform so that my judge will say I'm doing okay. Back in that day, the religion of the Old Testament was more perform right, and you'll succeed.

Here, the gospel is, no, I'll live inside of you through the Holy Spirit, and I'll make you what I want you to be. I'll give you the peace. I'll give you the joy.

I'll give you that patience. No, that person who hurt you, I'll take away the bitterness, and I'll give you forgiveness for that person. I'll do it, and that way, I'll get all the glory.

It won't be you doing it to impress me. It'll be me working in you, so my name will be glorified. Come on.

Can we all say amen to that? That's the grace of God. He told them to continue until he saw them again in the grace of God. I think that can be summarized by two things, this week or today or every day.

Let's depend on the fact that God is my father and your father. Every day we wake up, wouldn't it be great if the first words out of our mouth was just father? Not judge, father. But pass the symbol.

I've messed up since I've been a Christian. So have I. He's still your father. The father doesn't get rid of bad kids.

He works with them. He's patient with them. Father.

Father. Everybody say father. Father.

To continue in the grace of God is to live with a consciousness that I am a born-again believer, Jim Cimbala is, with all the false that you see and others that you don't know about, but God is still my father, and he loves me. Yeah, but I see this. I know he sees all of that and more, and he still loves me.

That's continuing in the grace of God. Satan will try to tempt you to move away from that and make God just your judge, and then you're going to have anxiety, and you won't have peace and rest. You won't come in and worship freely.

You won't come in with your petitions and pray because you'll be afraid. You'll be hiding like Adam and Eve did in the garden. But to continue in the grace of God is to say, thank you, Jesus, that you made it possible for me to have a father.

God is my father. He's not creator only. He's not just holy God.

He's not just all-powerful and all-wise and omnipresent everywhere at the same time, but he is my father, Abba, father. He's my father. How am I going to make it today through? I don't know, but my father's going to help me.

Yeah, what are you going to do with these problems you have? I don't know, but my father's going to help me. What father wouldn't help their child? What father? My wife and I were talking about a certain situation. What father or mother is not moved with compassion when one of their children or sons-in-law, daughter-in-law feels any kind of pain? You're moved with bowels of compassion.

It doesn't matter when my oldest girl was away from God, did I love her less because she was rebellious? No, the truth, I loved her more. That's what love of a father does. So he said, continue in that.

Wake up every day and remember God is your father and he'll do for you what you can't do for yourself. When you're facing mountains that you know are too high, don't struggle and try. Say, father, now send your spirit to work in me.

You're going to get me through this. You're going to help me with this besetting sin. You're going to help me with this situation, this pressure.

My heart is broken. You have to heal it. I cannot heal myself.

I remember praying countless times with Pastor Ware, founded the prayer band here, such a godly man. I wasn't worthy to be called his pastor. We would pray in the front of our former building and stand at the altar before the Tuesday night prayer meeting and just join hands or just shoulder to shoulder and he would often pray these words.

God, Pastor Simba and I are coming to you and you know this thing is too big for us. He would say that a thousand times. It's too big for us, but it's not too big for you.

It's too big for us. I can't do it, but I'm continuing in the grace of God. I not only have a father, but I have a God who's going to work in me and give me power that I don't have.

That's continuing in the grace of God. So they stir up the crowd and the crowd now kicks them out of town. Did you notice that? That's doing exactly what Jesus said.

When they kick you out of town and they act nasty, shake the dust off from your feet. That's something we don't think too much about today, do we? But when Paul was getting roused out of town, he stopped and he shook the dust off his sandals, the dust of that place as a protest against them. Just let God be witness.

We told you the truth and you not only didn't accept it, you treated us mean. That's on you now. Shake the dust off from your feet.

It's a warning now. Jesus told them to do that. That's not being mean or arrogant.

That's like, I told you everything. And now I'm going to turn to someone else. And it wasn't nice to kick us out of town.

When people are mean, we don't act mean back, but we let them know, look, I don't deserve this. I just told you the truth about Jesus. But this is a solemn thing because the Bible goes further.

Did you know what the Bible says about us preachers and Christians? That if they reject the speaker, they reject God. Then when they reject Jesus, they reject God. Jesus said, and when they reject you, they reject the one the father has sent me.

So what's happening right now, sometimes when I'm preaching here, it's happened over the years. Someone gets upset. They come in here to hear the music or they just stroll in here.

And then as I begin to preach about Jesus, that name divides, doesn't it? That name is like a match stick. It sets things either on fire for good or bad, and people will storm out. I don't want to hear about this stuff, sin.

I don't need a savior. Who are you? But they're not rejecting me. They're not rejecting us when we talk to them.

They're rejecting the one that sent us to tell them. And now they left town. When will they be back? I don't know.

I know. But Paul Barnabas, we love you. You're the ones who told us about Jesus.

You're our spiritual father. When are you coming back? We don't know. We're on a trip that we're being led by the Holy Spirit.

We don't know if we'll ever be back. So what should we do? I mean, do you have literature for us? No, just continue in the grace of God. Just know he's your father every day and know that he'll help you no matter what you go through.

Oh, praise God. Isn't Christianity wonderful? And they left. And instead of the people being like, what are we going to do? Paul and Barnabas are gone.

No. The disciples were more and more filled. That's the meaning of the Greek verb there.

The disciples were more and more filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. That is another definition of Christians that you don't hear anyone talk about. You don't hear people say, make sure you continue in the grace of God.

That's not a phrase we use. We should use it more. But you talk to most pastors, how's the church going? Well, praise God.

We were having 200. Now we're up to 400 and Sunday school in the building. We just got.

Very few pastors say, oh, pastor, the disciples, the believers are filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. That was the norm back then. Think what we complain and get depressed about.

Now, imagine Paul and Barnabas have left. They were kicked out of town because of their message. And now you're the new believers that have to remain.

How is the population going to treat you? You think you'd be afraid. You think you'd be forlorn. You think you'd be sad.

You think you'd be depressed. Nope. The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Praise God. We have Jesus. We have a heavenly father.

Who's going to be with us. God's going to help us through everything. And think about how many of us today are moping around, go to a Christian bookstore, how to overcome depression, how to overcome this.

We're all victims. And your dad was an alcoholic. And that's why you can't expect to be just functioning and happy.

And that was totally unknown to any of them. They were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. You want to see a mature believer? They're filled with joy.

The more mature you are, the more you're filled with the Holy Spirit. You automatically are happy. You show me someone up and down or depressed all the time.

I'll show you somebody that's lost connection somehow with Jesus Christ. They were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. What does filled mean there? And if the Holy Spirit is a person just as much God as Jesus and the father, what does, what does filled mean? It means controlled.

Can't be filled with a person. They were controlled more and more by the Holy Spirit. He was gaining more and more access and control in their lives.

Every believer has the Holy Spirit inside of them, or you're not a believer, but then these were more and more filled with the Holy Spirit. And why were they joyful? Because they were filled with the Holy Spirit. We try to get happy instead of just getting more of God in our lives, more God in your life, more God controlling you more, more spirit moving and working.

You'll be happy. Trust me. You'll be singing.

You'll be praising God. Did I ever tell you about the woman so filled with God came into my office 25 years ago, 20 years ago in the other building. And because of her husband, who was a drug addict, she had just tested positive HIV and she had two children.

She works in one of the ministries, still thinks she does here in the church. She came in my office and she would just praise God, Pastor Simba, how are you? And all of that. And I said, well, what do you want to see me about? And she said, well, I didn't know if you knew this, but I thought you, you should know.

And my husband was a drug addict and he got the virus and now I've contracted, but no, it's going to be fine Pastor Simba. Well, how can I counsel you? Well, I have a nine-year-old and a seven-year-old, and I just wondered, what do you think you're my pastor? Should I tell them that? Would they understand that? I know God's going to work it out for me. Praise God.

He's with me. But I just was wondering, I need a little wisdom with the children. And I'm like, and I told her what I thought best as we talked about, you know, Pastor Simba, I sense you're a little down today.

I hope what I told you didn't. I'm telling you the truth. I sense you're a little down.

Could I pray for you? How do you explain that? She was filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. We're trying to change circumstances. God's trying to change us because if he changes us, the circumstances will never overwhelm you.

Come on. Can we say amen to that? So that raises the question, how many of us are filled with the Holy Spirit? Controlled, yielded, available to him 24-7. And how many of our lives is he working so that he's producing joy in dire circumstances? Instead of feeling sorry for themselves, they were more and more filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Well, when's Paul coming back? And Barnabas, your spiritual fathers, where are you going to meet? The people just kicked them out of town. If they find out you're a Christian, you'll be in trouble. Yeah, but praise God, we're more and more filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

You might lose your job when they find out you're... They were more and more filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. We're going to pray on Tuesday night for everyone who comes. Not we serve communion, we get filled with the Holy Spirit.

How many want to be more filled with the Holy Spirit? Not just have him in us, but him controlling us so that it affects every area of our life. Close your eyes with me. If there's sadness in the building, if you're sad because you're not a Christian, I would love to pray for you because I offer you as Paul did to the folks in the synagogue, I offer to you that you can have all your sins forgiven.

I don't care what you've done. You can be forgiven and you can be in right standing with God. You can come into his presence.

Something the law would never provide just by simple faith in Jesus Christ. And nobody dare add anything more to that. Just through Jesus, you have access to God.

You have right standing with God in a moment just because of Jesus. That's the good news. But a second group of people, if you're here and life has wounded you and you're sad today.

I've gone through times in my life, a lot of sadness, had a battle against a broken heart, sadness, people being mean, plans don't work out, sadness inside. But the Bible says, rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I say rejoice.

You can't be strong if you're sad for the joy of the Lord is your strength. The joy of the Lord, not your joy. The joy of the Lord is your strength.

The joy that the Lord gives through the Holy Spirit. If you're here and would just like to close the service by being in the front with me and let me say a prayer. Anyone just want to come up to the front? Just come.

Pastor, been battling with sadness all this week. Just this heaviness, this sadness. Somebody did something so mean.

You're in the choir. You're an alto, you're a soprano, you're a tenor. Just come right to the front.

I want God to fill me with his joy. I don't want to be moping around. I have too many things to be thanking him for.

If they could rejoice in Antioch and Pisidia as new believers, more and more filled with the Holy Spirit. I want that in my life. Lord, bind up every broken heart.

You're the friend of a wounded heart. You heal broken heart. You said in your word that when you came, Jesus, you would heal the broken hearted.

By your spirit, diffuse your joy through our souls. Help us to look away from our circumstances and look at Jesus and his love for us and the great salvation we have and all our sins are gone. And if we die today, we're going to be with you forever.

How can we be sad? We have to be glad today, Lord. Fix us where we're broken. Help us where we're weak.

Renew our minds so that our thought life is different. Renew our minds so that we think differently. Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on your people today.

Spirit of the living God, fall fresh upon your people today. Come like a cloud and come down upon us and stir up rivers of joy within us, Lord. Put a smile on every lip.

Joy in our souls. We thank you for Jesus. We thank you for the gospel.

We thank you for what we've learned today. Help us to continue every hour in the grace of God. Remembering that we have a father who loves us and that you are more than able to do that which we need done in our lives.

But it'll be your power, not our effort. And keep us more and more filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. Bless your people now and forevermore.

Grant us peace. Watch over us and keep us, we pray in Jesus' name. And everyone said.

Everybody turn and ladies with ladies, men with men, hug a bunch of people.

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