

Book of Acts Series - Part 42 | He's Alive

by Jim Cymbala

Paul's defense before Felix and Festus teaches us the importance of standing up for ourselves and defending our faith, even in the face of false accusations, and trusting in God's plan for our lives.

Duration: 38:50

Scripture: Psalm 16:8, Ecclesiastes 3:1, Matthew 6:33, Acts 9:1-9, Acts 24:24 - 25:12, Acts 28:30-31

Topics: "Book Of Acts"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker encourages listeners to engage with the historical narratives in the Bible by using their imagination and asking questions. He uses the example of Paul's trial before Felix and Festus to illustrate this point. The speaker highlights the two-year period of relaxed detention that Paul experienced after enduring hardships and emphasizes the importance of recognizing and accepting the different seasons in life. He also praises Paul for his rational and logical defense during the trial, noting that he spoke for himself without the aid of a lawyer.

Transcript

As we continue our study in the book of Acts, what I'm trying to do now is very, very difficult. I haven't been challenged like this to try to pray through and explain something to you, because what we want to do here is look at a snapshot of three chapters in the book of Acts. And why we have to put them together is because this is a part of the New Testament many people are not clear on.

Paul, as we've learned, has completed three missionary journeys. He's gone from persecutor of the church to apostle of the Christian church, because Jesus appeared to him. And now he's risking his life.

That's how real it is for people who say this is all a bunch of made-up fiction. That's strange that somebody would be risking his life and going to jail for a lie, something he made up. So now he goes to Jerusalem, as we've learned, and they almost kill him in the area around the temple.

But the Roman soldiers rescue him. And the Roman soldiers, after they find out that there's a plot on his life, they take him up northwest to a place called Caesarea. And in Caesarea, he is under the custody of the governor there named Felix.

And Felix calls for the Jewish people who are making accusations against him, because remember Roman law is the law. Romans control the Roman Empire, and everyone is like a kind of like a vassal

state. You're under the rule of the emperor, who at this time, I believe, was emperor Claudius.

Felix is trying to find out what is this a bunch of religious stuff? Why are they trying to kill him? And I can't have riots breaking out, because I'm the governor. They'll recall me back, and I'll get in trouble in Rome. So Paul is before Felix.

And first, as we learned last week, the Jewish accusers, religious establishment, make their accusations against Paul. Now Paul's going to make a response. So let's just pick up some of his response.

Now look, he's in front of Felix. He's in front of these accusers, and his life is hanging in the balance. So let's see what he says.

The governor then motioned to Paul to speak, and Paul said, I know that you have been a judge over this nation for many years, and so I'm happy. I'm happy to defend myself before you. As you can find out for yourself, it was no more than 12 days ago that I went to Jerusalem to worship.

The Jews did not find me arguing with anyone in the temple, nor did they find me stirring up the people, either in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. Nor can they give you proof of the accusations they now bring against me. I do admit this to you.

I worship the God of our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, etc., by following that way. Now we heard that Christians were called the Nazarenes because they followed Jesus in Nazareth. Now we find out one of the names for Christianity was the Way, the Way, capital W there, which they say is false.

But I also believe in everything written in the law of Moses and the books of the prophets. I have the same hope in God that these themselves have, namely that all people, both the good and the bad, will rise from death. And so I do my best always to have a good, clear conscience, to have a clear conscience before God and people.

Then Felix, we're up a few verses, who was well-informed about the Way, brought the hearing to a close. And he said, when the commander, Lysias, arrives, he told them, I will decide your case. He ordered the officer in charge of Paul to keep him under guard, but to give him some freedom and allow his friends to provide for his needs.

Next verse. After two years had passed, Portia's festus succeeded Felix as governor, and Paul's in that detention, but relaxed detention. No manacles, no handcuffs, no chains, no nasty prison.

Felix wanted to gain favor with the Jews, so he left Paul in prison for those two years. So let's just stop here. So now we see Paul in front of Felix, and he makes his defense.

And then Felix, the part I left out, keeps talking to Paul and asking him to come. In fact, Paul witnesses to him, but Felix is one of those people who tries to live on the fence. Something about Paul's message touches him, but he says, maybe tomorrow I'll decide.

Always remember this. The only day for salvation is today. Nobody knows about tomorrow.

And on top of that, the Bible tells us he's looking for a little payoff from some of Paul's friends. So he lets Paul be there for two years. Now he's succeeded by festus.

So Felix, the governor, is succeeded by Festus. And now Festus has this prisoner, this man that everyone's trying to kill and persecute and make accusations against. So let's see what Festus does.

When Paul arrived in front of Festus, the Jews who had come from Jerusalem stood around him and started making many serious charges against him, which they were not able to prove. But Paul defended himself. I've done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against the Roman emperor.

But Festus wanted to gain favor with the Jews. So he asked Paul, would you be willing to go to Jerusalem and be tried on these charges before me there? But Paul knew that they would probably try to kill him on the way. So Paul said, I'm standing before the emperor's own judgment court, where I should be tried.

I have done no wrong to the Jews as you yourself well know. If I have broken the law and done something for which I deserve the death penalty, I do not ask to escape it. I'll die.

But if there's no truth in the charges they bring against me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to the emperor. Then Festus, after conferring with his advisors, answered, you have appealed to the emperor, so to the emperor you will go.

And now he's going to go to Rome. But that's better than going to Jerusalem, because they're waiting to kill him in Jerusalem. And one thing about the Roman empire, they really tried to honor the concept of law and accusations and give people trials.

And if you were a citizen, as Paul was, and he's already used his citizenship as we've learned, he figures I have a better shot there. Now God told him he was going to go to Rome, but he never thought he was going to go this route as a prisoner, right? Now Festus is stuck with them until he can get them to Rome. So who comes to visit Festus? But King Herod, that's the Jewish leader of the people, King Herod.

There were a few Herods. Remember the King Herod when Jesus was born? How many remember what he did when he found out Jesus might have been born in Bethlehem? What did he do? Yeah, he went and had the children killed. And then there was another Herod who had John the Baptist killed, gave the order to have him beheaded.

Now this is another in this beautiful family, and this Herod visits with his lucky lady. Sometime later King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to pay a visit of welcome to Festus. After they had been there several days, Festus explained Paul's situation to the king.

There's a man here who was left a prisoner by Felix. And when I went to Jerusalem, the Jewish chief priests and elders brought charges against him and asked me to condemn him. His opponents stood up, but they did not accuse him of any of the evil crimes that I thought they would.

All they had were some arguments with him about their own religion and about a man named Jesus who has died, but Paul claims that he's a lie. And so ends the reading for today. So we see Paul before Felix.

We see Paul before Festus and his accusers. And then we see Paul in yet another meeting, which maybe we'll look at these three chapters from a different aspect. Before the governor, Festus, and now King Herod and his wife.

And God inspired Luke to write this. So the first question you ask is, why? Why is this in the Bible? What are the lessons for us today? Is it just history? Do we just supposed to read about a trial? Now brothers and sisters, when you read these parts of the Bible like this, and there's a historical narrative going on, and then Felix, and then Festus, and then they call Paul in, and then other people came. What we have to learn to do is to use your imagination and picture what's going on, and then start asking questions.

So you just don't read it. You read it and you step back and you say, okay, Felix is the Roman governor. He's in charge.

He gives one word and Paul is dead. There's Paul. Now they call him in.

There's those accusers and they're railing, railing, accusing, accusing. Now Paul has a chance. He defends himself.

What's he really saying? Let me step back. What's his rationale? Okay, now they put him back under detention, but relaxed detention for a while. And then he lets him lay there for two years.

And then Festus becomes the governor. Festus doesn't know what to do with him. But remember, you mistreat a citizen, you're going to get in trouble.

So now Festus got to figure out what to do. He tries to understand the charges. And then he says, go to Jerusalem.

Paul said, no, no way. I'm not going to Jerusalem. I'm not going to Jerusalem.

The Bible tells us they had a plot as they had before that when they moved them, they would kill them. He says, okay, you're not going to go to Jerusalem. Paul says, no, I'm a citizen.

You want to try me? You try me before the Roman governor. Before the Roman governor, if you're not going to make a decision, I appeal to Caesar and off to Rome he's going to go. He's going to end up in Italy now.

And he's going to evangelize there. And we're going to find out what happens and his trip there. That's what the book of Acts tells us about.

So while he's waiting to move him to Rome, King Herod visits with his lovely missus and they bring him into a room. And now Paul has, you know, look, you're the Jewish king. Can you figure this thing out? Because I don't know what to do with this guy.

Because they say he did these terrible things. I tried them out. I heard them out.

He didn't do anything bad. It's a bunch of religious questions. He didn't kill anybody.

In fact, it's about this man called Jesus who died, but Paul claims he's alive. Now, one thing on the way here to my few little things I'd like to say, did you notice something in the story there? For two years, Paul was kept under relaxed detention. The steps of a righteous person are ordered by the Lord.

After all the tension and travel and beatings and prison and all that he went through, God gives him two years to relatively relax and get his strength back. See, there's seasons in life. Everything doesn't go on the way it's been going on.

You have changes in life. And many of us have a hard time accepting changes and seasons because we want the same old, same old, because we feel secure in that. But you know what? When your children get older and they move out of the house, you're in a different season.

When your daughter is in the third grade, it's one season. When she's in high school, it's another season. There's seasons in life.

There's seasons in a church. There's seasons in your ministry. And God, in his mercy, I see it as his mercy, gives Paul 24 months of good food, friends taking care of him, no laying in a prison like Silas and he were in Philippi where they got beat half to death, none of that.

Relaxed detention, food, changes of clothes, and a chance to recover his equilibrium. Because what we've been reading, this guy is something else, Paul. What has he been through? Every place he goes, there's a riot.

Every place he goes, there's trouble in many cases. And then sometimes he stays for three years in Ephesus, but there's always opposition. There's preaching, there's writing, there's praying for people, there's restoring people that fall backwards in their faith.

And Paul's doing all of this, all of it, all of it. And did you know that if you're a Christian rubber band and you stretch the rubber band too far, even a Christian rubber band will break. Christians can have nervous breakdowns because there's laws to the body.

There's laws to your nerves and your emotions. That's why workaholics can really get in trouble, can't they? Yeah, but I'm doing it for Jesus. You'll still break down because there's laws.

And now there's this season. I noticed that in my own life. I learned it as I've gone through different seasons.

But when I counsel people, people many times don't understand it's not always going to be the way it is. It's going to change. So relax.

It's a different season, different season. Oh, but I like the way it was 20 years ago. No, it's not 20 years ago.

It's a different season. We want God's blessing and more of it, but it's never going to be the way it was. Remember how they dressed in the 70s and 80s? But then again, in fashions, what goes around comes around.

What decade was it when the women were wearing platform shoes about that high? What was that? 70s? 80s? Yeah. We had a girl wearing an Atlantic Avenue. She wore platform shoes so high.

She came out of church. She was all blessed and jumping up and praising God. And she wore that and she broke her ankle from her shoes, praising God.

I don't know if that was led by the spirit or jumping up and down, but those platform shoes were that high. Now we look back and we go, that was a different season. How about you? You know, there's different seasons.

You don't always stay at the same job. Sometimes God moves you to that job. You don't always stay in the same church.

Sometimes God moves you for a reason. Sometimes God takes you out of your position in the business world. And he says, no, now I'm going to have you involved with more ministry.

Sometimes God takes you out of the ministry. You're in the church and moves you to another ministry. Sometimes God sends you out as a missionary before you were just a deacon, or not just a deacon, a deacon and a deacon.

It's their seasons. And to understand God's leading, you have to be open to seasons. So what do we learn from all of this? What can we gather? A couple of things.

Number one, do you notice that Paul defended himself? Paul used his Roman citizenship and said, no, you remember when he got arrested there, they were about to beat him and scourge him. And he said, excuse me, are you allowed to beat a Roman citizen without him being tried? And they went, what? You're a Roman citizen? He said, yep. And they went, whoa, whoa, untie him.

Let him go. You're not allowed to beat a Roman citizen without a trial. You're not allowed to beat a Roman citizen.

So notice this. Paul is defending himself. A lot of Christians think that if opposition comes against you, you just have to stand there and just take it and suffer as a martyr for Jesus Christ without opening your mouth and saying a peep.

Oh, he's defending himself. He doesn't trust God. No, he's defending himself.

He's trusting God, but he's defending himself. I want you to take a little portrait. We're going to take a portrait here for these few minutes of what this great man of God looks like and how did he operate and what does he want to teach us and what does he want to say to us? He defended himself.

He not only defended himself, he was rational and logical. And he said, look, hold the phone. All this stuff that they're saying, they can't prove one thing.

They cannot prove one thing. He had no lawyer like Kevin Quinn to help him through the trial. So what he did was he just spoke for himself.

They had attorneys and all that. And he just spoke for himself. He says, listen, hey, Felix, listen up.

I wasn't doing any of that stuff. You'll never find anyone saying I made trouble anywhere in the temple. This is all bogus.

He defended himself, which we have a right to do. Whenever you're falsely accused, you have a right to defend yourself. Now, what that teaches us is you should never be looking for trouble.

There's enough trouble that will come by itself. You don't have to look for it. Some people have actually, in church history, become martyrs almost looking for martyrdom because they thought that was a path to heaven.

That is not. That's what, by the way, in another religion, suicide bombers are taught. But Christians do not look to die.

We look to live. We look to be safe and be with our families. When we're in a situation where we see, whoa, for the sake of Christ, not for our wrongdoing, hopefully, but for the sake of Christ, we have to take one on the chin and we're going to be in trouble.

Then so be it. We trust the Lord, though he slay me, yet I'll trust him. But otherwise, we're allowed to reason, not angry.

Notice the poise that he has. He's not screaming back. He's not, I'm going to give him a piece of my mind.

So let's look at this. As a Christian, you have a right to use your American citizenship. You have a right to use logic and reason.

You're allowed to state facts, and you're allowed to then just state it. Now, if Felix would have said, I don't care what you say, kill him, then it is, it is what it is. But some Christians have got in it that you're not allowed to defend yourself or state the truth.

If you're a real Christian, you just take one for the team. Even Jesus Christ, up to a point, would reason, why do you accuse me in the book of John? Why do you say what I'm doing is evil? I only do the things the Father shows me. He was defending himself.

And then there comes a point where you go, and now into your hands, I commit my spirit. But notice when he defended himself, you want to talk about what a spirit-filled person looks like? A lot of people say they relate gifts of the Spirit to being filled with the Spirit. And gifts of the Spirit are very important.

But I want you to notice something else here as you look at Paul. As he defends himself, he has Holy Spirit poise and self-control. These guys are going off, making false accusations, buttering up Felix, trying to get on his good side.

Not Paul. Paul says, okay, let me explain what's going on here. These are all false accusations.

And I'd like to bring that to your attention. When you are led by the Spirit and filled with the Spirit, this is what God wants for our lives. He gives you poise under pressure.

Everyone's going crazy, making accusations, making up stories, and all that. And Paul doesn't go, what? This stuff is crazy. That's not true.

I never did any of those things. Please, Felix, listen to me. No, he has perfect poise.

And he says, none of that's true. None of it's true. And no, don't send me to Jerusalem.

I appeal to Caesar. He's under self-control. The Spirit is leading him.

And he has poise. Isn't it true that for a lot of us, we're spiritual until we're under intense pressure? And then something else comes out other than Jesus, right? I was once in a car accident on the campus of the University of Rhode Island on my way to play a basketball game against Brown University in our own field house. And I had friends visiting me from out of town.

And we were going up a hill right outside my dorm. And suddenly, the car ahead of us came to the stop sign. It was a hill.

Suddenly, it got put in reverse and started coming back at us as fast as it could move. We were in a Volkswagen, of all things, the bug. And the collision was huge.

And my friend who was driving got just bloodied up terribly on his face. Another friend in the front seat was hurt a little bit. And the collision, the impact was so strong that the seat came back and hit me so hard in my shinbone that to this day, I have a dent on my shinbone from that impact.

I jumped out of the car. My friend was bleeding. I went to the front car, one trying to figure out what to do.

And there was a man, older man, taking his daughter home because it was the start of a Thanksgiving holiday. But we were playing a game that night. But she was going to go home.

And he had a heart attack and fell forward and hit the car into reverse and fell on the gas pedal. And that's how it happened. And he died in my arms.

I didn't know what to do. He just heard gagging. And then he died right there.

And she went into shock. So the police came. They took care of him and all that.

Now I got my friend bleeding. So I grabbed my friend and I said, look, the campus infirmary is just around the corner, down the block next to the dorm where I was. So I take him and he's bleeding all over.

The blood's all over me. And I walk in. And it was an odd hour.

And the main people had gone home. But they had a student nurse or a new nurse on duty there. No doctor, just this nurse.

And I walked in the door. And she was all night white and dressed nice. And she saw me.

And she recognized me as the captain of the basketball team. And she went, hi, Jim. And I went pulling behind me.

I said, you got to help my friend. And you couldn't even see his face. And she went, ah.

And I went, you know what? We're not in a good place right now. We're not in a good place. She had all that medical training, I guess.

And she had a nice white uniform on. I was in a heap of trouble. It's like that in our Christian lives, isn't it? We're doing good.

We're praising the Lord. And then just somebody gets up in our grill. Somebody does something.

Somebody steps on us. Somebody cheats us. Someone says something nasty.

But Paul has Holy Spirit poise. How many want more every day, 24-7, Spirit-given poise? What a terrible testimony it would be if we act crazy like the people who are acting crazy around us. We're supposed to be different than the people around us.

Not just different because we don't do dope and we don't smoke weed and we don't do this and that. No. But we're supposed to be different because when everyone else is acting nasty and ugly, we refuse.

We don't go there because the Spirit helps us. Last thing on that. He not only has poise.

He says to Felix, you've been tried for his life. He goes, I'm so happy I can share with you my story. Happy.

And that word is no place else used in the New Testament. That Greek word is not used anywhere else. He said, I'm just delighted.

This is beautiful. You know, Paul, they're trying you for your life. I know.

But I'm just so happy that I have a chance to tell you what Jesus has done for me. And my life is in his hands. Whatever decision you think you're making, you can't do anything unless he permits you to make that decision.

So I have poise and I'm even happy to tell you under pressure and are surrounded by hate. Listen, when surrounded by hate, we can be happy. Can I get an amen? When surrounded by pressure, we can have poise.

And when surrounded by hate, we can be happy. We notice also here as we read these passages that Paul defended himself, had this wonderful poise and then trusted himself into God's hands. And now we're watching him.

He uses his citizenship. He's under control. He defends himself while he does it.

He has poise, joy, joy. And now we just notice the main accusation made against him. Festus says to Agrippa, look, the guy's appealed to go to Caesar.

He really hasn't committed a crime. But since we learn later, since he appealed to Caesar, he's going to go to Caesar. He's going to Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire.

But, you know, King Herod, I'm going to bring him in and you can hear him talk yourself. But the only thing that they talk about is it's a bunch of religious stuff, the temple, the sacrifices. But the main thing they say about Paul is this.

It's about something to do with a guy named Jesus, a man named Jesus who died. But Paul says he's alive. Now, that tells me something about Christianity so different than maybe the way we identify Christianity today.

Even those of you who have grown up in church, listen up now. There was a man named Jesus who could feel pain, who went on a cross and gave his life. Leviticus tells us that God gave this maxim, the life is in the blood.

To cover sins, you've got to kill an animal. And the shedding of the blood means there's been an innocent sacrifice made ceremonially to cover your sin. But that was just a figure.

That was just a symbol of what God really had in mind one day when the time was right. He would send his own son, a man. A ghost doesn't have blood.

Jesus became man. When he died on the cross, he felt the nails. He felt the spear.

He felt the crown of thorns. He was a man. And he died.

Why did he die? He did not die for anything he ever did. He died simply as a sacrificial substitute for you and I. God loves us so much. And our sins are so horrible and aggravated, especially people like me who grew up in a home where people went to church.

And I was taught the Bible from the youngest age. So I sinned against great light. And how about you? Even if you didn't go to church, you still had a conscience.

Your conscience was telling you that's wrong, that's right. So all we like sheep have gone astray. Isn't that the truth? We all come from different backgrounds, but we can all relate to each other because we're all sinners.

Am I right or wrong? And this man, Jesus, died. And of course, Paul's message was how he died and why he died and where he died. But this Paul says he's still alive.

He's alive. He died. He's alive.

That's impossible. That would take a supernatural work. That was Paul's message.

And now I understand more about Paul and I understand more about how early Christianity was. Christianity wasn't about going to church on Sunday and they never had any buildings like this. They didn't have a New Testament written yet.

You know what? To most of us, Christianity has been come. Unfortunately, I know to me growing up for sure, it's where you go on Sunday, the songs you sing, and then the mental concepts that you have about Jesus born of a virgin crucified under Pontius Pilate rose from the dead. He's coming again.

God has all power. Jesus can heal. You can pray in Jesus name.

We get formulas and doctrines and we go to a building and that's for the most part, the Christianity of most of us, but not to Paul. Paul's Christianity was this. There was a man who died for my sins, but he's alive.

I saw him. I talked to him every day. He often talks back to me.

He's alive. I wonder what percentage of people in this building live every day with an alive Jesus to their consciousness. We have compartments now for Christianity.

It's Tuesday. Let's go to the prayer meeting. Come bring your children.

That's good. And now it's Sunday. Which service should I go to? And when I read the Bible, oh, that's another good fact about Jesus, but don't you get it? He's alive.

He's alive. To Paul, it wasn't a religion of doctrine only. Doctrine's important, but it was way more than doctrine.

It wasn't just meeting together with other Christians. That's an important thing. The main thing was 24 seven.

He's alive. I can talk to him. He can talk to me.

He'll direct me. He has a plan for my life. He's alive.

I don't have a dead God. You'll find out as you study the book of Acts that although the cross and the meaning of the cross is mentioned over and over again, the emphasis that they have to a much greater degree than us today is this. He rose from the dead.

He's alive. He's alive. Paul, how do you know he's alive? Listen, I used to persecute Christians.

I hated the name of Jesus. I used to haul people into court. I had them killed, but one day on the road to Damascus at noontime, I was knocked over my mount and a light brighter than the sun shone on me, and I heard a voice saying, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? And I said, who are you, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus.

I'm alive. I'm not dead. I want to be the center of your life, not a doctrine, not a church, not the Brooklyn Tabernacle.

On a Thursday night at midnight and you're in trouble, how could the Brooklyn Tabernacle help you? You don't need the hands together, Jesus, to talk to him, to have him talk back to us, to love him. No wonder Paul has this poise, because as the Psalmist said, I have said the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. He doesn't see only Porsches.

He doesn't see only, I'm sorry, Felix or Festus. He doesn't see only King Agrippa. He sees Jesus.

He knows Jesus is in the room. He knows that Jesus is with him. So let them do what they're gonna do.

You can't take Jesus from him. Listen, they can take everything from us. They can take your money.

They'll tax us till we have nothing left. They could put us in jail. But even if they put us in jail, they can't take Jesus from us.

Come on, he's alive. We have Jesus. My best days in my whole life have been when I'm conscious that Jesus is alive, and I'm listening for him, and I'm looking for his directions, and I'm conscious that he's with me.

You want to know the worst days of my life? When it's only Jim Cimballa. Oh, don't you know, believe in the Bible? Yeah, but there's no living Jesus. You can believe in the Bible and live for months with no living Jesus, with no consciousness that he's alive.

Never consult him. Never run to him when you're in trouble. When you're feeling depression coming on, instead of running to Jesus and letting him speak words of encouragement and comfort, we just wallow in our own self-pity.

If you're here today wallowing in your own self-pity, why don't you open your heart and say, Jesus, I know you're alive. Now help me. Speak to me.

We love him because he first loved us. I love my mother more than I love my father. In this sense, my mother's alive.

My dad's gone. I loved my father, and I'll see him again. But I can't say humanly, I think of him every day and love him like I love my mom, because my mom's alive.

This is why so few people have deep love for Jesus, because to him, he's not alive to them. How do you love doctrine? How do you love a building? No, Paul says we love him because he first loved us. John tells us that.

It's the difference between a creed and a living Christ. Then when everyone's filled with hate, you can be sweet because Jesus is right there. Don't you see him? I don't see anybody.

No, he's there. You just don't see him. He's right there.

Trust me, he's right there. How many have ever had moments in your life when people thought you were alone and you were in trouble, but you knew the Lord was with you? How many have ever had it? You knew the Lord was there. Oh, you're just making that up.

No, we're not. He's alive. He's alive.

Why was Paul getting in all that trouble? Because he said there was a man named Jesus who died, but now he's alive. How would all of our lives change if we just had a living Jesus? Sometimes you can watch from the side here. You see some people worship the choir.

You see you worship. I saw when I was in Hong Kong with those underground pastors, and I see you do the same. You worship as if Jesus is six feet above your head.

Oh, he's alive to you. That's why you sing that way. That's why you weep sometimes.

What is she weeping for? No, if you saw what she saw, you'd be weeping too. You just don't get it. It's not like that.

And then other people are just looking around. Sing along to somebody. Oh, he's alive.

Do you know that he's right here with me right now? Did you know on the platform, he's watching how we sing to him? He's alive. He's alive. What are you facing today? He's going to handle it.

He's alive. Put your hand out. Let your hand go into his hand.

He's alive. He wants to walk with you. He wants you to have more than a relation.

He wants you to have fellowship. We got some women in the church that I've ministered to, and guys too, but more women, it seems, that have been abused by their earthly father. And although they have a relationship with their father, they don't have fellowship with their father.

Why? Because he did horrible things to them. So now, is there a birth certificate? Is that the biological father? Yep. Is there fellowship? No fellowship.

And that's the way we can get to be with Jesus. We have a doctrine. I'm born again.

I've been in the church for 40 years, but is he alive? Do you talk to him? Do you listen to him? Do you love him every day? Do you tell him, Cristo te amo, Senor. I love you, Jesus. Do you whisper to him during the day? Do you talk to him? Do you look to him? Are you just like, oh, how many want to be more crazy in

love with Jesus every day, and more conscious that he's real? The consciousness that Jesus is alive will keep us from untold problems and temptations.

Just the consciousness that he's alive. I feel his presence here with us right now. Would you just close your eyes? Lord, if there's anyone here in the room who is not a born again Christian, help them right now to just say, God, forgive me of my sins.

I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. He was that man, yet God, God, yet man, who died on a cross 2,000 years ago. I believe he died for me.

He bore my sins. I put my faith in him. Make me one of your children today by my simply trusting you.

I can't change anything. I can't do anything, but I can trust you. Let that happen, Lord, to anyone who needs you today.

We're so happy they don't have to come to an altar or join a church. They just need Jesus, the living Jesus. Now, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, all the good things that we need today, Lord, may you pour it upon each one of us in abundance.

Bless the families of that young man who stabbed that other student to death, Lord. Whatever bullying was going on, what a tragedy. Bless the family that lost that son, Lord, so young.

Bring comfort and let the living Jesus be manifested to them. Bless the family and that young man who faces all this trouble now, Lord. Protect our children, God.

When we pray on Tuesday, protect them from bullying, in cyberspace, physically, every kind of bullying, Lord. We're so happy we have a living Jesus and a loving Jesus that we can go to, and we love you back because you first loved us, Lord. So, be with us as we dismiss in Jesus' name.

And everyone said, I want you to turn around and hug a bunch of people. If you want to say hello to me, I'm in the front here. If you're visiting for the first time, I'd love to say hello.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25686.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jim-cymbala/book-of-acts-series-part-42-hes-alive/>

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