

Men Who Turned the World Upside Down

by Tim Conway

Tim Conway's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of the Gospel and the active role of Christians in impacting their world for Christ.

Duration: 1:05:30

Scripture: Isaiah 40:31, John 6:37, Acts 17:6, 1 Corinthians 3:6, Philippians 3:3

Topics: "Faith And Prayer", "Gospel Proclamation"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of deep dependence on God, a willingness to die for the Gospel, and the call to proclaim the facts about Jesus Christ without the need for eloquence or human wisdom. It encourages believers to step out in faith, pray fervently, and trust in God's power to turn the world upside down through the proclamation of the Gospel.

Transcript

So now let's rehearse the conference. We're at the end. I was thinking what each of these messages means to the Christian.

So, first message. What does that mean to the Christian? What was the text? Isaiah 40. Eagle's wings.

I was thinking about that this morning. Eagle's wings. Mighty wings.

God's children are those with the promise that if we wait upon Him, we will fly with the wings of eagles. What was the next message? John 6.37. Think of eagle's wings. That's a promise.

And then, we are those who have been given to the Father. We are those who have come to Christ. What was the next message? What was the third message? 1 Corinthians 3. We're not mere men.

I've always loved that text. Don't act like mere men. We don't have to act like others.

So, eagle's wings. We've been made a present. We've been given to the Son.

We're not mere men. What was the fourth message? Philippians 3. We are the true circumcision. We worship God in the Spirit.

We boast in the Lord Jesus Christ. No confidence in the flesh. What was the next message? Which one was it? Hebrews 6. Yeah, I was thinking about that this morning.

Strangers to the covenants of promise. Having no hope and without God in the world. That's how we were.

We didn't think that way. But that's how it was. Now, in Christ, all those promises are ours.

We're the people of eagle's wings. We're the people who have been made a present to the Son. We are a people who are not mere men.

A people who are the true circumcision. A people of the promise. That's where we've come in the conference thus far.

Let's pray. Father, we pray for the help that You know that we need. And Lord, we're needy and I'm needy.

And Father, here we are at the end of a conference. Lord, our desire is the same as it has been from the beginning. We want what's happening here to matter, to mean something, to be helpful to Your people.

And I pray that You would make it that. And I ask in Christ's name, Amen. Okay, I'd like to have you turn to Acts 17.

Okay, I'm not real polished in the pulpit. I'm sure you can see that. Acts 17.

Let's read the first eight verses. Acts 17, Now, when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul went in as was his custom.

And on three Sabbath days, he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead. And saying, this Jesus whom I proclaim to you is the Christ. And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.

But the Jews were jealous and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, the men who have turned the world upside down have come here also. And Jason has received them and they're all acting against the decrees of Caesar saying that there is another king, Jesus.

And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. And what I want us to focus on this morning, these men who have turned the world upside down have come here also. Paul, Silas, probably Timothy, they have come to Thessalonica.

And the observing world says, these guys are turning the world upside down. Have you ever thought about that little idea, that concept, upside down? The upside is turned down. Upside down.

The thing is spun over. It's put on its head. These are guys that where they're going, it doesn't leave things the same.

They're shaking things up. They're turning the things. Things that were one way are now another way.

And the people that are watching recognize this. These guys come into the synagogue and they don't leave the synagogue the same way. They shake things up.

People that were one way before are not that way now. They're different. Things that were going in that direction are now going in this direction.

That's what they're observing here. That's what I want to talk about. My wife told me, women turn the world upside down too.

Men and women that turn the world upside down. I want to talk about that. Men who turn the world upside down.

Several weeks back, as I was thinking about this message, I was thinking about men who turn the world upside down and how that related to me in my lost days. And I was thinking that before God saved me the way that I used to live, I was in this little bubble. I wasn't aware that there were people that turned the world upside down.

And it's not like I was just a spectator watching somebody else do it. Not just on the sidelines watching the athletes play on the field. I didn't even know that it was real.

I didn't know that there were these mighty kingdoms advancing. One advancing, one giving way that these kind of things were happening in the world. And I thought about, that's how it is.

You have those who turn the world upside down. You have those that watch others turn it upside down. And then you have those that don't even know it's happening.

I think the question to ask is, where am I at in there? Which category do I fall into? Which category do I even want to be in? There I was. I didn't know anything was happening. The battle was happening around me.

I was amazed when I got saved. I was amazed that there are really people who are born again that were in the world around me. There were people that were doing things.

The kingdom of Christ. Sometimes I'll look back at an old sermon that was preached by some preacher in 1983 or 1985, and I'm thinking, these guys were standing in a pulpit declaring the words of eternal life. And I was working on my motorcycle thinking about the party that I was going to go to on Friday.

Totally clueless. Totally out of touch. Clueless that anything was happening.

And something was happening. My own world was about to get turned on its head. I had no idea that that was coming.

I had no idea. But you know what? We do have some idea. You and I have an idea because we have our Bibles.

And we can look right here, and we can look at Acts 17, and we can look at these men that went into Thessalonica, and we can say, there are men who turned the world upside down. Or at least there were. At least there were at one time.

And the question that burdens me is this, what does this have to do with you and me? How does this affect us? Do we just conclude, well, you know, really, this has nothing to do with us. Do we just conclude what my pastor, first pastor up in Michigan, the first church I was a member of, a little sovereign grace Baptist church up in southwest Michigan, and the pastor of that church, he told me, because I'd come to him, I'd

ask him about the book of Acts, and he told me, well, you don't really have to concern yourself with it. It was a transitional phase in the church.

Just transitory. Is that it? Is that what we do? Do we just write this off as basically really not having anything to do with my life or my church or with the world? Is that how we're to think? Is that how we're to think? You know the reason that I even ended up down here was because something wasn't right. I felt it.

I felt it in my own soul. When God saved me, it turned my life upside down. There was something supernatural in this world.

And what I heard from that pastor, I began to pray, Lord, would You open a door somewhere where they hold to the doctrines of grace, where they're baptistic, but where there is reality from the book of Acts in that place. That's what I wanted. And you know what? I began to pray, and the firm I worked for got the Alamo Dome project down in San Antonio, and I went down there, and God had it that I crossed paths with John Saitsema.

And I moved down there, and I was in that church, and I can remember the very place I was sitting. I remember the moment. I'm looking at Pat Horner preaching, and I remember when he said it.

He went to Acts 1, verse 1, where it says, that former treatise, he was reading from the King James, have I written, O Theophilus? And he was dealing with what Jesus began to do and teach. I remember Pat hitting that. You say, what's that? Luke says to this Theophilus, my former treatise, my former letter, was all about what Jesus began to do and teach.

And Pat said, you see, the book of Acts is all about what Jesus continues to do and teach. And I had come to a place where they believed that the very things that happened in the book of Acts were for today. And that it went on.

And you joined that with Christ saying, I will be with you to the end of the age. And there it was. There it was.

Pat had hit that. He had driven that point home. What's it mean? It means that Jesus Christ isn't finished.

He started there, but He's not done. And now it's going on. And Pat had said it.

And that was it. That was what I was looking for. I knew it.

I knew I had come to a place where people actually got saved that wasn't even expected up there in Michigan. Where I was at. And there it was.

Christ in the book of Acts. He's not finished yet. He's still acting.

This is a book where Jesus dominates. Jesus is active. And it wasn't just to 28.

I don't know what you think of the Acts 29 movement. That's not what I'm concerned with. But the fact is, they've got a truth there.

They've got something. He continues to act. It didn't end right at the end of Acts 28.

He said, I'll be with you to the end of the age. He has all this authority, all this power. The book of Acts was not transitory.

Suddenly, there it was. Pat had driven that home. It was just the start.

It wasn't the end yet. Something is happening now and something is happening up till now. And I wasn't looking in the right places.

I had been a nominal Catholic. I didn't know where Christians were. But I had my Bible with the book of Acts and somewhere in those early days, I came across a set of George Whitefield.

I had volume 1 yesterday by Arnold Delamore. And reading that, Jesus, yes, He had come into the world and He started something. And He died.

He was crucified. And He rose from the dead. And He ascended.

But that was only the beginning. It goes on from there. That was just the start.

But it wasn't the end. The ascension opens a new chapter on what Christ goes on to do. And I saw it plainly there in the pages of my Bible.

Jesus Christ is not done yet. There it was. Pat had driven it home.

I felt it in my soul. But see, the question comes up, well, where is it? Where is it? I heard a pastor from this area on Sermon Audio. And he was saying something basically like that.

Well, we shouldn't expect to see various things. Where is it? Where is it? And that's probably where my pastor was at up there in southwest Michigan. Where is it? And I was wondering the same thing.

Have any of you ever heard the message where Paul Washer said that as a young Christian he wanted to tear the book of Acts out of his Bible? When I heard him say that, oh, that resonated. I was there. Craig Musselman and I, shortly after I was saved, we would sit on his floor sometimes through the night with Acts open.

Our hearts on fire. We're looking here. We're looking in Whitefield's biography.

And you know what the thing was? It's 1,700 years apart. And the same thing was happening over here that's happening over here. And then we're looking out our window.

And we're saying, where is it? Where is it? And the thing is, I wasn't content with that answer. Well, we just shouldn't expect it anymore. Wait a second! Why did it happen again 1,700 years later? If it ended in Acts 28, that doesn't explain this.

And I wanted something more. Brethren, that's what I want to talk about. Some say, where is it? Where is it? Jesus doesn't work any longer like that.

Is that it? Is that what we're supposed to believe? Is that what we should expect? Some will tell us, of course that's what we should expect. We don't see anything happening. But you know, I was there too.

If you didn't get it, the reason Paul wanted to tear the book of Acts out of his Bible is because he felt it's a mockery. How come we don't see that? And I don't want to just read these things in the pages of books. You know, if you take my Hudson Taylor set and you smell them, they smell old.

They are. They probably were in somebody's basement in Michigan for a decade. They smell of mold.

I mean, I like old books like that. Don't get me wrong. Read them.

But is that all you want to do? I mean, I'm telling you yesterday the story about they prayed by faith and oh, it's glamorous and it's glorious and everything, right? Hudson Taylor on a ship and they're just drifting and they're going to be shipwrecked and they pray and the wind blows. Oh, it's wonderful. He was really there.

He was really there when the possibility of being eaten by sharks or dashed against rocks was real. I don't want to just read about that. I want to live that.

Do any of you want that as well? I mean, I don't want to just have a musty old book. Because old books talk about old things and as glorious as they might be, can we live on the past? Do you want to live on the past? Here are these men that turn the world upside down. You go into Whitefield's biography and you've got Howell Harris and Daniel Rowlands and you've got the Wesleys and you've got Whitefield and you've got Edwards.

And you know what? When you go into those pages, it's the same as the book of Acts. There's electricity there. Cold dead religion doesn't survive there.

There's something real. There's something alive. That's what I want.

The question is, what does all this have to do with us today? Does this matter? And I think maybe to figure out what this has to do with us, maybe we ought to ask this question. How do we explain this? How do we explain men walking into the synagogue? How do we explain what has happened in the book of Acts or in the biographies? What is the explanation for Paul shaking things up? Shaking! You think about how it turned things on its head. You have men and women going to hell, and now they are headed to eternal life.

They are headed to glory. You have people who are slaves of sin now in love with Christ. You have people that are in darkness now in light.

I mean, radical, radical changes. People who went to the synagogue and it was all about their life and their culture and their religion, and now they don't go there anymore. Now they're worshiping Christ.

Radical transformations. People in darkness. Pagans! How do we explain all this? What is the explanation? Somebody will say, well, didn't you see it there in Acts 17? Paul spoke to them from the Scriptures.

He preached Christ. Oh, undoubtedly. Undoubtedly.

But have some of you not spoken to people about Christ and you've seen absolutely nothing? You see, that answer isn't sufficient by itself. That isn't it. You know what I start asking myself is right here in Acts 17.

What happened before that? You know what happens before that? Follow the road back up north to Philippi. What happened there? Well, they're singing, they're praying, and what happened? God came. God came and shook the place.

Luke wants us to see the facts. And if you follow His facts, God came. The place was shaken.

God came. The doors opened. God came.

Philippian jailer wonderfully converted. Go back before that. God came.

A demon was cast out. A spirit of divination from this fortune teller. Listen, try to do battle with angels.

We have no power. We're helpless. God came and that's what happened.

God came down there by the riverside and Lydia's heart was moved. You think about what happened at Philippi. There's no explanation.

I mean, again and again, Luke is pointing out to us, God came and did this. You follow back before that. Go back to the coast there and then across where they sailed from.

And what happens there? What happens there? Paul's not allowed to preach over in Asia. And then he wants to go up in Bithynia and he can't go that way. Why? Because God's coming.

And God's hemming him in. And God's steering him and channeling him. No, Paul, you can't go that way and you can't go that way.

And then he has a Macedonian vision. Where'd that come from? God came. God directed him and gave him the Macedonian call.

And what happens? You go back before that. Now it's not Paul and Silas, it's Paul and Barnabas. And what's happening there? These guys are going on.

Regular church life. There they are. Antioch and Syria.

And then God comes. Set apart for me these men right here to the work that I've called them to. God came again.

You go back before that and what happens? There's this guy breathing these slaughters and murders and he's headed towards Damascus. And God came in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and drops him down there, wonderfully converts his soul. You go back before that and now it's not Paul, it's Peter.

And what happens there? Day of Pentecost and the Spirit of God came. You go back before that. What's before that? What's before that? Are the things that Jesus began to do and teach.

And what's that all about? God with us. God came down. God did all the things in the Son that we now speak in this message that we proclaim.

But all the way through, that's the explanation. All the way through, you keep backing up and it's God came. It's God came.

What explanation for men turning the world upside down? We have to start right here with the living God. That is the answer. That's the answer.

Why, brethren, why was it that the things in the pages of Whitefield's biography seem so much like the book of Acts? Because they were like the book of Acts. It was like that. God had come.

The presence of God was real. God was manifesting Himself. God was moving.

What does this have to do with us? It has everything to do with us. Have you been watching the world? Have you been watching this world? Are you staying plugged in? Are you watching the rise of Islam? Yahshua said that a number of Muslim men have been dispatched from Edmonton to go fight for ISIS. You've watched ISIS come across the north tier of Africa, even threatening to go up into Italy.

Are you watching that happen? Are you watching mosques being built in our own country? Are you watching that happen? Are you watching the homosexual agenda? Did you see what just happened in Indiana? There with the governor? Some kind of religious liberty bill passed there and all the homosexuals and the transgender. Everybody's up in arms. The moral decay.

Are you watching our government? Do you watch the decisions that our President makes? Look at this world that we're in and God help us if we think that a Republican President is going to fix it all. Brethren, when you start looking here, the leaders were not any more dependable than ours are, but what was happening in the midst of all of it, God was coming. God was manifesting Himself.

Luke loves to tell us that. You have to notice this. Yes, you have men turning the world upside down, but you have to see where they're being empowered.

You have to see the things that Luke is emphasizing. After this, Paul goes down to Corinth. And God comes.

Paul had many people in this city. There He is in Jerusalem and He's arrested and the Romans have Him. And what happens? The Lord comes and stands by Him and says, Paul, you are going to preach the Gospel in Rome.

How do you account for that? Well, Paul, you've got the Romans, you've got the Jews, they want to kill you. The Jews do. You're going to have to sail across stormy Mediterranean.

You might be shipwrecked. But God's in it. God is there.

God is leading. God is guiding. God's hand is upon Him.

Even in the shipwreck, He says, the angel of the God whose I am and who I worship. He's there. God keeps coming.

That's what this is all about, brethren. We need God beyond Acts 28. And all we have to do is step back for a second and just think, I know we think about this and I know it's repeatedly been said, but let's remind ourselves again.

Because it's so consistent with the things that we even started hearing on Thursday night. Weak. That's no figment of Mack's imagination to come up and preach on Isaiah 40 about our weakness and our faintness.

Those guys were weak. We know by and large, fishermen. We know by and large.

If it wasn't for the fact that Jesus drew these men to Himself, they would have been just insignificant. They would have just passed away like so many others. We would have never known anything about them at all.

Somebody says, well, yeah, but Paul, he was trained at the feet of Gamaliel. Even Paul. Think about it.

He says to the Corinthians, weak, disrepute, homeless. I mean, to the Galatians, he ended up there perhaps because of some bodily ailment. He talks in 2 Corinthians about his bodily presence.

They were claiming his bodily presence is weak. His speech is of no account. I mean, imagine these guys.

They don't have degrees. They don't have wealth. Paul walks in.

Yeah, he's learned, but even there, his speech is of no account. His bodily presence is just... This guy isn't like King Saul who was head and shoulders above the rest and had a presence. This is a guy that walks in and you... And then think about their message.

We're here to tell you that a Jewish carpenter died and he's the Messiah. And oh, he rose again. Really, where is he? Well, we can't show him to you because he went to heaven.

I mean, you try that. Try that message. Go out and try to see how many people believe.

My Uncle Joe died. He rose again. But you can't see him because he went to heaven.

And you know what? Men have always had sex. Men have always had their cults. What was it? Thetis, Judas of Galilee.

That's what Gamaliel said. These other guys, we've had these upstart cult leaders come and go. And it's not of God and it just passes away.

And you know what? If you're a good salesman and you've got charisma, you can get a following like Jim Jones. You can get a following for a season. But then it just passes away.

But think about what these guys did. I mean, these guys are nobodies. And God scatters them.

And here they head into Samaria. There's great joy in the city. Revival breaks out.

These guys go into Syria. The church at Antioch is born. There's revival there.

You go to Antioch and Pisidia. Great move of God. You go into Ephesus.

And they're burning all their magic books and revival sweeps through that place. You go to Thessalonica. Not a few.

Did you see that? Many. How do we explain these guys having these kind of results? Brethren, there's no other explanation than the presence of God. That God is with them.

This is the reality. That Jesus Christ is not done. Jesus Christ is on that throne, but Jesus Christ is very much acting.

He is very much intent. We would have never heard about 60,000. And that's a government estimate.

60,000! What is it? Yemenis? Yemeni? What is that? 60,000 by a government estimate are saved. Jesus Christ! Who's doing that? Nobodies. We don't know who they are.

You know, we hold up Hudson Taylor and George Whitefield, but think about the people like those fishermen, those nobodies, bodily ailments, weak presence, no eloquence. They're out there. Where do you think those 60,000 converts are coming from? Jesus Christ is not done.

He's moving. He's acting. God has come.

That's how we explain the world being turned upside down. God came. God came.

Think about these guys. You launch out into the world and what are you up against? Judaism? I'm in the whole Jewish religious system. You're up against the Pharisees, the Sanhedrin, the lawyers and scribes, the Sadducees.

You are up against pagan religions. You are up against Rome. They're up against the hard hearts of men and women.

They're up against the devil. Think about who these guys are. Think about this crowd, this motley crew that came down from that upper room.

Who they are. There's simply no explanation for this other than because God came. That's our only hope.

Today, that's our only hope. The church moved. Brethren, think with me.

Think about where we're at. Think about what we need. Ruby and I were talking about these conferences.

And I can remember, I hear Charles and Mack and others speak about some of the conferences that were had at Bentley. Demons being cast out and people being wonderfully saved and very manifest displays of the power of God. And I hear these guys talk about Ravenhill coming.

And I read in the words, they speak about the McLeod brothers. And I read these biographies as well in these times of revival. Isn't that what we want? Brethren, it's not going to happen because we get ingenious.

It's not going to happen because we dream up some new way. Brethren, there's no shortcuts here. The church moved forward in the power of God and it has been exactly the same at every point in history and at every place like Yemen or wherever.

It has been the same everywhere. Wherever the church makes fresh advances, new advances into strongholds of darkness and turns the world upside down again, it's always where there is some new, where there is some fresh return to the New Testament power of the presence of God. Always.

God comes. That's the explanation. It's not that they got smarter, they got more learned, they got higher degrees, they studied longer.

I'm not knocking studying, but you know what I mean. The answer to this kind of thing is the presence of God. That is precisely why Whitefield's biography feels like Pentecost again because the God of Pentecost was there.

He had come. Brethren, the thing is, we are, as Tozer said, so hopelessly outclassed by this world, outgunned by this world, that brethren, we have no chance of victory except God come. We have no chance of its success unless that happens.

Our chances of success against ISIS, against the Islamic rise. You think about the demonic powers, the strongholds behind a religious system like that. What hope do we have? The moral decay.

You see how fast in 15 years our country has sunk to moral lows. Go stand in the street and try to stop that from happening. There is a current there that is pulling this nation along.

You and I cannot step in the way and stop. But you know what? Wasn't it not like that in the days before the first great awakening? You go look at the condition in Whitefield's day. All the gin ran freely in the streets.

The debauchery. What was it that was going to stand and stem that tide? God. Whitefield did not do that in his own strength.

Harris, Rolands, it was not in their own strength. Brethren, God came and that's going to be the same today. That's going to be our only hope against the moral decay, the hopelessness, and all of this.

Just as it was in their day. Think about them standing against Rome. And yet, isn't it interesting? In the end, Rome could not stem the tide of Christianity.

They tried to stomp it out. They tried to put out that fire. They tried to kill them.

And the more they killed them, the more they multiplied. We heard it yesterday. The media.

The devil. We like to be fed all this misinformation. God is at work.

We're sheltered from that. Not even Fox News is going to tell us about what's happening all over this world. But it's happening.

And where it happens, it always happens for the same reason. Wherever there are things happening, wherever the church is advancing, it is because there's always a return to the New Testament power of the presence of God. And that is exactly what Luke wanted to show us.

Wherever something happened, it's because God came. God was moving. God was acting.

God was coming down for us brethren. It means God's help or sure defeat for certain. God came.

And that's our greatest need. My question right now is this, how do we respond to that? How do we respond to this reality? I mean, if we know, if we really grasp this, what we need today is not primarily more activity of men. I mean, do we know that? Does that sink in? What we primarily need is not the mere activity of men.

We know that the book of Acts is not ultimately about what the apostles did. It's about what Jesus goes on and continues on and further is going to do and to teach. Now, He works through His church, but how do we respond to that? And this is what I want to leave us with as we depart from the conference.

We need God. Some of you might be out there and you're in the church like I was in in Michigan. Three families.

Three families and you're wondering where is God? Where is God working? Do we need to pack up? Is the answer we just need to pack up and move? Excuse me. And how do we respond? How do we react? Brethren, the first response is dependence. Dependence.

I mean, that's deep, deep dependence. I don't know what the cumulative prayer lives and church prayer meetings of all the churches represented here look like. If our great need is that God come, then we need

in deep dependence to be calling on Him and desiring that He come.

Brethren, we need to pray and ask God's help. A lack of prayer, a lack of prayer meetings, a great indication that we're independent, that we're trusting in our own mechanisms and our own devices. Look, we shouldn't look at worlds that need to be turned upside down and just run and hide.

You know what? We hear faint, weak. We heard that in the first message. You know what? We really have to be convinced of that.

We have to be utterly convinced. Without You, Lord, we can do nothing. We can say it, but we really have to be convinced of that.

But the thing is, the temptation when you do become persuaded that you're weak, is that I can't do anything. Because we are so used to depending on ourselves and our devices and our mechanisms and our strength and the arm of the flesh, that when we're absolutely convinced of our weakness, there can be this temptation and this tendency to say, well, who are we? Who am I? And so what we want to do is we want to run and hide in a safe hole somewhere. Brethren, that's not what they did.

The people that turned the world upside down, in light of their great weakness, they didn't run and hide. We need to call upon the living God in all of His might and all of His power and all of His authority and plead with Him to come. Brethren, what we need to do is we need to take that Gospel and preach it.

And see the lever. I was imagining a lever that we pry. Because what are we trying to do? We're trying to turn the world upside down.

And so we go and we pry on the world with the Gospel. We see if it won't flip for us. And we run to God and we plead.

We pry and we plead. Pry and we plead. Paul, think about him.

This was not just some nice closing, automatic, stale salutation of Paul when he closed out his letters to the churches and he pleaded with them, pray for me. Pray for me that I might be able to speak the way I ought to speak. Pray for me that I'm able to be bold.

Pray for me. You know what happened to Paul once he was dropped there on the Damascus Road? Behold, he's praying. They found him praying.

He was devastated. He thought he was in control before. He sees now he's not in control.

That's what we all need to see. And what did it lead him to do? In all of his desperation, it led him to pray. And he prayed.

And you see him letter after letter to the Romans. Prayers to God on my behalf, to the Corinthians, help us by prayer, to the Ephesians, praying at all times in the Spirit with all power and supplication. And he said, pray also for me that the words may be given me to open my mouth.

And Colossians 4 at the same time, pray also for us. And to the Thessalonians, brothers, pray for us. Why was he asking for prayer? Why finally, brothers in 2 Thessalonians, pray for us that the Word of the Lord may speed ahead.

Not just some mindless closing salutation. This is desperation. You know what? Paul could walk into some places like Athens and he could preach and he could proclaim the truth.

And he could dispute and he could argue the truth. And you know what? Walk away with very little fruit. You can be sure he fell on his face.

What we need to do is go out and pry. And when it doesn't roll over, we go to our knees. Lord, help us.

Help us. Help us. Give us what we need.

Lord, if the world doesn't capsize, back to our knees. Back to our knees. With greater desperation than ever.

You know one of the things that's going to really cause us to be desperate is not when we hold up somewhere in a safe house. It's when we go out into the world and we're striving. And we begin to recognize.

I remember one brother flying back from China one time. And he said as the plane took off out of China, he just felt so overwhelmed. So we can look at the size and scope of this world.

We can look at the darkness that we're up against. And we can feel like, oh, this is hopeless and we're so weak and let's just hold up in our churches somewhere. But that's not what they did.

They went out into the world. They sought to turn it upside down. And they were pleading and they were intensely desperate.

And they were calling upon the Lord. And if there's anything to show us our weakness, it's to go out. I mean, if there's anything to show us that you don't know what you're doing, it's go try to do something.

But in the light of God showing you, you don't know how to do that. You don't have the ability to do that. Then we fall on our knees.

I mean, that's prayerlessness. Brother, no prayer meetings. People think they can do it all by themselves, but that's a lie.

We can become so ignorant and arrogant. Our modern devices, our money, can tend to make us very self-confident. But that's the first thing is dependence.

Lord, we need You. And we have to really believe if God comes, He can use us the same way He has other weak vessels. And we can turn the world upside down.

Brethren, it can be done. Jesus Christ is still acting. He's on that throne.

His enemies are being brought and made a footstool for His feet. And many of those enemies are being made His people. And they're being brought to the cross and to surrender.

And it's happening through the proclamation. And not with eloquence. And not with all these devices.

And not with our money. But it's by the power of God. And it's happening.

In Yemen, it's happening. And it's happening here undoubtedly. Brethren, what we need is God to come.

Utter, utter desperation. Deep desperation. But here's the second thing.

There is this temptation in our weakness to hide. As I said, but brethren, when we step out... You know one thing about that early church? Is they stepped out into the place where God must come or it's all over. John Seitzman was telling me that when he was in Iraq recently, he said they were in a room with a family.

Many of you know about the Yazidi boy that had the cancer in the arm and he was dying. And John saw he's getting worse by the moment. And he said, we are telling these people about how glorious our God is.

They had secured their passports to come to the states. This family had in order to get the surgery that this boy needed, but the door closed. And then John traveled over near the Iranian border and the door closed.

And all the doors were closing and John said he's with this family and he's telling them about how great our God is. But John's looking at this boy and he's saying, we're telling them about how great our God is and we've tried in the name of our God to get this operation done and all the doors are shut and he's going to die. And he's saying, Lord, when you're in those situations where God must come or it's all over, and that wasn't going to cost John his life, but the reputation of the Lord.

There were places often Paul was in. Paul, seriously? You're going to walk back into a synagogue? Don't you know what happens to you when you go into synagogues? And you're going to walk back in there again? I mean, Paul, you just got stoned over there. Seriously? You're going to walk back in there? But brethren, when we're out there, when we go out into this world knowing we're nothing, one of the things these guys, they were seriously heeding the call to die.

Heeding the call to die. Do you remember what Paul said? Paul said, what are you doing weeping, breaking my heart? I'm ready not only to be imprisoned, I am ready to die for the sake of His name. You had men like this.

They were willing to step out. They believed. See, in their weakness, they had faith.

Lord, we're trusting You and we're going to step out here. And that's what John did. He's talking to these people about the greatness of God.

And he recognizes God's name's on the line. And God came through and that boy is still alive and he had the surgery. And those kind of things were happening here.

Happening repeatedly. It happened at Mount Carmel. It happened there with Elijah.

Brethren, we need to step out. We need this willingness to die. We need this willingness that if God doesn't come through for us, that it's all over.

We need to be people that are ready and willing to do that. Brethren, I was just recently listening to a message that Gordon Bayless did on a rider on a white horse. And that rider on that white horse, John saw heaven opened and there he was.

And Jesus Christ is still the same yesterday, today, and forever. And He is going forth conquering and to conquer. And brethren, He isn't going to conquer through us if we just hole up somewhere.

But when we step out in all of our weakness, our weakness should not deter us because we have a great God. We need to be stepping out there in faith. You know what? The call came.

That shipping container is heading over to Iraq. We need some people from our church to go. And you know what? I began to think... I probably did the thing that you don't want to do.

I have not really been interested in the beheadings. I have really not been interested in all the graphic stuff. I've followed the news basically on Drudge, but I have not really been interested in seeing that.

Well, here, somebody asked, how is the God of Christianity different than the God of Islam? And I began to think about that and prepare for a Tuesday study. And I actually went online and I began to look at the atrocities of ISIS. I began to look at that.

And then suddenly, okay, we need a team to go over. Now all this is fresh. And I'll tell you, this fear after looking at those things, after what I said on that Tuesday night, my wife said, you know they're going to kill you.

And it was like this spirit of fear came. And so now a team is needed to go over. And I'm not certain who's going to go over, but I feel like I began to think about, you know, maybe I should go.

And I brought that up with one of our deacons, Carlos, and he told me, yeah, I was there too. I was wrestling with that. And you know, I just told one of our other deacons yesterday and he said, yeah, my wife was wrestling with that as well.

And I got to thinking, you know, I have a feeling that a number of people in our church had to really wrestle with. You know, you travel over to Erbil when we know that there's sleeper cells. When John was there, ISIS made an attack on the city.

They crossed the Tigris River. He said the people they were staying with were quite alarmed. They had an evacuation plan.

There's a very real possibility you go somewhere like that. You are the one that ends up in the cage on the news. And you start thinking for Christ, you know, am I willing to go and leave myself in the hands of the Lord in all my weakness and face this monster of ISIS and Islam? We have to ask ourselves these, you know, are we there in all of our weakness? You see, that's turning the world upside down.

That's what's going to turn the world upside down when we step out and we're putting it all on the altar. They were heeding the call to die. Maybe we need to take a fresh look at Jesus' call.

Whoever would save His life will lose it. We have to admit, it's pretty safe here. We heard, was it Dan that said? Orion.

Ten thousand missionaries to that part of the world. I wish Dan would have given that presentation right before I preached because I was ready to preach when I saw it. I feel this tug.

I feel this pull. And look at a room this size. We are people, many of us, that Jesus Christ, He's washed us in His blood at great cost and great price to Himself.

And He calls us, follow Me. And Paul is like, what are you doing weeping and breaking my heart? What had happened in his heart? Christ, everything else is lost. Christ is gained.

I'm ready to put it all on the line. I'll go to prison just as long as Jesus Christ is exalted. And you know what? God came.

And God came. And God came. And you know what? We've read the stories about Smithfield there.

We've read about the Covenanters, the Covenanters, many of us. When God's people are being martyred, sometimes God has come in such ways that the people are hardly able to contain it. Think about Stephen.

He got stones bouncing off his head. And what happens? Jesus comes. We have to believe in the God who comes.

The God who's going to be there. The God who if you go to Yemen, or if you go to Jordan, or if you go to Iran, or if you go to Iraq, God's going to be there. Christ is going to go.

Christ is still acting. Christ is not done yet. That ascension opens up this chapter where He is further going to do and to teach.

And if we go there, He's going to be there. And He's never going to leave us. He's never going to forsake us.

We're going to find it's real. And if you end up in the ISIS cage and they burn you alive, you'll be like those martyrs of Ob that clapped their hands until their hands fell off because they were so full of joy and singing praises. We have to buy into that.

We have to believe that. And the other thing that I would say here is with prayer, desperation, and remembering this call to die, would just be this, that there's also this temptation in our weakness. And I think even with Ryan's message talking about these people that follow all the preachers, we can get an idea today that if you can't preach like John Piper, then it's almost like we need an eloquence.

When Paul's saying, no, you don't. We don't need that. Jesus said, you will be witnesses of Me.

Which means a witness, you're going to bear the facts. What are the facts? The facts are that Jesus Christ was the eternal Word of God. He came and He took on flesh and He was born of a virgin and He came forth and His open ministry, He did miracles.

And He healed the leper and He cast out the demons over here. And He raised the dead. And He said, look at that palsied man, I can heal him to show you that I can heal you of your sins.

And I raise these dead, I show you that I can raise you from the dead. And He did these miracles and He put all of His credentials out there on the table. And when He had gone three years doing these things and showing the world that He was the Messiah and proving to Him that He was fulfilling the Scriptures and doing the works that the Father had given Him and teaching them this message that the Father had given Him, and then He turns His head towards Jerusalem and He rides in there on a colt and we know what happened.

We know that they put Him on trial and we know that they found Him guilty and we know that He gave His life's blood and He died and there was that cross and they crucified Him and there was burial and there was that grave and He came out after three days and for 40 days, seen by upwards of over 500 people, most of whom were alive when Paul wrote to the Corinthians. And that's the story. Those are the facts.

And He ascended up on high and that's what He began to do and teach and now He continues to do it and He calls us to go forth and witness to those facts. And that's what we're called to do. We don't have to be eloquent like Spurgeon.

We go forth and we say the facts and we're going to tell this world about our Savior. It's this Jesus Christ that we are to tell this world about. And we go forth, yes, in our weakness.

And we go forth waiting upon the Lord. We go forth with this Gospel. We don't have to invent some new thing.

They didn't get fancy. They didn't get creative. I mean, you look at Peter on the day of Pentecost.

He's saying the facts. Paul walks into that synagogue. He says he had to suffer and he rose.

This Jesus is the Christ. And they said it in deep dependence. Brethren, I want us.

My desire is we go forth a lot of us, we won't see one another again for another year. I've heard a lot of you. You've started these churches.

It's small. Two families meeting. Three families meeting.

I want to encourage you. Are you weak? Yes. But don't say, we're not like the church in Kirksville or the church in Benton or the church in San Antonio.

We just, how are you different? Numerically, that's not what wins the day. Take that Gospel out. Be witnesses.

Proclaim it afresh. A new willingness to die in desperate dependence on the living God. You remember the book of Acts.

You remember Whitefield's biography. What explains it is that God came. Jesus Christ is still acting.

He's still moving. He's still conquering. He is moving forward and He will all the way to the end and out into eternity.

He is on that throne and He is going to be ultimately, totally, finally victorious and every nation will become the nation of our God and of His Christ. It is happening. And He is ruling.

He is reigning. And we can go on in that hope. And you may be in some small place.

If you will take that Gospel out, if you will take that out, and you will pray, and you will pray, and you will preach, and you will pray, and you will proclaim Christ, and you will pray, and you will plead with God, please give us souls. Give us souls. Give us our children.

Give us our parents. Give us our neighbors. Give us those classmates and those workmates.

Lord, please. And you will continue to do that and you will cling to Him and you will set forth Christ. That's what we can do in all of this.

That's the waiting. When we wait upon the Lord, that's not a waiting of idleness. That's not a waiting where we sit down and go to sleep.

It's in this utter dependence, we wait as we preach and we obey and we strive in this manner. May God help us, brethren, to do this. If God comes, if God comes, what can't be achieved? Father, I pray that as we end, Lord, we see the world around us.

We see, though it be the homosexuals or the Muslims, Lord, this is our Father's world. The nations of this world, every enemy is being stamped down. They are becoming more and more.

The redeemed are being gathered in. They are becoming onward and upward and more and more conquered by You, kingdom of darkness. It may seem like it's growing in our sight, but Lord, I pray, I pray, Lord, for Your namesake.

Just as it was there in Iraq, Lord, for Your namesake, please make a difference. Make a difference between us and the prophets of Baal. Make a difference between us, Lord.

Make a difference between Israel and Egypt like You did in days of old where the light shined in Goshen. Lord, may the light shine upon us. Lord, make a difference between us.

Please, help us to run onward, to press onward, to fly with those eagles' wings in light of the promises that have been given to us, not merely men, living life as those who are the true Israel, the true Jew, the true circumcised, running as those who are the gift of the Father to the Son, those who have come to Christ and live and abide in His strength. Lord, please help us. In Christ's name I pray, Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/dlMQ4mJLkSI.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/tim-conway/men-who-turned-the-world-upside-down/>

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