

Walking with faith

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[0 : 00] Acts 16. Acts chapter 16.

We've been talking about people whose names we do not know.! Today we're taking a different take on that.! We've talked about the boy, five loaves, and two fishes. We've talked about the girl who was the servant to Naaman's family.

We've talked about the Good Samaritan all the last couple weeks. We don't know his name, just Good Samaritan. Today we're taking it from a little different angle. Notice behind me, when she gets it up, she's still working on it. Okay, go to Acts chapter 16.

And I'll tell you what we're talking about. Look at verse, well, beginning in verse 16, verse 9. Okay, let me try that again. Verse 1, Paul is on his mission trip, and it says he went to Derbe and to Lystra.

And while he's in Lystra, notice what it says in verse 1. Behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, who was a Jewish and believed, and his father was a Greek. And we talked about that a couple weeks ago.

[1 : 26] Mother's Day, we were talking about Lois and Eunice. Okay? So this is Timothy and talking about his mother. And Paul, he joins Paul's crew there.

And down to verse 6, it says, And they had gone throughout Perga and the region of Galatia and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia.

They say to go to Mysia and say to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not. So Paul's, Timothy is joined with Paul, and now they're trying to go to different places to take the gospel.

And the Holy Spirit says, nope. But we're going to go over here. Nope. But then look at verse 9. And a vision appeared unto Paul in the night. There stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us.

And after he had seen the vision, immediately they endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

[2 : 38] Paul says, I've got a call from God to go. No, don't go here. No, don't go here. Yes. Go here. He's following God's leading. He's doing what God has asked him to do.

Currently, there are over 8 billion people in this world. And so, notice behind me, billions with no name. We don't know all the people out there.

We don't know all the people who are out there that need to be saved. We have no clue. It's hard to wrap our mind around the concept of 8 billion people. Think about that.

8 billion. And so, we don't know them. But God knows every one of them by name. He knows every one of them and where they live.

He knows all about them. And so, we're going to talk about the billions with no name that need to hear the gospel. Let's have a word prayer. Father, thank you for this time to stop and consider all of these people that we don't know their names, but you do and you care.

[3 : 51] You came to save them. You gave your life that they might have salvation. Lord, help us to have the same concerns for these people, Lord, that we would be concerned about our neighbors, our loved ones, the people we run into at the grocery store, the people we run into at the post office, people all around us.

Lord, that we would have a concern. We don't know their names either, but Lord, may we have a concern for their souls. You did, and Lord, may we also. Lord, help us as we look at this idea of these billions that you came and went to the cross for.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. In Matthew chapter 10, verses 29 and 30, Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your father.

But the very heads of your hair, heads, hairs of your head are all numbered. I don't know why I'm having such trouble with words today. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

You know, stop and think about that. How great is our God? The very hairs of your head are numbered. He knows your name.

[5 : 11] He knows where you live. He knows how many hairs are on your head. And you think about that one. He knows the hairs on your head. The interesting thing about that is that number changes every day.

Doesn't it? I mean, you look at some of you, nice full heads of hair. You look at Steve, Chuck, Dana, not so much.

But God knows. He knows what it used to be. He knows what it is now. He knows us that well. You know, to have someone who knows us that well and is concerned about us, someone who loves us enough that he knows all about us and came and died for us in spite of knowing all about us.

You know, if you had someone who could guarantee they'd change your life in 30 minutes, would you listen to them? You know, they have a message to share with you.

You'll never have any financial worries ever again. You listen to this program that I have and you'll never have financial worries again. I might give them 30 minutes, maybe.

[6 : 34] Most of the people I see on the internet now, no, I would not because they're always out to make a buck or something. Suppose somebody said, I can guarantee you, you do this program, you'll never get cancer again.

I might give them 30 minutes. I see things on the internet from time to time about diabetes and how you can cure diabetes without metformin and all that other stuff.

I've given them 30 minutes. They always want to sell me something. I've taken and sometimes I feel guilty about all the meds that are going into my body and then I just thank God that he blesses them that they can work the way they're supposed to and not have really super weird side of them.

Yep. And I take the medicines too and stuff. But then, you know, I see these things where you can get rid of all those medicines by doing this. Oh, and I trust him more than I would trust a man.

That's true. We trust God more than a man. Like I said, I've listened to a couple of them and most of them now I just ignore because they come down to, you can cure your diabetes with things that you have right at your house.

[7 : 51] You watch the thing and thing and you need to buy this. I thought I had the things at my house. You know, but anyway, they could guarantee you in 30 minutes that you would never be able, never be attacked again.

You have defense mechanisms and things that you could do. Never be, you know. That's true. You got to buy that cage.

so, we have a message to share that will change people's lives. We have a message to share that will change their lives not just for now but for all eternity.

Do we share it with them? Ah, there's the question. Do we share it with them? They know, we know the answer. We know what they need. They know what, not only will it take care of them for this life, it'll take care of them for all eternity.

Fletcher's here with us today because he's going on a missions trip. He'll be talking to you in the morning service. He's going to do that. He's going to take a message that people need to hear. Do we have that same enthusiasm to give the message to those right around us?

[9 : 05] You think about it. What's, if there's any chance that an unsaved person in this world knows a Bible verse, which one is it? John 3.16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

See, God loves us. Jesus came and sacrificed himself for us. And it wasn't a selective thing. It was an inclusive thing.

It says, whosoever believe. It's open to anybody. All you have to do is believe it. All you have to do is say, I believe Jesus Christ did this for me.

I believe that Jesus Christ gave himself to pay the price for my sin and I am turning myself over to him and, as we said, his protection. 30 minutes and I have his protection.

Doesn't even take 30 minutes. In 2 Corinthians 5.15 it says, and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him which died for them and rose again.

[10 : 15] He died for all it says. You know, big thing today, well, you can't be exclusive. You have to be inclusive and stuff.

Well, there's nothing more inclusive than the gospel of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5.15 I believe I just said.

Yep, 5.15. He says, I came so that anybody can have eternal life. How, how more inclusive can you get than that?

Anybody. And, we said, Timothy, he picked up Timothy along the way here in Acts chapter 16. and in 1 Timothy 2 verses 3 and 4 it says this, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior who will have all men to be saved and to come into the knowledge of the truth.

All men to be saved. That's why Jesus came. He says, this is good and acceptable in the sight of God. What? All men.

[11 : 28] Don't ever let people tell you Christianity is too exclusive. It's the most inclusive thing there is. 2 Peter 3.9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness but is long suffering to us to usward not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

He says, he's not willing that any should perish. Well, how come he doesn't just save us all then and be done and over with it? You've heard that one, haven't you?

Because he doesn't want us to be robots. He wants us to come of our own free will. I've given you the opportunity. I've made the way all you have to do is take the opportunity I've given to you to believe that I did it.

Good? The question is the question is the question is the question is you have to participate in?

Yep. It's a gift. The Bible tells another place it's a gift. Well, in order for me to get a gift I have to reach out and take the gift. And God says, here it is.

[12 : 48] Just reach out and take it. And we have to be willing to do that. But we as Christians we kind of have developed some selective hearing about some things.

When we hear the word of God we kind of take some things in and take other things in. Fletcher's going to go to the Philippines. He's going to go there and he's going to do some teaching and stuff and a Bible college there for a while.

He has that opportunity and he heard that call and he wants to do that call. But how many of us hear the call that says go to your neighbor? Go to your friends?

Go to your family? Go to and we kind of get like and I understand it's a little tougher. You know go off somewhere and people who you know they don't know you from Adam.

I can talk to them about anything. But when you have to do family and friends and you're going to see them every day and stuff and you're like do I really want to get into this with them? Do I really want to?

[13 : 52] See we get kind of selective. The Bible gives us commands and says do this. But we tend to ignore. How about those that don't seem to like us?

Those that don't seem to care about anything we care about. are we supposed to give the gospel to them? Yeah. Supposed to tell them about it.

What about those who you see them and you're kind of like they're not that lovable they're not that clean they're not that.

He says he's willing not willing that any should perish but that all should come to the knowledge. you think about us.

You know what we're like. You know what you're like. And yet God said in Romans 5.8 that God committed his love toward us and while we were yet sinners. Christ died for us.

[15 : 01] Christ died knowing what you were going to be like. Christ died knowing how you were going to live your life. Christ died so that you might have the opportunity to be saved and cleanse of that sin.

You know most people aren't going to run up to you like the rich ring ruler and say what must I do to be saved? Most people aren't going to do that are they? cry out in other ways.

You think of the drug and alcohol abuse of people. They're crying out. They're not saying what are they going to do to be saved? But they're saying I got a problem.

I need help. You talk about people who you know pornography. I need help. Attempted suicides from people.

I need help. See people are crying out for help all around us. Are we willing to help and give them the message that they need? You know there are a lot of people out there who are like this Macedonian man who says come over and help us.

[16 : 20] They're doing it in a different way. They're saying we're not at peace. We don't have joy. We don't have happiness. We don't have fulfillment. We don't have hope. That's why we're doing these things. We need to take the message of the gospel to them.

Matthew 9, 37. Then said he unto his disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few.

Think about that verse. You all know that verse. Go ahead, Mike. But we are the harvester now. Yes. The ones that are supposed to be harvest. Yes. Exactly. See, there's nothing wrong with the seed that needs to be planted.

It's the gospel. We take the gospel with us wherever we go. We're supposed to be planting the seed wherever we go. And there's nothing wrong with the people out there.

They're going through these things. They know they have a need and stuff. So what did you say the problem is? Us. Us. We're not taking the seed and we're not sowing it.

[17 : 28] We're not being the ones who are supposed to be the harvesters. We're not the ones who are supposed to be, we are the ones who are supposed to be the sowers. Taking the message of the gospel with us wherever we go.

So the fault's not God's. The fault, the problem is not the harvest. It says the harvest is plentiful. The problem is us.

Are we taking the message of the gospel to those around us? So in this chapter, chapter 16 of Acts, Paul receives a plea. A plea received.

Get up there, okay? In a very real sense, every Christian has received a call to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells us that's what we're supposed to do. That's what we're here for. Mark 16, 15, Mark's version of the Great Commission says this, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

[18 : 29] Now, you've heard me say this over and over and over. A sentence that begins with a verb is what kind of sentence? You've heard me say it over and over and over, but do you remember?

not derogatory. Not derogatory. It's a command. It's an imperative sentence. It's a command.

When he says go, when he starts with a verb, as in this case, go, it's a command. Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel.

He says go and preach. both of those things he's giving us a command. Paul received a special command. There in verse 9, a vision appeared unto Paul in the night.

There stood a man of Macedonia and prayed to him saying, come over into Macedonia and help us. Paul knew that when that Macedonian said, I need help.

[19 : 36] Actually, he said us. He said, we need help. Paul knew that the help that they needed was the gospel. The gospel would make the difference.

So many people in our world, they would trust in Jesus Christ. Is Jesus going to make everything perfect for them? They'll never have another problem? No. Because we have a devil.

We have an adversary. He's always out to get us. But Jesus will walk through you with it. I'll walk through it with you.

And he will go with you. And he will be with you in everything. So, again, fitting to have Fletcher here today, there is a need for missions.

There's a need for missions. The gospel can change lives. But in order to do that, in order for the gospel to change lives, it has to be preached.

[20 : 36] It has to be proclaimed. We have to tell people around us. You know, sometimes we have vague ideas about what the gospel is. But the Bible is good. Paul told us what the gospel was.

1 Corinthians chapter 15, you don't have to turn there, probably most of you know these verses. But in verse 1, he says this, Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel, which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand.

He says, I'm declaring to you the gospel. Okay, Paul, what is that? Verses 3 and 4. For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures.

So he says the gospel is Christ died, he was buried, he rose again the third day. And why did he do that?

So we could have forgiveness of sin, so that we could be cleansed. You know, the fact that God records in the Bible exactly what the gospel is, should be tremendous encouragement to us.

[21 : 52] We don't have to figure it out. He says, here's the gospel. You know, most people are not going to pick a Bible up and take a look at it.

And say, hmm, I wonder what the gospel is. They're not going to read that passage and go, hmm, I wonder what the gospel is. You need someone to tell them, someone to share it with them.

Romans chapter 10 verse 13 says, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Verse 14, how then shall they call on him whom they have not believed?

And how shall they believe on him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? He says, somebody has to go and tell them. Somebody has to share with them what the gospel message is.

Somebody has to go and say, let me tell you about Jesus and what he has done for you. He died, he was buried, he rose again, so that you can have freedom from your sin.

[22 : 56] You know, the Bible compares the gospel going out as seed, bearing precious seed as one passage talks about.

We, most of you, probably all of you, grew up here in rural Maine or somewhere not in a city. you understand what it takes to grow.

Every spring, farmers go out and they have to plant their seed. Every summer they go out and they till and they cultivate and they help with that seed.

And then, as the rains come and the sun is given and that seed grows. And then he's able to harvest. And when he harvests, what does he do? He saves the seed to be used again the next year.

God says, you're supposed to plant the seed. And then we go out and we harvest. We take the message of the gospel to people, we share with them, and we help them come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior.

[24 : 07] And then what happens? They share with others. They take the message to others. Haggai 2.19.

Haggai's end of the Old Testament, one of the minor prophets. He said this, Is the seed yet in the barn? Yea, as yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, the olive tree, hath not brought forth from this day will I bless you.

He says, up to this point, the seed's in the barn. Nothing's happening. Nothing's growing. Why? Because the seed's in the barn. You have to put it out there in order for things to happen.

Think about us as a church. Where do we learn about the gospel? Word of God. But, what happens if we leave it there in the book?

It doesn't accomplish anything, does it? we have to take it from the book to sow it. How about if we leave it, I preach about the gospel, I let you know about the gospel, but we just keep it in here amongst ourselves.

[25 : 23] Nothing happens. It doesn't do anything. Well, you know, you've taught us from the Bible, we've all heard it, and yes, I'm going to take it with me as I go out those doors.

I've got it right here, it's locked away right there. Okay, if it's locked away right there, what good is it? It's not accomplishing anything.

We have to sow it, we have to give it out. If for the gospel to change lives, it has to be proclaimed. For the gospel to change lives, we have to tell people, and share it with people.

Which brings us to the second thing up there. the necessity of men. The necessity of men. Why God did this, I have no idea.

But he's chosen us to share the gospel with people. He's chosen us to tell them the message, the good news, the gospel, of who Jesus is, and what he has done for them.

[26 : 28] You know, Paul's in awe that God has done that. We've been going through Galatians, Galatians chapter 1, verse 15 and 16. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, Paul's writing this, to reveal his son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.

Paul says, God called me. He gave me a mission. He wants me to share the gospel with people. he says, I went out and I preached it among the heathen.

And he said, I learned it not by conferring with flesh and blood, but by spending time with God. God is good to us. He's using us to declare the gospel to people.

You know, think about it. Everything God created is to be a servant of his. It's to accomplish his purpose. He has chosen us.

Psalms 119, 90. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations. Thou hast established the earth and it abided. Verse 91.

[27 : 47] They continue this day according to thine ordinances for all are thy servants. Everything, everyone to be servants to God, to proclaim his word to people.

Luke 19:40. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

He gave the job to us, but if we're not going to do it, he says, the stones could cry out. They could give the message. You ever wonder why God didn't do that?

Let the stones cry out and tell people. Let the birds sing. Let them sing the message of the gospel. Let the clouds write out the message in the sky.

But he gave the job to us. What a privilege that we have that he gave it to us. You know, there was once a professor father.

[28 : 55] And upon his retirement, he thanked the university for paying him to teach what he so thoroughly enjoyed. You know, if he was awed by the fact that he was able to teach at this university, how should we feel that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords has allowed us to take his message to people.

You know, God's looking for people who will follow him. He's looking for people who will proclaim his word. He's looking for people who will do the job that he's actually called us to do.

There's one verse I've always remembered, probably a lot of you have it memorized. Ezekiel 22:30. I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me in the land that I should not destroy it, but I found none.

I looked for a man. One. I couldn't find anybody. Are we going to be those who take the message of the gospel out?

Are we going to be those who take it out? You know, a few weeks ago we were talking, maybe it was Wednesday nights downstairs, we were talking about the shield and the buckler. We were talking about you have your individual shield, but you also have those ones that interlock, form a wall.

[30 : 20] He says there's a gap in the wall. I think of Paul writing about Demas. Remember, he writes about Demas in one place and Demas is with us in there.

Then another place he writes, Demas had forsaken us. There's a gap in the wall. Who's going to come and fill that gap? He says, I saw it for a man, but I found none.

He says, I'm looking for somebody who will come and take the job of taking the gospel to those around us. Are we that people? Is that our job?

Is that what we're trying to do? Make up the hedge. I'm going to stop there for today. Dear Heavenly Father, thank you. Thank you.