

# Paul - Radical Faith

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[0:00] Tonight we're looking at the Apostle Paul. Looking at Paul, a man with a radical faith. And Paul says this in 1 Corinthians 11 verse 1, he says, Hear what it says about him in Acts 24 verse 5.

It says about Paul. It's his CV, if you like, in a way. It's his testimony of his enemies about him. A man called Tertullus was slandering Paul and said of him these words in Acts 24 verse 5.

It says, So this is an accusation of Paul.

And we can learn a lot from these words, really, from examining these words about the kind of man Paul was. Even from what the critics said about him. And this text, verse 5, it outlines, if you like, Paul's credentials.

Paul was accused of some things here. And it's interesting when you think about what he was accused of. He was called a pest, a pestilent fellow. A pest.

[1:31] He was called a mover of sedition, a revolutionary. And he was called a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. He was a sect leader. And if you look at these things, basically he was accused of one who would disturb, disrupt and divide.

Paul was one of the most radical people in the Bible. And these statements about Paul were based on fact. But they were false accusations that he did answer. But you can see how, of true Christians, these things could be true, of you and me.

As real Christianity, it is a disturbance. It is a disruption. And it brings a division. Firstly, Paul was called a pest.

He was called a pestilent fellow. As we see, Acts 24, verse 5, they called him, amongst other things, a pestilent fellow. A disturbance, a nuisance.

Literally, he was, the accuser, Tertullus, was accusing Paul of Christians of being like a plague. You know, the word pestilence, obviously plague.

[2:37] These rulers wanted to stamp this Christianity out as if it was some plague, that it was some pestilence. And they wanted to stamp it out and exterminate it, as we see verse 5 here.

Paul was a pest to them. A pest will disturb and annoy. Now, we've had some pests lately. Some pests, not human pests. We get those from time to time. But some other kind of pests.

We've got some termites in the garden. And they're a bit of a pest, aren't they? You don't want to give them too much quarter around your home. I know I've seen a whole wall destroyed by these pests, these termites.

Also, we've got some mice around. They're making some scrabbling noises. Pests, they're annoying, aren't they? Annoying pests. Christianity was a disturbance to the orderly religion for the establishment of its day.

And we think, as we see encounters with them, that they had all their jots and tittles just so. And then along comes the Christians. And it's been the same through history, hasn't it?

[3:41] Non-conformists. Non-conformists. Think of the Puritans of Bunyan. He wasn't registered by the church of his day. He was kind of an outcast. He was a non-conformist.

And he held religious services and preached to the people in his day in little cottage meetings and in little settings of groups of people.

But it was outside of the established religion of the day. And so he was persecuted and cast into prison simply for preaching the word of God. In our text, they're calling Paul here a pest, a dangerous pest.

Tertullus was like a lawyer for Ananias, the high priest. And he describes Paul as a pestilent fellow, a troublemaker, one who was always stirring up unrest.

And Paul was often causing a disturbance. We see that said of him through Acts. We see, for example, in Acts 16, verses 19 through 20, it tells of Paul and Silas there as they came across a demon-possessed woman.

[4:47] And she was working in the markets as a fortune teller. And it says, when her master saw the hopes of their gain was gone, they caught Paul and Silas and drew them into the marketplace, unto the rulers, and brought them to the magistrates, it says.

And it says that they said, these men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city. So we see that Paul had commanded the demon out of this woman, and now she was totally free.

She no longer could tell the future. They had their fortune-telling business. Then along came the Christians. So Paul and Silas, they were seen as these agitators, causing disturbance, upsetting the city.

Their trade was affected. And these traders were more interested in making money than in the well-being of the woman. At another time we read in Acts 18, verse 12, another occasion.

It tells of Galileo, the deputy of Archaia. It says that the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

[5:55] So here they were again accusing Paul. Paul is accused by the Jews of changing the worship of God. Really, he was getting the worship right, but he was changing the worship.

He was creating a disturbance to the religionists of the day. They would rather worship in form and ritual rather than in reality. Friends, faith will cause a disturbance in how we worship.

Amen? We might have worshipped of sorts before we were saved, but when we're saved we know how to worship, because we worship in spirit and in truth, not about rote and tradition, but in that personal relationship with God himself.

So Paul was not really being a pest. He was bringing them to right worship of God. He wasn't being the plague. He was being the antidote for the horrific, destructive plague of sin, of falsehood.

And so we see that today in the disintegration of society. As I've kind of touched on that kind of theme, the real plague is not the corona, it's the dreaded disease of sin, of rebellion against God.

[6:56] And where are the pests of our generation? The Christians who will be willing to be counted a pest, those who will be counted as those who will cause trouble to the devil's crowd. Where are the true Christians who will see souls delivered, like the fortune teller woman saved and delivered?

Where are those who will challenge the lip service and the cold religion, the dead religion of today with the worship of the living God? Real biblical worship. When you think about it, everywhere that you go, you cast a shadow.

You have an influence. Every one of us, every one of you. When you step into the room, you affect the atmosphere. There's an influence from you, even though you're scarcely conscious of it.

You disturb things. There's something that changes things by you being present. You know, I had that occasion in my workplace when I was in a secular workplace, and they would just, they would utter a curse word, and they'd say, oh, sorry, Andrew.

And they weren't kind of, they weren't being facetious or mocking me, really. They actually meant it, because they knew that they shouldn't have uttered the Lord's name in vain, or some corrupt swearing and such.

[8:09] Because there's an influence when you're a Christian in a workplace, in the setting of, there's an atmosphere that they're conscious that you stand for God, that you can be an influence, you can be salt, you can make an impact.

And now I know there's probably some that might wonder whether this is really the footprint of Neil Armstrong on the moon. But if that is the real footprint of Neil Armstrong on the moon, you know, it's been said that they will be there for a thousand years from now.

There's an influence that that footprint will stay. And it's the same with you and me. There's an influence that lasts. We might not be conscious of it, but who knows whether our influence could last, outlive us, couldn't it?

As we see of some who have stood for God and done great wonders and great ministries, that there's an influence that stays, that the books they've written and the messages and the ministry that they've given, it stays well beyond their lifetime.

And we see, for example, one such man was Edward Kimball. And he's probably not a name that we can consciously know who he is. He was just a Sunday school teacher, just a Sunday school teacher.

[9:20] We think of the just the Sunday school teachers. And he lived over a hundred years ago, and he was a Sunday school teacher in Boston. And there was a young teenager that became part of his class.

And this young man was a country boy. He didn't know the ways of the city or the church. And he was a bit of a stranger to a Sunday school, to a church. And when the teenager came to the class, it's probably a bit older than the pictures of these kids, but he was a young teenager.

And the Sunday school teacher said, turn to the Gospel of John. And this country boy didn't know how to find the Gospel of John. And Edward Kimball, the Sunday school teacher, he recognised what was happening.

And while the other boys were snickering, he helped this young fellow open the book to the Gospel of John and handed it back. And when he asked the boys to read, the country boy fumbled as he read, and he was a bit embarrassed.

But Edward Kimball, the Sunday school teacher, saw the big perspective. He saw the possibilities in the boy. And Kimball, the Sunday school teacher, he didn't just do the minimum, he went the extra mile.

[10:27] He took the trouble to reach out to this young soul, to reach this one for Christ. And Kimball, the Sunday school teacher, worked with him and spent months and months going down to the store where the boy was working, talking with him, spending time with him, and he led the young man, Dwight, to Jesus Christ.

And this was the beginning of the ministry of Dwight L. Moody, one of the greatest evangelists of history. It was just a little Sunday school boy, just a little Sunday school teacher, just this obscure Sunday school teacher.

But this Sunday school teacher had a vision, and it made a huge difference. And it's like that with you and me. We make a difference. We cast a shadow. We have an influence wherever we are, wherever we go about our lives.

Are we willing to be like this obscure, unknown Sunday school teacher and go beyond? Like Paul. To be a Christian who makes a difference, who creates a disturbance sometimes.

Now, of course, we need to be wise. I'm not saying being a total, you know, loudmouth, or be brash, or, you know, overly in your face with people when you're in a workplace setting.

[11:42] There's a time and place. There's a way. There's tact. There's finding those right opportunities, the right words to say, and making that influence that is, it might be even subtle to a degree, but it's definite, and it will make a real disturbance for Christ.

Amen? Now, others might call you a pest. Now, they know you're a Christian, even without you hardly saying anything. They might call you a Bible basher behind your back, or they may accuse you of swimming against the tide, of taking your faith too seriously, of disturbing and annoying people.

Friends, if that's you, you're in good company. You're in good company. Elijah was called a troublemaker. It was said of him in 1 Kings 18, Ahab called Elijah a troublemaker.

It came to pass, it says, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? Are you that troublemaker? Here he was, Elijah, accused of making trouble, causing this trouble, the famine, the judgment, but really, whose fault was it?

Ahab, the godless king, who followed after false gods. It was Ahab who was the real troublemaker, but as a Christian, we know we can get accused of being a troublemaker.

[12:58] Now, friends, it might be disturbing, for someone to shout outside a burning building. Fire! Fire! Get out! Get out!

And here's a real picture of someone that's actually jumping out of a burning building. You know, imagine if it had been someone who was sleeping. You'd want to disturb them, wouldn't you? You'd

want to disturb someone who was sleeping in a burning building.

And it's the same with you and me. Friends, we're called to disturb people. Christianity, Christians are disturbers. It's a good thing to disturb people who are comfortable in their sin.

You know, you may disturb people. We do it every Saturday morning. You know, we're disturbing people. We're disturbing people from their apathy, from their life without God, their life in darkness. You're disturbing people when you give them a gospel tract. You're disturbing people when you share Christ with them, when you warn them to be ready for eternity, when you urge people to flee from the wrath to come, when you challenge false beliefs.

[14:00] There's a disturbance there. And it is necessary that we disturb the sleeper and wake up the lethargy. Prepare to meet thy God.

You must be born again. Judgment is coming. Christ is coming. Souls are hell-bound and need disturbing. So we need to be willing to be disturbers, to disturb, to sound the alarm, to wake people up, to shout out, as it were, to those that are hell-bound.

So disturbing is a good thing, actually. A second good thing, as spoken of as Paul, was that he was a disruptor. He was a mover of sedition.

You know, he was called an agitator. You'd have seen such a one as accused of stirring up a rebellion, of causing controversy, of getting outside the norm of bringing change, disruption. It means something different. It means a change to the norm. If there's not a disruptor, then the dominoes keep falling, don't they? But we are meant to be those that are willing to disrupt, to change things.

[15:12] And Paul was called this agitator, this mover of sedition, amongst all the Jews throughout the whole world. He was accused before this high priest of causing a great disruption, a sedition.

And of Christ himself, it says, the chief priest accused him before Pilate. It says, There he stirreth up the people. The Lord Jesus was accused of disrupting the status quo.

When Christ came, everything changed, didn't it? When Christ came, everything was turned upside down. And he upset the religious peace of his day. Christianity is a revolution.

We see of the early church, it says of them that they turned the world upside down. A worldwide disruption. And in the context of Acts 17 here, it says, The accusers were Jews who believed not. These unbelievers, it says, in Acts 17, look further at the context. It says that these ones, it tells of them, they were Jews who believed not. And it says, they came to the rulers of Thessalonica crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.

[16:25] In the context, verse 2, it says that Paul was reasoning with them out of the scriptures. Verse 2, Acts 17. Verse 3, it says he was opening and alleging that Christ must have, needs have suffered and risen again from the dead.

And that this Jesus who I preach unto you is Christ. And then verse 4, it says, the people believed. So Christianity will cause an agitation. And that's true for us.

When we reach out for Christ, when we tell the witness of our faith, when we declare the message of salvation, it's disruptive. People would rather stay in their sin and rebellion.

They would rather stay there than surrender to God. They would rather have their religion than faith in Christ. They'll say, you've got your religion, I've got mine.

They would rather reject God and stay in their disobedience. I mean, how many times I know Peter can relate when you're going Saturdays witnessing and they'll say, oh, I've got my religion.

[17:27] What is it? It's the devil's religion. If it's not the salvation, they've got the devil's religion. The devil's religious. And the accusers were calling these believers destructive, disturbing the quiet of society, unsettling everything.

But aren't we called to disrupt this sinful world? We're not meant to be dominoes just going with the flow, but we're meant to stand strong. And we're meant to extend God's offer of salvation to planet Earth.

And so there's a conviction there. We've got the message that matters. We've got these truths that are undeniable. The salvation story that is clear cut, that we must trust Christ.

We must know his heart change. And as messengers of our Lord, we must bring this message that brings conviction, the word of God, to a sinful world.

It disturbs people. It calls for radical conversion, change. It's a confronting, challenging message. And so this world, we're meant to disrupt it, turn it on its head.

[18:35] When we look at the values, the world counts of value, sodomy, abortion, gambling, fornication, drugs, alcohol, forgetting God.

It's a revolution, isn't it? It turns everything upside down. We don't want that. A man is changed from a sinner to a saint. A heart is changed from darkness to light. It's a glorious disruption.

We're actually called to be revolutionaries, when you think about it, aren't we? This is the ultimate revolution. Christianity. Our government needs to turn around. Our world needs this revolution.

Our community needs revolution. We're absolutely the revolutionaries of our day, not politically so much, but spiritually. Well, politically, maybe.

But that's not the main thing, is it? Really, it's spiritually, isn't it? The revolution we need is a spiritual one. It's a heart change. And so again, it says these that have turned the world upside down are come here.

[19:35] There was an eccentric English evangelist that was preaching on this text in an open air setting. And he said, first, the world is wrong side up.

Second, the world must be turned upside down. Third, we are the men to set it right. It's true, isn't it? The world's upside down. And we're meant to see that, to challenge that, to stand against that and to be godly disruptors, as it were.

And we all leave footprints on this world. Maybe like that obscure Sunday school teacher, people that we're touching lives. We're making our mark.

You will have an influence on your world. Now, here's a quote. Why does one man's yawning make another yawn?

Now, just even thinking about what I just said, you might start yawning. But it's an influence, isn't it? One person does something and it influences you. And your influence is negative or positive.

[20:42] It's never neutral. So we've all got that influence. There was a young boy asking his dad what shape the world was, whether it was flat or round. And the dad said, it's crooked.

That's the shape of the world. It's in a crooked shape. It's not about whether it's flat or round. It's crooked. And it's true, isn't it? This world's crooked. It's absolutely crooked. It needs the disrupting power of the gospel because it's crooked.

It needs Christ. This Christless world needs Christ. And this secular culture, it needs Christ. And it's all its vain and empty ways. The false peace that people have, the complacency.

They think they're, I'm all right, Jack, you know. She'll be right, mate. But it's the devil's lie to them. And they're content with the false plan of the devil for their lives. They need to be disrupted.

We need to be that one who'll stand and stop the dominoes falling. Who'll be a disruptor. Think of Christ himself. He was a disruptor. When Christ came to the temple, he was turning over the tables and ejecting the money changers.

[21:48] It was a disruption, wasn't it? We see, I know there's a meme about Christ. You know, what would Jesus do? He probably would do that, which we might say, that's what Jesus wouldn't do.

But it's actually what he did do and what he would do, isn't it? He disrupts. When it's carnality, when it's fleshly, when it's material, when it's godless actions, when it's ungodliness in the temple, he disrupts that.

He's against that. So like Paul, let's be, as it were, that revolutionary, carrying this radical message. And the third thing that's said about Paul was that he caused division.

He caused division. He was a sect leader. So he was kind of like a sectarian, the sect of the Nazarenes. Paul was called this ringleader, this captain, this champion, this leader of this sect.

Now a sect speaks about division. And there is a right division. There's a rightful division. There's a breaking away from an established pattern. Division is something good.

[22:52] When there's a departure from doctrine and practice that's true and right, then we should get back to the right and be divided from the wrong.

And so the word sect is also translated as heresy. It's the same word that is given of Paul as being a leader of a sect, as one who is a heretic, essentially.

So heresy is an opinion or doctrine that variants with established religious beliefs. It's a controversial or unorthodox opinion or doctrine. Of course, we know Paul was no heretic. He was rather, he was the one that was right on the mark. But the others that were astray from biblical faith, they were the ones who are really the heretics in heresy. And so Paul is accused here before Felix in Acts 24. He says about such an accusation again, here, Paul's speaking.

[23:56] He says, I confess unto thee, he's talking to the governor Felix and of his accusers, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.

So he's saying, you're calling what I'm saying, what I'm teaching as heresy, but really this worship is according to the scriptures. Verse 15, it reads on, and have hope toward God, which they allow themselves also that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscious void of offence toward God and toward men. So here was Paul, he was correcting his accusers, this was no party or sect that was formed by men, this was the way.

That's what they called the early church, the way. It was exclusively the way, the one way, no blending of error, no mixture. And it's the same for you and me, God helping us, that we won't, we can't unite with error and pretend that it's okay.

Our teaching and our fellowship must be uncompromised. And that can be difficult sometimes because we've actually got to say, no, that's wrong and that's right. And you know, there's some things clear cut, they're plainly so.

[25:19] Some things maybe, there's some argy bargy, but when it's clearly wrong, we'll oppose it. When it's clearly right, we'll uphold it. And so this was Paul, he was straight down the line.

He says, you're accusing me of heresy, but he says that I'm actually believing all things that are written. It was in accord with God's word. So our worship must be right.

We think of Elijah, again, that one that was caught a troublemaker, he got the worship right. It says of Elijah that he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.

Our worship must be right, right down the line, straight down the line. In our day, the altar has broken down. We need to worship in sound biblical ways. This is a world often filled with lies.

We need truth in such a time to worship God in spirit and in truth. Our worship must be right. Our faith must be right that we believe and go by the book, by God's word. Paul confessed to believing all things which are written.

[26:23] Think of the word of God. It's written for us, the holy scriptures. It's been written in English by the blood of the martyrs. This book, this word of God has been paid for by the blood of the saints.

Here's a picture of Tyndale who was instrumental in recording the word of God in English for the first time. And as they were strangling him at the stake before they burnt him, he prayed, open the king of England's eyes.

And God did that. God did that. And that's why we won't settle for one that is near enough. We uphold the unadulterated Bible. And our Bible must be right. Every word of God is pure.

So let's heed the Bible. Obey it, love it, learn it, live by it, memorise it, take it to heart. So our Bible must be right. Our hope must be right. Paul confessed to a steadfast hope.

He talked about the hope of the resurrection that he has of eternal life. Our conscience must be right too. In the context, Paul talks about his conscience, that he wanted his desire to please God and have a clear conscience.

[27:31] So here we see the division. This is Bible Christianity. We get the worship right, we get the faith right, saving faith, we get the hope right, the assurance of eternal life, we get the conscience right, we're living it.

But Bible Christianity is divisive. It involves a separation. And the world would look at that and think, oh, you're being so divisive, you're being so narrow-minded, so blinkered, you know, let's just have a little bit of openness, a little bit of, you know, wide open, accommodation.

That's what the world would want and would accuse us when we are clear and strong that it's divisive. But there is a right kind of divisiveness that we're called to because truth is truth. It cannot be redefined. We dare not compromise. And so that's why God helping us, we want to stand firm and strong, not be accommodating of error and pretend it doesn't matter. There's a rightful dividing, which can mean a breaking from what can be accepted practice. You look at what's mainstream Christianity these days. It's a pretty woeful picture I put to you. What is mainstream Christianity, what the world would say that are normal churches, that the ones that I see commonly touted as the mega churches, the big churches, the mainstream churches. [28:53] It's such a mishmash of all kinds of things. And so there's a needful divisiveness in terms of we want to divide the word of God, divide over what is right and true and stand for that, strongly for that, not accommodating what is false or questionable.

And so to stand by what is written. The key Jews in Rome wanted to hear Paul in Acts 28, 22. We desire to hear thee of what thou thinkest and for us concerning the sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against. It's the same today. Bible Christianity is everywhere spoken against, isn't it? See what the media portrays as Christians. As Bible believers, they're mocked and derided and ridiculed and routinely scorned and caricatured. It's the same today as it was back in Acts 28. People everywhere are talking against Bible Christianity. They're talking against Bible faith. People are mocking the Saviour still. [30:03] He's still despised and rejected of man. And they'll scorn faith in Christ saying that's too narrow. People are searching for reality.

We cannot dilute this message. We can't make it a mixture. It has to be the true, the sound, the straight on salvation gospel message. Because how dare we change that? We cannot. It's something that cannot be changed. And so these believers of the New Testament, they were willing to go against the established traditional order. They dared to go against the flow. And what about you and me? Are we willing sometimes to, look, I'm willing to be considered an extremist. To be considered extreme. Not loopy or strange, but biblical, right? To be biblical. biblical. Not to be different for different's sake, but to be biblical.

[31:04] That's what we want, isn't it? Don't you want that? Glory to the Lord. Yeah. So religionists do not like true Christianity. The church that clings to the doctrine of the Bible, they consider too far right.

You know, they're too out there. People don't want absolutes today. They want accommodation. That truth is relative, they say. They'll say, look, we're calling evil good today. We're calling good evil today. You know, live with it. As if you can redefine such a thing. Let's have unity at all costs. Don't rock the boat. You know, just go with the kind of mediocre, watered down Christianity.

But friends, these are days that call for us to stand fast. Let me be clear. There is truth and there is error. There is light and there is darkness.

There is right and there is wrong. We've got to be clear what that is. You know, come to your own conscience, to your own mind, scripturally led to that conviction because Christianity will create a division.

[32:14] It talks about he's going to divide fathers from sons and daughters. It's going to divide husbands from wives. Christianity is a divisive, it's in your face, isn't it?

A divisive message but it's a healthy, positive division between pollution and purity. That's a good thing. It's better to be thought too narrow, too hard than to be too soft and wishy-washy and not really standing for anything.

There must be a division between leaven and loaf. There must be a division between sinners and saints. It says of our Lord, John 7, there was a division among the people because of Christ. Don't be afraid to stand up and be counted. The thing that the Lord's Church wrote through history is by men and women who stood firm, have been willing to stand against attack, accusation. Paul was accused time and time again as we've seen and even our Lord, he was accused, being divisive. Where are the men and women of God who'll stand on the word of God no matter what?

[33:20] The Bible says clearly how we are saved. The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

These are truths that cannot be changed. It tells that there is one name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. The name of Jesus.

Here's a quote. Many churches are willing to do almost anything to draw a crowd and keep them. They will adopt anything from the world because after all we have to help dear Jesus do his work. Some churches now have swimming pools, saunas and bowling alleys. Why not have a McDonald's fast food business right in the church? One Houston church now has Big Macs on the way. End quote. Now, does that sound ridiculous but that's actually what's happening? Mind you, it'd be nice to have some donuts and coffee after the church or nice to have those kind of refreshment things.

[34:26] We're not against that but it's like when that becomes the focus it's like we'll go to the church that's got the better coffee or I mean that's the kind of mentality isn't it out there? Honestly, that's how people rate churches now as to how much of these little extras people can get and how much fluffy stuff they can get rather than the truth and so I put to you tonight to think about Paul think of what he stood for how he stood for it what he was accused of Paul was called a pest like a plague he was a disturbance it's a good thing to disturb things he was called a revolutionary let's be unashamed to spread this revolutionary message let's be willing to disrupt our community with its hell bent ways people need to be disrupted because they're going to hell we need to stand and disrupt them to point them to the saviour amen to be unashamed of our lord and of his truth let's be standing with

Paul who was called a sect leader let's make a division it's a separation concerning what is right not to be argumentative picking and nitpicking but standing for what matters from true biblical doctrine for true biblical worship and faith to stand fast in that to be willing to stand with Christ divide with Christ against everything else that is wrong to stand for what is right and true and biblical are you so sold out for God that you disturb the guilty world around you think of the influence the shadow as it were the effect that you can have that footprint on the moon as it were that your life can have an influence that goes well beyond even your earthly span to be a disturber to disrupt the devil and all of his works to disrupt to be one who will stand in the gap and reach the lost at any cost to disrupt to disrupt and to divide to divide from what is error and what is truth from what is error and untruth search the scriptures be willing to get some biblical convictions about doctrine about your faith and stand on that be willing to search the scriptures and study and be willing to relearn unlearn learn from

God learn from his word be willing to be radical like Paul and stand fast in the faith let's pray Lord we thank you for Paul and how you tell us through him that we should follow him as he follows Christ Lord we thank you that we see in Paul he was certainly a man who made a mark and Lord we see the example as his accusers accused him of being disturbing of disrupting of dividing yet Lord these are good things for us to do in their right settings Lord not to be awkward or causing unnecessary disruption but to be a godly influence in where we walk and how we talk and the lives we can touch Lord that we would be led by your spirit to be like you to be different from the world around to walk in faith and light and truth pray Lord especially for each one here and those from afar that each one might know that personal relationship with you that saving faith that knows you trust in you and knows your saving grace

Lord that that finished work is for us and we've claimed it and we know it Lord for each one as we walk in this faith that you'll help us to be strong even when we face accusation and those that would mock us for our faith that we won't be deterred but rather it'll strengthen us and our resolve Lord to hold fast and lean on your strength Lord give us the grace to make an influence an impact like that obscure Sunday school teacher that saw that young boy trust you and that boy became a power for you Lord on this planet to see multitudes enter your kingdom Lord we don't know the small things we can do can have such a big influence Lord help us to be ever mindful of that Lord guide us we pray in Jesus precious name

Amen