

Paul's inspiring journey - the power of resilience

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[0:01] We've all got a God-given assignment, haven't we? God's got something for every one of us in our lives and some allotted span of time that we all have to live.

And the question is, how are we to live? Who are we going to follow? We need to choose carefully who we're going to follow. We know the world follows people, the Pied Pipers that are taking them the wrong way.

Our Lord says, follow me. And there's another one who says, follow me, and his name is Paul. He's the only other one. And he's really for us a human example of who we are to follow, Paul, in the Bible.

Paul urges us to follow his example, as we see in 1 Corinthians 11 verse 1, it reads, be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. So Paul's saying, follow me as I follow Christ.

Paul's demonstrating for us how to live. He's a role model for us, who we can learn from. Paul, and really for all of us, we're all meant to be like a walking sermon, every one of us.

[1:02] We're all meant to be living the life that he's called us to. And we're going to look at Acts 20, where Paul kind of unfolds really the example that he is. It tells of the character of his life, what we can learn from that.

And as we would reflect, Paul is one of the most prominent men in the New Testament. He wrote about 50% of it. And when Christ met Paul on the Damascus Road, Paul was forever changed. Think of what he was and what he came to be. He was one who was against the church and caused much havoc and mayhem and stirred as Stephen was stoned. And now Paul is for us an example.

So let's have a look at his life. There's a time where Paul shared his heart with people. And it was as he was about to board a ship and bid his last farewell to some beloved friends.

And here in this occasion, in Acts 20, where we're going to go, we can catch a glimpse of the character of the man. So we're going to go to Acts 20, verse 17. And from Miletus, he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church.

[2:12] Paul called the elders, the leaders of the church. And when they would come to him, he said unto them, you know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons.

Paul talks about the manner of his life. That's how we measure a man. It tells of his character, the manner of our life. And what was it that made this man such a man that we are called to follow? Let's look at some of the characteristics of Paul and maybe think about how can I have those same characteristics. First of all, we note faithfulness. Faithfulness.

Paul says, you know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons.

Here's a man who didn't put things off. He wasn't a procrastinator. I must confess, sometimes I'm a bit like that. You know, the usual way you put it, I'll get around to it.

[3:15] I'll get around to it one day. But Paul says, no, from the first day. From the first day. From day one. You know what kind of man I am.

And he got on with it. Right from day one. What does it say? From when? From the first day. In other words, Paul was consistent. Right from there.

Right from the start. He was sold out. And he got on with it from day one. And we could take heart in that, I think, brothers and sisters. Sometimes when we feel God's telling us to be about something, we can drag our feet.

But notice, Paul says, from the first day, I've been getting on with it. And I've been doing it at all seasons. Summer, winter, spring, autumn. Now, there are maybe some things that you cannot do.

You may not be able to get up here and sing. Or perhaps play the piano. Maybe you could come up here and mime. You may not be able to preach a sermon. But there is one thing you can do.

[4:20] We all can do. You can be faithful. You can be faithful. Amen. We read on about the man, Paul. His faithfulness, we read on.

Another characteristic is humility. Verse 19. Paul says, He was a man serving the Lord with all humility.

He served as a bond slave. What is the mark of humility? Serving others. That all humility of Paul was shown by the serving the Lord.

And really serving others too. A humble person is a person who serves other people. When God measures a man's life, he does not measure the man's life by how many servants the man has, but by how many the man serves.

And we can be like that, can't we? To have a heart to serve, especially serving the Lord. And then that translates into serving others too. So humility was a characteristic.

[5:29] Another one is compassion. Notice it says in our text, Paul says, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind and many tears. Many tears. Many tears.

It tells of many tears. As we read also about tears in 2 Corinthians 2 verse 4. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears.

Notice that, many tears. Not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. So Paul was a man who had many tears.

He had a burden for others. He wept many tears. How about you? Do we care? Do we weep? You know, I've wept when I've heard someone left the church.

I don't weep when everyone says that, but... But no, this one I thought, yeah, I'm going to miss him. I'm going to really miss him. And I wept when he left the church.

[6:38] Paul wept many tears. Many tears. We can weep too, can't we? Weep over the backsliders. Think of some backsliders I know. It grieves my heart.

Where are they? Where are they going? What's happened? What's gone wrong? We weep over the threat of false teachers. We weep over souls too, don't we?

Think of loved ones we know who don't know the Lord. We can have a heart for them, can't we? As it says in Psalm 126 verse 5. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

Hallelujah. They that sow in tears. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. What is that precious seed?

It's the word of God, isn't it? As you go witnessing, you think of those who don't know the Lord. And it breaks your heart, doesn't it? To know that they've rejected the Lord. That they're going to a Christless eternity.

[7:37] Paul was a man who wept many tears. He was a man who had the compassion of Christ, didn't he? In his heart and in his life. Paul knew what it was to have the compassion of Christ. The Lord beheld the city and he wept over it, didn't he?

He had a compassion for souls. And so should we, such that it moves us. Moves us to go forth. Moves us to go and take that precious seed. How about us?

Do we weep? Do we care enough to be moved inside of us for souls? Do the things that break the heart of Jesus break our heart? Do you know how to weep?

When is the last time you shed a tear over some soul? We need to pray and weep, don't we? Weep and pray. Paul had that compassion.

Another character trait of Paul was he had courage. It reads on verse 20, And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but I've showed you and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

[8:47] Paul says, I held nothing back. I gave it all to you. He was sold out. And we are called to courage, people. We're called to be courageous.

Don't hesitate. Don't hold back. Don't hold back. He knew the danger, but he had to testify. He had that burden. I've got to tell somebody.

I've got to tell somebody. We are to testify, it says. Notice that word, verse 21, testifying. Each and every one of you has a testimony, and your testimony is your testimony.

So testify. Testify. It was his all-consuming mission to testify, to tell, to give testimony. Now, the devil doesn't want you to testify.

Amen? The devil wants you to clam up. The devil wants you to zip the lip and not to speak the name of Jesus, not to witness. He wants to move you to silence, to silence you.

[9:48] The devil does not want you to testify, but God does. And Paul says, I've held nothing back. I've got to testify.

I've got to tell you. I've got to tell somebody. I've got to share the gospel. It was all-consuming for him. And believers here today, we are to urge people to repentance, to faith in Christ, to call people to repentance toward God, that change of mind, that change of heart, that mind shift.

He shifts us from darkness to light, from unbelief to faith, from lost to found, from blind to sight. It's a shift of your whole being, really, isn't it?

Of your mind, of your life, such that you see your sin for what it is, and how it binds you and holds you. And to see the setting free power of God, that you can be forgiven eternally.

And he calls us to faith, faith in Christ. This is our message. This is what we must do to testify. And let's have the same courage Paul had, such that he wouldn't clamor.

[11:07] The devil couldn't move him to silence, that he could not be moved in that direction. He had to tell his world. And he showed courage.

Think of it, in face of many dangers that lay ahead of him. Paul knew that he would face danger, yet he set his face to go to Jerusalem. He had to go and testify. He had to go and tell somebody.

He had to go and take that message of faith, of repentance, of the gospel truth, that Jesus saves those who will trust in him. In verse 22 it reads on, And behold, now I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there.

Notice it says Paul was compelled here. The Holy Spirit propelled him, compelled him, to go to Jerusalem. The love of Christ constrained him to go and complete his work, to go to that city.

Have we this sensitivity to the Holy Ghost? The Holy Spirit moved him to take the message. The Holy Spirit directed him.

[12:12] What is it that's directing us? Notice verse 23, The Holy Ghost witnessed it in every city that bonds and afflictions abide me. Paul knew the suffering, the affliction.

It's just no easy road. But it was God's way, wasn't it? That lay ahead of him. And he had this compelling, propelling power of the Spirit of God.

He knew the suffering and affliction that faced him, but he did not quit. It's been said moving parts always create friction. You know, when you do something for God, there's going to be friction.

It's been said the door to success swings on the hinges of opposition. Opposition. When you've got opposition, chances are you're doing something right. Chances are it's something right.

If you want no one to criticise you, do nothing, say nothing, and be nothing. But do something for God. Have courage. Do something for God. You will face opposition.

[13:11] You can expect it. It's sad when opposition comes our way from people who should be our friends, our brothers. Sadly, that can be the case. It was the case with Paul. Our life will have tribulations and trials.

We're going to face some hard challenges, but we can go forward in faith because we're bound by the Spirit, aren't we? The Holy Spirit is witnessing to us.

Paul shows us what to do, to have courage, have courage. And he says, follow me as I follow Christ. Here's another thing about Paul. Steadfastness.

He was steadfast. Verse 24, But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify, there's that word again, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Notice here how Paul would rather die with a conviction than live with a compromise. He says, none of these things move me. None of them. We're too easily moved, aren't we?

[14:16] We're too easily moved by things. He says, neither count my life dear unto myself. Paul's saying, my life's not important to me. My life is not really dear to me.

It seems like many folk do count their life dear to themselves. I'll just go only so far. There's this line here that says, the comfort zone, the comfort zone.

I'm not going to step over that line, out of my comfort zone. I've got to stay in the comfort zone. They think only of themselves, of their own rights, their own needs, their own little, cosy, comfy world.

Paul says, my life is not dear to me. He places no value on his own life compared to the importance of fulfilling the will of God, of doing God's will. And really, every one of us, everyone makes their own choices about life.

It's been said, the world has yet to see what God can do with a man that's totally surrendered to him. Wouldn't it be good if we could aspire to be such a one? What will it take to stop us, to move us, to detour us?

[15:31] We're going to face some things that threaten to throw us off course. Paul stayed on course. Paul would not be moved. Daniel was like that, wasn't he?

They tried to move Daniel, but Daniel would not stop praying. The Hebrew children would not be moved. They would not bow down. Moses would not be moved.

He endured by faith, as seeing him who is invisible. Moses would not quit fasting and praying till God changed his mind and spared the people. Joseph would not be moved.

When the temptress sought to lure him away, Jacob would not be moved. He would not let go of the angel until he got the blessing. The Gentile woman refused to get offended till she got the crumbs from the table.

Blind Bartimaeus would not be moved. They wanted him to shut up, but he just cried all the louder. When they tried to keep him quiet, he just wanted to get his sight back.

[16:31] He would not be moved. What about us? James says, blessed is the one who endures temptation, for when he has tried, he shall receive the crown of life. Paul says he was to face bonds and affliction.

He says, none of these things move me, not one of them. David says, I shall not be moved. I have set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand. I shall not be moved.

That's Psalm 16 verse 8. Can we like Paul say, I'm not counting my life dear to myself. I'm giving it all. I'm giving my whole life. I'm laying it out on the altar to be used for Christ.

None of these things move me. I just want to be in the will of God. I'm not living my life for myself. I'm living my life for Christ. It seems that many are being moved today.

Now the world would move you. The enemy would move you. The flesh would move you. Some are being moved by winds of doctrine blowing them all about the place.

[17:30] Some are getting moved. Some have been moved. They're half-hearted, spasmodic. They've retreated from the front lines. They've moved.

If that's you, you can move back. You can move back to where you're meant to be. Amen. Now I know there's someone in our midst here who's selling their house and they're planning to move. I want to tell you, don't move. But it doesn't relate to your house that you're trying to sell. But we're talking spiritually here this morning, aren't we? Don't move. Please don't move. People of God, the old paths, we should stay on them.

Don't move to some new path. I urge you, don't move. Don't quit. Don't be moved. And notice Paul says that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry.

He's talking about a running race that he's on this running track and some would move him, of course. He says, I want to finish my race. I'm not going to stop running. I'm not going to be detoured.

[18:32] I'm not going to take some sidetrack. What about you? Are you going to finish your course? What God's put on your heart to do? What he's called you to? We aim to reach your full potential.

Run your course well. The Lord wants us to be good stewards of our life, our very life. We read on verse 25. Paul tells, And now behold, I know that ye, all among whom I have gone, preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Paul's telling of his responsibility towards other

people.

Friends, it's not all about you. It's about the others that are watching you. It's about the others who are following you. And we've got a responsibility to others. That's important.

He says, follow me. If we're going to follow Paul, we want to make sure he's going in the right direction. And it's the same for the ones following you. We've got a responsibility towards other people. We have to testify.

[19:37] We have to tell them. And so as you testify, you're going to be an example for others that they're going to follow your example to go and testify. And Paul says, I did not hold back.

Now notice here, there's a graphic picture here of blood on hands. Now that's pretty graphic, isn't it? It sounds like Ezekiel 3, where it reads, verse 18, When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life.

The same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. He's talking about the responsibility of the watchman. These are telling words here, gripping words, aren't they? Blood on hands. Someone else's blood on my hands. The one I haven't told. The one I haven't warned. When I should have. We have to warn people.

There's a hell ahead for many. The most. We've got to testify, people. We've got to testify. Paul wasn't ashamed of the gospel. He warned people of the danger, the danger of hell.

[20:44] He told the Ephesian elders that he had preached the whole counsel of God. He could stand before the Lord Jesus, and you will stand there one day. What will be on your hands?

Of course, we can take this too far, but there is the sense of responsibility in the now, isn't there? We must warn. We must warn the people we love.

We must warn the people we don't love. We must warn everybody. Warn the wicked. He could say his hands were clean of the blood of any man. He says, I have not shunned to declare unto all the counsel of God.

He didn't hold it back. He didn't water it down. Because we know we're forgiven. All our sin is forgiven. We're saved. We're blood-bought. But maybe there'll be some regret looking back.

What I could have done. Wouldn't it be a shame to have regret in heaven about what we didn't do? And Paul says, my hands are clean from the blood of all men.

[21:48] He didn't hold back. We could learn from that, couldn't we? He urges the Ephesian elders. He says, Paul says, take heed.

He says, take heed to yourself. And whether we're an elder or not, we ought to take heed unto ourselves, shouldn't we? Take heed to the flock, to the blood-purchased church.

Notice it's purchased with the blood of God. That's what it says. That's the King James. I believe it. It's the blood of God. The very church of God, which is purchased with his own blood.

Why are we to take heed? Verse 29, Paul tells further, For I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Now, I've not seen a grievous wolf, but I've seen an angry fox in a cage, and I've seen the fangs of the fox.

But I'd imagine a wolf is probably 10, 20 times bigger than a fox. Paul talks about men acting like grievous wolves. Grievous wolves.

[23:00] It's true. Grievous means cruel and destructive. Some people harm people. Some preachers are like that. That's a problem.

They act like savage wolves. Paul warns about that. Paul warns about that danger. And I think it's real. I think it's true.

I think it could be said of some that they're grievous wolves. Verse 30, Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw disciples after them. Therefore watch and remember that by the space of three years I cease not to warn everyone night and day with tears.

Tears again. Tears again. Paul says, watch. He says, watch. And he says, watch and warn, he says. Here Paul talks about tears again. He warns about dangers from within and from without. We have need to watch, to be on guard, to be alert. Grievous wolves. Grievous wolves. Now let them come after me.

[24:02] But if they come after my flock, that's something that I don't accept. They go after the flock. The people in this church. Come after

me .

Don't go for my flock because I've got need to care for my flock. And Paul talks about tears again. He says, watch, warn. He says, I've been warning night and day with tears.

We've got need to watch. There's enemies out there. We've got need to be on guard, to be alert.

We can expect to be under attack. The idea here is of the church elders serving as watchmen.

As men that stand guard. As sentinels on the walls of the city. And what are the watchmen to do?

To look out for those who might come from without and besiege the city.

Watch for wolves. Watch for the enemy. We have need to watch. And we should steel ourselves for combat. We can expect opposition. And Paul urged the people to be biblically led.

[25:06] It reads on verse 32. And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Friends, it's the word that we need. The word that will build us. And we can together corporately be constructive Christians. Building up one another. It's by the word it says. Notice it's the word of his grace.

It's the word of his grace. That's the emphasis of it. Then Paul relates. Verse 33. I've coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel. Yea, you yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities and to them that were with me.

Paul says, the prosperity of others did not move me. He says, I've coveted no man's silver or gold. He was not afraid of hard work. Verse 35.

He says, I've showed you all things. How that's so laboring you ought to support the weak and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it's more blessed to give than to receive. You could say that's another characteristic of Paul, his generosity, wasn't it?

[26:08] He knew it's more blessed to give than to receive. I know there's people that give of their time, their valued labor. There's people that give of their energy, of their enthusiasm, of their pockets.

Jesus says, there's a blessing as you give. Paul tells how we're meant to be living in this materialistic centered world. He says, don't live a selfish life. Be a giver. He says, support the weak. Notice another thing Paul shows us is prayer. He was a man of prayer. Verse 36. And when he had thus spoken, he knelt down and prayed with them all. Paul says, follow me. We should pray like Paul prayed.

Amen. He believed in prayer. And in verse 37, we see in this emotional parting scene, Paul had been with them for three years. He says, you're going to see my face no more. We see how the church loved Paul and how they loved him.

Verse 37. They all wept sore and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him into the ship. So there was a bit more weeping, a few more tears.

[27:12] See the love here. That's what the church is meant to be. We're meant to love one another. Amen. That's what the Holy Ghost church should be. A people who love one another. Who care for one another. So what can we see about the life of Paul?

He was a man with purpose in his life. His purpose was what? To testify. He says, this is my purpose, to testify and I'm not moving. He was steadfast, no matter the struggles, the hardship. He was committed to testify. Paul's journey was fraught with danger, with opposition, with hardships. He would face beatings and prison and riots. And Paul was prepared to lay down his life for the gospel.

Paul never wavered. He never moved. He says, follow me. What is he saying? Don't be moved. Get the job done. Paul kept his focus fixed on finishing his course. Tears did not move Paul. He shed many of them. Temptations did not move Paul.

[28:11] He faced trials and tests. Persecution did not move him. Paul talks about someone lying in wait. Just looking to ambush him. To kill him. I think there's someone that's been keeping a dossier on me.

To find something. Any little thing that they can find. And they've kept a little dossier on me. And now they've unleashed it.

And said, these are all the faults of Andrew Craig. Well, I could give him a whole load more. To add to that list. The Jews were looking to ambush him.

They were lying in wait. To kill him. People are against you. That want to do something for God. Should it stop you? Should you say, oh, I've got to throw in the towel.

And have a poor me session. Oh, it's too hard. I'm not going to do anything for God. People are going to start picking on me. I'm not going to poke my head above the trenches.

[29:12] Because I'm going to get shot at. People were against him. Out to get him. Even of his own brethren. They were going to lie in wait. To try and harm him in some way. One time Paul had to be let down.

A wall in a basket. To make his escape from the city. This was real. They were out to kill him. And brother, sister. We can expect this. In this world.

Our Lord says, you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world. Paul says, persecution does not move me. He says, future danger does not move me.

In verse 22, he talks about going bound to Jerusalem. He was saying, not knowing the dangers that shall be for me there. He did not know what trouble was going to meet him there. But he wasn't going to be moved.

And we see the record of his life. We could go much longer on this really. 2 Corinthians 11. I won't read it word for word. But how he was in much labors.

[30:08] In stripes. So he was beaten. In prison. He was stoned. He was in shipwreck. He was in perils of waters.

In perils of robbers. In perils by my own countrymen. In perils by the heathen. In perils in the city. In perils in the wilderness. In perils in the sea. In perils among false brethren.

In weariness and painfulness. In watchings often. We see the many things here. The care of all the churches. Paul lived it. He knew what it was to not be moved.

None of these things moved me. He had to testify. He had to take the gospel. Friends it's the same for you. You might find it's hard for you to testify. Your family might be against you. You know that they're going to be against you.

You know that you're going to stir up some opposition. When you stand up for Christ. Paul says follow me. I've got to testify. He says I'm not moving. If the whole world moves. I'm not going to move. Paul says to you don't move.

[31:09] We all have a God given assignment. To testify. God's calling on our lives. Paul says verse 24. But none of these things move me. Count the cost.

Count the cost. I don't count my life dear to myself. Count the cost. The world will move you in a different direction. You've just got to let it. You know how. I know in times past.

In a swimming pool that's round. You go round and around. And it starts a whirlpool. Who's ever had that? You start a whirlpool. And if you just lie still. That water is going to take you.

Where it's flowing isn't it? The world is going to flow. And it's going to move you. If you just let it move you. And it's going to move you in the wrong direction.

But friends we've got to be strong. Count the cost. Don't shy away from sacrifice. Nor do I count my life dear to myself. I don't count my life dear to me.

[32:07] In other words my comforts. Be more comfortable to quit. Wouldn't it? It'd be more easy. Wouldn't it? Paul says none of these things move me. He says I've got to keep going.

I've got to get the job done. I've got to finish this course. And I'm going to finish it with joy. Even though it's hard. I'm going to finish it with joy. Because the joy comes from obeying God. Doesn't it? The joy that we know. Is by doing his will. That's where the joy comes from. It's not by pursuing our own personal agenda.

Our gain. Or comfort. It's do we obey his will. And that's where the joy is. Where we can know the joy. Our joy doesn't depend on our circumstances.

It depends on what he wants. Pleasing him. And Paul says if only I may finish my course.

[33:05] And I'm going to finish it with joy. There's a joy there.

Gladness. Not about our own personal comfort. Or our own comfort zone.

It's I'm going to do the will of God.

I've got to testify. It doesn't matter what they say. Those who oppose me. Even my own family or friends. The ones who should be for me. Even though they're against me. I'm going to testify. Because I don't want their blood on my hands. That's the point isn't it? We've got a mandate. And the ultimate blessing comes as we fulfill God's purpose. Be a finisher. Be a finisher. Not a quitter. We see 2 Timothy 4. As Paul relates. I've fought a good fight. I've finished my course. I've kept the faith. There's a good fight. Finish the job. Don't move. No matter the tests in life. Don't move. Stay firm. We can know God's strength is made perfect in our weakness. Yes. In your weakness. Because we can know his sustaining power. [34:01] To finish this race. And Paul says this. Being confident of this very thing. That he which hath begun a good work in you. Will perform it. Until the day of Jesus Christ. Now these words of Paul are written from prison.

God has begun a good work. In you. That believe. And the Lord calls us to a good stewardship. Good stewardship of our lives. Our lives. Our lives are meant to be such that we'll use them wisely. Paul says follow me. As I follow Christ. Friends. People are looking to you. To set a godly example. Think of that too. It's not just about you. It's about the people watching you. And Paul tells Timothy. Young Timothy. He says. Let no man despise thy youth. But be thou an example. Of the believers. In word. In conversation. In charity. In spirit. In faith. In purity. So. Be thou an example. Paul says follow me. [34:58] And he says. Look out. Because people are following you too. So be an example. Paul says follow me. We think of his faithfulness. From day one. From the first day. He just kept on.

Dogged determination. British bulldog. He was determined. He was dogged. He says from the first day. He's saying. In all seasons. Faithfulness. He says humility. Humility of mind. Serving the Lord. Humility. We see compassion. Many tears. Many tears. God will help you to have a burden. Compassion. Courage. None of these things move me. I'm going to keep trusting. I'm going to keep faithful. Steadfastness. Watchfulness. There's opposition. Watch. Warn. But don't be deterred. Carry on regardless. Watchfulness. And warning too. Give warning. [35:55] There's wolves out there. Prayer. Paul prayed. Love. Love. They loved Paul. And Paul loved them.

And the church should be a loving family. Shouldn't we? We should love one another. We've got to look out for one another. There's hurting people here and there amongst us. We've all got our burdens. You don't have to carry that burden alone. Share one another's burdens. Pray for one another. Love one another. And we see as Paul exhorted Timothy, be thou an example. Be an example yourself. Because others are watching you. Friends, I've been preaching really to believers here this morning. If you've yet to trust Christ, can I testify? Can I testify? Testify to you. Repentance towards God. Faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ. To know you can have a shift of heart, of mind, of purpose, of life. You can turn to Christ in faith and trust his saving power. [37:01] Now, the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believe it. Faith.

Simply trust Christ died for your sin and rose again. He took and paid for all your sin. Fully took the punishment for it in his self. The penalty due to you, the death penalty, such that you can have his gift, eternal life, as you trust in him. And so, friends, for all of us that believe, we've got a gospel to testify. To testify the gospel of the grace of God. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you that your grace was evident in Paul. The grace that saved him. The grace that propelled him. The grace that teaches us how to live in this world that would move us. Lord, help us to see, as Paul saw his need of you, his great resource and strength, such that he knew that he had to testify, no matter what was against him, that none of these things would move him from that course, from that race.

[38:14] Lord, we too are on this racetrack, and the world would move us, the flesh would move us, the devil would move us, but yet we know we must not be moved.

We must stand firm. And we must not even count our life dear to us, such that we're willing to be vessels that you can fill and use.

Pray if there's any here this morning that might be feeling downhearted or discouraged. Lord, that you'd lift us all up. Help us, Lord, if there's needs, physical needs, that you'd bring healing.

Lord, that we might know your great power. And, Lord, help us to be compelled by your spirit, constrained by the love of Christ, to take this gospel of the grace of God to the world all around us that so desperately needs it.

Help us, Lord, such that we won't be regretting, not speaking, but we will have spoken. We won't have blood on our hands. Lord, we'll have that assurance we've told, we've testified to the world around us, as we know we must.

[39:19] And, Lord, give us the grace too, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen. Thank you.