

Macedonian Call - Acts 16:1-10

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[0:00] I love traveling. I like going and seeing things that I have not ever seen. It doesn't have to be anywhere exotic. It could just be a country road. I've never been down just to see what is down that road.

We all probably enjoy some degree of exploring and seeing things, but longer trips require some planning, some additional planning. Where are we going? How will we get there?

Who is with us? Where will we stay? These are common questions that one answers prior to departure. I recall a time though on some trips they don't always go as one expects.

I remember being detained in a police station in the middle of China. And being questioned and interrogated for several hours.

And needless to say, things were not going as I intended on that trip. So you go to plan B. And in our text today, Paul sets out on his second missionary journey.

[1:06] And we will see as they start out, it doesn't go as intended. Nor does it continue to go as intended. That said, we will see that God is sovereign.

And how he leads and guides is to his good pleasure. And he uses often disruptions to lead and guide and direct.

So if you have your Bible with you, if you want to turn to Acts chapter 15. If you recall before we get to our text today, last week we saw that Paul and Barnabas had returned from the first missionary journey.

And they were reporting how the Gentiles had come to know Jesus Christ by faith. In Christ alone, by God's grace through faith in Christ alone. And there were some people from Jerusalem who said, No, no, no, no, you can't be saved unless you're also circumcised.

And so there was a debate about that and to settle the debate. They went to Jerusalem and convened the first ecumenical council of church, so to speak. And the church gathered there to settle this dispute.

[2:18] And they came out of that dispute with a letter in hand to distribute to all the churches to indeed say yes, Gentiles can come to know, have salvation through Jesus Christ alone by his grace through faith alone.

So they are now on the cusp of their second trip. And it begins in a not intended way. Let's look at the scriptures with me at Acts chapter 15.

And so we will see how God four ways that the Lord guides his people in our text today. The first one we will see is through conflict and failure.

Look with me in the text, chapter 15, 36 through the end of the chapter. And after some days, Paul said to Barnabas, Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we we proclaim the word of the Lord and see how they are.

And now Barnabas wanted to take with him, John called Mark. And Paul thought it best not to take with him the one who had drawn from them in panphilia and had not gone with them in their work.

[3:35] And there arose a sharp dispute. So they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed to Cyprus. And so Paul chose Silas and departed having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.

And he went through Syria, Silicia, strengthening the churches. The first way the Lord we see guiding is through conflict and failure.

To go their separate ways was not the original idea. Look with me in 36. Paul said to Barnabas, Let us return and visit the brothers in every city proclaiming the word of the Lord. It was intended by Paul to take Barnabas and revisit all the churches they had just want to.

That was the intent. That is how they had set out on this trip. After all, Paul and Barnabas had worked together and they had worked well.

This was a natural proposal. They shared ministry together. They took their first missionary journey together. The Holy Spirit was working through Barnabas's relational gifts coupled with Paul's immense mastery of the law and his brilliant intellect that produced dynamic results through the power of the Holy Spirit.

[4 : 51] They shared wounds together. They journeyed together. They envisioned the future together. They were soul brothers, if you will.

Every man and every woman in ministry would want a ministry partner like Paul and Barnabas. The proposal was let's partner up, strengthen the churches, deliver the letter from Jerusalem. Let's go. There are Gentiles to be saved. And yet there was a problem. In verse 37, Barnabas has an idea.

He wanted to take John Mark with him. John Mark was Barnabas's cousin. Barnabas wanted to give John Mark another chance.

And Paul saw John Mark's previous departure in the first missionary journey as a form of abandonment. If you read verse 38, it didn't set well with Paul that he had not gone on and continued on their ministry journey.

[5 : 57] And it says here that there was a sharp disagreement in verse 39. A sharp disagreement. This was not some gentlemanly disagreement, but an intense, passionate conflict.

And in fact, I'm sure if we were to look at these two gentlemen having this dispute, whether John Mark should go with them, we would think to them, hey, guys, settle out. You need Jesus.

And therein lies the problem. They have Jesus. Barnabas saw him, John Mark, that is, as beneficial to accompany them on the missionary journey.

But Paul would rather have anyone but John Mark to accompany him on this journey. Why? We are not told. Other than you get the sense that Paul's interpreted John Mark's departure as some form of abandonment in the work of the gospel.

And he would not have that. Who is right? We are not told. And it really doesn't matter. What was the conflict a result of?

[7 : 03] I suppose that in some ways you could argue that this is a personality conflict, a temperament conflict, maybe mixed with a little bit of nepotism, perhaps in Barnabas, because John Mark is his cousin.

We don't know. We can't say with declarative definition, so to speak. But I want to propose that there's a personality difference here.

Paul and Barnabas are different. And this should bring some form of encouragement to us.

Barnabas is the son of encouragement. We are told that he is full of the Holy Spirit. He is generous. He's sold a piece of land and brought it to the apostles. He's the consummate advocate. He is the consummate supporter Barnabas is. When the believers in Jerusalem were afraid of Saul, it was Barnabas who brought Saul to the apostles and advocated on his behalf.

Barnabas advocates for John Mark. Once again needing help in ministry and Antioch. Who does Barnabas go and seek? He went and sought Saul and Paul and said, Come with me to Antioch and teach here.

[8 : 14] And Paul, what about him? He's an incredible teacher. He's an incredible preacher of God's word. He was a Pharisee of Pharisees. He knew and had memorized. He could teach the law of God better than any of his peers with a new covenant understanding.

He had a strong personality. He was able to take a stoning and keep proclaiming Christ. He could stop Paul from proclaiming Christ. He had this internal compulsion to live or die for Christ.

We often naively think that if we were just more spiritually mature, we would never clash with anyone. I agree that generally our clashes would be less frequent and less severe in proportion to spiritual maturity.

But until we get to glory, there will always be conflict. And perhaps this diddy is true. To dwell above with the saints we love, oh, that will be glory.

But to dwell below with the saints we know, well, that's a different story. Number two, under this first form of how the Lord guides, is personality conflicts, clashes arise between people who share the same basic theology.

[9 : 31] Is theology the problem? But just remember where they just once were. Paul and Barnabas went before the Jerusalem Council. That's where they were. The core issue of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone was affirmed.

They both agreed to that. They both defended that before the Jerusalem Council. This wasn't necessarily a matter of theology. Personality clashes can arise between people who are godly and committed to the cause of Christ.

Paul and Barnabas were not new believers. Both men had walked with God for years, and they both were committed to doing the will of God, no matter what the cost. The first missionary journey proved that to be true.

And then lastly, personality clashes can arise between people who have served together in the cause of Christ. Paul and Barnabas have had a long history of serving together.

It was Barnabas who enlisted Paul's, who listened to Paul's testimony and brought him to the Jerusalem Council. It was Barnabas again who sought him in Tarsus and brought him to the church at Antioch to preach and to teach the church at Antioch.

[10 : 49] These men had been set aside and commissioned together, and they went out on their first missionary journey. These men served well together for the cause of Christ.

So personality differences can lead to clashes that can cause us to sin. The question always comes up, who is right in this clash, whether to bring John Mark?

Luke the author does not blame either party, so we need to be careful. There is a slight nod that may go to Paul, since it is stated that the brethren in verse 40, and Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.

So at Antioch, Paul and Silas were the ones who were sent out by the church. So there may be a slight nod to Paul, that could just be a historical note though.

That said, we could also argue that, and here's where I want to land, they are both right and they could both be wrong. And let me explain. Paul was right in that he was a rugged pioneer venturing into enemy strongholds with the gospel, and he didn't need anyone on his team who would run from the heat of the battle.

[12 : 09] He needed committed warriors who would not flinch in the face of hardship or adversity, and John Mark had proven himself not to be such a man. Barnabas was right in that he saw an undeveloped potential in John Mark.

He wanted to extend grace to this young man in spite of his earlier perceived misstep by deserting them in this cause. History proved them right in that Paul later told the church of Colossians to welcome John Mark, in his first imprisonment he told Timothy to pick up Mark on his way and bring him, because he saw John Mark's later ministry as useful to Paul.

So Barnabas' efforts to reclaim Mark for the cause paid off, and both men were right. Both men were also wrong.

I believe it is likely that they fell into sin in the way they dealt with the disagreement. They both were stubbornly dug in their heels and refused to give in to the other's point of view.

I am certain they both would have said that they are standing on the matter of principle, but they could have graciously agreed to disagree and parted ways in the spirit of mutual respect.

[13 : 29] Instead, they had this sharp disagreement. Paul later used the verb form of the Greek noun sharp disagreement in the great love chapter where he states, love is not easily provoked.

At the very least, Paul and Barnabas were provoked with each other. I think that we were not going too far to say that both men likely crossed the line into sinful anger.

It may have been God's will for the two men to separate, but it was not his will for them to separate in a heated quarrel. Consequently, let me give two practical observations.

A person's greatest strength, and this applies to us, is often the area of great weakness. Paul's strength was that he was a resolute, committed follower of Jesus Christ, no matter what the cost and to stand firm in his convictions.

He even publicly confronted a powerful man like Peter. You could beat Paul, you could throw him in prison, you could stone him. Whatever you could do, you would not stop him from proclaiming Jesus Christ, and him crucified is the only way of salvation.

[14 : 45] Paul's weakness, though, is his inability to accept and work with a weaker brother, perhaps like John Mark, who had potential but just wasn't there yet.

Paul's later comments about John Mark, as well as other scriptures that he wrote, seem to indicate that Paul may have overcome some measure of this weakness in himself.

What about Barnabas' strengths and weaknesses? Barnabas' greatest strength is that his ability to encourage the faint-hearted and to help the weak, he was a champion of the outside, the fringe person.

He knew how to show grace to those who had failed, but he aired on the side of showing grace to those who needed to be confronted. It took Paul in Galatians 2, 13, who even Barnabas was carried away into the hypocrisy of Peter, and the other Jews withdrew from him from eating from the Gentiles out of fear for offending the Judaizers.

So Barnabas' kind ways led him even into sin and looking out for the outsider. The application for us, know yourself. Whereby God's grace are you strong and are you gifted?

[15:57] Exercise that strength for his glory, but be careful, because your strength may lead you to sin. If you are not on guard, a man who is strong in discernment can easily be judgmental.

A man who is strong in accepting others can easily err by tolerating sin and doctrinal error. Number two, we should not let personality clashes cause us to quit serving the Lord.

I imagine many of us in this room have perhaps seen or witnessed two godly people have a clash, and maybe that clash was with you, and you have said, I'm out, I'm done.

If that's the way things are, I'm out. We should not allow personality clashes cause us to quit serving the Lord.

Don't do that. The work of Christ is greater than any of us, and we should keep on serving him, even if we've had a clash with another Christian.

[17:09] Neither Paul nor Barnabas nor John Mark allowed this clash to stop them from serving the Lord. Instead, of one missionary team, now in God's sovereignty, there are now two.

Paul and Barnabas, or sorry, Barnabas and John Mark went to Cyprus, Paul and Silas went to Asia Minor. What do I want us to see?

I want us to see that this was a way, this conflict, this failure, was a way that God led these two men in a way they did not anticipate.

Number two, another way that we see God leading and guiding in our text is through gospel partnerships. Look with me in chapter 16, one through five.

Now Paul and Barnabas, or I'm sorry, Paul and Silas are on their journey. They came one through five. Paul came also to Derbian and to Lystra, and a disciple there named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman, was a believer, but his father was a Greek.

[18:17] He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him, and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for the observance of the decision that had been reached by the apostles and the elders who were in Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

Think from Timothy's point of view, how the Lord was leading him through a partnership in the gospel by bringing the apostle Paul through town and asking, come serve with me.

God leads through gospel partnerships. It says Paul came to Lystra, the very town that he was stoned, and he was left for dead. It was at Lystra that the young man stood out, Timothy.

Timothy was likely a teenager, and I especially would like our youth and young adults to listen carefully. Timothy had a godly upbringing with his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois were told in 2 Peter.

[19:32] We are told that his dad was a Greek, so his dad was an unbeliever, and he was without a spiritual dad. The Lord was at work in this youngest man's life to be a faithful messenger and a prepared disciple to proclaim the gospel, and this was the case for Timothy.

It is likely that Timothy had come to Christ approximately two years earlier when Paul's first missionary journey went through town. Timothy began walking with the Lord, excelling in the law of God.

He had grown up with the law of God because of his Jewish mother and grandmother, and now he had a new covenant understanding of the law of God, of a fulfillment of Jesus Christ as the awaited Messiah.

Look at his reputation in verse 2, Timothy. He was well spoken of by the brothers in Lystra and Iconium in just two years. This man had traveled from these two neighboring towns, and he was spoken of well by the church, by the brethren.

Paul saw Timothy as indispensable for the cause of the gospel advancement, and he took him along his missionary journey from this point forward.

[20 : 49] Just a quick word to our youth group. Again, Timothy was likely a teenager. When Paul heard of his reputation of this young man, Timothy, he saw him as indispensable.

He didn't want to go any further without this young man on his team. That decision altered the direction in Timothy's life. No matter if you are without a parent, no matter if your parents are physically or spiritually absent, God is in the process of raising you up to serve him.

If you want this morning to be prepared for the service of the Lord, I would encourage you as a youth or young adult to say something to Pastor Eric.

Pastor Eric is a gift to us and a gift to this church. He would love to partner with you and what the Lord is doing in your life to prepare you for ministry service.

Paul does something to Timothy that seems to be out of place in our text. Paul has Timothy circumcised. He does something that months earlier in Jerusalem that he passionately defended before the Jerusalem Council that you don't need to do as a Gentile who had come to faith in Christ.

[22 : 13] Salvation was by grace of loan, through faith alone and Jesus alone, without works like circumcision. So why do this? Why circumcise Timothy?

Paul had in fact a strong resistance in the case of Titus to not circumcise him. But Titus was a pure Greek. He's a pure Gentile.

And Paul refused to have Titus circumcised. And it's a matter of Gentile liberty that is at stake. And so however in Timothy's case, Timothy is both Jew, his mother and Greek, his father, and uncircumcised decision would continue to offend the Jews with no advance to the cause of freedom.

So Timothy voluntarily removed this stumbling block. So Timothy was perhaps advantageous in this cause of Christ for he was half Jewish and half Gentile.

And he could bridge both cultures.

[23 : 26] The Lord provided guidance to Timothy through this gospel partnership. It has been a desire of mine to plant churches. And in order to plant churches, one needs to be intentional to raise up leaders and to fill the vacuum that is created when you plant.

I'm grateful now to partner with other groups and other pastors. This year we joined the INC, this new church planting group of pastors that are here in Spokane.

And we want to see churches planted here in Spokane and in the surrounding area. And collectively through this gospel partnership, the Lord is providing guidance and helping each church respectively in that endeavor.

And I am grateful that 4th Memorial Church is part of this church planting initiative to plant other churches. And thank you for giving this year. We were now giving 1% to the INC, this group of pastors who are looking to plant churches.

And that was instituted in this year's budget. And so I'm grateful. And the Lord provides guidance through gospel partnerships. And what about you? I recently heard of one of our elders hosting a 530 prayer meeting with other men.

[24 : 43] And they are partnering in the gospel's sake. And they're holding each other up and praying for each other for the sake of the gospel. And that gospel partnership and gospel ministry partnership is helping each of these men.

One of the chief places I see gospel partnerships and ministry partnerships is in the local church with Pastor Eric with youth and Heather with our children.

And Jay and our adult discipleship, Melissa with women and Josh in worship ministry. And what do I mean by that? That those who serve help us raise up disciples in this body and serve with these men and women in the church.

And I'm grateful for them, but I'm grateful for you in those gospel and ministry partnerships. And thank you in that endeavor. Thirdly, we see that God leads through restraining influence of the Holy Spirit.

Look with me in verse 6 and 7. And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak a word in Asia.

[25 : 58] And when they had come up to Missiah, they attempted to go to Bethany and the spirit of Jesus did not allow them. I have a map here to help show us their journey.

Remember, they took a letter down here in Jerusalem. They departed in Antioch. And then they went over in Derby in Lystra, which they found Timothy in Lystra. So Silas and Paul and then Timothy is picked up here.

So now it's a trio. And it says they wanted to, as they were passing through Missiah, they wanted to go to Asia, but the Holy Spirit would not permit them to do so. And they wanted to go to Bethany, but the Holy Spirit would not allow them to go there.

And so now they're on their way down to Troas. But what I want you to see is God is directing them. He is leading and guiding them through the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we call them closed doors. When Paul finished his ministry in Galatia, he decided to go south and ministered in Asia, where Ephesus is located, but he was stopped.

[27 : 08] He tried to go north to Bethany, and he could minister there to the prosperous cities around the Black Sea, perhaps, but he could not. The Holy Spirit hindered him there. And the overall effect was a funnel to direct them westward to the Darnell Straits to the Aegean Sea.

Paul, Silas, and Timothy were actually driven west by closed doors. How does the Holy Spirit restrain them? With all the pastoral wisdom I can muster, I would have to say, I don't know.

I don't know. Was it through the bestowing or removing of the subjective sense of peace? Or was it through difficult circumstances or transportation problems or supply chain complications, or did a donkey have a flat tire?

I don't know. I don't know. One postulation that I can have, though, that has some biblical merit, is it could have been illness.

That allowed a door to be closed here and a door to be closed there. Why do I, someone, perhaps Paul, maybe even fell ill? And you say, where do you get this?

[28 : 18] Look with me in verse 10. I know we haven't read this verse yet, but when it says, and when Paul had seen the vision, immediately he sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Notice something very interesting happens in verse 10. And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia.

The pronoun we is a little unique because it's here for the very first time. Something interesting happens. Luke has been writing the book of Acts, and he's always been referring to them as they, they, Paul Silas, Timothy, they, they, Paul Silas, Timothy.

They, they, they. Now we get to we and who shows up. Luke inserts himself in the narrative and now Luke shows up at Troas over on the Aegean Sea.

He inserts himself. So now we know it's not only Paul Silas, the two who originally set out. They picked up Timothy at Lystra and now Luke is with them. Well, what's Luke's profession? He's a doctor.

[29 : 27] Did someone possibly fall ill and need of care and the quickest way perhaps, let's look at the map. Let's say perhaps somewhere out here, someone fell ill and they sent word to Luke, get, come to us quickly.

And so Luke, the fastest way Luke could get somewhere is by sea to get to Troas. And that's where Luke shows up in the narrative. I don't know. We don't know why.

But I find the pronoun we with the insertion of Luke now in the narrative. Whatever the circumstance, however the Holy Spirit restrained them, we do not know.

However we know that the Lord was directing them through closed doors. What is the application for us today?

What kept Paul going despite the disappointment and how do we handle disappointment?

Remember, they wanted to go to Asia. They wanted to go to Bethany.

[30 : 30] They wanted genuinely to do this and they were restrained from doing that. That would have led to some measure of disappointment. For Paul, he was not being able to go to the destination he desired to go.

It wasn't turning out how he wanted. This trip is not going how he wanted or intended to go. How did Paul keep going despite his estrangement from Barnabas, despite the potential sickness, despite the disappointment of the closed doors?

How does Paul keep going? His simple faith that God is in control of his life. Later, when Paul was sitting in the Roman jail and his detractors took advantage of his imprisonment to build up their own following, he said, In prison, I want you to know, brothers, or under house arrest, that this has happened to me and has really served the advancement of the gospel.

Even my imprisonment has served to the advancement of the gospel. God rules. God is in control of Paul's life and he knew it. And in the Corinthians, he wrote, he said, We are afflicted in every way and we are but not crushed.

We are perplexed but not driven to despair. He kept trusting in God and God is in control of Paul's life and he had confidence in that. Paul refused to indulge himself in the what ifs.

[32 : 04] If only we had never taken John Mark even in the first place. If only if Barnabas had not asked to take John Mark. If only one of us didn't get sick.

If only I was smarter. If only I'd just stayed home. What ifs will kill you and they kill the trust in God is in control of your life.

Paul maintained a loyalty to the Lord and faith in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When I first met Wendy, prior to us being married, Wendy was student teaching here in Spokane and she was preparing herself to go to ministry or to seminary because she wanted to be in ministry someplace and perhaps overseas.

I was part of a church plant on staff at a church plant and I was preparing myself to what I thought was a ministry overseas as well. I remember then going to, we got married, that was important detail.

We were married and I remember going to a doctor's visit with my wife and there she learned through a series of doctors visits, this is the one where we were to get the information of what the diagnosis was and I remember the doctor saying, Wendy you have this autoimmune disease.

[33 : 34] The room fell quiet, didn't even really know what questions to ask and so I said, hey we're preparing to go overseas.

What do we need to be mindful of? They said, well as long as you're near a western hospital in a large city so that should a flare up happen, she can be treated, you're probably fine.

But that wasn't where we were intending to be, we were intending to be pretty remote with some unreached people and so in some ways I know that door seemed to be closing.

And so I selfishly, the car ride home was pretty quiet. I selfishly was thinking, now what?

Without regard to my wife receiving this diagnosis, only with hindsight, can I see that now? And my wife was sitting there and it took us perhaps a few days to say no.

[34 : 52] I remember praying and saying Lord would you help us maintain a loyalty to you and a faith in the guidance of your Holy Spirit.

I don't know what our future holds now but we trust you. It took a few days but eventually we got there. A loyalty to the Lord and expressing a faith in the guidance of his Holy Spirit.

The Lord has restrained our plans, it didn't go as we intended to. But we still love the Lord and we trust in his guidance and I don't know your story.

I don't know what the Lord is doing in your life, of the doors he may be closing and restraining influence of the Holy Spirit. Fourthly though, we look for ways that the Lord guides and then we see in our account today that the Lord guides through direct revelation, look with me in verse 8 through 10 now.

So passing by Messiahs they went to Troas and a vision appeared to Paul at night and a man of Macedonia was standing there urging him saying come over to Macedonia and help us.

[36 : 02] And when Paul had seen the vision immediately he sought out to go to Macedonia concluding that God had called them to preach the gospel to them.

Today God speaks and he reveals himself primarily in four ways through his word, through prayer, through circumstances and through people.

And for Paul here in this account he speaks through the vision. Nothing motivates us like hearing a cry for help. If any of us were taking a walk and we heard someone crying out, help, help!

You would immediately get your attention. And Paul has a vision and there's a man who is saying to him come over to Macedonia and help us.

A cry for help, our adrenaline kicks in and we respond. The distress Paul heard in the vision was come over and help us. I love the word concluding in verse 10.

[37 : 05] In verse 10 it says we sought to go to Macedonia concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel. Concluding. It's a verb that means to bring together or to coalesce or to knit together.

Luke and Silas, Timothy and Paul now are considering this vision in the context that all has transpired. It has all come together to their understanding we must go to Macedonia and what is it that's coalesced?

What is it that's been knit together? What is it that's coming together to conclude? It's coming together that they just came from this Jerusalem council that says they don't need to be circumcised to be saved.

By grace through faith in Jesus alone is someone to be saved. Paul is also considered thinking maybe I'm an apostle to the Gentiles.

I remember that's what I've been called to do. And so they remember Jesus and Matthew 28.

[38 : 13] Go and make disciples of all the nations, all the nations. And so Asia Minor now so to speak has been reached. Where is it that the gospel hasn't gone?

And this is the first step. This is the first means by which the gospel is now going to Europe. And for a good millennia and then some 1800 perhaps 1500 1600 years, Europe will become the seat of Christianity.

Right now in biblical times Jerusalem is the seat of Christianity. Well here shortly in history past Europe will become the seat of Christianity. And in part it's because the gospel makes the sleep from Troas.

We're going to read in the next chapter into Europe into Macedonia and here's this cry. Come. And they they conclude that God has called us to preach the gospel to them and that was the right recollection.

I wonder if the nations could speak today what they might say. Come and help us.

[39 : 26] I want to share a few things with us today that burden my heart and burden us as staff and elders and there are three billion people who are yet unreached in the world who have little to no access to the gospel.

Three billion. There are 7000 people groups who are unreached with little to no access to the gospel.

I have with me some little figurines that I have in my office and their traditional dresses that if this these people groups were to go to a festival or something they would get in their traditional dress and this is the traditional dress.

This one here is meaningful to me because this one is the traditional dress of the Miao people. And when I was in China I went and ministered among the Miao people in southern China.

There's the Miao, the Yi, the Khaja people. They all live in southern China. And these are minority people groups that are represented in in the nation of China alone.

[40 : 39] There's but here's what I want you to have a visual image of. Imagine 7000 of those figurines all on the stage. 7000 of them with little to no access to the gospel.

They're unreached and they constitute three billion people. What compounds part of the problem is that 99% of mission resources in churches average.

And this is average across many churches, not just fourth memorial, but 99% of mission resources are spent on the already reached places.

Think about where people are already reached and 99% of mission resources are spent where people are already reached.

Put another way, 1% of mission resources are spent among the three billion unreached peoples or 7000 people. 1% of missions budgets. 1%.

[41 : 44] Approximately there are 400,000 missionaries currently serving in gospel ministry around the world. And 97% of the missionaries are sent to peoples that are already reached.

3% of missionaries are sent to the unreached. And I wonder, this man in Macedonia, Paul has a vision and he says, come over here.

Come to Macedonia and help us. And Paul rightly understood the bottom of verse 10 that God had called him to preach the gospel to them.

And I want to say there are still people, 7000 people groups with little to no access, 3 billion people that unless things change, they are going to die apart from Christ and spend an eternity separated from Him.

And if you're here today and you say, Scott, I want to be prepared to go to the unreached peoples.
[43 : 00] I want to prepare my life for that endeavor. Would you say something to one of the
pastors or elders today and say, would you help me prepare my life for that ministry service?

We'd be happy to have that conversation. And let's pray. God forgive us for the times when we
refuse to walk or ministry in harmony with our fellow servants.

Thank you that you so graciously use our failures to bring an increased fruit in character and in
service.

Thank you for all the ways that you guide us. You guide us through conflict and failure. You guide
us through gospel partnerships. You guide us through the restraining influence of their Holy Spirit.
And you guide us through direct revelation. Lord, I pray that we would be a church that would be
willing to be guided easily by your Holy Spirit.

[44 : 08] Your plans are always superior than ours. Help us to walk humbly, eagerly, yielding to
your will as you reveal it to us step by step.

We love you. We love you, Lord. Send your name, Jesus, we pray. Amen.