

## A Necessary Element of the Mission

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 04 December 2022

Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[illegible]

Acts chapter 13, if you got your Bible, we've been in a series now for many, many weeks going through the book of Acts. We are about coming to halfway in the book of Acts, and Lord willing, the plan will be next weekend in the book of Acts, and then we'll take a break and pick it back up in January.

So hope that you are enjoying this study of the book of Acts, and so tonight, we're gonna do a little bit of an overview. I've told you this from time to time that when I teach scripture, there's sometimes I feel like we need to slow down and look at just a few verses, and then there's times I think we need to look at a bigger section of scripture to kind of understand the forest that you don't get lost in the trees.

And so tonight's one of those where I wanna kind of show you a big picture of what's going on here in Acts chapter 13 and 14, but for our scripture reading, we're just gonna read chapter 13, beginning at verse four down through verse 12.

So if you're able to stand, please do so as we honor the reading of God's word. Again, Luke is writing this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And he says, so being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there, they sailed to Cyprus.

[ 2 : 02 ]      And when they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. And when they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus.

And he was a proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elamus, the magician, for that's what the meaning of his name was, opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?

Now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for some time. Immediately, mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand.

And then the proconsul believed when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. This is God's word.

[ 3 : 29 ] Pray with me and for me as we ask God to teach us tonight. So Lord, we thank you for this time now to be in your word. It's inspired of you. It's a two-edged sword.

It convicts. It also equips. And so we pray that this evening, Lord, that you would minister to us as we listen, as we look to your word.

And Lord, we just ask that you would speak into our lives. As I have no doubt, there are many watching or in this room who may feel discouraged or burdened, and I pray that this evening, your spirit would encourage us and minister to us.

And we pray all this for the glory of Jesus. That is the one that we exalt in this place this evening. And all God's people said, amen. Amen. You can be seated. It's one of the greatest stories of human survival of the last century.

The story took place in 1972 about a rugby team whose plane crashed in the Andes Mountains. There were 45 people on that plane.

[ 4 : 41 ] 18 of them died on initial impact or within the first few days. Stuck there in that extreme cold of over 12,000 feet, the survivors took refuge in the broken remains of the aircraft.

After, think about this, two weeks of waiting for rescue, an avalanche engulfed the shelter, killing eight more people and leaving the rest trapped in the dark for the next three days.

After digging their way out, the survivors were able to find a small transistor radio only to learn that the search and rescue mission to find them had been called off.

Surrounded by towering mountains too difficult to climb and too steep to descend, they were, fate family, left to die.

Temperatures plummeting well below freezing at night. No one left had any survival training, no suitable clothing to wear, no fuel for a fire, no water, and practically no food.

[ 5 : 53 ] In fact, one of the kind of legendary stories that came out of this, and by legendary, I do mean that it's true, is that they actually had to eat the flesh of those that had died just to stay alive for 72 days.

Realizing just how serious this was, eventually one man by the name of Nando and his friend that he convinced to go with him, Roberto, they decided that they were going to make the brutal trip down to find help.

And so, the next seven days, these men began to go down the mountain with no ropes, no boots, no axe knife, no tent, no map, no compass. They descended over 4,600 feet and walked over 33 miles until they finally found a remote valley where they encountered a few men on horseback.

Within two days, or the next day, two helicopters arrived to rescue the survivors, and it's what became known as the miracle on the Andes. All of the survivors that were left were diagnosed with serious medical conditions, including altitude sickness, dehydration, frostbite, broken bones, and malnutrition.

At a hospital in Chile, Nando caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror. He was skin and bones. Could hardly even recognize the former athletic young man that had boarded a plane some 72 days before.

[ 7 : 38 ] And all he could do was stare in that mirror and mumble over and over again, I'm alive. I'm alive.

I'm alive. Now, Faith family, I doubt that any of us, I don't know, maybe there are a few of you, I don't know the story, if it's true, but most of us have never had to experience that kind of survival situation.

But there is something that those individuals possessed, are you listening to me, that I promise you you're going to need at some point in life.

It's called endurance. You know what I'm talking about? Like that ability to keep putting one foot in front of the other no matter what, to do whatever it takes just to get to the next day, to tell yourself whatever it takes so that you don't give up, you don't quit, you don't throw in the towel.

And some of you have been there. Maybe for you it was a medical situation where everything was about just get to the next day, just survive the night.

[ 8 : 52 ] Maybe for you it was financial and it was just pay the minimum payment, pay the required bills, and stay afloat financially. Maybe it was circumstantial.

That is, you had to keep telling yourself there are going to be better days ahead. There are going to be better days down the road. Maybe for you it was emotional. You were grieving and you were hurting and all you could do was muster up enough energy to get to the next day.

You know what I'm talking about, don't you? I guarantee you there are many of you in this room that know what I'm talking about. You had to do whatever it took to endure. Listen to me, Faith Family.

Sometimes the only thing that gets you through life is getting through life. Let me say that again. Sometimes the only thing that gets you through life is getting through life. It's the necessity of endurance.

And while endurance is not just a requirement in life, endurance is a requirement in the mission of Christ. Can I make a very obvious statement?

[ 10 : 00 ] Being a Christian is hard. That was a great place for an amen. I think I got two people on the front row that said yes sir. Alright? Which I'll take.

Being a Christian is hard. Being in ministry is difficult. Following Jesus is challenging. What part of take up your cross daily sounds enjoyable?

Sounds easy? It's not. The Christian life is hard. And I think sometimes we're afraid to admit that. It is not easy being on mission for Jesus.

I mean, just think about the metaphors that the Apostle Paul uses to describe the Christian life. Here's some from 2 Timothy 2. Share in the sufferings as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

And athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It's a hard working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.

[ 11 : 13 ] Here's some from 1 Timothy 6. Fight the good fight of faith. 1 Corinthians 9. Do you not know that in a race all runners run but only one receives the prize so run that you might obtain it?

I do not box as one beating the air. 1 Corinthians 15. I worked harder than any of them but it was not I.

It was the grace of God in me. Now which one of those examples sounds passive? Like it isn't hard and difficult and challenging and that there are not moments in those metaphors when you want to quit the race.

You want to stop working in the fields. You want to stop punching the bags. Whatever analogy you want to use it's hard.

Which is why one of the lessons we need to learn in the mission of Christ is the necessity of endurance. That is exactly what I want you to see in the life of Paul and Barnabas here in Acts 13 and 14.

[ 12 : 30 ] First I want to show you what Paul and Barnabas endured. I want to show you what they went through. In Acts chapter 13 verse 2 Paul and Barnabas are set apart for this mission after a time of fasting and prayer.

In verse 3 they are sent out. Paul and Barnabas leave Seleucia. They sail to the island of Cyprus. They work their way from east to west all the way to Paphos.

And there in Paphos they encounter the first type of opposition that they will experience on the mission. Pick it up chapter 13 and verse 6. When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos they came upon a certain magician a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus.

He was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus a man of intelligence who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Ilmes a magician for that's what his name meant opposed them seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

So this encounter is very very similar to an encounter that Philip had back in Acts chapter 8. If you remember Simon the magician and what I told you there was that don't get caught off by that word magician.

[ 13 : 49 ] This is not somebody that does magic tricks or performs a show. What it means by magician is someone who was a worker of the occult someone that was involved in demonic activities.

So what Luke is showing us here again is another example of how when the mission goes out it always encounters a spiritual opposition.

I don't know if you know this faith family but the powers and principalities that we cannot see don't want you on mission. They don't want faith family on mission and there are going to be spiritual forces in the spiritual realm doing whatever it can to oppose the mission of Christ.

Now watch what Paul has to say about this opposition. Verse 9 I love this. I want to put this on a coffee cup. Saul who's called Paul filled with the Holy Spirit looked intently at him and said you really bad person.

No it's not what he says. You son of the devil. Kind of like what Jesus called the Pharisees. You are of your father the devil. You enemy of all righteousness full of deceit and villainy.

[ 15 : 09 ] Will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? In other words Paul here does not win an award for being politically correct. He doesn't come across nice.

And I want you to lean in here. That's because he is dealing with false teachers or false teaching or the spirit of anti Christ.

And the Bible tells us to rebuke those spirits. Not play pat-a-cake with them. Not be you know well we all have disagreements you know you know you know you know you know you have your view we'll have our view and we'll just sing kumbaya and roast a marshmallow.

No Paul when he realizes I am dealing with something that is demonic I realize that I am dealing with someone that is a spirit of anti Christ he calls it what it is you son of the devil you enemy of righteousness there is coming at me a force not of flesh and blood but of powers and principalities and greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world that is exactly what they deal with in fact notice who wins this encounter verse 11 now behold the hand of the Lord is upon you and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for some time immediately mist and darkness fell upon him and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand and the pro council believed which is what he was trying to prevent when he saw what had occurred for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord there's so much I could say here but I'm doing overview tonight I'm doing big picture here's the point

I'm trying to make notice it on the screen a must not forget we are at war we are not at war with one another as I said earlier we are not at war with flesh and blood but powers and principalities but Christian let me remind you that when you said yes to Jesus when you put your faith in Jesus you became two things instantaneously forgiven and hated and you have had the bullseye on your back ever since because there are powers and principalities that do not want you to be on mission for Jesus Christ but if you if I if we will stay true to the gospel listen you will prevail or as we just sang about yet not

[ 17 : 59 ] I but Christ in me even in the face of spiritual opposition Paul and Barnabas endured here's the second thing notice not just that they had to endure spiritual opposition they had to endure personal opposition here's what happens next keep your seat belt on Paul and Barnabas set sail to Pamphylia they work their way up to the region of Poseidon there they're going to find a synagogue now why a synagogue because a synagogue is a public place where you can start a public conversation and they're going to share a word to share a message and in chapter 13 verse 15 they're invited to share that word they're given the opportunity to share a message and they jump at the opportunity to do so in fact in chapter 13 verse 16 through 41 this is where Paul gives a message showing how this is frequently done in the book of

Acts how Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament! Let me give you just a glimpse verse 32 chapter 13 and verse 32 and we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus as also it is written in the second psalm you are my son today I have begotten you he starts showing them how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament and they love it I mean they erupt in applause they can't get enough Facebook and Twitter explodes so much so they invite them to come back and give another message on the next Sabbath and on the next Sabbath they did it again verse 48 chapter 13 verse 48 says this good things are happening amen the word of

God is spreading people are being converted even the pro counsel against spiritual opposition comes to faith and if I've learned anything in my over 25 years of vocational ministry it's this just when you think everything's going well get ready for opposition because you think man things are really happening here and look what happens in verse 50 the next verse chapter 13 verse 50 but the Jews so the word of the Lord is spreading throughout the whole region but the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city and they stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and drove them out of their district in other words Paul and Barnabas not only faced spiritual opposition they also faced personal opposition this is going to be a shocker I know I'm glad you're sitting down people will stir up division when things are going well and the gospel is advancing and people's lives are being impacted make no mistake about it opposition is coming notice this on the screen a life on mission for

Jesus will have to endure personal opposition if you take the mission seriously people will stir up things about you and they might be from your own family Paul's a Jew and the people who are stirring all this up are Jews see even the very people who would have loved Paul have turned against Paul and this may be some of the most difficult opposition to endure this may be the kind of opposition that will make you want to quit the most but Paul and Barnabas in the face of personal opposition continue to endure here's a third kind of opposition they faced and that is theological opposition theological opposition what's the source behind the personal attacks what's the source behind all the division that's being stirred up answer theological differences there really is nothing new under the sun you see in each of these cities

Paul and Barnabas went into synagogues and preached the gospel to religious that is Jewish people people that had the inability and difficulty to do two things number one they could not connect the Old Testament storyline with Jesus they were blinded by their Old Testament to where they couldn't see the fulfillment who is the person of Jesus Christ amen and secondly they couldn't accept that righteousness before God comes not by your works of the law not by your good deeds but by grace alone so the theological issues that prevented them from getting over the hump is they couldn't see how the Old Testament was fulfilled in Jesus which is what Paul preaches and they couldn't get over the fact that your obedience to the law doesn't gain you jack before a righteous standing before God and this is the very thing that

[ 23 : 49 ] Paul and Barnabas preach at the heart of their message is this you don't save you God saves you pick it up in chapter 13 verse 17 I got a good amen there alright you're getting warmed up only halfway through the sermon as far as you know chapter 13 verse 17 chapter 13 verse 17 notice the emphasis here the God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt and with uplifted arm he led them out of it and for about 40 years he put up with them in the wilderness and after destroying the seven nations in the land of Canaan he gave them their land as an inheritance all this took about 450 years and after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet then they asked for a king and he gave them

Saul the son of Kish a man of the tribe of Benjamin for 40 years and while he had removed him he raised up David to be their king of whom he testified and said I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart who will do all my will of this man's offspring God brought to Israel a savior Jesus as he promised did you notice the emphasis I put on the word he who was at work God was in other words your whole redemption story Israel was a work of God not you he did it he brought you up and he led you out and he fed you and when you needed a king he gave you a king and he gave you David and through all of that what did he give you an offspring the savior of the world God was working on behalf of his people faith family redemption is

God's work not ours and religious people hate the idea that you can't contribute a thing notice this on the screen faith family the only contribution you bring to your salvation is your need for it it's the only contribution you make you say but I believe and who gave you the ability to believe for faith is a gift it's a gift from God next not only are they preaching here that you don't save you God saves you they preach that you are righteous before God by faith and not by your works look at chapter 13 verse 38 chapter 13 verse 38 let it be known to you therefore brothers that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you and by him everyone who believes is freed!

from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses in other words what are they preaching they're preaching grace they're preaching faith alone you couldn't be freed under the law of Moses you only became more of a slave you've heard me say this many times the law was not given to keep the law was given to prove you can't keep it and your only way out will be your faith in the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ of putting your life in his not in your own strength we've said this a thousand times around here the gospel isn't due it is what done it is all about what Christ does for us here's the point faith family notice it on the screen a life on mission for Jesus will endure theological opposition there will be people particularly religious people who will want to shut the gospel down because they cannot save yourself that you cannot contribute anything to your salvation now you might think this wouldn't be an issue in

Minnesota I don't know how many of you know this but Minnesota has the most per capita keep that in mind per capita the most mega churches in the U.S.

[ 28 : 19 ] yeah it's the most per capita mega churches in the U.S. a lot there's a lot of Christianity in Minnesota a lot of Bible but I believe not a lot of clear understanding on what the gospel is it's why I still will have people that will come up to me and say we visit a lot of churches but we don't hear the gospel to which I want to say what are you hearing what else is there to say than the gospel I don't when there's no more need for the gospel I'm done because I got nothing to say I'm like a one bullet gun gospel gospel gospel gospel and if it ever becomes not about the gospel I have nothing else to preach it is about the gospel there is far too much self-help being preached in churches than the gospel so even among religious people expect theological opposition particularly when it comes to the gospel of grace so they face spiritual opposition personal opposition theological opposition number four relational opposition relational opposition before we move to chapter 14

I want to show you another issue quickly that Paul and Barnabas have to endure look at verse 13 of chapter 13 now Paul and his companion set sail from Paphos and came to Perga and Pamphylia and John now this is John Mark we're going to see this again later in Acts chapter 15 John left them and returned to Jerusalem John Mark quit he left the race he went home he didn't have a medical emergency he didn't leave his Bible at home he just quit he said how do you know he just quit because when we get to Acts chapter 15 this will be the very reason and some of you know this why Paul will refuse to take John Mark with him as they continue on the journey and Paul and Barnabas will actually split over this issue someone who had been in the trenches with them doing ministry decides to walk away notice this on the screen faith family a life on mission for

Jesus will endure relational opposition if I have learned anything in 25 plus years of ministry and I don't say this for pity it's the last thing in the world I would want is that ministry can be a very lonely place I have seen so many people come and go over 25 years people will quit at the first sign of disagreement even disagreement over important issues or difficulty and maybe some of you have experienced this loneliness in the mission maybe you're married to an unbelieving spouse maybe you're one of the only believers at school or work friends or family members walk away because you believe in Christ maybe you're single and the reason why you can't get a date is because you refuse to compromise in order to get a date and the loneliness of the mission can make you feel like you just want to quit remember the great words of theologian Dr.

Seuss alone whether you like it or not alone is something you'll be quite a lot I assure you Paul knew what that was like but even in the face of personal opposition relational opposition Paul and Barnabas kept enduring one more are you enduring this sermon I told you you were going to learn endurance tonight one way or the other physical opposition physical opposition the journey continues now in chapter 14 they now travel from Iconium they get run out of town there and they end up in a place called Lystra in Lystra there's a man who is crippled from birth and he's healed I'll come back to that in just a moment but I want you to notice what happens after this man is healed look at chapter 14 chapter 14 and verse 19 but the

Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and having persuaded the crowds they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city supposing that he was dead let me put some context around this they followed the hall for a hundred miles do the research find the maps trace it out they follow him for a hundred miles stone him with rocks drag him out of the city and they leave him for dead now be honest this is now in chapter 14 he has already experienced theological persecution and personal and relational and spiritual and now he's being physically harmed because he is on mission at this point you would want to say enough I'm out I'm done forget this and yet look at

[ 34 : 03 ] Paul's response in verse 20! But when the disciples gathered around him he rose up and entered the city and on the next day went on with Barnabas to Derbe to Derbe I didn't figure that would do a thing for you in other words let me translate it he traveled 60 miles after just getting stoned with rocks I always make sure to emphasize it's the kind with rocks not the other kind Paul gets stoned with rocks like I'm afraid somebody is going to go on YouTube and just cut out a three second section of me just saying Paul got stoned and it just goes everywhere right he stoned with rocks and he gets up and does what 60 miles like at this point Paul looks like

Rocky after the Russian dude like cut me Mick throw in the towel let's be done here instead what he does is his best impersonation of the black knight in mighty python's holy grail stoning just a flesh wound big deal I've had worse and then where of all places does he return verse 21 and when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples they returned to what Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch translation he went back to the places where they wanted him dead!

these were the places he had to leave because they were trying to kill him and yet he goes back there notice it on the screen a life on mission for Jesus will endure physical opposition persecution now for most of us in America this will not be a physical attack for your faith though there are the majority of Christians in church history have had to deal with physical persecution but know this they will they may not try to hurt you but they will try to cancel you they will throw verbal stones in your direction narrow minded intolerant zealot here's what I mean notice it on the screen the world may not cut off your head but it will most certainly try to silence your lips let me say that more specifically the American culture may not in some places in the world they will cut off your head here in

America they may not cut off your head but are you as tired as I am do you see why I wanted you to see the whole picture look at what they went through for the sake of this mission and Paul and Barnabas will journey from Iconium to Bethsaida and eventually they'll make it back to Antioch and this is what happens in Antioch verse 27 and when they arrived they gathered the church together they declared all that God had done with them how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles and they remained no little time with the disciples yeah I'd rest too I'd take a little time to be strengthened by the church and some of you just may say pastor you don't there's no this is too much for me

I mean even though I'm probably not going to face all that they faced like you need to understand I'm the type of person that I can't even lose 10 pounds I can't even save 10 bucks I can't even pray 10 minutes much less endure things like this for the mission of Jesus here's the good news yet not I but Christ in me let me show you as I conclude this message your 45 minute warning not just what they endured what they endured but let me show you how they endured and we'll close with this how they endured how did these energizer bunnies keep going and going and going and going even in the face of all of the opposition they had to face here's the first reason they had a biblical perspective of the Christian life they had a biblical perspective of the Christian life let me show you what

[ 39 : 00 ] I mean verse 22 of chapter 14 verse 22 of chapter 14 this is when they get back to Antioch it says strengthening the souls of the disciples encouraging them to continue in the faith do you think they were good examples of that you think they had cred absolutely they were encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God and I wonder if Paul was like let me show you this scar right here that was like the 23rd rock that hit my face let me show you this broken bone that that's when they drug me out of the city and what were they strengthening these other believers with it's through many tribulations that you enter into the kingdom in other words they never expected the



Christian life to be easy and I think this is very very very important they knew what they were signing up for they knew that taking up a cross daily would not be comfortable they knew that this was not advanced Christianity this was Christianity 101 blessed are the persecuted have you heard these words before in this life you will have trouble but take heart I have overcome the world that's what Jesus told his in this life you will have trouble but take heart I've overcome the world in other words they knew that this is what was going to be a part of the mission they weren't shocked by that here's the second thing is they had a biblical perspective on the character of God a biblical perspective on the character of God I told you that there was a story

I would come back to in chapter 14 I'm almost finished hang with me about a crippled man that was healed in Lystra let me break down the context I don't have time to go back through all the details of it but here's what happens after this crippled man from birth gets healed the people start worshipping Paul and Barnabas and the reason they're worshipping them is because there was a legend in that town prior to Paul and Barnabas and the idea was that Zeus and his son Hermes had come into flesh they had come and become like man and entered into this city but they were not received in other words no one showed them hospitality no one was nice to them and as a result the majority of the people in that town died so when they see what takes place through

Paul and Barnabas they assume that this is the return of Zeus and Hermes again and they don't want to make the same mistake again so this time they worship them and they fall at their feet and here's what Paul says chapter 14 verse 15 he says this men why are you doing these things we also are men of like nature with you we're not gods we're not Zeus or Hermes here we are just like you are we're human beings just as you and we bring you good news that you should turn from these vain things to a living God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them in other words here is what Paul and Barnabas are preaching unlike the gods you worship like Zeus and Hermes who motivate you by fear turn from them and worship the one true and living

God who is a God of grace he's given you all these things he's your creator he's given you rain and fruit and food and gladness and chocolate cake and it probably didn't say chocolate cake and sunsets and laughter and on top of all that gave you his son you don't have to be afraid of him you can actually know him and worship him not us we're just like you through faith in his son in other words Paul and Barnabas had a deep understanding about who God is and the goodness of God and the grace of God that you don't have to be motivated to approach him by fear you can be motivated to approach him and worship him because of grace and Paul and Barnabas could endure these things because they knew God was they knew his character they had a biblical perspective on the

[ 44 : 16 ] Christian life they had a biblical perspective on who God is and then lastly they had a preoccupation with the gospel a preoccupation with the gospel one more thing I think it is extremely significant I'm going to read you several verses and see this is a good kind of game I want you to see if you can notice the pattern notice the trend in these verses chapter 13 verse 5 chapter 13 verse 5 when they had arrived at Salamis they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues to the Jews as and they had John there to assist them chapter 13 verse 44 the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord chapter 14 verse 7 and they continued to preach the gospel chapter 14 verse 15 said men why do you do these things we're men just like you we bring you the good news that is why you should turn from these vain things to the living

God who made the heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them chapter 14 verse 21 and when they had preached the gospel to that city and had to Antioch what do you notice in every single one of those verses they were preoccupied with something the preaching the sharing the declaring of the gospel faith family endurance for the gospel wanes when affection for the gospel cools say that again endurance for the gospel wanes when affection for the gospel cools that that is why at faith family we are not music centered we're not music centered we sing off the screen we're not centered on music we're not centered on a denomination we're not centered on a specific program we're not centered on the pastor thank you thank you thank you we are centered on the gospel

Paul and Barnabas endured not out of discipline but out of delight to share the gospel of Jesus Christ run me out of town wherever I go next is another opportunity to share the gospel and the ministry that I have received from the Lord Jesus to do what to testify to the gospel of the grace of God don't give a rip about my life it's not precious to me at all what is precious to me is finishing my course and the ministry that

I have received! from the Lord and what is that ministry to testify of the gospel of grace of our endurance endurance for Paul came not through discipline determination but through gospel preoccupation he was obsessed with the gospel I close with this one of my favorite stories some of you may have heard this one before may have heard me share it before it's about a man by the name of Cliff Young love this story Cliff was a 61 year old man who showed up one day for the longest toughest marathon back in 1983 a marathon 500 miles from Sydney to Melbourne Australia it was the inaugural event professional runners from all over the place gathered there in their professional gear and their Nike shoes and Nike shirts and everybody looks professional but

Cliff shows up and he's wearing overalls and boots and everybody seriously thought Cliff was an absolute joke when the gun sounded the runners took off and guess what Cliff did he was still taking off his boots he didn't even start running when they ran he was right there at the starting line and the crowd starts busting out in laughter when he finally starts running because he runs with a limp like he's got a hitch in his giddyup like he doesn't run smooth he runs slow and they thought what an absolute embarrassment so imagine their surprise when Cliff not only finishes the race he wins it oh but faith family he doesn't just win it by a few seconds or a few minutes he won it by almost 10 hours all of

[ 49 : 42 ] Australia was stunned how in the world could a 61 year old man who had never run a marathon accomplish this victory here's what they did not know Cliff was not a professional runner Cliff was a farmer he was a farmer without the luxuries of a

horse or a four wheel drive and he would run not for an hour or two he would run sometimes for two or three days rounding up all of his cattle that were spread over 2,000 acres so while all those professional runners listen in would run for 18 hours and then sleep for six Cliff never stopped listen he ran for five days 15 hours and four minutes without sleeping he had never taken a professional running class he had never been professionally trained in running but he had something none of the others had endurance maybe some of you this evening are awfully close to throwing in the towel faith family when your race feels long and impossible to finish when you feel like those rugby players like you are never going to get out of your situation remember the greatest race that's ever been run and it is not the one from

Sydney to Melbourne Australia it is the one from Jerusalem to Calvary when a 33 year old Jewish carpenter finished his race and everybody thought he was a joke they laughed at him and they mocked him that even made him carry a cross and I assure you on that day there was not a single person in that crowd that thought he'd get out of his situation alive but they didn't realize this man was more than a carpenter he was and is the very son of God and the Bible says that for the joy set before him he endured the cross and he didn't just finish the race my friend he won it and he promises to give us the grace we need to endure this mission and

God's people said amen let's pray Lord thank you for passages like this in acts one of the things I love about what you've given us in the Bible is how real and honest it is how straightforward it is you didn't give us a message that makes the mission look like going to an ice cream store every day you show us real people bloodied drug from town to town stoned with rocks facing demonic activity watching their friends leave called every name in the book while the very message that would give people hope was opposed that would be enough to quit and yet by your grace and for our good and salvation you saw to it that

Paul and Barnabas kept going in the face of all of the opposition in moments where it never looked like they'd get out alive they endured and Paul will say but it wasn't me it was the grace of God in me for I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live it's Christ who lives in me so Lord take this word tonight and encourage your people who are also in a race and also face discouragement in that race and Lord just remind us that the one who began the work will finish it we love you Lord and God's people said amen yes Thank you.