

Building Relationships for Kingdom Impact

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[0 : 0 0] Can you remember stepping into a new school for the first time? It might have been you moved up from junior high to high school, you had to move to or elementary to junior high, you had to move to a different campus and or maybe your family moved to a new area and you're walking down the hall and and there are all kinds of new students you've never you've never met before and you're the new kid and every voice is a strange voice that you hear and every face that you see is a is a strange voice and you feel a mix of excitement and nervousness whether find figuring out whether you'll find your place there and if you'll even fit in you know most of us have been there right maybe it's a new job sometimes and you've got that excitement to start a new job but then you get there and it's everything is new a different way of doing things everybody there is is new maybe even a new neighborhood starting fresh can be both thrilling and it can be daunting as well and in our world today it's easy to feel alone it's possible even to feel alone in a crowd some of you have been there been in a crowd but yet uh you you still feel alone for those who scroll through social media you know you see other people's highlight reels you see what they post on a good day and then you compare it to your bad days and you wonder if there's something wrong with you and we crave real connections because haven't we been created for that we've been created for connection we've been created for relationships but how do we find those relationships how do we find those connections in a world that that often feels so impersonal and that's where our story begins today in the book of

Acts chapter number 18 and we find the apostle Paul arriving in a brand new city Paul leaves where he is he leaves his cohorts behind and he arrives in a city called Corinth a huge city an important city a city that is bustling with all different kinds of people and it's a city of diverse cultures and of diverse people and Paul in this new city is now faced with all kinds of new opportunities as well but instead of feeling lost and overwhelmed Paul does the remarkable he starts building relationships he goes around looking for people that he can build a relationship with he goes out and he looks for common ground where he can find people and make meaningful connections that would make a lasting impact and here's the thing

God calls us to build intentional relationships where we live and where we work so our lives can be a witness to others of his love God calls us to build relationships to create connections right where we live right where we work so so that we can allow our lives to be a witness to others around us of the love of God and what he's done not only in our lives but what he can do in the lives of others today what we're going to do is we're going to explore the apostle Paul's approach as he gets to Corinth Corinth and teaching us how we can build relationships in our very own lives that will not only enrich our lives but we trust also can enrich the lives of others and God can do something even greater when we come together so let's dive into the story this morning in the book of Acts chapter 18 and see how we can live on mission right where we are let's read Acts chapter 18 starting in verse verse 1 and we'll read up through verse 1 and we'll read up through verse 1 and we'll read up through verse 1 and we'll read up through verse 8 this morning after these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth and he found a certain Jew named Aquila born in Pontus who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome and he came to them and what we see is here in these verses is that he stayed with them a while because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked for by occupation they were tent makers verse 4 and they reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and persuaded both Jews and Greeks when Silas and Timothy here we have Silas and Timothy now coming to meet Paul they come from Macedonia Paul was compelled by the Spirit and he testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ is the Messiah is the anointed one but when they opposed him and blasphemed those were the Jews that he was speaking to in the synagogues he said to them

your blood be upon your own heads I am clean now I will go to the Gentiles. We see that there's a new chapter in Paul's ministry. And he says, from now on, I will go to the Gentiles. And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justice. We see that in other places, his name was Titus Justice.

And he was one who worshiped God, whose house was, how convenient, next door to the synagogue. Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. [6:10] We've seen that before, an entire household coming to know Jesus. But it's interesting. Who was this Crispus? He was a ruler of the, he was the main Jew. He was the main guy in the Jewish community. So the ruler of the synagogue comes to know Jesus and his whole family, his whole household comes to know the Lord as well. And many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized.

Corinth was a city of about 200,000 people, making it really a tough place to start a church because you don't know anybody when you first come into town. There's a lot of people. There's a lot of opportunities. We also see there was some opposition as well, but that's exactly where Paul goes after he leaves Athens. And he went there on his own. He was alone. He was by himself. Things were difficult, but Paul didn't quit. Corinth was known throughout the Roman Empire as a place that was full of wickedness. In fact, he was there when he wrote to the Corinthian church, 1 Corinthians 1, verses 18 to 32. You can look that up sometimes. And he talks about the world and how they view God.

And because of its location, Corinth was a hub for trade and for travel as well. Now, Paul was known when he would go into a new area, he would go into the largest population areas. He would go where there was the heaviest concentration of people so that he could reach the most people in the shortest amount of time without having to travel days and days and days. So Corinth was another big city that the apostle Paul goes to. Now, this brought a lot of money and temptations along with new ideas, along with new religions into the city of Corinth. And many of these quickly took root. Corinth was the capital of Achaia. And it was one of the most important cities that Paul visited. The other important city Paul visited was the city of Ephesus, where another church was planted, the church at Ephesus.

Here's the thing. When God opens doors for the church, Satan will also bring opposition. We're going to find that when God is moving, Satan is not happy and he's going to do everything he can to keep things from moving forward. And it's easy for us to get discouraged and it's easy for us to give up. So as Paul was working in Corinth, God gave him the encouragement he needed to keep on going. And we can find that same encouragement from God today. He says, our labor in the Lord is not in vain. We know that when we're doing something for God, God's going to do his part. The only part that we have to do is be faithful, proclaim the word of God, share Jesus with those around us, live a life that honors and pleases him. And God's going to give the increase. We just plant the seed. God's going to send the sunshine. He's going to send the rain.

And he is going to cause the seed of the gospel to germinate in the minds and the hearts of those that God has called to believe. And we know that there are those that will reject the word of God. [9:42] There are those that are going to accept it, receive it, and it's going to take root and it's going to bear fruit as well. And that's where we're going to see Paul this morning. He is going to be taking his time and then he is going to put his focus on those who are ready to hear the word of God.

So when Paul finds himself in Corinth, he finds himself in a city that was alive with activity. Corinth was a melting pot of all different types of cultures that we mentioned before, who people who came from all different walks of life, kind of like what we see in a city of New Orleans, a city of New York City, a place where people come from all different areas, different languages, different cultures, and diverse environments, even where places we might find ourselves in today, whether it's at school or it's at work or even in our neighborhoods. But instead of feeling overwhelmed by the newness of it all, Paul did something that we can all learn from. What he did was he connected with others. He found common ground right where he was. Let's go back to verse number two in Acts 18. And he found a certain Jew, verse number two, named Aquila, and he had recently come from Italy. So he was also, Aquila was also a new person who was there and probably feeling alone also. And they come there, Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome. He comes there with his wife,

Priscilla. And because they were of the same trade, what trade was Paul? Paul was a, he was a tent maker by trade. He made tents. So he had a, he had a part-time job and he used that part-time job to help fund the ministry. Now, later we're going to see that funds come in from the churches and Paul's able to devote his full time to the preaching and teaching the word of God. So he kind of puts his tent making aside for a while. But here, what he does is he makes a connection. He finds people who are in the same trade. They spoke the same language. They, when, when he talked about cutting and when he talked about sewing and when he talked about making tents and, and selling them, you know, they, they knew what he was talking about. So they had something in, in common and Paul didn't just share Jesus with them. He worked alongside with them and they shared life together in this new city of Corinth. Now, in the same way we can look for common interests that we have with other people. It might be in school. It might be at work. It might be in our neighborhood. It might be at the ball field when, you know, our kids are, are, are playing or whatever.

We can find common ground with people and use it as a springboard, as a bridge to be able to connect with them in order to build relationships. Ralph Waldo Emerson, the poet said, God evidently does not intend for all of us to be rich or powerful or great, but he does intend for all of us to be friends.

Isn't that so true? God doesn't call everyone to be a, a president or a king or a politician or someone who's got, what is it now? \$29 billion like Elon Musk since the election. But I think God, God wants all of us to have relationships with others. He wants all of us to be friendly in order that we can be friends with others. I think this is a powerful reminder for us. Sometimes we think that sharing our faith means we need to stand on a street corner with a megaphone and a sandwich board. And that's the only way to share the gospel. But Paul shows us it can start with something as simple as a new relationship with someone we share something in common with, or maybe working together on a project. Maybe, maybe you're paired with someone at work or someone at school and you have a lab project and it's someone that you don't really know that well.

[13:59] Well, use it as an opportunity to get to know them. And maybe God will give you an opportunity to share Jesus with them as well. So Paul teaches us that great things can happen. And this is our first main point that great things can happen when we connect with people, we connect with others where we are. That God can cause great things to happen. The synergy can take place when we simply connect with others right where we are. See, Paul lived, Paul worked with Aquila and Priscilla. But on Sabbath days, they went into the synagogue and they witnessed boldly in the synagogue. Well, after all, that's why Paul came to Corinth. Every time Paul went to a new place, he went to where the Jews met. Where did the Jews meet?

On the Sabbath, they met in the synagogue. And Paul would talk to others about the gospel. He would probably, he would mention the Old Testament and he would mention the Messiah. And he said, the Messiah has come. The Messiah is Jesus, the Christ, Jesus, the anointed one. Now think about where you are right now. Maybe it's school. Maybe it's work. Maybe it's in your neighborhood somewhere.

What are the people? Who are the people God has placed around you? What do you have in common with them? You know, it could be a shared hobby. It could be a class that you take together. Or maybe just living on the same street. These commonalities are things that we can use to build relationships with other people.

around us. Now what Paul teaches us is that building relationships doesn't have to be complicated. It could simply be what we share in common. It can start with simply being present. Just being there.

Being there for someone and being open to the people around us. And then taking time to get to know them, to share in their lives and allowing them to share in our lives. You know, there's a lot of conversation that can take place when you're working on a project. Because most projects, you can talk and you can communicate while you are involved or engaged in something. Now this week, what I challenge is, I challenge you to identify one person in your immediate circle. Could be in your family, that someone who doesn't know Jesus. Or it could be someone in a work group, could be someone in school that maybe with whom you could deepen the relationship between them. Maybe it's inviting a classmate to join you for lunch. Maybe it's inviting a co-worker to come over for a barbecue. Or maybe meet for coffee sometimes, just to share time together. You know, these small steps can lead to relationships that we can use, that God can use in our lives, where we can share

the gospel with someone else. And then we can be a witness to the love of God in their lives. So that was verses two and three.

[17 : 07] Let's move on to verses four and five. And Paul, what Paul did, we see this word before, we've seen it in chapter 17. Paul reasoned with them. Paul didn't just preach at them. He didn't just talk at them.

He reasoned with them. He asked questions. And he worked through what the word of God said. So let's wrestle with this for a while. Let's say, what did God mean when he said this? What did God mean when he said that? So he reasoned with those in the synagogue every Sabbath. And it says he persuaded both Jews and Greeks. There are many who said, so this is the Messiah. This is the one who we've been waiting for. And in verse five, when Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the spirit and he testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. And so as Paul settled down into his life in Corinth, he didn't keep his faith a secret. He shared Jesus with everyone that would listen. Every Sabbath, he goes to the synagogue and he reasons with the Jews. He reasons with the non-Jews who were there. And he talks to them about Jesus. He was bold about his faith, but he wasn't pushy. He wasn't necessarily in their face. He just talked to them about Jesus and he reasoned with them.

And he shared, I believe, with kindness. I believe he shared with respect the same way he did in Athens. He said, it seems to me that you all are very devout in your religion. And you even have an idol to someone who is called the unknown God. You called the unknown God. Let me take a moment and share with you who that God is. And then he shared with them the creator of the universe. And ultimately he shared with them Jesus. What does this teach us? Our second main point, that we can be bold about our faith.

We can be bold about our faith wherever we are. See, we often hesitate to share our faith because we may be worried about how other people might think or what other people might think. Well, what if they reject me? Or what if they turn their backs on me? Or what if they make fun of me? And the thing is, the thing is we have to consider, so what? Because what's our responsibility? God says we are ambassadors.

Ambassadors. We've been sent to this world to share the good news of Jesus Christ. We are God's ambassadors on this earth. So our job is to represent our home country. The Bible says we are here pilgrims on this earth. We're just sojourners, the Bible says. We're aliens, if you will, because this is really not the country to which we belong. We belong to the country called heaven, if we know Christ as our Savior.

[20 : 01] Because we're going to live there forever. You know, when you go, you know, I've heard there's some places, you know, it's a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there. I think that kind of defines earth. You know, it's a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live here for eternity because there's a place that's so much better. So that's where our real citizenship is. It's in heaven.

Now, we don't want to come across as judgmental or forceful, but being bold in our faith is simply being genuine about what we believe. Just genuine. This is what I believe. This is what I believe the Bible teaches. And this is what the Bible teaches about Jesus and who he is. We don't have to be pushy about it. We don't have to be over the top. We can just be bold and say, this is what I believe. I trust Jesus Christ. And this is, and we believe the Bible is true. It just seems, it just means being genuine and open and doing it, I believe, with love and respect with those around us.

You know, think about the people that you interact with every day. Maybe there's a friend or co-worker who's going through a tough time or a classmate who maybe is curious about the way that you live. Now, these are natural moments for you to share your faith.

Maybe there's someone who's going through a tough time and they're wondering how you can still smile when you're going through a tough time of your own. It's an opportunity for you to share with them about Jesus Christ and the joy. We sang about that a little earlier, about the city of joy.

[21 : 43] Well, the reality is, God says, we can have joy today, right here where we are, even in the midst of our trouble, even in the midst of our circumstances, because joy is not the same as happiness.

Joy is that deep-seated understanding, that deep-seated reality that God's in control and we can trust Him and that He will take care, even if we don't see the way out.

So it doesn't mean that you have to give a rehearsed speech. It doesn't mean you necessarily have to go through the Romans road, Romans chapter 3, verse 23, 623. It could simply be sharing just the love of Jesus Christ to someone. It could be simply sharing a story about how God has worked

in your own life and maybe offering to pray for someone who's struggling. Just last week, a couple of weeks ago, I was sitting in eating lunch with Steve Piggott and our server, before we left, I asked if there's anything that we could pray with her about. And she said, yes, pray for my sister. She had been arrested the night before. So she was going through a difficult time. And so we prayed for her right there in the restaurant. Just simply showing the love of Jesus to someone. Or maybe a co-worker who notices a positive attitude in your life and wondering why you're always so hopeful. Well, share with them why or how you can be hopeful in that God can give you that joy. God gives you that joy. God gives you that strength, just as Paul did in the synagogue. So Paul's boldness came from his deep conviction in his love for others. We can have that same confidence in our world today. So ask God to give you that confidence. Ask God to give you that courage and the boldness about your faith that you can share with others. And trust that he can use your word, your words, to make a difference in somebody else's lives. So what do we do when things really get rocky? Well, let's move on. Let's continue in chapter 18. Let's look at verses. Let's look at verse 6. But when they opposed him, when they opposed Paul, things were good for a little while, but things got a little rocky. And the ones he was speaking to, they opposed him. They blasphemed about the message, took his garment, and he shook his garments and said to them, your blood be upon your own heads. I'm clean. From now on, I will go to the Gentiles. Again, as we said, this is the turning point in Paul's ministry. He goes from the Jews, because Paul would always go to the Jews first, everywhere he went. Now he says, I am shaking my garments. I am done with you. He says, your blood be upon your own head. Your responsibility is on your own heads. He says, now I'm going to move to the Gentiles, and I'm going to preach the gospel to them. So as Paul continues his mission in Corinth, not everyone is thrilled with what he had to say. That's going to happen sometimes in our lives. Not everyone's going to be thrilled about you talking about Jesus. [25 : 19] You know, there are some things that we probably can steer away from in conversations that we know are going to get people riled up. One of those is, well, it depends on where you are. It could be sports.

It could be politics, or it could be religion. But we don't shy away from the truth, because you talk, you can talk about where you go to church. You can talk about if you're this denomination or that denomination. People probably won't get too riled up. But you start talking about Jesus, that's when people begin to take sides. And so Paul sees people taking sides. Whenever God is blessing a ministry, you can expect increased opposition as well as increased opportunities. Paul said in 1 Corinthians chapter 16, verse 9, for a great and effective door opened to me. Paul said a big, a great door of opportunity open, but he said there were also many adversaries. So every time a door's open, every time we go through it, there's going to be opportunities. But along with the opportunities, there's going to be some problems as well. Spurgeon used to say that the devil never kicks a dead horse. The devil rarely kicks a dead church. The devil rarely stirs up or gets stirred up when Christians are not accomplishing anything for the kingdom. But let us begin to get busy, get vocal about our faith, and begin sharing the love of Jesus Christ in our community. And that's when Satan gets wound up. So there are two interesting

Old Testament images that we see in verse number six. To shake out one's garments. So that what Paul said in verse six, or what Luke says, he shook his garments and then he says to them, was an act of judgment that said, you've had your opportunity, but now it's over. Today we might say, I'm washing my hands of you.

That's another way of saying the same thing that Paul did when he shook out his garments. For those of you who want to do a little more research into that, look up Nehemiah chapter five and verse number 13. Acts chapter 13, verse 51, and then Matthew chapter 10, verse number 14. These are all instances where the same word picture, the same analogy is used. The same thing is used. So Paul never stopped witnessing to the Jews. He simply, his focus changed to really now ministering intently to the Gentiles.

His primary calling was to evangelize the Gentiles. We see this in Acts chapter 13, verses 46 to 48, and also Acts chapter 28, verse number 28. And then next we see the, your blood be upon your own heads.

[28 : 49] Well, the old Testament to have your blood on your hands meant you bore the responsibility for another's death because you weren't faithful to warn them. What we see is this comes from the watchman on the wall of the old Testament cities that were ringed with a defensive wall. They would post watchmen on the wall and the watchmen were there. If any enemies were

coming to attack the city, the watchman would turn around and he would ring some kind of alarm and he would let the city know, be prepared. And if a watchman fell asleep and the city fell to an enemy, it was said that the blood of the people were on the watchman's hands because he failed in his job. Ezekiel chapter three, verses 17 through 21. We see that, that being said, Ezekiel chapter 33, verses one through nine talks about blood being on someone's hands, but to have your blood on your own head, what that meant was you were to blame for your own judgment. You were to blame for yourself. You, the, the, the bad things that happened to you, it's not on anybody else's hands. It's on your own. So Paul said, your blood be upon your own heads. You've rejected the gospel. You've rejected the message of the Messiah. So when judgment comes, you've got no one to blame, but yourself. So be careful. If you are listening to the sound of my voice today, wherever you are, whenever this, whenever you're hearing this, or if you're here this morning, if you reject Jesus Christ and don't misunderstand me, you don't have to overtly say, I reject Jesus.

Simply saying, I just want to go on with life and I'll make a decision some other time is in effect rejecting Jesus today. And we're not promised tomorrow. So he said, your blood be upon your own heads. You're to blame for your own judgment. You had the opportunity to be saved, but you turned it down. We see that also in, in Joshua chapter two and verse number 19. But Paul said, he says, my hands are clean. We also see that in Acts chapter 20, verse 26, because Paul had been faithful to declare the message of the gospel. The Jews had their blood upon their own heads because they rejected God's truth.

Now, some people oppose the apostle Paul, and that's something we can all relate to. And he says, from now on, I will go to the Gentiles. And what we see here is we're bound to face resistance at some point. It could be resistance from your family. It could be resistance from people at work who don't want to hear the message of Jesus. But here's the thing. Paul didn't let that stop him. He just said, I'm just shifting gears. And I'm going to go to the people who want to hear me. I'm going to go to others. So he stayed faithful to the mission. He stayed faithful to the mission that God had given and entrusted him with. And he trusted God for the results. So like Paul, our next main point, we need to stay faithful even when we meet resistance. We need to stay faithful even when we're met with resistance. So this is a powerful lesson for us. When we face pushback, it's easy to feel discouraged. It's easy to feel and question if we're doing the right thing, if we are in the right place. It doesn't mean we're on the wrong path. It just means that we need to step out in faith because Jesus himself faced opposition, didn't he? And just like Jesus did, he says that we will as well. So think about it. Think about a time when you faced opposition for your faith. Maybe it was a friend who didn't understand your life choices serving Jesus or a family member who maybe questioned your beliefs. Don't give up. Remain faithful. It can be tough, but it's important to remember that God sees your efforts in these moments and he will reward those efforts. Paul didn't dwell on the rejection. What did he do? He just changes. He pivots and then he moves to the Gentiles. See, we can do the same when we encounter resistance. Don't be discouraged. Just know that some people will reject the mission, reject our message. We just need to move forward with our mission. And we move on now to verses 7 and 8, our last two verses. What did Paul do? He leaves the synagogue. He departs from there. He enters the house of a certain man named Justice, one who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized.

After facing resistance in the synagogue, Paul didn't throw in the towel. He just moves next door. And he continues sharing the gospel. He just shifts his focus to those who were open to hearing the message of the gospel. He goes next door to a man named Titus Justice, a man who welcomed him.

[34 : 37] And he was receptive to the gospel as well. This decision, excuse me, led Crispus, who was the leader of the synagogue and his entire household to come to faith. So Paul's experience teaches us an important lesson about where to invest our effort, how to invest our time when it comes to the gospel.

What should we do? Our main point, number four, let's focus on receptive hearts. Let's focus on those who want to hear us. Let's focus on those who were, who are receptive.

Yeah, we want to hear more about what you have to say. Yeah, we're open to what you're talking about. So Paul shifts his focus in our own lives. We may encounter people who aren't interested in what we have to say about God. Just move on. Not everyone will be ready to hear. Not everyone

will be ready to listen. It's not a reflection on you. It's not a reflection on your values. It just means that not everyone is going to want to hear, excuse me, about your message. So we can follow Paul's example and focus on those who are receptive. Think about the people in your life who seems to be open about spiritual conversations. It might be some folks at school. They don't want to talk about it. It can be like our bug man. He says, you know what? I'm not into all that. That's okay. But then you have someone else who said, I'm kind of interested. Where do you go to church? Or, man, why can you be so happy all the time? Or why is it that you can go through the stuff that you're going through and you can still have a smile on your face and not just throw in the towel? Those are the people who may be receptive to what you have to say. These people may be worth investing your time in and taking more time and sharing what you know about Jesus Christ. The thing is, don't get discouraged. To walk by faith means to see the opportunities in the midst of opposition.

[36 : 47] You see, a pessimist only sees the problems. An optimist only sees the possibilities. But a realist sees the possibilities in the problems. Let me say that again. A pessimist only sees the problems. An optimist only sees the possibilities. But a realist, they see the possibilities in the problems. You know, we're not just Pollyannish, pie in the sky and the sweet by and by. You know, we know we're going to go through some hard times. But even as Paul said, you know, God's open. There were adversaries, but God opened a great door of opportunities. Even in the midst of the opposition, Paul saw that God can accomplish his will. And it won't always be smooth sailing because we'll face opposition. But in the middle of the opposition, God's going to give us some opportunities. Faith simply means obeying the will of God. Paul didn't close his eyes to the dangers and the difficulties and the situation in Corinth, but he, I believe, began to look at them from a divine point of view. What does God want me to do? And how does God look upon these people? Faith simply means obeying the will of God in spite of feelings, in spite of circumstances, and in spite of consequences. See, there's never an easy place to serve.

If you find an easy place to serve, it might be the wrong place. If you find an easy place to serve, God might be saying, well, you know, maybe there's not a lot going on there, and you may need to look for a place where I'm calling you. 2 Timothy 3, verse 12, Paul reminded Timothy, yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution.

If you want to live godly, you're going to suffer persecution. Now, Paul didn't waste time trying to force doors open. He went to where God was opening the doors. I mean, if you try to open a door and it's locked, don't beat your head against it. Don't try to ram through it. Just say, hey, let's try the next door.

Oh, this door's open. Let's go through it. That's the way God leads sometimes. Closed door, locked door, locked door, open door. Okay, let's go through the open door, and let's see.

And sometimes then God's going to say, oh, you know, there's a hallway. Why don't you turn left? And God is going to move us as we're moving. So this week, make a list of the people in your life who seem open to spiritual conversations. See their faces, and then pray for them. Pray for God to give you the opportunities to share Jesus with them. Maybe just share the love of Christ with them, to ask them, is there anything I can pray with you about? Because they may be open to talking about God. Commit to praying for them regularly, and look for ways to support, look for ways to serve them. And remember, it's not about convincing everyone, but it's about being faithful to share with those who are ready to listen. God will use your efforts to make a difference in their lives. So as we wrap up today, take a moment and think about the incredible opportunity God's given us with the relationships that we have, the relationships, the connections that we make with others around us right where we are. See, God has placed each one of us in unique environments. God placed you in your place of work for a reason. God's placed you in your home for a reason. God's placed you in the school that you're in for a reason. And God may have another chapter in your life where He will place you somewhere else, again, for a reason. So God has given us these unique environments with a purpose. Just like Paul and Corinth, we're called to build intentional relationships right where we are. So share wherever you are. What if we started seeing our everyday opportunities, our everyday interactions as opportunities connect, to connect, to share, and to love others as well with the love of Christ? You know, it doesn't require grand gestures.

[41 : 13] It doesn't require perfect words. Just a heart that's faithful and committed to following Christ and being on the mission of sharing the gospel, making relationships with others so we can share the love of Jesus Christ. Remember, you're not alone in this mission. What did God tell us in

the Great Commission? Go, make disciples of all nations, teaching them what I've taught you, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And He says, Lo, I am with you always, even until the end of the age. We're not alone. God's with you wherever you go. He's at work in the hearts of those around you.

And He's inviting you to join in that work. So let's commit to being on mission every day, no matter where we are. So as we leave today, think about one person you can reach out to this week. Pray for them. Spend time with them. And be ready to share the hope that you have. And together, we can make a difference. One relationship at a time. Let's go out and live on mission, trusting that God will use our efforts to change lives and to build His kingdom. Let us pray.

Father, we thank You for our time together this morning. We thank You for Your Word. We thank You for the example of the Apostle Paul as he moved on to a brand new city, the city of Corinth. And as he found someone, he shared something in common with and built a relationship with them, found someone else he could have a relationship with when he turned to the Gentiles, the non-Jews. And you blessed that door of opportunity to share with those who are receptive. So teach us today.

Help us to be actively engaged in the mission that You've given us until You come to bring us home. We thank You for this. And we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.