

Thank You Acts—Until Next Time!

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: 21 June 2020

Preacher: Walt Alexander

[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! I'm a little bit sad that we're leaving it.

I'm going to begin reading in verse 23. So if you do have a copy of the scriptures, if you don't have some, we have some in the back. We'd love to get them for you. So Acts 28, 23, and this is about the apostle Paul, and he's about to testify before Rome and give an account of the charges against him.

So Acts 28, verse 23, when they had appointed, that's the Jewish leaders, had appointed a day for him. They came to him at his lodging in great numbers. From morning to evening, he expounded to them in testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus from the law of Moses and from the prophets.

And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul made one statement. He said, The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet, Go to this people and say, You will indeed hear but never understand.

[1 : 38] You will see but never perceive. For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear. And their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.

Therefore, let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles. They will listen. He lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

That is the word of God, the infallible, inerrant word of God that we give our attention to this morning. In the early 2000s, Lance Armstrong captured the heart of the nation.

He was a professional cyclist who fought cancer and beat it, and he bounced back to win the Tour de France for an unprecedented seven consecutive years.

If you don't know anything about the Tour de France, it is widely regarded as the most difficult bicycle race in the world, stretching 21 days and over 2,000 miles.

[2 : 59] That's the difference between Athens and Mexico City. A little bit of difference there, but not only with Armstrong, was it a feat of, I guess, a sports feat, a physical feat, but while recovering from cancer, Armstrong started the Lance Armstrong Foundation to raise awareness and help others fight cancer.

His work to help others was relentless in this area. In the summer of 2004, if you're old enough, you remember Armstrong renamed the foundation Live Strong, partnered with Nike to sell those yellow bracelets that were all over the place, if you remember those, to raise money for his organization and raise money to fight cancer.

And it seemed that the whole world got on board. Nike sold 80 million of those bracelets. All profits go into this foundation. 80 million dollars. They tuned in, though.

They didn't just get into his cause. They tuned in. They cheered him on. They did their part. They bought that wristband. It seemed to be a story that was too good to be true. How could Lance bounce back?

How could he do so much good for other people? And sadly, it was too good to be true in some ways. After years of speculation, questioning, and denial, Armstrong, along with many others, admitted to doping in each of his Tour de France wins.

[4 : 25] They were all excavated, or whatever that, evacuated, whatever that word they use for championships that are taken back, fans all over the world were disgusted and disappointed.

And I recently watched a documentary about Armstrong, and all throughout, Armstrong was kind of wondering aloud, why did so many people follow his story? Why did so many people buy the bracelets?

Why did so many people suddenly care about cycling? I mean, cycling, after all, is for uncoordinated athletes who only have lungs and legs, which is why I mountain bike.

Not many of you got that. But one leader, though, had a very poignant moment, profound moment in the documentary. One leader said of Armstrong, of everything going on, and all the rage around him, one leader said, I think they wanted to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

I think they wanted to be a part of something bigger than themselves. They wanted to be a part of an unbelievable story. They wanted to join a cause that was great and significant.

[5 : 38] They wanted to help stop cancer. And in actuality, what that documentary discovered is not surprising at all. We all long to live for something bigger than ourselves. We're always looking for something big to live for, whether it's the way we look to the vols each year to deliver, only to be disappointed.

Even hashtag 98, or feels like 98, doesn't do much anymore. Or even the way we look for the next thing. You know, we often live with the next thing when you're growing up.

It's the next age. It's 16. It's 18. It's 21. And on down there. And then you get to 40 where I am, and you don't want that next year. But we live for the next promotion, the next adventure, the next season, the next project.

Certain it'll give us the rest we need. We long to live for something bigger than ourselves. And we've studied the book of Acts now for 25 Sunday mornings. So if you're bored, that's why, right?

And if there's one thing Acts has taught us, we were created to live for something bigger than ourselves, the fame of Jesus Christ. Acts lays out something so wonderful that we get to recover and celebrate this morning, that we're to live for this fame.

[6 : 53] This morning we're going to look at these final verses, but we're going to look through them at the whole book to see what we must not forget. And where we're going is live now for the matchless fame of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Live now. Don't wait. Live now for the matchless fame of the Lord Jesus Christ. And some of you will laugh at this. I got an acronym for us today.

Come on. My last acronym I was mocked for weeks on because it was a little bit confusing for the slower people. And so where we're going, just kidding. Fame.

Fame. We're going to break down that acronym. The fame of the Lord Jesus Christ. So the first point is forgiveness received now. That's an F. Forgiveness received now.

Forgiveness received now. Jesus was raised from the dead to bring forgiveness and his kingdom blessings now. You know, in these verses that we just read, Paul finds himself on trial before the Jewish leaders again.

[7 : 52] If you remember this, we've been just hearing this week in, week out. Paul is on trial again. Paul is on trial again. If you look back, verse 28, verse 20, or chapter 28, verse 20, he says, I am on trial for this reason.

I have asked to see you and speak to you because it is the hope of Israel that I'm wearing this chain. So it's because of the hope of Israel that I'm wearing this chain.

And the hope of Israel is just a way of saying, I'm on trial because of what I believe about Jesus Christ. Acts 23 says it this way, which we have on the screen.

It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial. So Paul is now at the end of this season in Acts. He's not dodging their charges.

He's not changing the subject. He's not trying to keep the peace. He's telling them the truth. What he's saying is, when I'm saying I'm on trial for the hope of Israel, I'm saying I know you may have heard about me.

[8 : 48] I know you will hear things about me. But this is why people are angry with me. I'm on trial and will testify before Nero Caesar because I believe that Jesus Christ is the hope of Israel in the world.

I believe in a word that the man Jesus from Nazareth, the man, the historical man, Jesus from Nazareth, that Josephus and all the gospels wrote about is the promised Messiah who was dead,

who died, was raised, and is now Lord of all.

What Paul is saying is the same thing he said, or the same thing that's been said throughout Acts, and been proclaimed that Jesus Christ is Messiah or Christ and Lord.

Look at the way Luke says it in Acts 2. If you remember, this was many weeks ago back in September. Remember, Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.

This Jesus delivered up according to a definite plan and for knowledge of God you crucified and killed. So he's going to these original eyewitnesses and said, you remember that man, Jesus?

[9 : 57] You killed him. You crucified. But God did not. That wasn't the end of what God had for Jesus Christ. He continues, this Jesus God raised up. And of that we're all witnesses, being therefore exalted at the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit.

He has poured out this, that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. If you see what Peter's saying right there, is that Jesus is the promised Messiah. He's the one that the Old Testament talked about.

He's the one that all the promises pointed forward to. He was anointed by God. And it was clear, just like Elijah, just like any of the Old Testament prophets, the anointing of God was evident in what God did through him.

So he's the Christ. But he's also the Lord. If you see that in verse 33, he was exalted at the right hand of God. This means when Jesus ascended into heaven, when he floated up into the skies, as Luke tells us about, he didn't evaporate or disappear or go into hiding.

He didn't take a few days off. He was crowned as the Lord of all. It was his coronation service. He is over all and through all and in all at the right hand.

[11 : 15] You know, in ancient times, the right hand symbolized power and strength and greatness. And one of my favorite card games, Euchre, I don't know if you've ever played it, the highest card in the game is the right bower.

I don't know where bower comes from, but right comes from this, the right hand. That's why they call Pedro Martinez the right hand of God, which is probably not a good thing considering what we're studying, you know.

But the point is, that's where Jesus is. That's where he sat down. So this means a couple things. One is, there will never be a savior on Capitol Hill.

Jesus is the king. But his kingdom is not of this world. I love, I love this. Acts concludes, those verses we just read, Paul is ready to stand trial before the wicked Nero Caesar, who I think executes him.

And some years later, and while waiting on his bogus accusations to be heard, he doesn't protest. He doesn't riot.

[12 : 24] He doesn't revolt. He doesn't try to escape. He doesn't try any political maneuvering. He keeps proclaiming the kingdom of God. What's he saying? He keeps proclaiming the kingdom of God because there's no hope in any other kingdom.

His kingdom, Jesus' kingdom, is not of this world, so he's not trying to work it in there. He knew his work. So vote however you want. But don't invest your vote with hopes that can only be fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

This world's not our home. The second, though, is the blessings of the kingdom are available now. The blessings of the kingdom are available now. If you look back, if we can look back at that Acts 2, verse 32 and 23, it says, he was exalted at the right hand of God, having received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are hearing.

So while Peter's preaching there, that's Pentecost. And so, I mean, it's a Holy Ghost party. The Holy Spirit has fallen there. Flames on top of people's heads.

People are speaking in tongues, and we're not going to do that today if you don't want to be nervous about that. And so, it's a Holy Spirit party. It's evident. Everybody's seeing and hearing about God and what he's done.

[13 : 37] And so what Peter's saying, this that you're seeing and hearing, is because Jesus is in heaven and is pouring out blessings now. Jesus is not waiting for his return to pour out blessings.

He's on his throne pouring out the blessings now of forgiveness and all these things through the gospel, a real life, spirit-given, immediate blessing through the preaching of the gospel. He says,

receive the forgiveness of sins.

No man can extend that. That's only extended from God. Just like they said to Jesus, can you forgive sins? He can't forgive sins unless he's God. And he says, receive forgiveness of sins. And I fear that we're not often amazed at forgiveness as we should be. You know, we live as if we deserve good things like forgiveness from God.

We live to some degree entitled. When we come to think of God, we think, of course he'll forgive me. That's his job. That's what I deserve.

[14 : 43] But the stunning thing to these original hearers was that's not the God of the Bible and they knew it. The God of the Bible doesn't owe us anything.

That's why we celebrate the gift of life. He doesn't owe us children. He created us in his image to live humbly before him yet we've all gone astray and the only thing God owes us is a proper reckoning and account.

But the message of the gospel says receive the forgiveness of sin. You see, you don't want God to give you what you do or what you deserve. In the movie Unforgiven, the town of Big Whiskey is torn up by injustice and the citizens offer a reward to any man who steps forward to make things right and kills the two cowboys.

William Muni, played by none other than Clint Eastwood, is a former outlaw who has changed and repented of his ways. He's a new man now. He's not playing those games anymore and a local kid though comes along and pulls him in to chase him down the reward along with a few of his friends and so William Muni is pulled out of retirement so to speak.

The corrupt sheriff in town is on the side of the crooks. He's on the side of the cowboys and he protects them. Before long, Muni and his boys kill two cowboys and claim the reward but something goes wrong.

[16 : 27] One of Muni's good friends, one of his boys, Ned Logan, played by Morgan Freeman, is captured by the sheriff who tortures him and kills him and now Muni's mad.

If you've seen Clint Eastwood mad, it ain't a good thing. You know, he goes into town and takes out all the sheriff's men. In the last scene, he has the corrupt sheriff down and is loading his gun to finish him off and the sheriff says, I don't deserve to die.

William, I don't deserve to die. I'm building a house. I'm starting a new life. I don't deserve to die and Muni stands over him and says, deserves, got nothing to do with it and finishes him off.

You know, the same thing is said of our salvation. Deserves, got nothing to do with it. If God gave us what we deserved or what we were owed, we'd be called into the courtroom and sentenced to death and damnation immediately.

But in offering us the gospel, God gives us what we do not deserve, the forgiveness of sins. What this means is not merely that God overlooks or sweeps sins under or acts like they didn't happen.

[17 : 41] What this means is so much better. What this means is that Jesus will never, ever, ever give you what you deserve or God will never, ever, ever give you what your sins deserve because of Jesus.

Jesus stood in your place to take what you deserve, the wrath of God so that you might not receive what you deserve and receive eternal life.

And so that's what Peter is proclaiming. Today I have news for you. I have news that your accounts can be settled before God this day that you might never fear his wrath again through the preaching and the receiving of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So receive forgiveness of sin. But that's not all in the book of Acts. It just keeps going. Receive eternal life. Receive your sins blotted out.

Acts 3. Receive the Holy Spirit. Receive times of refreshing. Receive healing. Receive peace with God and in life. Receive freedom from everything the law of Moses could not free you and all this for hell deserving sinners like you and me.

[18 : 48] I must ask where are you before Jesus Christ this morning? What do you deserve?

We're all hiding behind something in this life. Maybe it's the good things we're trying to do or maybe we're trying to weigh out and have a little seesaw effect so that our good outweighs our bad but that is not enough to settle your account with Jesus Christ.

If you want to get right with God it only comes through Jesus Christ through admitting that what you deserve is damnation.

but that Jesus has come to invite you to life.

The blessings of the kingdom are now. If you receive Jesus Christ if you trust in him you will never be more accepted before him than this day.

[19 : 53] It does not matter. I don't care if you snooze five times and never read your Bible. You'll never be more accepted before God than coming to him through Jesus Christ alone.

I don't care if alcohol is on your breath that same acceptance is offered to you this morning through the gospel. So fame forgiveness is received now to all people invited all people invited.

Y'all like that F-A going on? Just a joke. You know Jesus in the book of Acts he sends this good news and these blessings to invite anybody and everybody.

As he's done so many times when he's on trial in Rome Paul defends why he took the good news to the Gentiles. Now Gentile is kind of a Bible word you know we hear it a lot it's a word that just means everybody that's not Jewish.

We're all Gentiles alright so make sure you're aware what camp you're in it's just anybody that's not Jewish so now Paul was a Jew who raised a Jew and he was preaching to non-Jews and so that was surprising to everybody around him and that's really what all the drama about Acts is about in so many ways and it makes perfect sense the Old Testament was written to Jews it talked about a mediator or someone who would come and there's so many promises made to the Jewish people there and so they're kind of perplexed they're scratching their head why are the Gentiles welcomed in?

[21 : 33] Why are they allowed to attend the Jewish party? And this is the question that Acts keeps talking about and look what Paul says on trial look down in verse 26 to them he says go to this people and say you will indeed hear but never understand you will indeed see but never perceive for this people's heart has grown dull and with their ears they can barely hear and their eyes they have closed and lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn and I would heal them therefore let it be known that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles for they will listen now that's a quotation from Acts 6 I mean Isaiah 6 remember the call of Isaiah and the year that King Uzziah died and everybody's declaring holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty and then he sends him out with this call the idea is that the prophet Isaiah was called to proclaim a message that the people of Israel wouldn't hear now Paul is saying the same thing is happening now

Paul is saying the difficulty about him as he went and proclaimed the gospel to the Jews first but they didn't receive and understand so now the salvation of God has gone to the Gentiles now that's probably all just kind of foggy stuff you're not used to talking about but the idea is once it goes to the Gentiles that means it goes to all people and the book of Acts in so many ways is just the unveiling of this gospel breaking in and welcoming all the Gentiles of the world it moves out from Jerusalem if you remember they were there for the first sixth chapter it moves out from Jerusalem to a hated half-breed Samaritan and then to an unaccepted African unit it converts a persecuting law keeper in Saul or Paul himself and then an un-Jewish Roman soldier and his family it rescues an unholy magician a slave girl a Roman jailer it comes for many Greeks philosophers thinkers idol worshippers it shows vividly that the goodness of God is for all people every culture every class every race strikingly throughout the book of Acts as we saw when we went through it every time it breaks new ground in this way it's the

Lord Jesus who's breaking the ground from heaven if you remember it's the Lord Jesus that brought the persecution and moved them out into Samaria it's the Lord Jesus who directed Ananias to Saul and raised him actually it's the Lord Jesus who appeared to Saul and then it directed Ananias to him it was the Lord Jesus who directed Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch the African eunuch it's the Lord Jesus who when Peter couldn't get the message brought multiple sheets and said bacon is legal so that it can go to this Roman centurion the idea it's the Lord Jesus who wants to take the gospel out so why does he intervene in this way here it is Jesus wants each one Jesus wants the self-righteous rule keeper and the lawless lawbreaker Jesus wants the poor and broken and those who think they have nothing and even those who think they have no dirt Jesus wants the righteous Jesus wants the unrighteous Jesus wants the religious Jesus wants the irreligious

Jesus wants those who have thrown away years of their life and foolishness and the young who are teetering on the edge Jesus will not rest until his church is not a museum for saints but a hospital for sinners from all cultures classes and races the idea is the church and what we see in Acts is an embassy of heaven the church is an embassy of heaven it's a temporary home planted on foreign soil I'm not trying to align it with some political platform it's a place that doesn't align with political

platform it's a place that doesn't have the battle lines of this world it's a place that doesn't have the anger and outrage of this culture it's a place where the political positions of this nation have no place because it's a place that is all about Jesus Christ and it's a place for all people that's what Acts is about most Americans are not native there's no American race think about this Italians look like Italians Germans look like Germans Indians not Native American Indians but from the country of India look like Indians but America looks like all colors where'd you come from I'm Scotch-Irish my wife's Vietnamese what are we doing together only in America that's what makes America unique among the nations of the world I love the Statue of Liberty we have the quote for you there's a poem by Emma Lazarus on there she says not like the brazen giant of a Greek frame so not like a Greek god that we studied when we went through Acts with conquering limbs astride from land to land not like

[27 : 00] Alexander the Great here at our sea washed sunset gates shall stand a mighty woman with a torch that's the Lady Liberty from her beacon hand glows worldwide welcome give me your tired your poor your huddled masses yearning to breathe free the wretched refuse of your teeming wretched refuse refuse of your teeming shores send these the homeless tempest tossed storm tossed to me I'll light my lamp beside the golden door that's true of America how much more so the church of Jesus Christ live now for the fame of Jesus Christ this is what his fame is about all people invited point three mates created mates created you know every acronym has to have a stretch in it so this is my stretch you know

I don't use mates but I do have an Australian friend who does use mates and puts another shrimp on the barbie or something like that the idea is though nevertheless is in our text Jesus creates true mates true friends in the church Jesus creates true mates in the church you know we see this throughout the book of Acts if you remember we studied this at the beginning of October after the spirit descended in power at Pentecost and many came to faith the immediate result was true friendship it's very idyllic if you go and read Acts 2 and they're just devoting themselves to prayer and the fellowship breaking the bread giving to one another anything that they have need of it's just this wonderful ideal friendship the idea is this fellowship takes place because of the gospel because of the power of the gospel there's this immediate fruit in love for one another and deep friendships unlike any they had seen and unlike any this world has seen you know often we form friends because of where we're from or where we work or what we like to do we form friends about something we have in common it can be anything and usually is insignificant

I was reading not too long ago last May Colorado teenager Kendrick Castillo stood up to a shooter in his high school sadly those shootings just kind of blend in because we're just white noise we've heard so many of them but he he stood up this young man I think 16 years old stood up gave his life away protecting other students that's our favorite story I was telling Rev the other day my son that's our favorite story someone who gives their life away but Kendrick loved Jeeps and had friends who loved Jeeps with him and I love this story when the Jeep community got word of his death and how he died they showed up in strength over 800 Jeeps showed up to lead Kendrick's body on a special procession to the grave side

I mean give it up to the Jeep owners right it's incredible but friends in the church aren't formed in that way the church is often not made up of natural friends it's made up of people who don't belong together but people who have one thing in common that's not superficial at all and it's Jesus Christ and he's what creates true friends and I love the way Acts 28 captures it it closes with this picture of Paul gathering together with Rome and Paul longed to visit this church and Paul didn't plant it he planted a lot of churches but he didn't plant this one he knew about it and he traveled to them and Taylor mentioned this last week he includes his letter to the church in Rome which we referenced last week and was written several years before where we are in Acts several years earlier and he mentioned 27 people by name I encourage you to go read it Acts 16 he mentions 27 people some of whom he hadn't met and some that had been sent there to serve and to help that work and it's just filled with gratefulness and affection but in Acts 28 we get to see we get to hear when he sees them we get to see when he sees this church for the first time you look down there in Acts 28 verse 14 and I just think it's so pregnant with meaning and so profound if look in verse 14 the back half he said and so we came to Rome verse 14 and verse 15 and the brothers there when they heard about us came as far as the forum of Appius and the three taverns to meet us on seeing them Paul thanked God and took courage if you've read Romans 15 and 16 you understand why he's thanking God and able to see them but look it says they came as far as the forum of Appius that's

40 miles outside Rome even more came to the three taverns that's 12 miles outside Rome give it up for the brothers and sisters in Rome they're coming to see this apostle this one who had written them they're coming to celebrate friendship and what it creates by the power of the gospel the idea is true mates aren't created by a common interest political party or skin color true mates are created by Jesus Christ a shared allegiance to him and a commitment to him I pray that's one thing we take away we never take for granted the church never take granted friends don't be a rock like Simon and Garfunkel said don't be an island and I so respect you know this is father's day [33 : 16] I so respect you fathers who have built your families on the church as a top priority your example is huge I want to encourage these guys we're not impressed with ourselves at all but when you make this commitment when you make a non-negotiable allegiance to Jesus Christ and not sports or work or anything else I believe the Lord blesses it I think he loves it I think it pleases I know it pleases him so praise the Lord just don't take it for granted point four everyone sent everyone sent fame Jesus sends everyone out as witnesses the book of Acts began with a promise if you remember that before Jesus ascended he was proclaiming about the kingdom of God he was talking about what he talked about all the gospels began with repent the kingdom of God is at hand and so at the beginning of Acts 1

Jesus is still proclaiming this message the kingdom of God has come is coming in him but before he ascended after he told him he was about to ascend he proclaimed to them this kingdom one more time and the disciples said Lord will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel and you remember his response we have it for you he says it's not for you to know the times the father has picked by his own authority but you will receive power when the holy spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth and so Jesus makes this announcement don't worry about the kingdom but wait for the power that comes from on high and proclaim this gospel as witnesses and peppered throughout Acts if you remember are these summary statements reminding us that this promise is being fulfilled in our hearing he says the word of God is increasing Acts 6 7 the number of disciples is multiplying in Acts 13 the disciples are walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the spirit the church is being strengthened so all of

Acts peppered throughout are these indicators that the promise is being fulfilled that the gospel is going forward the power is coming on high and the church is being built up and so Acts concludes with one final summary that's what verses 30 and 31 are if you look there with me he says he lived there two whole years at his own expense you see a summarizing statement he welcomed all who came to him proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance why does Acts in that way the idea is Paul is preaching about the kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Christ the book of Acts began explaining the kingdom and ends proclaiming the kingdom the kingdom of God are the bookends to the book for the nerds out there they kind of like that and the bookends but there's more to this the book of Acts began with the living reigning

Lord Jesus Christ sending out the church and the power of the spirit to proclaim the gospel and the kingdom and the book of Acts ends with the apostle Paul and the church standing in that same spirit to proclaim the gospel and the kingdom Paul is still proclaiming with all boldness and without hindrance it's meant to be a summarizing statement to say something about God John Stott captures it well he says without hindrance means that though his hand be bound the word of God is not though he he is changed the word of God is not the book of Acts closes this way to remind us that the Lord Jesus Christ is still on his throne and will not be stopped until he brings the full harvest of those who must be saved the book of Acts in conclusion is wonderfully unfinished you've been listening to a message given by Walt

Alexander lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens Tennessee for more information about Trinity Grace please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com Paul this imprisonment was the first one Eusebius tells us that from the first century in which Paul wrote Ephesians Philippians Colossians and Philemon several years later he'd be imprisoned again in Rome in which he wrote first and second Timothy and Titus the pastoral letters and was executed but Acts doesn't tell us that now maybe it's because Luke is writing more current so Paul had not died or was still in prison I think that could be a very good reason but I think it ends this way for another reason it ends this way to push the question into your chest will you stand up for the cause will you proclaim the kingdom of God do you believe that Jesus

[38 : 50] Christ is still on the throne or if you've begun to hope in other things will you stand in the line of the apostles and the disciples and all those who have gone before you to testify to Jesus Christ will you live for something bigger than your personal comforts and personal privileges the promise is what Luke is saying the promise still stands you will receive power you stand before kings I'll tell you what it's saying the Lord still reigns with all authority in heaven and on earth and the gospel alone still saves from the young church goer to the lost centers of the deepest die and so it's calling us Luke is calling us to live now for the fame of the Lord Jesus Christ this is something to live for it's something to die for and it's something so much bigger than ourselves G.

Campbell Morgan says most men are not satisfied with the permanent output of their life nothing can wholly satisfy the life of Christ within his followers except the adoption of Christ's purpose toward the world he came to redeem fame pleasure and riches are but husk and ashes in contrast to the boundless and abiding joy of working with God for the fulfillment of his eternal plan the men who put everything into Christ undertaken are getting out of life its sweetest and most priceless rewards live now for the fame the matchless fame of our Lord Jesus Christ let us pray Father in heaven we thank you for this wonderful book we thank you for just a moment to sit under it one more time Lord we say farewell to the book of Acts and we're going to miss it we need these stories to buttress our faith and to push us on

Lord we pray that you would this day not let any of us leave until we carefully consider where we are in relation to Jesus Christ that we would trust in him with all our heart soul mind and strength and forsake any other thing to trust in that we would follow him God we pray that we would be a church that's not marked by our political platform not marked by our personal preferences not marked by size of our houses or anything superficial and stupid like that we pray that we would be a church that's marked by lives caught up with oh concentrated on riveted by the fame of the Lord Jesus Christ people that don't count their lives valuable people that are ready to give it all ready to lay it all down to follow Jesus Christ help us God we pray and we thank you in Jesus name amen