

Acts 5:41-42

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[0 : 0 0] We got some fun things on the docket tonight. We have with us brother Jim Showers. I got that right, correct? And he is a missionary to Paraguay. And so he's going to come and take a few minutes.

He dropped in. I didn't know he was coming. We like missionaries, so you might have noticed. And so you come and tell us about the work in Paraguay and whatever you want to do here for about five minutes. Well, listen, I got to tell you that I'm honored to even have the opportunity. This is the mothership.

And I'll tell you how I know that. In 2007, I was a part of a college nursing and pre-med major missions trip to Atikipa.

We met another guy that you're probably familiar with, Bradley Edmondson, and put on a massive clinic there at the Bible Institute in Atikipa. And God changed my life in that 14 days. I'll just tell you that. I thought that I was missions-minded.

Until I went. And I'll tell you what. It's been eight years now, and not a minute, excuse me, not a day has passed, that I have not at least thought, if not prayed, for Atikipa and those people.

[1 : 0 9] And as much as that, I want to tell you how God really developed my burden, not just through that medical clinic, but through some things that I saw there. I've had the opportunity to go back and do the same thing in 2009.

We had the opportunity to go back, took our kids, and served for 10 weeks back in 2011. Actually, I went to the Language Institute. And that did a couple things for us. One is it gave us a real sense that our kids were going to thrive, and it gave me a real sense that it's not hopeless when it comes to me learning language.

But I'll tell you what I saw. And, you know, if you've ever been to Atikipa, you very likely have this experience. And I won't say that this made my burden specific to Peru, but I'll tell you this.

We were walking around in Yanahua, and we went into the Iglesia Yanahua, which is the Catholic church there. It's probably 400 years old. And as I walked through, and I saw the statuary on both sides as you walk in, the dead Jesus in the crystal coffin, and Mary, Queen of Heaven, with her crown and jewels and her gold and linen and silver.

And I got a sense of what the Catholic church has done in those Latin American countries. My wife was a missions kid, grew up in Mexico. I've also had the opportunity to serve short-term in Mexico, where Catholic priests went around and warned the people in our small town that we were just there to harvest their organs.

[2 : 3 2] I also had the opportunity to serve in Costa Rica, which is a very similar grip that the Catholic church has had on that place. But as I was just appalled in the Iglesia Yanahua, I looked behind the altar, and I see if you've been there, and many of you probably have been there, and you've seen all the statuary behind the altar.

And you see Mary, Queen of Heaven. Mary, Queen of Heaven. Mary, Queen of Heaven. And all of her jewels and gold and silver and fine array, and up above, all by himself in the darkness, is one little Jesus.

It brought me to tears then. It brings me to tears now. When I think of that one little Jesus all by himself, surrounded by Mary, Queen of Heaven, and that gives me a sense of the grip, the bondage, the spiritual bondage that the Catholic church has, on those people, and really all of Latin America.

And so, as God has worked in our hearts and lives through the years, and drawn us to him, and this is just anecdotal, there's nothing particular about this, but years later when God finally said, Go!

Brother Austin was preaching at a missions conference in our church, and you don't remember this, Brother, but I was right there, on my knees praying and saying, God, I'll go. Well, I wanted to be a part of the mothership, or not be a part of it, but I wanted to come and visit the mothership.

[3 : 52] And I had been in contact with Chris, and David emailed me, you ought to stop by. I said, well, I'm on my way there, Brother. And I've got to tell you, I'm just honored. Listen, I have heard and I have followed some of your publications, and it seems to me like I've seen the work in Atikipa, which, now you know this, all right, and I'm just going to tell you about my admiration for it.

If you get a sense of what one man surrendered, and his wife and kids can do in one city, which is plant a church, labor, slave like dogs, see that work grow, and it begets a Bible institute, and it begets plants, and it begets, eventually, what, 30 or so years later, it begets this.

That'll give you a vision of what a mature missions ministry should look like, and can look like. And it's not just one guy going, planting that church, and then when he leaves the field, then that work struggles and ultimately fails.

It's a thriving ministry. I envision that for our work in Paraguay. Paraguay is no different than Peru. It's flatter and hotter and not quite as beautiful, but we have the challenge of languages, two languages that don't have, they speak Guarani, which is an Indian language, and they speak Spanish.

Fortunately for us, everybody speaks both. I will certainly have to improve my weak Spanish, and then I'll have to become fluent in Spanish and then pick up some Guarani. But the Catholic Church has had no less a stranglehold on the people of Paraguay than they have on Peru or Costa Rica or Mexico or any place where that scourge has been in the last 400 or 500 years.

[5 : 32] And that really is my great burden. That's the thing that God used to take and focus what I believe was a mission's heart, but he focused it on a place.

He focused it on a people, and that for me is the country of Paraguay. I'll be serving with another missionary I sent out of my own church that my own pastor asked me to pray specifically about laboring with.

It's a guy that just, I could use his leadership and his talents. He could use my followership and my talents, and my intent is to go and be the hardest-working second man ever in the history of missionary work and to labor as faithfully and as fruitfully as possible in the Bible Institute there.

I will tell you this, and this is hyperbole for missionaries, but I believe it. I believe that Paraguay can be evangelized in our lifetimes, but I don't believe that it will be American missionaries going to do that work.

I think that it will be Paraguayan missionaries sent out of that Bible Institute. I genuinely believe that can and will happen, God willing. And so you pray for us.

[6 : 35] The Showers family is myself, my wife, Carrie, and our three kids. My wife's a nurse practitioner. We don't have any right now specific plans to use her medical training, although it will certainly arise, if not just in being a help and a blessing to the home church there and the church plants and the people in it, but we will certainly find a way.

But our focus is going to be church planting, and my particular focus is going to be that Bible Institute. I believe that God has called us. I believe that he has confirmed that call.

I believe that he is prospering us, not prospering financially. I'm on deputation. But he is prospering us in the work that he's called us to. And I'm grateful again for the opportunity to come and present our work to you.

Thank you, fellas. All right. If you'll pray for him, how about a good round of applause so he knows that. And I would assume you have plenty of these.

All right. He's got plenty of these prayer cards there so you can get one. It is interesting that Tracy knows his wife, Carrie. She taught Tracy Pover in school.

[7 : 46] So we're connected. All right. So please pray for them. And if somebody wants to give him a green handshake before he leaves, it won't hurt. That means you wind up a little bit of money, shake his hand, leave the money in his hand, not yours.

It doesn't mean you shake his hand and hold on to the money and pull it back. It means you leave the money. All right. So if you want to do that, that would be great. Well, Eric Elrod is back.

Where are you, Eric? Come on up. Eric just got back from India. And first off, we'll start here. You've got to talk to a microphone because we have a listening audience of thousands around the world. And let's hear something in Hindi.

And don't lie to us. I'll ask Jim if you said something. How about a verse or something? Okay. John 316. Amen. He's going to take a couple of three minutes, five minutes, whatever tonight to talk to you.

Then Sunday night he'll give an update to the whole church. But I'm glad he's back. I know you're glad he's back, getting married a few days and leaving the church on deputation.

[9 : 06] So shoot it. Eric, go to it. Well, since November, I've had the opportunity to serve as a missionary. I'm sorry, an intern. Sorry, I'm a little bit jet lagged in my vocabulary, maybe just a little bit off.

But serve as an intern with the Roberts family in northern India. And I was telling the church that I got to go, my parents' church last night that I got to go to, that I felt sorry for them because I've had the opportunity to be with a family who I love with absolutely all of my heart and who I believe is God going, who God is going to do something with to reach New Delhi with the gospel.

They are not just my friends. They are my family. And so it has been an opportunity that God has given me to be able to learn from them, that they have been great to me.

They have loved me on days when culture just got the best of me. They loved me on days when I was struggling, when I needed somebody to believe in me.

They were there. They believed in me when I wasn't able to believe in myself. And so I'm excited to get to be back. Just a quick little thing about what we got to do. Spent some time learning language.

[10 : 11] I don't know if many of you have seen Light in the Darkness film, but one of the guys in the film that does, he goes to his home, his friend Suresh, and he says, I'm worried about Suresh. He says he believes in Jesus, but he's praying to all these other gods.

And you see in there, you see the goddess of Saraswati who gives you wisdom and knowledge and power, and you see Ganesh. You see all these different gods. And then you see Suresh. He says, I believe in all gods, but I pray to Jesus Christ because he's the miracles in my life.

And so we see these things, and so Suresh begins to come to the church there. He begins to come, and he begins to learn. And during one Wednesday night, he made a profession of faith.

And it's just amazing to see how just the spiritual oppression upon the people of India, how they're blinded by Satan of Hinduism and Islam and Sikhism, of how God is using one family to reach people with the gospel.

And so it's encouraging to get to know that one day, Lord willing, that we're going to get to be a part of that. And so I want to thank each and every one of you for giving us the opportunity, for giving me the opportunity to get to go, for giving, for praying, for encouraging, for supporting, and allowing us to get to go.

[11 : 25] I'm looking forward to getting married here in just a few weeks. And so we will be looking forward to getting things started. But I just ask that you would pray for us.

And I look forward to Sunday night to getting to share with you more about what God allowed us to do while we were there. Tell us one cultural mess-up. Or one time that you caused problems for the Roberts.

Anything you want to tell us? We just need a good laugh. Dirty laundry. Yeah, that's a good one. Well, after a little while of being there, there was a lot of kids and stuff running around the street outside of where we live.

And I kept wondering, and I kept wondering why, when I would walk up and I would wave to these kids, why their grandmothers and their mothers would hold them back. And I thought, you know, usually, like, kids might want to run up to, you know, foreign people.

They want to see how they are. But when I'd see a kid, I would do like this, just like wave at them. Well, there, this means come here. And so they're thinking, well, here comes this person who's wanting to have all these kids just come to them and just hang out with them.

[12 : 32] And so I'm sitting here, and I'm going to these kids, and you're seeing these old women there. All these kids. What's wrong with me? I'm not crazy. I mean, I didn't think there was nothing wrong.

But one day I did it, and she did that. I thought, wait, that means something. So it took a little bit of time to get used to it. All right. Chris Way is on his way out.

Come on up and tell us what's going on and what's happening with you. Take five minutes, whatever you do. Well, it's good to see everybody tonight. Excuse me, I'm losing my voice a little bit.

But we are on our way to the country of Thailand. We leave here in about three days. We leave on Monday afternoon. And privileged to be able to spend the last year or so in the United Kingdom there in the city of London, working with Travis Snowed and extremely thankful for our time there, for what God allowed us to be a part of in such a short of time.

Miraculously, we were able to master the language there in a short amount of time. You know, such a difficult thing. But, no, in all seriousness, just had a wonderful time.

[13 : 38] If you know Travis at all, just a great man of character. Couldn't have asked for a better teammate and a better friend, a better family to spend our first year on the mission field with.

Learned a lot about ministry, a lot about church planting and those types of things. But I'll tell you the biggest thing I learned from Travis Snowed was how to be a man of character and how to live out your life as a servant.

And if you don't know Travis, you don't know those things about him, I encourage you to get around him and know him and ask him and learn those things from him. But just thrilled about what God's doing in our lives personally and in the church plant there down in Baptist.

The church is doing great. They'll be having their first missions conference coming up here in about a week. And so just praying about exciting things. There's a few young men there, Samuel and Josh, and a new guy that's been coming around.

His name is Dayo. He's going through foundations with Travis now. And just excited about what God is doing there through the work. And excited about Thailand. We'll be, like I said, there in here in just a few days.

[14 : 39] A place, as you know, of just utter darkness. Less than 1% professing Christ at all. And we'll be working there in the city of Bangkok in the first stage.

We will stay there, but at least for language school. So we just ask that you pray with us. Pray we'll get this language. And pray that we'll be able to get there and get all set up without much consternation.

So thank you so much. Somebody said, I'm trying to make us a clapping church. I'm working on it.

Let me get all the deacons and the staff. Let's pray for him. All the deacons and church staff, if you'd come up here. Let's have a word of prayer and ask God to bless Chris and use him.

Dear Father, I thank you for allowing us to come to church and worship you. Thank you for Chris. Lord, I pray that you'd work in his heart and his life. Pray that you'd draw him really close to you. Pray that you'd strengthen him as he goes to Thailand.

[15 : 40] That you'd help him to learn the language quickly. And that you'd help him to stay focused on you and what you've called him to do. And pray that you'd use him in a great and mighty way there in Thailand. Heavenly Fathers, we come to you in prayer, Lord.

Thank you for Chris and his family, Lord. We ask that you just use him greatly there in Thailand. That you prepare the hearts of men that you're going to train by using him, Lord. I ask that you would just help him to conquer this language real quick.

Lord, I ask that you would just grow him and Philip close together, Lord. I ask that you would just grow him and his wife close together and that nothing can get between them, Lord. I ask that you would just be with them, Lord. I ask that you would just be with them and just do great things with them and let them know there's churches behind here.

Just love them. And, Lord, more importantly, let them know that you are working through him, Lord. We thank you for what you're doing. Thank you for what you've already done. We love you, Jesus. In Jesus' name. Father in heaven, I love you, and I thank you so much for the opportunity as a church to support Chris and his ministry.

I pray, God, that you would let him know from the depths of his heart that he's loved and respected and honored here. That we are asking your great blessings on him. I pray you'd give him the language.

[16 : 47] I pray you'd help him to reach Thai people and see them saved. And I pray, dear God, that someday in the future we'll look back on tonight and realize that we were just dreaming of all of the great things you were going to do, and you did far more than we ever asked.

Thank you for Chris. Thank you for Sherry. Thank you for the way you've raised up his support, the way you've taken care of him, the way you've opened the doors. And I pray, God, your richest blessings on Chris.

And I pray your name would be honored. In Jesus' precious name, amen. How about a round of applause for him? And they have a seat. All right.

Martin Wickens, come up here. We're going to talk a minute, and he'll preach in a minute. This guy doesn't speak American. He doesn't speak American. Is your microphone on?

Because we want to list an audience to be able to hear you. All right. Let's start off. Just get more of the testimony. How you got saved or something like that. Not your message. You'll preach later. I'm going to interview you.

[17 : 44] Go ahead. Okay. Well, my name is Martin Wickens, and I'm from England. I was born in Redding. And I said with the middle schoolers earlier that I know God is in control.

I know because his word says that. But I also know because in October the 4th, 1980, an American missionary left Georgia, had his final service here, and then went to England. And he shared the gospel with my stepfather.

And then I heard the gospel. But here's what really shows me God was in control and had a plan. And it just blesses me when I think about it. He left here on October the 4th, 1980. And I was born on October the 4th, 1980.

So the day I was born, God sent a man from 3,000 miles away to start a work through which I would eventually hear the gospel. And so it was through Tom Dodson I heard the gospel. It was through him I was initially trained.

But I came to the Lord in August of 1994. And then within a couple of years, I knew the Lord was calling me to preach. And I surrendered to serve him. Ultimately, I really wanted to leave England.

[18 : 44] I wanted to get away from the country. I wanted to go to Rwanda. But the Lord just really worked in my life and showed me that his will was for me to stay in England, in the United Kingdom, and to see churches strengthened and replanted, and then God willing to see other churches begun as he would lead and allow.

All right. Tell us how you got married and where you found such a good wife. Well, I met my wife, Carrie, in 2001. And she had looked all over the United States for a good man and didn't.

Wait, sorry. That's because we were all taken. There you go. So now I met her. You can't trust the British.

She was over in England on a missions trip. And so that was back in 2001. And she was there just for a short time. But my pastor and his wife invited her back over in 2002 and 2003 in the summers to help with the youth ministries.

And in that way, I got to know her. And then we were married in May of 2004. And since then, Lord has blessed us with four children, Ashley, Samuel, Sophie, and Emily.

[19 : 59] So your pastor knew you needed help getting a wife, and he came to America. He did. All right. Tell us about your church. Okay. Okay. I'm a pastor of Brimpton Baptist Church.

And Brimpton is about an hour west of London. Brimpton itself is out in the middle of a field. And it seems like it's in the middle of nowhere. But all around us, there are towns and villages that we reach out to with the gospel.

Newbury and Thatchern would be the biggest towns near to us. Newbury is where I grew up. And then further afield, you have Basingstoke and Redding. And so we have quite a large population within a short distance, within half an hour.

We have many thousands that we can reach out to. But I pastored in Northern Ireland. I was there for about three years at a small church plant that the missionary had to leave at short notice.

And we saw that built up and handed over to a Northern Irish pastor. And then we went to Northern England, up to Sunderland. And there were two mission halls there. And it's kind of a long story with them.

[20 : 58] But we labored to see them work towards becoming independent churches. And we began the work there and then handed it over to a young man that I'd helped train up in a Bible school. And so he's now continuing that work.

And we'd met him in Northern Ireland. And then he followed us over to Northern England, went through the training. And then we handed the work to him. And he's continuing there. And then four years ago, we moved back down to Brimpton, where I grew up.

And that's where I'm pastoring at the moment. One more question. You said that male leadership in the past, in the country, wasn't there. And that's kind of how we got where we were when we talked.

Could you kind of elaborate on that to these men? Because they ought to be spiritual leaders. So you can kind of rip us a little bit. Tell us to be men. All right. Well, have you noticed on Mother's Day, it's our mothers are wonderful.

Thank God for our mothers. And then on Father's Day, it's like, you're good for nothing. You need to really train up. Well, seriously, in Britain, I think a large part of the problems we faced, I think initially, you know, back in the late early 20th century, the authority of God's word was undermined.

[22 : 05] But then something that really hit the country hard in World War I and World War II, we just lost generations of men. So many thousands upon thousands died in the war. And the home just fell apart.

And after that, you know, many who did come back, they just weren't the men who left. And there were good men that came through it. And they were, you know, faithful to their country. But they were just shattered by some of their experiences in war.

And so ultimately, I think what we saw was the home broke down. And that's had an impact on society and certainly on the church. And one of the biggest slacks we see is good, godly men lead in their homes and taking the stand that God would have them to take.

Many, many churches in Britain, it's, you know, just mainly women who are the driving force behind things happening, not in every church, but in a lot. And maybe Chris has kind of seen some of that.

You know, I'm thankful where we are. We do have a lot of good, godly men. But that's a great need. And if the men aren't standing up doing what God has ordained for them to do, then the pattern that God has ordained and planned is not there.

[23 : 09] And so it's just an awesome responsibility on men in general, on fathers, on husbands, to just be what God has called for them to be. Why don't you tell our older men, say, 35 and above, what they should be doing between the time they kicked the bucket?

Well, man, what a start. So much. So much. In terms of men, you know, I find so many young men, you know, preteens, they just don't know what's coming.

And just trying to show them what life is all about, setting them a good example and just looking for men to mentor and discipleship. And it doesn't even have to be maybe in a formal setting, but just being something that these young men look up to and showing them what it's all about.

You know, the young men who are getting ready to get married. Just don't let them know everything they're in for. But give them a heads up. You know, it's good to have some surprises. But just, you know, help them to be what God has called them to be.

We can't do it on our own. And I'm still learning so much. I'm still under 35. So I'm one of the young guys that you need to, you know, you need to be showing. I just said in that example, know God's word so you can know what God wants you to be to others.

[24 : 22] You can't teach what you don't know. All right, if you'll pray for Brother Wickens, give him a round of applause. Thank you. He is one of the finest young men I know.

God's using him in Great Britain. And I want you to get to know him. And in just a minute, he'll come and preach to you. I want you to pray for Martin in England and for Travis Snow in England.

And we were talking today. And I said, why don't I just give up on England? And he said, well, then you're just giving up on America because y'all are following our steps.

That's pretty sad. And so we, as men, need to man up. So far, God's blessed our church. We're seeing men, training men. And you're involved in discipleship.

But I want to challenge you, if we don't lead our homes, if we don't keep our church passionate, if we don't work at doing the things that we know ought to be done, we're always one generation from extinction.

[25 : 33] And it doesn't take long. He's been in a little over 40 churches since he's been back here in the States, since he's been in the States this time. And I said, how many of them are older?

He said, oh, maybe 70% are old people. And then he said, I said, how many of the churches have been good churches? He said, oh, maybe 10%. And so we want to make sure we make a difference.

So you've got to be a giver. You've got to be a prayer. You've got to be an example setter. We are making a difference when we honor Jesus. And let's pray for other churches around us, encourage other Christians, and just realize this is more important than we've ever dreamed.

I just, you know, Brother Martin will be here in just a second to preach to you for a few minutes. He'll get you out on time. But I just want you to know that we have a great responsibility as men.

And that's one of the reasons to break us up and put us here. You're the leaders. It was interesting. Sunday afternoon we had our deacons and deacons and training meeting. And several of the men talked about what a wonderful time they had together, loving Jesus, discussing the things about the Bible and things about leadership as spiritual leaders.

[26 : 50] And we make the difference. We're to lead our homes. We're to teach people about Jesus. We're to make a difference. And I hope that you really, really take that seriously.

Father, I pray your blessings on Brother Wickens. I pray that you would bless him in his church. I pray you'd bless him in his support. I pray that God give him encouragement and excitement.

I pray that Vision Baptist Church would be a special place to him after tonight. That he would be blessed by these men and blessed by being able to be at our church. I pray for his wife and children.

And I pray, God, that your name would be honored and glorified. We give you wonderful glory for how great you are and how wonderful you are and all the great things you're doing. I thank you. In Jesus' name, amen. Brother Mark.

I wonder if you can turn with me to Acts chapter 5. It is a blessing to be here. And I really appreciate the opportunity. We've been looking forward to the visit. And it's great to see so many familiar faces.

[27 : 53] You know, there's several that I've known through Facebook and social media. And so it's good to see them face to face. It's good to see Brother Brendan again. The last time we met was the first time we met was over in Morocco.

So, you know, it's a blessing to kind of be here again. So just praise God for the opportunity to be here. In Acts chapter 5, verse 41 and 42, it reads, And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

And daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. I like to ask why about things. I want to try and understand things.

You know, I want to try and wrap my head around sometimes why things are different. Why do we do some things back home in England, in the United Kingdom, that you don't do here?

You know, and sometimes answering that question, it can be entertaining. You know, why do we have you in some of our letters that you don't? So honor, color, savior. We have, you know, O-U-R at the end.

[29 : 00] Why don't you have that? You know, apparently one reason for that is because after the pilgrims left Britain, there were a group of scientists who said, you know, English compared to Latin just doesn't look that clever.

So we need to make it more difficult. And so they deliberately changed it. Can you believe that? You know, and if you go to tombstones that are back in the 14, 1500s, the spelling is without the U.

So that was something changed after you guys left. You know, why do we drive on different sides of the road? Why do we use different words for things? You know, sometimes those whys are important to understand.

There was one preacher who came from here over to England. And, you know, over there, pants are your underwear. Okay. Not, you know, what you call pants, we call trousers. And, you know, you know, you guys, if you wear kind of a three-piece suit, maybe you wear, you call it a vest, right?

A vest for us would be kind of the undershirt. So this American's preaching away. He's kind of getting hot because, you know, the churches don't have air conditioning. And he says, he takes his jacket off and he's like, I hope you guys don't mind if I preach in my pants and vest.

[30 : 09] And so the church is like, well, yeah, kind of we would mind. You know, so I like to know why are those things there?

You know, more importantly than the whys about our cultural differences and the words that we speak, you know, why is Britain in the condition it is today? And I can't say that I completely understand the condition of my country.

But I know there are some things that we can do to find the answer. And, you know, very often if you want to find the right way of doing things, you go back to the original. You look at the pattern that it's taken from. And so when we go back to the Word of God, when we go back to the early church, these first disciples, we look at what they did and maybe compare what they did and how they behaved to the way we are and the way we behave.

And maybe some of those differences will reveal to us the need. In Acts chapter 5, verses 41 and 42, I believe there's three things that we can look at this evening. The first is they departed from the presence of the council.

They departed from the world. They walked away from everything that was familiar to them. They discerned the right priorities. They made sure what was important to them is what they had learned from God was important to him.

[31 : 21] And they daily served. And, you know, when they had those things in their lives, what was the answer? What was the description given to them when they started to travel around?

Here comes those guys who turned the world upside down. You know, they were changing the world in which they lived. And if Britain is to go back to the days where it's changing the world in which it lives, we need to be the type of Christians that we see in Acts 5, verses 41 and 42.

The need in the United Kingdom is great, and I'm not going to go into too much detail because I believe you know it. But I look around, and if I look humanly speaking, then it does seem to be, you know, almost hopeless.

You know, could you imagine going somewhere all your life to worship? And then one day perhaps you go away for, you're gone for 5, 10, 15 years, and you come back. And instead of it being a place of worship, it's a grocery store.

It's a tattoo parlor. It's a mosque. It's just broken down and overgrown with weeds. You know, that is something which is a familiar scene all throughout the United Kingdom.

[32 : 29] And each one of those examples I've given you I've personally seen happen. A church converted into a mosque or a Hindu Sikh temple. You know, a church turned into a tattoo parlor. A church turned into a grocery store.

Many, many are turned into residential homes. So the need is there. It's great. And if we're to see what's needed, it's not a matter of one church starting one church.

But the churches need to multiply. We need to see a work of God that I think most of us has perhaps only read about or heard about, but rarely actually personally seen. And I have to believe that God is able and that He's willing.

You know, our God has not changed. With the sower and the seed, you know, when you look at the sower and the seed, was there a problem with the sower? Was there a problem with the seed? Was there a problem with the ground? You know, the ground where the seed went, you know, that's always the same.

You know, the lost people are always lost people. They're always dead in their trespasses and sins. As we spoke about it earlier with Pastor Gardner, you know, I don't think we're going to meet, you know, Charles Spurgeon or Hudson Taylor or any of these guys and meet them in heaven and say, you know, tremendous work.

[33 : 34] You were such an encouragement to me. I loved reading about your life. But, boy, did you have it easy. You know, people were dead in their trespasses and sins in your day, but they weren't quite as dead as they were in my day.

They were so much more dead by the time I came on the scene. Now, times change. I understand that. But people are dead, are dead, are dead. And so the people of the lost are the same.

And so I have to look and say, well, the seed is still good. You know, God's word hasn't changed. You know, the good seed that goes into the hearts of men and women, that's still able to say. And so I need to look to the believers.

I need to look to the church. And as we're gathered here tonight to a large degree, we need to look to the men. You know, in this context, we need to really understand the responsibility of men. So the first thing then, they departed from the presence of the council.

Now, obviously, this is speaking physically, that they walked out of the building. They walked away from that council. But understand, when they did that, they were turning their backs on everything that they had understood all their lives.

[34 : 37] You know, that council was made up of scribes and Pharisees and of the ruling class culturally and religiously speaking and the business leaders, the high priests. You know, these were the men who were the movers and shakers in their country.

And when they walked away from them, they said, You know, we don't see things the way you see them. We're going to follow Jesus Christ. You know, we don't think, as you think, that Jesus is just some upstart from Nazareth, some carpenter who's got above his station and he's just caused all this trouble.

We believe that Jesus is the Christ. He is the Messiah. He is the Son of God. He is our Savior. And we're going to follow him. Over in verse 29, Peter and the apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

We're not going to obey you. We're departing from you. We're walking away. You are the same council that put Christ upon the cross, that betrayed him, that rigged that whole jury setup, you know, that condemned Jesus Christ.

Christ, you can do the same to us, but we're going to obey God rather than men. They departed from the world. They turned their back on the council. They turned their back on the crowd.

[35 : 46] They turned their back on the culture. Have you ever thought how difficult it was to simply meet on the first day of the week? You know, we read it all the way through in the New Testament. They gathered on the first day of the week.

They met on the first day of the week. That was a radical change. You know, something we so take for granted, and yet it was different to everyone else. And yet they departed from that.

And, you know, in the United Kingdom, we need a generation of believers that will depart from this world, that will say, you know, we don't care what the council of this world is. We don't care what this world says is right and wrong or wants to do.

We're going to follow Jesus Christ. We don't care what the crowd does. We don't care what our culture says. We're going to follow Jesus Christ. We're going to depart from the world. We're going to focus on him.

And this world wants a man-made religion. It wants something that it can wrap up in a box and wrap its mind around. And I think every person wants salvation to be something that they can earn, something they can deserve, because it makes us feel better about ourselves, doesn't it?

[36 : 44] You know, I think the British tend to be very arrogant, not as arrogant as the French may be. God loves the French. I know that I'm not saying anything about that. But the British are very arrogant.

They're a very proud people. You know, our island is called Great Britain. You know, and I know that goes... Now, I know that goes back to the size of the island compared to the other islands around it, but how many other places do you know that keep that as the official title, Great Britain?

You know, if we were truly humble, it would be, OK, Britain. You know, it's Great Britain. You know, we're a proud people. I met a lady in Warner Robins in Georgia a few years ago, and I was speaking to her.

And there was another missionary with me from a national pastor from another country. And I was trying to slowly kind of work out to invite her to church. And God had, I think, ordained that situation.

We met in Warner Robins. She was from the same town I'm from in England. So I think God had ordained that. And as we're speaking, the other missionary steps in, and he didn't do anything wrong. He just did what he knew to do.

[37 : 48] And he said, Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior? And this lady turned around and said, No, it's OK. I'm English. No, it's OK. I'm English. It's like there was some kind of an arrangement.

You know, we've got something set up. We don't need to be saved like the rest of the people do. You know, we're different. It's OK. I'm English. You know, we need a generation of believers who need to depart from all that, to walk away from all that, and to understand that God has called us to walk on a different path.

We need a church that will send men out to change the world. And, you know, a church that thinks the world is OK is the right side up isn't going to turn it upside down, is it? If you think everything's pretty much OK with the world, then why turn it upside down?

Because it's not the right side up right now. It needs to be radically changed. And the generation of believers in the United Kingdom need to turn the world upside down. They need to depart from this world and say, OK, God, what do you want us to do?

And I'm not talking about being different just for different sake. We can do that in so many ways. But truly being a child of God, we're going to stand out from the crowd. The second thing they did was this. They discerned priorities.

[38 : 54] It said that they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. Have you ever rejoiced? Have you ever been mocked for your faith? And again, most of us aren't going to endure what some believers around the world endure.

But sometimes we can feel sorry for ourselves. We can feel like we're hard done by because we're being mocked. We're being teased. And, you know, there are people that suffer. But here's the thing. Do we rejoice that we're counted worthy to suffer shame for his name?

You know, if we have the right priorities, then if we get mocked and teased and persecuted, if it comes to some kind of a physical persecution and torture that we face, could we walk away from the situation that these apostles walked away from and say, thank you, Lord.

You would count me worthy to suffer for your name. Lord, we're not worthy to suffer for your name. We want to be worthy to be lifted up on pedestals and live an easy life.

So often we pray for God to take away the very things he's used down through history so much. You know, what is it that was said that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church? And yet the least little persecution comes my way.

[39 : 58] And I'm like, Lord, make it stop. You know, what if economic disaster is what would bring a nation back to God? And yet we get the rumblings of it and we say, pray, Lord, take it away. What if it a natural disaster or a flood or tornado or earthquake or whatever it may be is what God would use to bring a nation back to him?

And yet we get those things and we say, Lord, make it stop. Make it go away. Do we have the right priorities? Do we say, Lord, whatever it takes? Now, I'm not looking for people to suffer and die and in those types of things.

But don't get me wrong. Do we have the right priorities? Do we say, Lord, whatever it takes? Lord, send it our way. Do we rejoice to suffer?

You know, Paul puts it another way over in Philippians chapter one. If you can look there with me for a moment. This is something that I've only recently seen and it just I can't get my head around it. If you like to study the Bible, there's a little tool that the apostle Paul often uses.

If you look up the times he uses, not only but also there's a lot of wonderful truths. He kind of communicates in that way. And he does that in Philippians one twenty nine. He says onto you. It is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.

[41 : 14] Now, that word they're given. It means it's a gracious gift. It's something that's done out of grace. It's a favor. And so if we adapt that verse a little bit for onto you, it is given in the behalf of Christ to believe on him.

Well, that makes perfect sense, doesn't it? You know, that's a gift we want to receive. Have you ever had a gift that you just weren't too sure about? I have an aunt that used to send me these sweaters every Christmas and they were.

Do you know what's weird now? They're like they're in fashion. But back then they were just ugly. And so I would get them. My parents would make me put them on. They take a photo and then we take them off and never wear them again.

You know, that wasn't a gift that we wanted to receive. And yet we did every year. You know, it was a gracious thing. It was a kind thing, but it was not wanted. But he says here we are given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer.

For his sake. It's a gift when we suffer for him. It's a gracious gift. Christians in the United Kingdom have to discern the right priorities.

[42 : 23] When we get our priorities right, when we're willing to suffer for him, then you know what? I believe we'll see things begin to happen. But Christians in the UK are distracted. We're distracted by sports.

We love to play football. You call it soccer. But football makes sense. Think about it. You use your feet. And it's a ball. Football over here.

You use your hands. And it's shaped like an egg. But you don't play hand egg, do you? You play football. But whatever you want to call it, we're distracted.

We have Formula One. It's like NASCAR, but with corners that go both ways. You know, we're distracted. Okay. Do you know I said that in North Carolina?

It did not go over well. I got in trouble in West Virginia as well. It was the day before they played the University of Kentucky.

[43 : 22] May God rest their souls. But, you know, I said I'm really torn because I'm from the UK, the United Kingdom. So I feel like Trent messes me up so much.

He keeps posting about the UK. And I'm like, oh, what's this? Oh, basketball. But I'm like, you know, I feel like I should support the UK, you know, the University of Kentucky. And I was in West Virginia.

And by the end of the evening, I supported West Virginia. But you know what? Christians are distracted.

Christ isn't our priority. We're looking at so many other things. Those things are fine. You know, race cars and sports and, you know, these things are fine. I enjoy them. But they've got to be in the right order.

You know, the last thing that we see in Acts chapter 5 is that they were daily serving. Daily in the temple and in every house. They ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

[44 : 20] This was their every thought and ideal and effort. Daily they served. And, you know, I'm English. I can't help being English. The way I speak, it's because of where I'm from.

I enjoy hot tea. I enjoy sweet tea, but I enjoy drinking hot tea. There are so many things that distinguish me as English, but I don't set out to do them. I don't think, OK, how can I get up and do English stuff today?

I get up and I am who I am. And just so often as Christians, we make Christianity and witness something we do and not just something that we are.

But we don't just get up and be Christian because that's who we are. We have it the wrong way around. If we are going to see a change in the United Kingdom, it's going to be because a generation of Christians have departed from the world.

They discern the correct priorities and they are daily serving. And there may be so much more that we need to do practically speaking. But I think in terms of basics, this is where it has to begin.

[45 : 21] And if you would pray for us, we would thank you. And if there's something here that applies to your heart that the Lord has landed on, then, you know, respond to him. Answer him. He's faithful. He's true.

He's worthy alone to serve. May God bless these thoughts to our heart. Thank you. Pastor Gunn. Let's have a word of prayer. You would. Father, I thank you so much for the message. I thank you for Brother Martin.

And I pray your blessings on him and his ministry. Now, I pray, God, you'd help us as a church to apply this message that you've sent our way, that you have directed him to share with us, that it would be real to us.

And I pray, God, that you would help us as men to be leaders. And I pray you'd help us to depart from the council and to get our priorities right and to honor you and worship you. And I'll give you praise.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, just a second. If you would say, boy, I think the Lord's really dealt with my heart tonight through this message, through the testimony time or any of it, I just want to have a word of prayer with you.

[46 : 18] Who has God dealt with? Who's God spoken to? Not hold your hand up real quick. Let me see it. I see bunches of hands. Father, bless us tonight. We love you. We want to serve you. We want to be Christians, not just do Christian stuff.

We want to live out what you've put in. And, God, we want you to work in our church, our lives, our country. We ask you for Great Britain. And we ask you, Lord, for your work around the world.

And we give you praise for it all. In Jesus' name, amen.