

# Missions Conference day 3

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[ 0 : 00 ] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Alright, Acts chapter 24. And the problem with coming up the third night of the conference to have my first speaking opportunities, I've already heard two of my best presentations by some of the other guys that, you know, I'm going to take some of that stuff and use some of that.

We'll be in Acts chapter 24 tonight. And when you come to Acts 24, Paul has gone all over the place and he's preached the gospel. He started churches. He's trained men.

And when you come to Acts 24, he's been taken just before this and bound by the Jews at Jerusalem. And he's brought to Caesarea and he starts this series. He's standing before rulers and before governors. And he's answering why he's been doing all the things that he's been doing.

So when we come to verse 14, Paul says this. This is his confession, as well he calls it. But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets, and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, talking about the Pharisees, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust.

[ 1 : 23 ] Let's stop right there for a second. Paul says three things to us. He says, I worship God. And you and I know that whatever it is that's in our life that we really love, that we really have that great affection for, that's going to be the thing that we worship.

And Paul says, I love God and I worship him. He says, and I believe all the law, all that's written in the law and the prophets. He says, I believe the holy scriptures. And he says, I believe men stand before God and they're going to be found just or they're going to be found unjust and condemnation is going to rest on them.

And so Paul comes to verse 16 and he says, and herein do I exercise myself. I do these things repeatedly, the things that I've been doing, because I'm sowing seeds and I'm expecting an end result when we exercise.

That's what we're doing. And he says, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men. Paul says, everything I've been doing is because that little governor inside me, my conscience that you and I have is that that governor inside me that's regulating my actions is trying to bring my actions and my life in line with those three things that I believe, that I love God and I believe the holy scriptures and I believe men stand before him and they're found just or they're found unjust.

And my conscience is trying to bring my actions in line with what it is that I really believe. And so I didn't always want to be a missionary. I remember my only church experience when I had as a kid is that, you know, I went to when I was about five or six and we showed up five minutes late for every service.

[ 2 : 49 ] We left five minutes early and the preacher always preached way too long. I knew this because when we got back in the car, that's what my dad said every time that we went, which wasn't too often, but that preacher would preach way too long.

So my first church experience is when I was invited by a friend of mine at 14 in 1996 to an all night youth activity and I heard the gospel and I responded and I was saved. And that next Sunday I came to church with him.

And before I ever heard the, met the pastor or heard the pastor preach or sat in a service, I went to Sunday school and I sat there with eight or 10 other guys and they gave out Bible verses.

They were look up and the teacher came back to the first guy and they read his verse and he explained it. And he went to the second guy and he read his verse and he explained it and he came to me and I was so embarrassed because I had still not found first Peter five, eight.

I, I didn't know there were two Peters. I didn't know any of that stuff, but I remember this, the Sunday school teacher, he stood up and he stepped across that aisle and he sat down next to me and he showed me where first Peter five, eight was.

[ 3 : 50 ] And he showed me that there was an old and new Testament. And he told me about the chapter and verse divisions and I didn't know anything. And through the next three or four years, everything I learned, I learned from my pastor pouring into me and my youth pastor pouring into me and my Sunday school teacher pouring into me.

And I didn't, I didn't learn any of that from my family who was pouring the gospel and the Bible into me, but I learned it from those men. And that man crossed more than an aisle for me. He crossed roads. He crossed bridges.

Anytime we had an activity for our Sunday school class, I knew he was going to pick me up or any church activity, any youth activity. He was coming to pick me up. All I had to do was pick the phone and say, Hey, brother Doug, I need a ride.

I knew he was on the way. And so everything I learned, I learned from those three men. And then I graduated high school. I went to college and I came back and I've, uh, this past year, God put it in my heart to, to be in missions.

And I, uh, I, uh, I came and I was trying to find a country that I wanted to, uh, to be a missionary to.

[ 4 : 55 ] And I, some advice that I was given is take the three largest countries in the world and pray about them. And I was praying about China and about India and needy countries. And I was praying about Indonesia and I knew guys in China and I knew guys in India and I didn't know anyone in Indonesia.

And I couldn't get by a country that's the size. In my lifetime, Indonesia will be bigger than the U.S. When I was 10 years old, the U.S. was smaller than Indonesia is now.

Today, Indonesia is bigger than whenever I was 10 years old. And so, uh, to think of a country like that, that doesn't have the fingerprints of the gospel on it.

It may have been touched. We've had missionaries there before, but it doesn't have that lasting impression. Those fingerprints of the gospel has been taken there and there's an impact left there. And so, uh, we want to carry the gospel there and, uh, I was thinking of what chance those people are just in the same situation I was where at 14, I didn't know there was an old New Testament.

I didn't know, I didn't know first Peter five, eight. I didn't know anything about the Bible. They haven't been touched with that. And I don't have anyone that's pouring into their life, the gospel. What chance does a 14 year old boy there have of hearing the gospel?

[ 6 : 04 ] That's a country the size of the U.S. And so why Indonesia? I'd have to tell you the same thing Paul said. That, that I believe God. I love, I worship him. I love him. I believe the Holy scriptures.

And I believe that men stand before him and they're found just or they're found unjust. And the only thing I want to do is bring what my actions in line with those beliefs that I have.

And so I, there, there'll be millions of people in Indonesia that are not going to go to hell because they've rejected the gospel. They'll go there because they haven't heard the gospel. And so I hope you'll be praying for the country of Indonesia.

I hope you'll be praying for my wife and I as we're getting started. And it's been a blessing to be with you folks. And I hope that you'll, you'll think about Indonesia this week, that you'll be praying for that country, that you'll study about it and learn about it.

And I'll save the rest for, for tomorrow when I get to present again. Thank you. What do you usually think about? Do you think about drugs? Pablo Escobar?

[ 6 : 59 ] Do you think about coffee? Do you think about violence? A place that you probably never go. Yes, Colombia has had a bad history with drugs. Yes, Colombia had had a bad history with violence.

Yes, Colombia is a place that most people will not visit or go. But tonight, I challenge every single one of you to think about something else when Columbia comes to your mind. I challenge you to think of a country that has over 48 million people.

I want you to think, and I challenge you to think about a country where at least 90% of the people do not know the God of the Bible. I challenge you to think of a country where at least 43 million people have not accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior.

If you would please go with me to Romans chapter 10 verse 1 in your Bibles. And here, I want you to put yourselves in Paul's mind, in Paul's shoes, and I want you to think about what he's thinking.

As he's writing this, Paul is in his mind remembering his brethren, the Israelites, the Jews, and he's thinking and he's writing this. In verse 1 he says, brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel.

[ 8 : 07 ] And he stops, and then he says, is that they might be saved. Here we can see a Paul that is heartbroken for his people. Here we can see a Paul that tells us of how Israel, his people, his nation, his countrymen do not trust in Christ.

How his heart's desire and prayer to God is for his people to be saved. And the people of Columbia today are in the exact same place. Go with me to verse number 2, please.

And Paul continues on, he says, for I bear them record that they have a seal of God, but not according to knowledge. And we see here that Paul tells us about how religious Israel is, how they have a great seal for God, but also how wrong they are.

Because they do not believe in the word of God. How wrong they are because this is not the truth, what they follow. Right now I have a video, and they're going to play it. And I want you to look at this video, and as they're playing it, I want you to focus on the people that are on this video.

And I still remember when I was a kid in Columbia, I remember news reports, I remember going to this place that's called Monserrate. Go ahead and play the video, please. And I remember that Monserrate is a mountain on the top of Colombia, in the top of Bogotá.

[ 9 : 19 ] And at the top, there's a Catholic church there. And this mountain is about 10,000 feet above sea level. And when you go up there, the people of Columbia, they go there because there's a shrine.

And that shrine that they go and worship is called El Señor Caído, which means the fallen Lord. And the people of Columbia come to this place as a pilgrimage, climbing a rocky path underneath all the way from the bottom of the mountain to the shrine that sits on top.

And on the way up, I bet you, I know they're thinking, man, this will please God. Man, this, this, maybe God will hear me if I go and do this.

Maybe God will hear me. Maybe God will forgive my sins if I do this. Go to verse number 3 on your Bibles in Romans chapter 10. And Paul continues on. And you can just imagine Paul seeing his people doing the same thing.

Worshiping God, thinking that they're doing exactly what they're supposed to do, but it's completely wrong. Verse number 3, Paul keeps on going and he says, For they being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

[ 10 : 30 ] Paul here is saying, man, they don't know. They don't understand. They're ignorant of the truth. They don't know what God says in his word. And it is why they're doing this.

It is the reason they're so religious. It is the reason that they're so wrong in what they do and what they believe. When these people that you have just seen up here, when they reach the top of the mountain, you know what they see?

They go up there and they see that shrine. They see that fallen Christ. They see that suffering Christ. But they do not understand why he died. They do not understand why he suffered. They do not understand why God is in the Bible saying that Jesus Christ came to die for us.

They don't realize. They don't know. They don't realize that he paid their debt. They don't realize that he died so they could have a relationship with God.

They don't realize that he wants them to go on and not suffer and not hurt themselves and not seek their own righteousness. Please pray for us, for my wife and I, as we go to the country of Colombia to bring in the truth.

[ 11 : 33 ] Well, now that I'm good and red-faced, it is a wonderful privilege to be here with you all tonight. Turn to your Bibles, if you will, to the book of 1 Corinthians and chapter number 16. 1 Corinthians chapter number 16.

Of course, I am a missionary to India. The country of India is a place that really works in my heart, obviously, as it should. It's a place that I cannot think of and not think of the scriptures, especially of this passage.

1 Corinthians chapter 16 and verse 8. In verse 8 it says, But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost, for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

When Paul steps into this point, he's talking about his desire to go work with the Corinthians. He wants to spend time with them. He goes throughout this book wanting to share some gifts with them, wanting to share some time with them.

And as we read through the book of 1 Corinthians, we find out that they definitely needed some time with the Apostle Paul. They definitely needed some sorting out. But he says something here.

[ 12 : 32 ] He says that I need to stay at Ephesus. Now, Robert Canfield is a smart aleck, and he says that he uses the word tarry in a regular conversation. But most of us do not. That word simply means to wait.

That word means to stay. And I need to stay here. I've got things to do in Ephesus. I'm going to spend this time here. And he says it's because there's a door open to him. And he has three descriptions for this door.

First thing he says is that it's a great door. When he's describing this, he's not talking about the quality of it or how pretty it is or how much you'd want it on your house. He's talking about the size of it. We know from history that the city of Ephesus was a massive port city.

That it was somewhere that Paul would not only have been able to affect Asia Minor and the people, but he would have been able to affect the entire world from where he was. The country of India has 1.2 billion people in it.

The city of Delhi alone has 25 million people in it. To put that into context, that's four times the population of the United States in a place about the third the size of that.

[ 13 : 34 ] And then it's the population of Georgia, South Carolina, my hometown, state, and North Carolina all combined. In a place about the size of New Hampshire and Vermont put together.

It is a gigantic place. These are numbers that are beyond our conceiving, beyond our understanding. What's even more crazy is the fact that in somewhere like Podunk, Picken, South Carolina, there are 98 independent Baptist churches.

That's not counting everybody else. And yet in the whole country of India, there's about 12 million people. That's a broad estimate. And that's a big estimate of people that claim to know the name of Christ.

About 12 million people. That's about half the size of Delhi. But most of the people in Delhi wouldn't know. It's about 1% of the people who know anything about Jesus Christ.

Beyond what you saw with the videos that Eric was able to show. Secondly, Paul says it's an effectual door. The great door speaks to its size. The effectual door speaks to the fact that if I can get through this door, something will happen.

[ 14 : 43 ] Now Paul, of course, we see that he had a wonderful time working with the brethren there. We see that he had a ministry there. We see that he spent three years there in his ministry. So he had a great time. The country of India is an effectual door.

Now you might say there's only 12 million people there who claim to be saved. Don't sound real effectual to me. Well, let's take a step back into the religions of India. The primary religion would be Hinduism.

And Hinduism follows two basic tenets. The idea of karma and the idea of reincarnation. Karma is basically everything you do, good or bad, adjust everything.

Basically, it changes how your life will be. And reincarnation is a magical reset button. So that you hit the end of your life and you get to start all over. But these are religions that really put people shackled in death.

They are people who, they are religions that hold them down. That lock them into this. That reincarnation holds them in this continuous cycle. That they're terrified of the next move in their life. They're terrified of the next change in their life.

[ 15 : 45 ] They're terrified of everything that might go on next. And they live this life. And so at the end of their lives, they do take their bodies to the Ganges. They burn them.

It takes about 1,400 pounds of wood to burn up a body. But that's okay. If we burn you far enough along, maybe the gods will accept that. And maybe you'll be able to be saved.

And maybe you'll be able to be free from the cycle of reincarnation. So we'll chuck your body in just as far along as we can get it. And of course because we worship this river as well. Because we worship everything.

We drink this water. We bathe in this water. And because it's a third world country, raw sewage runs into it as well. We find a people who are enveloped in darkness.

If there are a people that dwell in the valley of the shadow of death. As Isaiah 9.2 tells us, it is the people of India. But we find that they that dwell in the valley of the shadow of death.

[ 16 : 43 ] A great light is shined in unto them. And when the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ shines in unto the people of India. It will change their lives. It does show them their need.

We see men like Das. We see men like Udum. We see men like Suresh. Who God has worked in their lives. He's shown. He's directed. He's changed the way they think. And you'll see multitudes of people who the word of God can work effectively in their lives.

Finally, we see that it's an open door. Now the country of India, we have to be somewhat creative to get in. Can't go directly as a missionary. They get real suspicious of that. So instead you go as a teacher or I have a wonderful 10-year tourist visa.

If you'd like to come to India, I'd suggest you start with that way. It takes about a day to get done if you do your paperwork and your money right. And I suggest you all come to India, please. But getting into the front door is that part of it.

On the inside, you find the people who are opening, who are open, who are welcoming. You find the people who truly, they're starved for the truth.

[ 17 : 48 ] You find the people who they're, and I couldn't imagine it until I saw it myself. There are temples on every street. Every house nearly has an altar in it. Places of worship just litter the area.

I mean, in South American countries, you'll see icons set up. And you see the same thing in India. You see a people who are consumed by their religion. And they are consumed by what they see.

It's an open door. Because there's really, there's nothing else there. There's nothing else that will change their lives. There's nothing else that will save them. They have the prophet Muhammad.

He came there about a thousand years ago. They've had fights back and forth with them. They have Sikhs who will teach them that there is one God, but not the God they're looking for. They have the Hindu gods that basically keep them shackled in their demon worship.

Finally, Paul says this. He says, I have this door set before me. He says, it's great. It's effective. It's open. But he says there are many adversaries. There's a multitude of adversaries.

[ 18 : 51 ] We see Paul had a multitude of them in Ephesus. And we have a multitude of them on our own. We have, but I break it down to three because it's easiest. We have the world, the flesh, and the devil that are enemies. The world, on the end of India, the government doesn't really care for us being there that much.

World religions have never liked us being around. We as Christians have got to live in the sunlight for about 300 years, and now suddenly they don't like us very much, and we don't understand why. It's because they never have.

World religions don't want us there. The flesh doesn't want us there. Here's a little side note. It gets really hot in India. I found out from Eric that thankfully there is a winter.

Not that long. It does get nice and cool. But the highs they had back in May were 125. At 125, guess what happens? The road melts. And in case you hadn't noticed, I am not a man built for 125 degree weather.

So the literal flesh fights against the idea of India. Fear works in my heart. Fear works in all of our hearts if we want to do something for God.

[ 19 : 59 ] Every time we step out to do something for God, there's fear. There's the fact that we're scared. And to be honest, there are people who are scared of India. I thought it was pretty neat, but to be honest, there is that level of just trepidation.

That level of fear. That level of terror. And finally, we have the devil. And the devil just works mainly to feed the first two. He wants the world to hate our guts because he knows that if we get in there, the world will not be able to stop people from hearing the gospel.

Will not be able to stop people from getting saved. Will not be able to stop the word of God from changing their lives. And he works on this because if he can keep us defeated, if he can keep us undermined, if he can keep us weak, nothing will happen.

But there's a beautiful truth. See, my God and your God, I certainly hope, opens doors that cannot be shut. He shuts doors that cannot be opened.

And he has overcome all of our adversaries. He has overcome the world because he is the God of the world. When Christ was offered the kingdoms of the world by the devil, he was offered nothing that wasn't already his.

[ 21 : 05 ] When he was offered, and he's overcome our flesh. The beauty of the gospel is that it's not just the fact that we're saved eternally, but it's that we're saved now. That we no longer have to be shackled by the sin, the flesh, and the fear.

If God has not given us the spirit of fear, but God has given us power and love and a sound mind. And finally, the devil.

Well, I've read the end of the book. I've read Revelation chapter 20 and verse 10. And the beauty of it is that that old serpent, that old devil, the accuser of the brethren, the one who really, really, really wants us to fail, he's living on borrowed time.

And there's a wonderful truth that there are doors open to us. There are doors open in India, and there are doors open in your life. What must be done is not that we trust the God of heaven.

That's what we must do. And we just simply walk through those doors. Thank you. It is a joy and a delight to be a Vision Baptist Church. I love our church. It's a blessing.

[ 22 : 08 ] Thank you, preacher. You know, missions conference is about you and I doing what Jesus told the disciples to do. He said, lift up your eyes and look on the fields.

And that's what this is all about, is for us to lift up our eyes and to see a world that is perishing. And when these brothers get up and preach, I mean, I want to surrender to go to Indonesia.

But a couple minutes later, I want to go to Colombia. And then I want to go to India. Hush. Now, I've got a problem in that we're accustomed to the idea of saying, I want to look overseas and hear about this country far away.

Well, I want to talk to you about a mission field that isn't far away at all. It's in Alpharetta. It's in coming. It's in Atlanta. But I think it's just as invisible as those other ones.

Because all around us here in this city, there are 120,000 Jewish people living in the Atlanta area. And by the way, we are right in the middle of where the Jewish people live.

[ 23 : 17 ] Okay? They're all around us, but we don't see them. They're invisible. How many of you have ever seen Fiddler on the Roof? Okay. Yeah. Okay. Good. I love Fiddler on the Roof.

When I was in high school, our high school put it on. I love it. And there was this chubby guy named Tevye. And I kind of relate to him. And but he, anybody remember the big word he always said?

Tradition. Right. I can't sing. But tradition. And the whole point of it was that everything in our life, it is because of our tradition. And you watch the movie and it's so poignant and it's so cute and it's so attractive and you think that's just wonderful.

And it's not. It's not. I watched the movie and I thought it was wonderful. I moved to Israel and I saw the truth. Open your Bibles, please, to Matthew 15.

Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees. Matthew 15, 1. Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why did the disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?

[ 24 : 26 ] For they wash out their hands when they eat bread. The Pharisees came to Jesus and they said, What is wrong with you? Your disciples are breaking the traditions.

It's a horrible thing to do. Jesus' answer is incredibly apt. And he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your traditions?

You have exalted your traditions high above the heavens to the place where the word of God is now lower than your traditions. You hold your traditions higher than the word of God.

Now, that's what he said to them that day. Today, this morning, we were doing outreach down in Brookhaven in the city. Tomorrow is the start of Rosh Hashanah, Jewish New Year's.

And so we were handing out the Rosh Hashanah tracts that we made for this event. And we were giving them out. And most of the Jewish people received them gladly and thanked us, some of them repeatedly for coming.

[ 25 : 28 ] But there was one lady who took it and she didn't like it. And she left and she went home and came back. And she grabbed a hold of me and gave it to me for about 20 minutes.

I am deeply offended by this. Tears running down her face. You are disrespecting my religion. You cannot do this. And I said to her, ma'am, we are not trying to dis...

We love the Jewish people. We love you. Please don't take this as a sign of disrespect. And she said, all you're doing is trying to promote your church. And I said, no, ma'am, we're not trying to promote our church.

What we're trying to do is Jewish people don't know what their own Jewish Old Testament, the Jewish Tanakh. That's what they call Old Testament.

They don't know what the Tanakh says about the Jewish Messiah. We want you to see what it says about your Messiah. And she said, you're just talking about the way you understand the scriptures.

[ 26 : 34 ] It's not the way we understand them. And I said, ma'am, if I could open your Jewish Tanakh, your Bible, and show you that it describes in perfect, absolutely clear detail that Jesus is the Messiah, would you believe?

And she said, no. Stop and think about that for a minute. If I could show you from your Bible, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Jesus is the Messiah, would you believe in him?

Absolutely not. See, the Bible, for her, is not the authority. The tradition, it's the same thing as we read in Matthew 15.

By their traditions, they have thrown down the Bible. This people lives among us. And they're lost. Do not believe that because they're Jewish, they're saved.

They're lost. They have rejected Messiah. You say, why have they rejected? Because their leaders have led them astray. And they live lives. They live a religion that is ruled by iron, cold, dead tradition.

[ 27 : 50 ] And mostly, nobody is going to tell them. I have a friend here in Atlanta who called me two weeks ago. And he said, Sam.

I said, what? He said, there's this Jewish guy. I have this activity I do with these two Jewish guys on a regular basis. And I've been praying for these guys. And I've been trying to get to the gospel to them.

And last night, one of them came to me and told me that he had gotten saved. Praise the Lord. You know, in spite of that tradition, Romans 11, 5 says, even so that at this present time also, there is a remnant.

God is saving Jewish souls. And, folks, the only way, the only way the Jewish people of Atlanta are going to get the gospel is if you and I together will take the gospel to those Jewish people.

That's right. So the other night, you heard a little bit about things like the culture in China, shopping, food, and some things about the religion there. But tonight, I want to let you all see a little bit about the ministry in China and what God gave me the opportunity to see done and what he used me there just in the short time that I had to spend.

[ 29 : 05 ] This video that we're about to watch follows the story of a young man named Alex. And it just kind of follows the choices that he had in life and different directions that he could have gone, but what our God is doing in China.

And it just kind of follows the story of a young man named Alex.

And it just kind of follows the story of a young man named Alex.

The story of a young man named Alex. The story of another ■ is that he meets the story of a young man named Alex. He looks and he makes the story of a young man named Alex.

And he uses a larger body of a young man named Alexsemza. And he sees a new brands, and it just kind of follows the story of a young man named Alex. And he looks back to you by the Luego of the■■■■ bi■■. And he looks forward to us and is a HARR■. And he's like, look, your wisdom, erodes of the life, Hin Praise helicopter, inεævad that I have to run for...

[ 30 : 47 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 33 : 17 ] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. You're welcome.

[ 36 : 09 ] college students. So we're standing outside his dorm. It's about to be time for him to go inside. But I can just, I just know that, I just know he is so close to accepting the gospel. I mean, I can just see it as he's reading the word. He's understanding the truth. And I'm doing everything I can just to make sure he understands what salvation by grace through faith is.

And at that night, he put his trust in Christ. And I was walking back to my apartment. It was late at night. The city streets were all dark. As I'm walking back, my phone lights up and buzzes.

And he sends me this text message. He says, so now I am a Christian. Thank you. I have been waiting for this moment for a long time. And you know, there are Alex's all over Indonesia, all over Colombia, all over India, and all over Atlanta. People who are waiting for the truth. And as Vision Baptist Church, you have given, you have given of your money, you have given of your people. And because of that, that story plays. And as Vision Baptist Church, you continue, you continue to give, you continue to go, and you continue to change lives. So I thank you so much for that.

Well, it's powerful, wasn't it? I'll tell you right now, this has been some great service tonight. And it's not because of the special singing or the men that got up and testified. It's because of God being in hearts tonight in a special way. And boy, it's just been an honor for me to be here all week, these last few nights. But especially tonight, it's just been something. And I appreciate God's blessing and allowed me the privilege to be here with you and the invitation to come. And everything has been done for me and Karen since we've been here to every meal, every kindness that you've shown us. It's just been, it's been pretty special and we sure appreciate it. And I appreciate God's blessing to us. Turn with me in the book of, to the book of Nehemiah. I love, I love the study of the book of Nehemiah and what a, what a man of God Nehemiah was. And we looked at Jeremiah for two nights and we talked about his enablement. We talked about his engagement. But tonight, we're going to look at this man, Nehemiah, for just a little bit. And we'll, we'll sit down, we'll go home. But I just feel some things on my heart tonight, I would like to share with you. Nehemiah chapter number one, we'll just read a few verses of scripture in chapter number one that we have here. But if you are, let's say, let's say you're eight years old and under. If you're eight years old, would you stand tonight? Eight years old. And brother John, do not stand, okay, wherever you are. You're not eight years old. Eight years old. Can you stand for me? Everybody that's eight, seven, six, five, right along there. Four, three. All right. Did you know what you can do? Eight years old, seven years old, six years old.

Did you know that you can touch people that this old ball-headed guy could never touch? You can reach people that this old guy could never reach. Six, seven, eight, nine. Our, our grandson Noah, I was telling somebody this evening, Noah loves to give out tracks. And, and Noah, of course, there, he was born in Africa. And I tell everybody, he's our Afro-American. And his name is Noah. And he looked like a little donut for a long time. Now he's a slim, trim fellow of about, almost 14 years old. But when he was eight or nine years old, he was giving out tracks. And, and there was a man took the track. And they stopped him. He was mowing grass. He took the track from Noah, threw it on the ground and started his lawnmower up and mowed over it. Um, he's had people fuss at him, a little kid, but you know what? I asked Noah one day when he was about eight or nine years old, I said, Noah, I said, you want to be a missionary when you grow up? You know what Noah told me? Noah said, Papa, I am a missionary. Ah, I like it. Amen.

[ 40 : 20 ] If you're eight, nine, seven, six, five, you know what? You can be a missionary. God wants to use you. Now, how many of you are here tonight? 12 years old, 12, uh, 11, 10, nine, around that age. Stand up for me. Stand up. All right. Seven, eight, six, five, eight. All right. 12 years old this week.

No, no, no. Let me back up. Uh, in July, when we were, when our son Jason's family left, Luke, who's our 12 year old, he came to me with an envelope. And he said, he said, Papa, I want you to be sure to put this in the offering. They were leaving to go out West to visit churches.

And we were going to stay behind and, and take care of their church. And so he handed me this envelope. I forgot about it. I just laid it in the office, forgot all about it until the week before they came back. And I saw it laying there. I said, Oh my goodness, he's going to kill me. I got the envelope that he had handed me and I looked on it. You know what this was? This was Luke Hamby's faith promise for the entire month of August. Can I tell you what you can do kids? You can give to missions. It wasn't a gazillion dollars, you know, like an adult could give, but it was something. And so let me challenge you young folks. Give, give your life, give your heart. Can I challenge you to not do something for the Lord? Because there's somebody in heaven that's watching everything you do. And I'm telling you, he takes count of all of it. And you're laying up eternal treasures in heaven and how richly God will bless you. Please be seated. Now I'm not going to ask this. I'm not, I'm going to ask the question, but how many of you don't have very much money? Don't stand, don't raise your hand because that'll be everybody standing up. Many years ago, I was in Arequipa preaching, teaching in the, in the school there. And I was invited by a fellow by the name of Ronald Tobias to go to his church.

And brother Ronald had a church that was in one of the poorest sections of Arequipa. When we drove up, I think it was Chris drove me over there that night by the grace of God, we arrived safely and arrived back home. It was only by the grace of God. And so when we got there, we go in and here's this little tiny building that is maybe the size of this part from right back there this way, just a little bitty tiny building made out of these big lava block. And so I preached and, and Chris translated.

And after the service, you know what they did for this, this American, that church of poor, poor, poor people took up an offering for me. I have been all over the world, third world countries all over, never have I ever had a church like that church take up an offering for me. I'll tell you my heart, man, even tonight I'm on. So I, it wasn't much, but you know what they did? I think of Mary, she did what she could. I like, you know what? I like when they were, they were condemning Mary and she'd, she had broken the alabaster box of ointment and, and the disciples were getting onto her. Oh man, can I tell you the Lord stood up and he said, leave her alone. I like it when he gets on somebody's case for me, leave her alone for she had done what she could. And so I, I got to thinking about that money and I, and Jason at that time was in Africa. They were trying to build a building in Ivory Coast.

[ 43 : 43 ] And, and I asked, I asked brother Ronald if I could take that money and invest that money in a church in Africa for them. And so we got back to the States. I, I, I gave it, put it, gave it at the mission for Jason to be put into his account, to be used for his building in Africa. And the next time I go back to I get to keep, I get to go back to Ronald's church. I want you to know, I don't go back to a little bitty tiny building. I go back to a place that is massive. Let me tell you, you cannot out give God.

You, you do what you can. Ooh, God will do the rest. If we'll just be willing to do what we can. And the problem with me, with Dean Hamby, I don't know about you all, but the problem with me is I don't even want to do what I can do. But if I will just turn loose and let him, I'm telling you, he can do so much more. So it doesn't matter how old or how young, how rich or how poor. It doesn't matter who we are. It doesn't matter our language, our station in life. God just wants us to do what we can and let him do the rest. And so I, I hope you're willing to do that. I hope you are doing that. And it is tough.

It's scary sometimes. It's scary all the time usually, but God will richly bless us if we do. So that brings us to our thought in the book of Nehemiah. And let's just read a couple of verses of scripture. Let's just look at verses one, two, and three. It says the words of Nehemiah, the son of Hekeliah, and it came to pass in the month Chislew in the 20th year, as I was in Shushan the palace, that Hanani, one of my brethren came, he and certain men of Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity and concerning Jerusalem.

And they said unto me, the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. You see the problem? You see the plight? Well, God's going to do something because of what we just read. Let's pray. Father, we thank you tonight for what our ears have heard, and we thank you for what our eyes have seen tonight. And thank you, Father, for the good grace of God. Thank you for saving sinners. And Father, I thank you that we're able to be here tonight, and our hearts have already been stirred. I pray that we'll not leave tonight as we came, because if we do, we will have closed our heart to God and shot off our ears to the plight of this world and the pleas of men. Father, I pray that you'd help us tonight to be all you'd have us to be.

In Jesus' name we do pray. Amen and amen. Tonight I'd like to share with you just quickly three thoughts. Now we talked about Jeremiah, and Jeremiah was the pre-captivity, pre-exile prophet.

[ 46 : 33 ] He preached, and we know, of course, the people turned a deaf ear, and because they turned a deaf ear to the warnings of God's man, and the preaching, and the compassion of the man of God, of course, we know they went into captivity because of their sin, and they are there. Now, when we come to Nehemiah, Nehemiah is the post-exile. He is this man that is in captivity, but God is going to send him back, because it had been some hundred years or so since the 70 years had been over, and the Jews had been allowed to go back, and the temple had been built. But the problem was, the walls were still broken down, the gates were still burned with fire, the people were still in reproach, there was still a problem.

Now you think about it. The Lord Jesus Christ died 2,000 years ago. 2,000 years ago. Did you know there's a whole lot more people on planet earth tonight than there were when the Lord Jesus Christ died? The disciples did what they could. Men from Jerusalem, women from Jerusalem, from Antioch, and from Macedonia, Thessalonica, and all these places, they did what they could. But did you know there's more people that are lost and perishing tonight than there were back in the days of the Lord Jesus Christ? Can I tell you, it has been a long time since the day he died on the cross, shed his precious blood, was put in that borrowed tomb, and came forth raised from the dead. And can I tell you, there is still a plight. The walls are still broken down, and the gates are still burned with fire. And so we have this man, Nehemiah, and what a man of God. And if you want to understand about what I believe leadership is all about, you read the book of Nehemiah. So let me give you these three things, and we'll be done. Number one, this man, Nehemiah, was concerned about a people that he did not know. He didn't know these people. He was a Jew. They were Jews, but he didn't know these people.

I'm a human. They're humans. But you know what? Most of the people in this world, I do not know. When I think about what happened here, Nehemiah, I'm probably sure that because of his situation, because of where he was and who he was, I'm sure that this was probably not the first time that he had ever received visitors from Jerusalem. Most likely, there had been people coming and going back and forth, and he had probably on occasion, how's it going? How's it going? How's it going?

But you know what? He heard something that he had heard probably several times, but he never heard it like he did this time. Isn't it amazing that you can read a passage of Scripture, or you can hear a message, and you've heard it over and over and over and over again? Because you know what? We preach tonight. We preach the same thing that's been preached for hundreds of years. I have nothing new to tell. But isn't it amazing when God speaks through the message? Because it's not the messenger.

It's not me. It's not you. But it's the God of the message. And when God takes that message, and when he heard, and I believe that God, with the words that he heard, I believe that God painted in his heart a picture of the plight of the people of God. It wasn't, let me tell you, it wasn't the fact that the walls were broken down, and the gates were burned with fire. That wasn't the problem.

[ 49 : 42 ] The problem was what was going on around the walls that were broken down, and around the gates that were burned with fire. The problem was the people. Friends, tonight, it's not the poverty, though that is bad. It's not starvation, though that is terrible. The problem is people that are lost, and dying, and going to hell.

God is concerned about the lost souls of people. And so here's a man that had his life made. It was great. And now, all of a sudden, he hears something that he's probably heard before, but all of a sudden, it entered into his heart, and it brought about a thing called conviction. But can I tell you tonight, conviction is not enough. How many times have we sat in services, and we have been convicted over things that we have heard? Maybe even over things that we have seen, and nothing happened? You know what I believe here in these verses of Scripture, when you come on down through the chapter, I believe what the thing that made the difference in Nehemiah's life, like it's got to do in my life and your life, is there's got to be a conversion. Now, you know, and I know that for a lost person, a sinner who doesn't know Christ as Savior, there's got to be a conversion. There's got to be that transforming that makes that person, takes that person from being a sinner to being a child of God, a conversion.

That is the conversion for salvation. But can I tell you, for us who are saved tonight, you know what we need? We need the holy God of heaven to get a hold of our hearts through his word to do another conversion. And I call that the conversion for service. Because what the conversion that happened for salvation did, it dealt with the sin problem. What I believe the conversion that needs to happen in our life tonight as Christians is a thing that has to do with the selfish problem.

And we're converted from looking at me and all that I can gain and all that I can get, and all about me and all about me to them and they. The Lord Jesus, who could have come into this world and demanded everything, he could have demanded service from day one, to be born in the best palace, to be born with splendor and royalty, to have walked everywhere and been surrounded by glory. Can I tell you what he did? He came into this world not to be ministered to, but to minister. And so that is a selfless life.

So this man, his life was changed because God did something in his heart. I'm afraid many times, I'm afraid many times we don't allow God the time to work because of all of the distractions that come.

[ 52 : 19 ] All of a sudden, you know, a service like this, it won't be long. We're going to be going out the door and we're going to be distracted. We're going to get our minds off of the things that we have seen and heard tonight and distracted. As you come down through the end of chapter number one and you get in between chapter number one and chapter number two, there is a little tiny space. But can I tell you that space is full of a whole lot of things? And I believe it's in that little space of time, which it happened right then, where he had a secret meeting with God. Have you ever had a time where you just met with God? I mean, a time where you were just alone with him and allowed God to continue speaking and continue and continue dealing with your heart to show you, you know, here's what I want you to do. Here's what I want you to be and allow God to do that in your heart and in your life, a secret time in his life. And you know what he did? He surrendered all to the Lord.

He surrendered all. You know what happened? He became concerned about a people that he did not know. I dare say that Ed and his wife, they, they have met a few Chinese people. I'm not sure if Beth, if you've gotten to, where's Beth? Where'd you go? I don't know. She's here somewhere. There, there you are. I don't know if you've been to China or not. Okay. But there's a whole lot of Chinese folks that Ed doesn't know. He knows fewer than he does know in China. But I got to thinking about Mary Angela.

Is that right? Where is she? Oh, there you are. I want you to stand up, would you please? I love that outfit. You ladies, good night. Ed, you're just the, you're just the sideshow when it comes to these ladies. What? I'm telling you, the singing, I'm telling you, I'm just joking. The singing was just phenomenal. I didn't, phenomenal, whatever it is. I want you to look at her outfit.

She is wearing Columbia. Okay. She's wearing Columbia. Where's Jeff Bush's kids? And Jeff, you can stand up. Where's Jeff Bush and the kids? Oh, there you are. Where's your children? All right.

Come on. Don't be bashful. Okay. They're wearing what? What are they wearing? It's an American outfit. Okay. Sit down. I want you. I don't need you. Okay, brother Jeff, he's wearing Argentine. Oh, there you are. You're wearing what? Chinese? India. Oh, India. I don't know my countries. Okay. I've got others in the nursery. Okay. In the nursery. Stand up. Brother Sam, Wilson, stand up. Okay. Brother Sam was wearing that thing on his head a little while ago. He was wearing Israel. Okay. I'm wearing a thing called a boo-boo. You're wearing a thing from Burkina Faso.

[ 54 : 45 ] So this is from Ivory Coast. And what's your wife's name? Yeah, Elizabeth. We're wearing, oh my goodness. We're wearing different countries. But you know what? God doesn't want us to wear the country on the outside. God wants us to wear it on the inside. He wants us to wear Columbia in our hearts and Israel in our hearts and India in our hearts and Africa. He wants us to wear it on the inside. He wants us to become concerned about a people that we do not know. Because friend, unless we do that, we're never going to be motivated to do anything. You might be motivated by maybe some motivational speech to give a little bit, but it's over. But when God gets a hold of your motivator, boy, you just keep on giving. You just keep on giving. You just keep on giving. You'll keep on going. And you'll keep on staying and staying and staying and staying. So he was concerned about a people that did not know. Number two, he was committed to a job that he did not choose. When you read down the last part of verse number 11 of chapter number one says, for I was the king's cupbearer.

Do you know why he was a king's cupbearer? It is because he was born into slavery. He had no choice. When he was born into that family, he had no choice of the family. Isn't that sad? You know, many times you don't really have a choice about who your family is, you know. You can pick everything but your family, you know. He didn't have a choice. He was born a slave. He didn't have a choice. Didn't have a choice.

Can I tell you tonight, the day that you got saved by the grace of God, you're no longer your own, but you are bought with a price. He was born a slave. And because he was born a slave, he didn't have a choice as to what he would do. The king comes along and said, hey, you're going to be a, you're going to be my cupbearer. You remember the story of Esther? Now, we know the end of the story. She became queen, but she didn't know she was going to be queen. The king sent his men out to search out all the beautiful virgins of the land, and they come upon a lady by the name of Hadassah. Her name was Esther, and you're going to be, you're going to come to the palace. She didn't have a choice. Can I tell you, I like it when, when the Lord God of heaven walks up and down the pews, and God says, hey, you're going to be this, and you're going to be this, and you're going to be this. The problem is many times us Americans, we want to rebel. We want to say, no, I got my life.

I got my plan. I got my future, but can I tell you, we got to stop and remember, we were bought with a price. We are not our own. He bought us. He deserves everything that we are or ever hoped to be.

We are a slave, and so he had a job he didn't choose, so here's this man, and all of a sudden now, God says, I want you to go build a wall. Wait a second. He's not a wall builder. He's a cup bearer. I'm not an architect. I've never built a wall in my life. He had a dainty job, man. You work for the king. You're not going to have calluses on your hand. You're not going to have sweat running down your face unless you're afraid there's poison in the food, maybe. He had a cushy job, but God says, I'm going to take you out of this, and I'm going to put you where I can use you. Hey, he had a job he didn't choose, but you know what he did? Chapter number two, the king says, why are you sad? You know what is astounding to me in those passages of scripture in chapter number two? He had never been before time sad in his presence, never been sad in the presence of the king. Do you know what the Holy Spirit of God is doing as he's given this account of the book in the book of Nehemiah? He's giving an indictment, an indictment against the heart of Nehemiah. He'd never been before sad in his presence. Can I ask you a question tonight?

[ 58 : 35 ] God, have you ever shed one tear for anybody else? Have you ever been sad because there's somebody that's lost? Man, I saw some tears tonight. My heart was moved tonight.

This man had never been before sad in his presence, never one time. But can I tell you what had happened to him in chapter number one? Now he's standing before the king. And you know what?

It wasn't the next Sunday. It wasn't like, okay, we have the mission conference and it wasn't the next Wednesday, the next Sunday, or even the next five months later. Five months later. If I do a work in your heart, it may last five minutes, it may last five days, but five months later, he was still sad in the presence of the king. He could not hide on the outside what God had done on the inside.

And now God was going to choose him to do an impossible task, something that had not been able to be accomplished in 100 years. Now God was going to send him back to do. A man that was not equipped physically speaking for the job, mentally speaking for the job, but you know what? God chose him to do it. And because God chose him to do it, God was going to equip him to do it. I don't know what God has for you. I don't know where God would send you. I don't know what God has for your life. I kind of tell you, would you just do this for me? Would you just be open? Would you let God, you know, I'm so glad for the pictures that we have and for what God allows us to do and let us see and be able to enjoy and be able to be touched. But you know what? That's as far as it can go. God takes it and he puts it in our heart and God gives us something that will only be counted for time and for eternity.

Here's this man. He had a job. You know what I think about this man and what had happened to him? This man was able to do something, this job that God chose him to do. Let me just read you a verse of scripture that I think is pretty astounding. Look at verse number six of chapter number two.

[ 60 : 45 ] And the king said unto me, and the queen's also sitting beside, sitting by him, because he had just told the king that his city's in ruins, the city of his fathers, and that's why I'm sad. But he says, for how long shall thy journey be? And when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me, and I set him a time. Let me ask you a question. Why would this heathen king be willing to send Nehemiah on this trip? It wasn't going to be for a week or a month. He was going to be gone for 12 years, 12 years. Why would he do it? You know why? Because he was faithful in little things. Now this king that he was serving was a king that was not a sweet, oh, I love you so much kind of a king.

If he didn't like what you did, he'd just cut your head off. But he was faithful. You know what God recognizes tonight? God recognizes faithfulness. We have a lot of showmen. God just likes faithful.

God just likes faithful. There's a lot of people that as long as we're seeing and watching, they do, but as long as nobody's watching, they don't. But God watches. And this man was faithful. He trusted Nehemiah. He was trustworthy, so he sent him on his mission. And for 12 years, and you know what happened? Because he was faithful in little things, God said, you know what? I believe I can trust him for heavenly things. And he trusted him. And he sent him on his journey to do a great work for God. Let me tell you something that I love about this too. He was trusted by the authorities.

God used him. But I want you to notice something else. Look with me in chapter number two again. Begin reading with me in verse number 11. So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days. And I rose in the night, I, and some few men with me. And neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem. Neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. And I went out by night and by the gate of the valley. And let's go on and on and on. Look down at verse 16.

And the rulers knew not whether I went or what I did. Neither had as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the noble, excuse me, to the priest, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work. Would you know, I'm not going to take time to let you read all of them, but 11 times Nehemiah uses the word I in this portion of scripture. I came, I did, I did, I did, I did. I want you to look at verse number 17 now. Then said I unto them, you see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste and the gates thereof are burned with fire. Come. Now I want you to look at this now.

[ 63 : 16 ] Let us build up the wall of Jerusalem that we be no more a reproach. Then I told him of the hand of my God that was good upon me, as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work. Do you see something that happened from verse number 11, verse number 16, down to verse 17 and 18? The I was transformed into us and we. Us and we. I like that. I appreciate what Brother Austin said a little bit ago. No missionary that's sent out by Vision Baptist Church goes alone. If you go alone, you will die alone.

You will suffer alone. But I like it. Something happens when all of a sudden their reproach became his reproach. I like it when the missionary goes to the field and it's not no longer they and us.

Something happens when you get there. It's all of a sudden we. And we're working. We're laboring. Our suffering. Our reproach. Our work. And now we see that this man Nehemiah, his heart has been transformed because he had been given a task and all of a sudden he was committed to a job. He didn't choose and God caused him to like it. He caused him to like it. That's what God does. That's what God does.

Last of all, he had confidence in a God he had never seen. You know, I was just thinking of today, you know, Abraham appeared to, excuse me, God appeared to Abraham and he appeared to Moses and he appeared to Solomon and Samuel to Daniel. God appeared to Ezekiel. God appeared to a whole lot of people, but you don't find where God ever appeared to Nehemiah. Would you listen to me for just a second as I close? A lot of people will only want to serve God as if they can see some big something. That's when they, okay, if I, Lord, if you'll just do some big something, then I'll, then I'll serve you. He never saw some big something. He heard of a need and God worked in his heart.

That's it. There was no flash. There was no bang. He heard a need and God worked in his heart, but he had confidence in this God that he had never seen. And you know how it was when you look through here, everything was about God, God, God speaking, God's hand. It was all about God.

[ 65 : 44 ] And if we do anything for God, it will be because of God and God through us. But he had confidence in a God. I think about learning a language and going to a mission field, getting on an airplane. And we talked about that on yesterday, the fears that are there, they don't go away. I wish they would.

They don't go away. We don't know what's down around the next corner. We don't know what's going to come in our life. But can I tell you, God is able. We're in 2000 and what year? 2015. And God is able today to provide and do for us now as he ever was. The problem is not God. The problem is us.

Let's stop saying, until I see something big, would we just start believing in a big God that is able to do the impossible and just do what we know to do and be faithful in the little things and let God make our little things big things in his time. And I'm telling you, when we do that and we put our confidence in him and not us, amazing things will happen in our life. And we'll be able to look back and see a wall built. So what could not be accomplished in a hundred years, he was able to do it in 60 days.

Amazing. Because God did it. God used him because he had confidence in a God that he had never seen, but yet he believed him. He trusted him. So how about you tonight? Are you willing to dig deep in your pocket? Are you willing to give more than you've ever given before? You say, I can't afford it.

Can I tell you, we really cannot afford not to. We can't afford. Wouldn't it be a shame to the Lord to come back tonight and we've left all kinds of money in the bank and we could have given it to God?

[ 67 : 25 ] You say, I can't do anything. You can do something. You can do something. Are you willing to do something? Here's a man that had never had his hands dirty before. And all of a sudden he was in the midst of rubbish, rubble, filthy, clothes were nasty, stinky, smelly, hair matted. But you know what? He was exactly where God wanted him to be. The cushy job was over. The comforts of the palace was over.

And you know what? In spite of the rubbish and the stench of a place he had never seen before, he was right at home serving God in the security of God's will. Let's stand to our feet. Your preacher's coming tonight. If you have a need, if you're a, if you're a child tonight and you've never trusted God for anything, would you come tonight and say, Lord, here's my life. A teenager, you've never done anything for God. Would you come and say, Lord, here's my life. A grown up, an adult, you've never done anything for God. Would you come and say, Lord, here is my life. I want to do something until Jesus comes to make a difference until, until he comes so somebody can know about the saving grace of God.

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