



**VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH**  
**SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS**

# UNSTOPPABLE: God's Work in the World

**Now It's Your Turn – Acts 28:17–31**  
**Tim Badal | April 14, 2019**



Let's turn one last time to the book of Acts, chapter 28. This is Palm Sunday, when Jesus triumphantly entered the city of Jerusalem. It's also the start of Easter week, which we will celebrate with the rest of God's church."

This morning I want to bring our series to a close. We've invested a great amount of time in this book. For the last two school years, we've been on a journey to truly understand what God has for us as a church. That's true of every series we do. Every time we open God's Word, we want to hear from Him and know Him.

Our preaching and elder teams determined that we would study Acts because we want to be a church that is equipped to minister the way the people in Acts did. We want to be on mission for God and His kingdom, not only here, but all over the world. I'm very thankful to be part of a church that takes this call seriously and personally. I'm thankful we are sending people all over the world to share the good news of Jesus Christ because we believe in one truth, which is that the gospel is and always will be the only hope for the world. We have looked to a model like the book of Acts to ask, "How did God move in the hearts, minds and lives of people who were just like us, so that they would radically change their world with the gospel of Jesus Christ?"

I want you to know this series has included over 50 sermons. I was trying to figure out how many hours we have spent as a church, including the time we've spent in our small groups. It's a massive number. We've spent massive energy seeking to understand what God's will is for us in light of what we've learned in Acts. My greatest concern is that we will be hearers of the Word and not doers (James 1:22–25), that we'll leave this book and simply say, "Okay, we can cross that off our list of the Bible books we need to study." While we're to be commended for not allowing our itching ears to hear only what we want to hear but have devoted ourselves to studying and applying it to our lives, let us be challenged to realize it's not enough to say we've gone through the book of Acts. Rather, might we be able to honestly say, "I've been changed by the book of Acts. Because of this study, I've become more missional, more on fire for the Lord after seeing the examples of Paul, Peter, James, John and the early church." After all, the same Holy Spirit Who raised Christ from the dead, Who fell on the believers at Pentecost, Who empowered Paul through his journeys is the same Holy Spirit Who is alive and well in our lives. God wants to use us to change the world.

Today in Acts 28:17–31, we'll see the book end rather abruptly. We'll see that Paul made it to Rome after his arduous journey, then for two years he was able to hang out in Rome. We'll read about an experience he had with the Jewish leaders. Then while he was under house arrest, chained to a Roman soldier, God used him in a difficult circumstance. And then—that's it. We would like to have had a 29<sup>th</sup> chapter, so we would have the rest of the story. But the great historian Luke seems to imply that we ourselves are the rest of the story. We're the ones who are to take up the mantle and devote ourselves daily to the cause of Christ. Paul, Peter, James, John and the rest served their God and fulfilled their mission in their day. Now it's our day, our opportunity. Lest we think the mission is done, we need to remember that all we have studied is still an unfinished work. People are still lost and in need of a Savior.

Just as we saw in Acts 1–12 that the work was unfinished, we have seen in chapters 13–28 that it is an unstoppable work as well. As we take up the mantle of following Christ in our day, in our world and our communities, this should give us courage and confidence that God will meet us, and the unstoppable work will continue to change people's lives.

We've seen how the gospel has changed both the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak, those who are open to it and those who oppose it. Brothers and sisters, in this Easter week, we need to realize that just as the grave could not stop Jesus, the unbelieving world cannot stop His gospel today. We are the victors and we are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:31–39), because the Spirit that is in us is greater than the spirit that is in the world (1 John 4:1–4).

This means we have work to do, but our great joy is that we're entering into a victorious work that Jesus finished on the cross. We can be certain that when we step out in faith, God will meet us. He will not only change us; He will change the world around us. Now it's our turn. Will we take up the call? Will we take up our commission? Let's see how Paul finished his commission in Acts 28:17–31:

<sup>17</sup> After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. <sup>18</sup> When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. <sup>19</sup> But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar—though I had no charge to bring against my nation. <sup>20</sup> For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain." <sup>21</sup> And they said to him, "We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. <sup>22</sup> But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against."

<sup>23</sup> When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. <sup>24</sup> And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. <sup>25</sup> And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet:

<sup>26</sup> "Go to this people, and say,  
"You will indeed hear but never understand,  
and you will indeed see but never perceive."

<sup>27</sup> For this people's heart has grown dull,  
and with their ears they can barely hear,  
and their eyes they have closed;  
lest they should see with their eyes  
and hear with their ears  
and understand with their heart  
and turn, and I would heal them.'

<sup>28</sup> Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen."

<sup>30</sup> He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, <sup>31</sup> proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

We have an opportunity, a mission, because we're living in a time that needs the gospel. For 28 chapters we have seen people who have taken the calling and commission of Christ seriously in their world, seeing how they changed that world. So these are the questions for us this morning:

- What keeps us from serving God in this way?
- What keeps us from being bold?
- What keeps us thinking about what goes on inside our church, rather than thinking about what goes on outside?
- Why aren't we changing our world?

Before I get to our outline, I want to give you four reasons why, when it's our turn, we fail to take up the challenge. First, we have fear. While we face only a fraction of the persecution experienced in the early church, many of us live in fear of some sort of reprisal we might encounter. Maybe we'll lose some popularity. Maybe we'll be overlooked for a promotion at work. It might impact our standing in our community. Or maybe we're afraid someone will hurt us in some way, although that seems out of the norm here in America.

There are other fears that keep us from embracing our calling. We may be afraid we won't know what to say or we won't be able to answer questions. When we read Acts and think, "Wow, what they did was great, but I could never do that today," for many of us it's because of fear.

The second thing that keeps us back is our lack of faith. Maybe you aren't taking on God's mission because you're struggling with faith. "Is God going to meet me when I need Him most? I see how God was with Peter and Paul and the other apostles, but when I need Him, I'm not sure I believe He'll be with me." Do we believe that He who began a good work in us will be faithful to see it to completion (Philippians 1:6)? Some of you are in the middle of a storm this morning and you may be wondering if God has forgotten or abandoned you. This lack of faith can cause us to pull back from doing what God has called us to be a part of.

For others, the thing that keeps them from their calling is, thirdly, frustration. You've been serving God for a long time and you're to be commended for that. But as you are honoring God and ministering in His name, you've encountered trouble. Or maybe you're becoming tired of being rejected. You pray, then you determine to step out with confidence to hand an invitation card to someone. But then that person looks at you and says, "Why would you think I would want to go to your church? What makes you think I need Jesus?" Your frustration might lead you to decide it's not worth it.

Or perhaps you've been sharing your faith in your family and now you're coming up on another Easter holiday. Again, you want to be light in the dining room, but you are likely to be rejected one more time—and you've just grown frustrated. "I don't have the energy anymore to deal with that kind of rejection." Maybe that describes some of you.

Are you not engaged in the mission because of fear, lack of faith, or frustration?

Finally, you might simply be dealing with fatigue. There might have been a time when you were on fire for the Lord; you served and honored Him. God might even have met you and shown you great things. You might be looking back at the "good old days of youth group," or the "good old days right after you were saved." You served Him then. But you're thinking, "Right now I'm really tired; maybe someone else can take over and I can step off the stage. Let the young people do it. Let the pastors and elders do it." Perhaps you're looking at the calling of Christ, and like the old adage says, "The juice isn't worth the squeeze." You aren't getting what you want out of it.

For you, is it fear, a lack of faith, frustration, or fatigue? Whatever it is this morning, I want you to know there's no better place on earth to be than on a mission for God. It's there where we experience His presence, His peace, and His joy. It's where we experience what it means to be truly alive in Christ. God said He has fashioned us to be His ambassadors to proclaim the good news of Christ. What's holding us back?

As we see in our text, nothing held Paul back. The book of Acts finishes with Paul still on mission for God. If we want to be anything like the early church, if we want to see the kind of inroads into the world they made, there are some things we must allow as part of our lives. I have five closing thoughts I want to give you based on our text and this long series we've gone through together.

## **As we embark on this unfinished and unstoppable mission, remember to trust God's sovereignty.**

First, our mission will be successful as we learn to trust God's sovereignty. Acts 28:16 tells us when Paul came into Rome, he was allowed to stay by himself with a soldier to guard him. Then after three days, he called together the local Jewish leaders. *"Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans."*

Paul's journey started long before his arrival in Jerusalem. It began on the road to Damascus, where he was heading to persecute Jewish believers. But here, he was telling these leaders about the journey he took as a Roman prisoner from Jerusalem to Rome. We might think he was simply explaining how he got to where he was. But in that phrase he used—*"I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans"*—there is a spiritual truth. Essentially, he was saying it was neither the Jews nor the Romans who were responsible for his journey, nor was it his own decision. Rather, it was God Who ordained where he was taken.

Back in Acts 23, Paul was imprisoned in Jerusalem because a mob there did not want him to preach the gospel. They sent him to trial with the hope that the Romans would put him to death. But we read in Acts 23:11 that one night while he was in prison, Jesus appeared to him with a promise. "You aren't going to rot in this prison or die at the hands of these leaders. Rather, you're going to be My witness in Rome. There's a tomorrow for you in Rome."

God was giving Paul not only his starting point, but his ending point and that was all Paul needed to know. As we've read through the chronicles of that journey, we've seen that it was not a smooth one. There were many ups and downs—the good, the bad, and the ugly. But Paul faced all those challenges with confidence that God was going to be faithful to His promise.

That's what you and I must understand as well. If we're to go on mission for God, the only way we won't be overwhelmed or fearful or try to manipulate our circumstances is to realize that the God Who called us is faithful to see us to the end of His mission. We need to be thankful that Luke recorded for us in detail the account of Paul's safe arrival in Rome. He was brought there with enough energy and ability to fulfill his mission in Rome. But remember, he had been beaten up, he was exhausted, and he had experienced great stress on the journey.

We should never listen to those TV preachers who tell us if we are serving Christ, everything will go well for us. We'll be healthy, wealthy and wise. Paul wouldn't confirm that at all. He was depleted in every way, including financially. Yet God met him at every turn and provided the help he needed to accomplish the mission.

When we can trust the sovereignty of God—when we realize He is in control—we won't fret when difficulties come our way. We'll remember that Christ has called us to heaven, but along the way there will be difficulties. Yet the God Who reigns supreme over the universe reigns supreme over our lives as well.

Do you believe that this morning? Do you believe you serve the God Who controls the universe? Do you believe you serve the God Who holds the world in His hands? When we believe that, nothing that men can do to us will scare us or thwart us from obeying God's call in our lives. Do you trust in God's sovereignty? Do you believe God is delivering you—step by step, day by day—to the destination to which He's called you? We need to trust God's sovereignty.

## **As we embark on this unfinished and unstoppable mission, remember to embrace flexibility.**

The second thing we need to understand, if we're going to let the book of Acts guide us on our mission, is we need to embrace flexibility. Paul continued explaining his story to the Jewish leaders in Rome in Acts 28:18–20. Essentially he said, "I'm wearing this chain because I'm preaching Christ and the hope of Israel."

Luke gives us little pieces of information to help us picture what Paul was dealing with. Earlier in verse 16 we're told simply that Paul was living in a house with an imperial guard for a roommate. But now in verse 20 we realize he was actually chained to that guard. Luke's account of this arrangement is confirmed by Roman historians. Paul would eventually be thrown into a dungeon just before he was killed, but he wasn't there yet. At that point he went from "a chain" to "chains."

Imagine you're Paul. You're living in a house, which is better than a jail or a dungeon. Think about all you've done this morning. Now, think about doing it chained to somebody else. I'm talking about the daily necessities of life. You're going to need some flexibility, right? Right away, your dignity is gone. Right away, your privacy is gone. Right away, your ability to freely do what you want when you want is gone. Everything must be done with someone else there.

We do have some concept of house arrest. This week we saw Julian Assange being pulled out of house arrest from an embassy. For years he had been holed up there. He was able to watch TV, read newspapers and get on the internet, but he could never leave the house. You might have seen pictures of him looking out windows, dismayed that he couldn't go out into the world. But if he left the house, he would have been put in prison.

You might think Paul would have said, "I'm done. My ministry is done. My life is done." But he doesn't get depressed or lose his mind. Rather, he poured himself into ministry. The only way you and I can do that is if we're flexible. Some of us are so set in our ways that even if opportunities came, we wouldn't take them because they don't fit our schedule or life circumstance. God may be calling you to some great ministry, but you resist because it involves "those kinds of people." Or maybe you're turning away from ministry because it means you'll miss a sports event on Sunday. Perhaps it would mean you would have to give up some of your money.

As Christians, we're called to be flexible. The early church would never have accomplished what they did had they been inflexible. Paul said, "I desire to be all things to all people" (1 Corinthians 9:19–23). Talk about flexibility. Let me give you seven ways Paul was flexible.

1. Paul was willing to share the gospel with both the Jews and the Gentiles.
2. He was willing to do ministry in a given place for either a short or a long time. Sometimes he would be in a place for a day or two; other times it might be two to three years.
3. Paul served God when things were good and when things were bad. Sometimes he was free; other times he was in prison. Sometimes he shared Christ out on the streets, but he also shared Christ in the Philippian jail.
4. He was also flexible in how he presented Christ. We read today that he preached from morning until evening. That's my kind of preaching. Hours long—glory to God!
5. Then last week we saw how he showed the love of Christ, not through a long sermon, but through taking care of the tangible needs of others. His ministry was flexible.
6. Also, he was willing to preach both to those who were open to the gospel and those who were opposed to it.
7. Finally, he was willing to preach to both kings and slaves.

Can I ask you a question? Where's the line in your life where you'll tell God, "No"? If God were to tell you to go to a certain place to serve a certain people in a certain way, where would you draw the line? That's the place where you're not flexible. While it's fine to be inflexible if you're God, let me remind you on this snowy Palm Sunday morning, there is a God—and you and I are not Him. We are His subjects. When the God of the universe says, "Little man, little woman, you need to jump," our response should not be, "No, I don't think so, God." Our answer needs to be, "Yes, God, how high?" We need to be flexible enough to go where God wants us to go, to do what He wants us to do and to serve whomever He wants us to serve. We need to get rid of anything that brings rigidity and causes us to say, "No, God, I've got another idea." Whether in chains or free, Paul sought to serve God—and we should as well.

## **As we embark on this unfinished and unstoppable mission, remember to pursue spiritual vitality.**

In Acts 28:23–28, a day was appointed when a large number of Jewish leaders would come to Paul:

From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet:

'Go to this people, and say, You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive. For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'"

Paul was calling these Jewish leaders—and calling us—to pursue spiritual vitality. He says, "There is life to be had." Being on mission isn't just "do, do, do." It is to experience and to be something. God doesn't have us just as little worker bees out doing His tasks. We're not His "minions," if you will, solely to accomplish what He's asked of us. No, as followers of Jesus Christ, we are His workmanship, created in Christ to do good works (Ephesians 2:8–10). As we serve and honor Him with our deeds, God is pouring into us His love, grace and mercy. Because of that, we get to experience joy and the satisfaction of knowing our God, with Whom we were created to have a relationship.

Vitality is seen in our text in a couple ways. First, we will only find vitality when we understand the Kingdom of God. Paul was "testifying to the Kingdom of God." What is that Kingdom? Jesus spoke of it when He taught us how to pray. He said, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:5–15).

The Kingdom of God is God bringing heaven to earth. Heaven was brought to earth in the Garden of Eden to Adam and Eve. But they fell, choosing rebellion over righteousness. Because of that, paradise was lost. But God did not leave us there. He told them in Genesis 3, "I will not leave you in your sin, but I will bring an offspring of the woman who will crush the serpent's head, even though the serpent will nip at His feet." From the beginning, God promised to bring heaven to earth. The prophets foretold this; the patriarchs hoped for it. And on that great and glorious day in Bethlehem, God came near. He took on flesh and made His dwelling among us, and we have experienced the glory of the one and only God. Jesus brought the Kingdom of heaven to earth.

What did we do? We esteemed Him not. We didn't believe Him. Worse, we mocked and scorned Him, then we put Him on the cross, calling Him a criminal. God could have said, "All right, you blew it in the Garden and now you've blown it again. It's all over." But instead, God promised that after Jesus died, He would be raised from the dead, and in His resurrection is the inauguration of the

Kingdom of God. Now the Kingdom of God is being manifested little by little, day after day. There will be a time of God's choosing when He will bring all things under His feet.

What does that mean for us? If you and I want to be on mission for God and experience the vitality of living for Him, we must live as citizens of heaven, not citizens of earth. You might say, "Wait a minute, Tim. I've never been to heaven; I only live here. How do I do that?" You do it by doing what Jesus said in the Lord's Prayer, by asking God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. God's will is perfectly done in heaven. We're asking for the Kingdom of God to be made manifest in our lives, so that when God calls us to do something, we do it. When God calls us to live a certain way, we live that way. Why? Because we want heaven on earth. We want to experience the fullness of what it means to have paradise regained and experience true fellowship with God. How do we do this?

Notice what Paul did. It says he expounded upon the Scriptures. He tried to convince these Jewish leaders Who Jesus was, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets. It was the Old Testament; the only Scriptures Paul would have had at the time. This tells us that vitality is found as we search the Scriptures to know the good and pleasing will of God.

Are you experiencing the vitality of being on mission for God? If your answer is no, it's not God's fault—it's yours. The reason might be that you've not devoted yourself to the study of the Scriptures so that you may be fed by them. Notice Paul's excitement. We're told he did this from morning till dark. Do you have enough knowledge of the Scriptures that you could devote that kind of time to the articulation of its truth? If not, there's work to be done. Know the Scriptures. Understand the Scriptures.

I have a second question. There are a lot of you who have grown up in the church and who know the Bible backwards and forwards. Do you have this kind of excitement, that you would want to devote a whole day to talking about spiritual things? How do we get there? Paul used a passage from Isaiah about which I could talk for some time. I could speak of the connection between the Jews, the Gentiles and the whole plan of God, but I'll leave that for you to study on your own.

We need to note that God breaks people down into two groups. When the Word is preached, there are two responses. Either you close your ears or you listen. Either you close your eyes to the Word or you open your eyes to it. Are you dulling yourself from the things of God, or are you looking forward with great anticipation to what God will teach you through His Word? That is where we'll find true vitality in the faith.

I want to read a prayer I wrote in my notes that might help you understand how I'm working through this:

"I am saddened as a pastor more and more when I see Christians proclaim that they have been changed in great and awesome ways, even more ways than that of Christ such as by a new exercise or diet plan or some new way of living. They announce with great excitement how a particular product has changed their lives. Don't get me wrong. Many of these things no doubt bring great good, and for that we should be happy.

"But what I am jealous for is the passion of Christians who seemingly have a passion for everything else instead of God. Why is it, God, that Your people will get up early to work out, to fix their bodies, but not get up and do devotions to fix their spirits? Why is it, God, that Your people will save up for a new iPhone, but won't sacrifice to give to God's work? Why is it, God, that we will sit with rapt attention to watch a new Avenger movie, but we are bored when people talk about God and His Word?

"Let it never be said, God, that Your people here at Village missed out on God's mission because we have grown bored or dulled by Your things. You have shown us what it means to love You with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. You gave us an example in Paul, who loved the things of God far more than the things of this world, and because of it, he was able to share the good news of Christ more than he could ever imagine."

Are you dulled by the things of God this morning? If so, then never expect God to do anything great through you, because your eyes, your heart, and your passions are for things other than Him. Paul shows us what it means to pursue spiritual vitality and we need to lean into that.

## **As we embark on this unfinished and unstoppable mission, remember to seize opportunities.**

In Acts 28:30–31, we're told that Paul lived two whole years at his own expense. He had his own house; he was a tentmaker, so he made tents in his home and sold them. It also says he welcomed all who would come, and He proclaimed the Kingdom of God, teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Paul was contained by house arrest. You and I would have given him a pass, saying that because of his arrest, he could just sit around and pray. We wouldn't expect him to do anything more. But wherever Paul found himself, he was doing something as he told the Ephesian church. Near the end of his letter to them, he admonished them to be *"making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil"* (Ephesians 5:16 NIV). Paul was telling them, "There's work to be done."

In our world, there are always opportunities. Maybe you feel as though you've been silenced in your workplace or silenced by the culture. Maybe your life circumstances have caused you to think there are no good opportunities. Maybe because you're older and your energy is low, you might think you have no place to serve. But Paul was in a house under house arrest, chained to a Roman guard. He had no privacy, no opportunity to do what he wanted to when he chose to. But he seized the opportunity God placed before him. What situation did he make the most of? Go quickly to Philippians 1. This is another of Paul's prison epistles, written during the Acts 28 season of his life. What was Paul doing while he was under house arrest, chained to an armed guard? He was finding joy in the middle of a hard circumstance. He wrote in Philippians 1:12, *"I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel."* In other words, he had found opportunity there. What was it? Verses 13–14: *"It has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear."*

Paul could have complained about the man chained to him, talking about his lack of privacy and more. But instead, Paul realized, "I've got a captive audience. I'm going to tell him about Christ, and he can't go anywhere. He has to listen." So that's why he could write to the Philippian church that the whole imperial guard was aware of why he was in chains—because of Christ.

Who are you chained to that seems to be a problem, but to whom God has given you the unique opportunity to share the good news of Christ? Is it someone in your workplace or school? Is it someone in your community? Where has God locked you in, where it seems all hope is gone, but where you can seize the opportunity to serve and honor Christ?

Paul decided, "If I'm going to have a soldier strapped to me, I might as tell him how to be saved." That's what we need to do as well. We need to seize our opportunities, because God gives them to us every step of the way.

## **As we embark on this unfinished and unstoppable mission, remember to live for eternity.**

Our text here concludes in an odd way. It comes to an abrupt end. It doesn't resolve our questions. What happened to the church next? We have to look to other sources to answer that question. We do know that Jesus was right: He would build His church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it (Matthew 16:13–20). That was true in the first couple centuries and it's true even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Our second question would be what happened to Paul? All we know is he was under a relatively lenient house arrest for two years. From history and from his writings, we know his end was coming soon. During these two years he wrote four letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Then within a few years after Luke finished Acts, he was martyred for his faith. Acts 28:31 could serve as the inscription on his tombstone. Paul had served his generation; he had fought the good fight and he had finished the race (2 Timothy 4:7). He proclaimed the Kingdom of God without hindrance and with great boldness. Paul saw his life as nothing if it wasn't to be used for Christ. This was also true of the other people who served God about whom we've read in the book of Acts.

It's our turn now. Paul is no longer here. He did his duty, he died, and now he's in heaven. Now it is up to us. Will you faithfully give your life to Christ? Will you take up the mantle of God and His Kingdom, fully trusting that He is in control? Will you change your plans and dreams to follow the commands of Christ? Will you walk with Him as a priority and be on the lookout for opportunities to serve Him and share His gospel? When we are willing to put His Kingdom first and seek it first, then we will be blown away by

what God will do in and through us. What do you need to be building into your life right now so that your faith in Christ will be what people remember?

Luke's story of the early church is designed to give us 21<sup>st</sup>-century Christians insight into the power we have in the Holy Spirit, the hope we can have amidst storms, the peace and joy that is found as we come together as followers of Jesus Christ in the church to fulfill God's plan to bring all people to Him. God's plan is to bring Sugar Grove, the Fox Valley area, America, and the world to Jesus Christ, on their knees, for the glory of God. And He says that mission, that plan He has had since the foundation of the world, is unstoppable. The world cannot thwart it and God will be brought great glory when every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord. But until that day, you and I have been called. It's our turn to take the mission of the book of Acts, the mission of the gospel, to a lost world in need of a Savior.

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