

The Experience of Every Christian Life - Part 7

Trusting An Invincible Savior

Luke 13:31-33

Well you probably didn't come to church this morning thinking your Pastor would lead you to reminisce about those school yard fights when you were a kid. But they were something, weren't they? Think about those, the school yard fist fight. Nothing could draw the savages in your school together faster than the school yard brawl. Or even the hair pulling girl fights, do you remember those? It was like Romans rushing into the Coliseum to see lions feed on human beings, that people would cheer and would clap and they would chant and they would coach you. I mean you'd have an instant crowd to watch the fist fight on the playground. Lots of drama lots of anticipation lots of euphoria for the spectator. But not the participant, it's a whole different scene for you emotionally if you are a participant or if you are chosen to be a participant. If they look at you and say, "You're dead meat", particularly if it all arises at an inopportune time during the school day and you get chosen to meet at the flagpole after school. Remember that? Now if it was a real big fight it would be at the bike rack, at least in my school, after school. And if it was a fight to the death well then it would be at, we use to have a little park next to our school and you'd meet at the park after school. And then we knew it was out of the view of all the school employees and we figured that would be a real, now that would be a real brawl at the park after school. (01:58)

Now if you've never had someone say to you, you better take a different way home from school today because you know Bruiser is going to rearrange your face, well congratulations. I mean maybe you lived in a better neighborhood than I did or may be you were less controversial that I was. Congratulations, that's a good thing. But if you have had that experience of having someone stick their finger in your chest and say, "I'm going to; I'm going to pass your face in." If you've had that experience and then spent the rest of the afternoon in school just unable to think and with all the fear and trepidation of all that, well you're in good company. Not because your Pastor has experienced that, which I have, but because Jesus knows what that's like. Jesus has experienced that. He's been targeted as the person who people have promised to exercise violence against. And he responded in a way I would hope you expect Jesus to respond. You expect him to respond in an unfazed manner. I mean he's going to be brave, he's going to be bold, he's going to be undeterred by that, but if you don't understand why he responds the way that he does. If you envision him more like a superhero in a movie because he can take anyone on or he's bench pressed more than the next guy and he's, no one's a match for Jesus because he's definitely going to defeat them well then you've misunderstood why Jesus responds in the unfazed, determined, fearless way that he does and you'll be missing something about understanding who Christ is. More than that if you don't understand exactly the scene that we're going to look at today when Jesus is targeted as those that people want to kill you may miss entirely the kinds of effect that a passage like this should have on your daily life. You will live with a lot more fear and trepidation and uncertainly and anxiety than you should, than God would really want you to. (03:47)

So this morning as we continue our study through Luke 13 I want you to look at this passage, verses 31 through 33 a very short scene here in Luke chapter 13 and to recognize exactly what's being done here and what's the reaction of Christ. What's the reaction of Christ and why he responds the way that he does and make sure we don't miss the implications for our lives. So let's learn something about the character of Christ by the way he responds when it says in verse 31 that at that very hour some Pharisees came to him and said, now remember at that very hour it's important for us to look back where we've been. And you might remember he's just come off of a statement about the reality that there's going to be a lot of surprises on judgment day when there's a lot of people that would expect to be right there at the table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the prophets and they're going to be shut out while people that you wouldn't expect from the north and south and east and west, well they're going to be dining there with the VIPs of the Old Testament. And he says you know lots of surprises, first last, last first so don't expect that the people you would most expect to be there will be there. There will be some surprising turns of events in the kingdom. To which the people were most expected to be seated real close to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the prophets they spoke up and said, "Now it's time for you to move on Jesus." (04:59)

Now what we need to learn I suppose about this scene is as I've often told you that we move the ministry of Christ from Galilee in the northern part of Israel to the southern part and he's making his way to Jerusalem but this

particular scene is taking place apparently on what we would call the east side of the Jordan River, today is the kingdom of Jordan, and in the Old Testament and New Testament terms we call it Perea. So he is there under the purview of a man named Herod and he comes into the scene next when they say, "Listen time for you to go because, get away from here for Herod wants to kill you." Now if you read your Bible with any attentiveness at all you recognize there are many people called Herod who serve that role in the ruling class in the New Testament times. We meet Herod the Great in Matthew chapter 2, he's called Herod the Great not because he's a great man because he's great with power and authority and he sweeps in there through Bethlehem and has all the infants killed. Remember that? So Herod has already tried to kill Jesus as an infant but this is not that Herod. This is the Herod which your Bible should say somewhere in the notes there, it should clarify for you, this is Herod Antipas. Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great and he's got a lot of half brothers and he's got some nephews that end up playing important roles in the book of Acts. But what's going on here is Jesus is getting a threat from Herod Antipas which was the very man who had John the Baptist beheaded and that effected Jesus greatly. And he had a lot to say about that. So here's a man that's already proven he would kill the prophets of God and he gets word through the Pharisees as he's teaching here in Perea, and he says, "You better get out of here, Herod - in the reign and area of Perea - he wants you dead and he wants to kill you so it's time for you to move on from our area." (06:40)

Verse 32, and he said to them, "Go tell that fox", which by the way speaking of Junior High this is not a statement about his appearance you understand that, right? Fox. And this is not even a statement about his cunning or his slyness or something about how crafty he is, that's how we like to use and enlist that metaphor of fox, but if you look at the word fox through the Hebraic idioms of the Old Testament and the analogies of the Old Testament you'll find this is usually a nuisance. An animal that comes in and slips in to say your vineyard as it says in the Old Testament and he starts eating your food and doing things that, it's kind of the rat who sneaks in uninvited to mess things up for you. And so I guess to put it in New York terms, I mean you go tell that dirty rat, it's a way to put it I suppose I don't want to take too much liberty with the text but there's the idea. You tell that rat, it's an insulting way to characterize Herod Antipas. But you tell him this, 'Behold, I cast out demons, where? Right here where I'm working and I perform cures today and tomorrow. I'm not going anywhere. And then the third day I finish my course and that course is going to take me out of this area into Jerusalem proper but nevertheless I must go on my way. Verse 33, today and tomorrow and the following day for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem. So I am heading to Jerusalem as he says in the next verse, verse 34, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent by it. (08:02)

Now we know that he's going to die in Jerusalem, he knew according to chapter 9 that he was going to be lead to Jerusalem. He turned his face toward Jerusalem and he was going there and as we quoted last week in Matthew it makes it very clear I'm going to Jerusalem because the Chief Priests and the scribes are going to turn themselves against me I'm going to suffer many things at their hands and I'm going to die and that was the very beginning of his ministry. I didn't come to be served I came to serve and give my life as a ransom. In the words of John the Baptist who was beheaded by Herod Antipas here's the Lamb of God, he's going to die like a sacrifice and he's going to pay for the sins of the world. That picture of Christ's death was not in question for Jesus and when he's told to split and get out of here. He says listen I'm going to do what I'm doing and I'm not afraid of you and I'm not going to be deterred by you and my plans are not going to be thwarted by you and today I've stuff to do and tomorrow I have stuff to do, proverbially speaking and the third day I'm going to finish my course and you're not going to get in the way and thwart it or in anyway impede it. That's just what I'm going to do, so I'm going to go about by work today, tomorrow following day it cannot be that I can die anywhere else but Jerusalem that's the plan and that's what I'm going to carry out. (09:13)

Now again if you expect him to say these kinds of things because you think he's a superhero on a tarmac of an airport and no one is going to beat him up because he's a strong guy, you miss the point. He says this and it very true as I like to jot down in the first point that nothing will defeat his plans. (09:31)

1. Realize Nothing Defeats Christ's Plans

You need to realize that, nothing can defect Jesus' plans. Christ's plans will not be impeded by anyone. But you need to know it's not because he is a really brave person, a really courageous person, a really strong person not humanly speaking. Matters of fact here's what I'd like you to write down once you get that point written down, I'd like you to write this down. Jesus is sovereign, there's the biblical word of it. There's the theological category for it. He's sovereign. Now if you want a definition of sovereignty I don't want to make you write too much but here's a



biblical definition of sovereignty. Sovereignty, divine sovereignty, not some kind of human monarchical sovereignty, but divine sovereignty when I speak of the triune God being sovereign I mean this. That God retains all rights, he has all rights, every other right that's ever given is given by him, every other right that you might have is derived, it is not inherent. He has and retains inherently all rights and he exercises supreme and ultimate authority over all things and everyone. Divine sovereignty, God retains all rights and exercises supreme and ultimate authority over all things and all persons, everyone. That's what we're talking about when we talk about the sovereignty of Christ. It's not that I'm not going to be afraid of a guy who killed John the Baptist, I will be okay, I'm shrewd, I'm careful, I'm thoughtful, I'm sly, I'm more sly. That's not what's happening in this passage. This is a statement about the purpose of God that is lived out through the Son. And you need to understand this, jot this one down if you would, Hebrews chapter 1 verse 3. (11:12)

Hebrews chapter 1 verse 3. It says this about the Son, the Son, Christ, is the radiance of the glory of God, the weightiness, the majesty, the greatness of God. He is the radiance of the glory of God, you can see the glory of God in Christ. He is the exact imprint of his nature. Whatever you can say is true about the sovereignty of the Father you can say is true about the sovereignty of the Son. And here's the next line, he upholds all things by the word of his power. That would be the next thing you need to understand. If you're going to understand sovereignty you're going to understand why he's sovereign. He's not sovereign just because he's got good plans and he makes good plans. His sovereignty extends over all things and all people. His management, his authority and if he plans to do something he will accomplish it. Here's why, because he upholds everything by the word of his power. Let's put it this way, Jesus is sovereign because he's omnipotent. That's a good way to put it. (12:07)

Jesus is sovereign that's what he is by nature but he's sovereign and he can back that up because he possesses all power. He has authority to uphold all things to redirect all things to change anything he wants because he has authority over every molecule of the universe. That's the teaching of the Bible, because we believe that about the Father. It says this to put it in the common verse you might remember, Colossians chapter 2 verse 9. In him, in Christ, the whole fullness of deity dwells in bodily form. So the great power of the Father exists here in the second person of the Godhead in the Son, now when the Son was here in his earthly ministry he proved that to us over and over and over again. That he has sovereign rights and exercises oversight over all things and all people. There's not a molecule in the universe including all the synapse in the brain of Herod Antipas, every muscle fiber, his tongue that flaps in his mouth to speak words, all of that is under the direct sovereign control of Jesus Christ. And he directs those molecules and he manages those molecules and he may allow some things in the derivation or the committing and the giving of authority but he retains the rights on everything. And therefore he directs it all. (13:32)

Now some of the things he did to prove that for instance when he was on the boat there on the Sea of Galilee. Now think about this, we studied this in Luke, he's on the Sea of Galilee and there's a great storm. And in that great storm they were a little freaked out that they were going to perish. They cried out to Christ, "We're perishing, we're perishing. Don't you care that we're perishing?" Now Jesus had a plan, a sovereign plan, and the sovereign plan was he was going to die in Jerusalem as the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world. He was not going to drown in a boating accident on the Sea of Galilee, but they were afraid of that. We're all going to die. And Jesus says, "Oh you of little faith if you don't understand my sovereignty, my sovereignty here's the first pillar of it is propped up here by my omnipotence, I have all power, let me show you my power, you of little faith and let me demonstrate it." And he stands up and he rebukes the wind and the waves and suddenly there was a great calm. Now that's what I call a GT1 miracle, in other words this is a God-Thing intervening in space and time and exercising sovereign control over the molecules of the world. Now it's not like he's predicting the storm is going to break soon, as a matter of fact the storm is going to break now and things start to break. Now there are waves crashing over the bow of the boat but the Bible says suddenly there was a great calm. He now takes the laws of buoyancy much like when he walked on water and he said, waves, waves, wind, wind, [poof] with a word. That's why they marveled and they were amazed, here's how the text reads, Luke chapter 8 verse 25, They were afraid they marveled and they said to one another, "Who then is this that he commands even the winds and the water and they obey him?" With a word the molecules respond. (15:16)

Now think about that, this is not like, hey Captain America no one is going to beat him up. He's not afraid, he ain't afraid of Herod Antipas I don't care who he's beat up in the past. No, that's not it. Here's the one that controls every atom, every lepton every electron of the universe. And he says I know the plan and the plan is I'm going to finish my course and my course is going to move through Perea, it's going to move through any jurisdiction that I plan and I'm going to get to Jerusalem and I'm going to die for the sins of the people. No, you're not going to kill me, you're



not going to thwart my plan and you're not going to impede my plan, you're not going to derail my plan, you're not going to defeat my plan, my plan I'm going to carry it out because I'm sovereign. I have complete managerial authority over every one and all things and you are not going to in any way mess up my plan. Why? Because I have all power. (16:07)

Secondly Christ is sovereign because he is, here's another omni word, omniscient. Think about that now. He's omniscient. The Bible says in the Old Testament about the Father, that the Father knows the end from the beginning. Let's just think about knowledge. You can't teach him anything, he's not surprised by anything, there's no bit of data, there's no information, there's no reality in all of existence that can impress him as wow, I didn't know that. Nothing. The end is known from the beginning. So time for him is not an issue. All things perceived at all times instantaneously at the same time with equal power if you want to be philosophical about it we have a Godhead that knows all things, you can't teach him anything, no surprises. (16:54)

Now Jesus tried to show that he knew that through out his ministry. He did all kinds of things that let people know he knows everything. I think of John 6 when it says there were some among them that did not believe Jesus and then John writes he knew from the beginning those who did not believe him. And he knew the one who would betray him. Now this is early in his ministry. And even that you can read kind of like a superhero and in this case a super insightful psychotherapist who looks around and "Nah I don't really think that faith is genuine." He's not a good reader of people's character. That's not what's being said here. He knew from the beginning the ones who would betray him, the ones who would not believe, he knew that. He knows it not because he's making estimations on what might happen. We're not open theists here if you know your theology. He's not a good guesser, he's the omniscient Godhead dwelling, the deity, the fullness of God, dwelling in human form. I mean there's no question about what he knows. And if you want proof on that I guess John 6 may not convince some people. How about this one? Jot this down Luke 22 verses 9 through 13. (18:00)

Luke 22:9-13, let me summarize that. They're about to have the Last Supper in the upper room. What upper room is that? Well he tells his disciples, go and prepare the Passover Feast so that we can eat it. And they said, "Where are we going to do that? We're traveling itinerant preachers, don't you know we don't have a place to have this meal, not for all 13 of us. Where are we going to do this?" And Jesus says this, "Behold when you enter the city you're going to see a man who is carrying a jar of water and he will meet you. And you will follow him into the house that he enters and when you follow him into that house I want you to talk to the master of that house and tell him this, 'The teacher says to you where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' And then he will show you up a stairway, up to a large upper room that is furnished and then I want you to go there and prepare it there." And they went and found – verse 13 says– just as exactly as he had told them. And they prepared the Passover. Heh, there's no other way to read that passage but to understand this. He knows exactly what's happening in that scene in the future before it ever happens. It's a man carrying a jar, he's a servant, he knows what's in the jar which the disciples wouldn't even know but I suppose for details sake its not olive oil, it's not wine, it's water. He's walking into a house and happens to have a master there when you follow the man with the water on his shoulder and he goes into that house he's going to have a master and you're going to say, "We want, the rabbi is going to come and have the Passover" And he's going to lead you up to an upper room up some stairs and you're going to see it all furnished there. You're going to have a table there and a place to eat and that's where I want you to do it. You tell him that and he's going to let you do that. Wow, it's like you're looking at some past recording of some events in history and seeing them as real and true and firm and confirmed and yet this is in the future and from our perspective you can't know any of that. (19:51)

Christ is sovereign, the incarnate deity because he's omniscient. Did he know he would die on a cross outside the gates of Jerusalem? Absolutely. Did he know there would be Roman soldiers that would beat his face and whip his back? Absolutely. Did he know that he would have to stand trial in some kangaroo court before Pilot? Absolutely. How about Caiaphas? Did he know he would be brought before Caiaphas and the High Priest and have to answer? Absolutely. He knew all of that. Herod Antipas was not going to kill him prematurely because he has all knowledge. Now we could estimate, we can guess, yes I can take him, I'll meet you at the bike racks after school, I'm going to win this fight. You can estimate a lot of things based on a lot of your past knowledge but you can't know the future. Jesus knows the future. So when he responds this way don't think he's just a real confident, kind of Clint Eastwood kind of character that walks in knows he's going to whip these boys. He didn't know that because he's guessing, he knows that because he's God. (20:55)

Well there's a third leg on this tripod that holds up the sovereignty claim of Christ. Retaining all rights, exercising supreme and ultimate authority over all things and all people. Why? Because he has all power he can uphold the universe with a word of his power, he knows all things so nothing is a surprise to him, he knows he's going to die in Jerusalem. Thirdly he is faithful let's put it that way. That might not be a powerful or potent word to you but think about that. There is no one faithful like God. God is a faithful God. When it comes to your life and my life our lives they ebb and flow we change and mature, if you want a kind of a stronger word for that, his faithfulness is an offshoot of his immutability. Immutability, he does not change. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. And when he makes a plan and he turns in Luke 9 and says, "I'm turning my face toward Jerusalem." When he says in Matthew I'm going to Jerusalem I'm going to suffer at the hands of the Chief Priests and the Scribes and the Pharisees and I'm going to die there and on the third day I'm going to rise again. That is a commitment to a plan, even if you want to think in terms of time that will always be accomplished because he never goes back on what he says. He is a faithful God because he's unchanging. (22:13)

Here's a passage right here because we're looking from the futures perspective at history, we know that's exactly what he does, he continues to cast out demons and perform cures. We're going to see it in the next chapter. He doesn't run for his life, he doesn't put his tail between his legs and run scampering away from Herod's jurisdiction. He didn't do any of that. He finishes his course. How about this statement? You want a statement that would be arrogant in the mouth of anybody but God? Here it is, Matthew chapter 24 verse 35. Matthew 24:35, let me quote it for you, Heaven and earth will pass away. That's a lot of things that seem pretty stable, going away. But my words will never pass away. I mean you've heard some pretty arrogant people speak in your past, think about that. You know what? Heaven and earth will pass away. But what I'm telling you, never pass away. Well maybe you'll change your mind. Never going to change my mind. Maybe you'll grow and mature and have a different view. Never going to have a different view. When I speak I'm faithful to my word. Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away. (23:15)

The Christ of the Bible is not some superhero. He is the sovereign king of the universe and when he sees a threat he's unfazed, not scared, determined, resolute. The fortitude of Christ is in place because he is God. That's what we'll see through out his ministry and we'll continue to see that through the rest of the Gospel of Luke. So I'm going to my way today, tomorrow and the following day and I'll end up in Jerusalem and I'm going to die there but not at your hand, not with your sword, not in that Jordanian prison that John was in when he was beheaded. Not that, realize nothing defeats Christ's plan and by the way let me read the rest of that verse I quoted for you in Hebrews chapter 1 verse 3, I only read half of the verse. Here's the second half, what was his purpose? What was his plan? What is the course? Well I've already hinted to it but here's the rest of the verse since I quoted the first part, I'll quote it again. He is the radiance of the glory of God. He is the exact imprint of his nature; he upholds all of the universe by the word of his power. Next sentence, middle of verse 3, after making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. So when did he finish his course? When the great high priest came on earth to be the sacrificial lamb when he was done then he sat down. On the cross he said, "It is finished." after he made purification for sin, that was his purpose. Sin problem solved it. Guilt, human guilt, lets atone for it. That was the purpose of Christ and when he says in the middle of verse 32, hey I'm going to cast out demons, perform cures today and tomorrow, third day finish my course. That's a great word, finish my course, I'm going to finish it. And when he finished it, what did he do? Well he cried out on the cross, tetelestai, it is finished, it's done, I've done my job. My job is to atone for human sin. To live human righteousness so it can be credited to you to take your sinful life and credit it to his cross and that transaction of his righteousness for your sin, that's the transaction that I've come to complete. And now looking back on it in space and time, we look at it and say he finished it. I mean it's just a few short chapters away when he dies on a cross and says, "It is finished." Well that has some implication for us. Allow me to state that in terms of transition to help you think through what we need to think about now in terms of what he was doing for us. (25:44)

Take a look at this verse 32, now this is subtle, pay attention this is important. You can look at this passage and think like so many have, very shallow, kind of a superficial view and you can say well here's a great thing, he's casting out demons. Demons are harassing people and he's freeing them from that, and they're sick and he's curing them and he's doing that today and tomorrow and then finish his course on the cross. And like a lot of people the John Wimbers of this life are going to say, "Wow look I want that to happen to me." Well, that's great; I mean that's good if you're sick to be healed. It's good if you're harassed by the enemy to be freed and protected all of that's great. But here's what we learn about that. Every time Jesus does it in the Bible, every single time Jesus does this in the pages of the gospel, we've studied it time after time and I've tried to remind you of this so that you don't think



superficially and shallow about these passages. That you don't think that's great I just want all of that in my life. Well, you may get some of that in your life but it's never a permanent reality this side of heaven, you understand that. Jesus does these and we've made this very clear as a sign, he does it as a sign of his credentials. Even when he does the most miraculous cure and Lazarus has been dead for days and he pops him out of the grave. His speech to his sisters is this. "Hey Mary and Martha, do you believe that I'm the resurrection and the life? Do you believe that if you trust in me, even if you die on the other side of that death you're going to live? I'm the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me even though he dies he's going to live. Trust in me. Do you believe this?" And then as credentials he says, let me take your dead brother here and pop him out of the grave. You know what happen to Lazarus that was resurrected? I've said this many times from this platform. I don't know how long it was, even though he was on the talk show circuit and everybody wanted to talk to him about being dead and now you're alive. Later he died. Dead just like every faith healer, they all die, every one of them. (27:44)

So what's that point? The point isn't that, look Jesus has got some more people to help, and that's what he came to do. That's credentials, look at my credentials. So that I can give you my ultimate help which is what? Finishing the course. What's the real course all about? Taking care of sin, atoning for sin, purifying sin so that when you die you're going to live on the other side of that, not in the kind of decrepit decaying body, the body that perishes in this life but the body that is resurrected like Christ's body impervious to all of that, a body without reference to sin and a place where he wipes away every tear. Where there's no crying no mourning no death. All of that's gone. First order of things done. The only way to be qualified for that is to have your sins atoned for. Even Satan if he is protecting people from the harassment of the devil every one of those demoniacs that was exorcised of their demons, you tell me did they ever have any problems again with the enemy? [blows raspberry], absolutely, he's a tempter, he's a slanderer, he's an accuser of the brothers, he comes to steal, kill and destroy. And every single one of those demoniacs that was freed from the harassment of demons, every single one was harassed again, maybe not to the same extent but certainly he has his ultimate way with them, as Hebrews says they all died. The ultimate work of the enemy. Now think about that, he comes to steal, kill and destroy and when it comes to these things the point is Jesus do those things to me, although we like that and nothing wrong with praying when you're sick for God to help you and heal you, that's great. But the real thing is for him to show his credentials and as we've said here's another aspect of it, give you a foretaste in a picture of what he's going to do for us eternally. And say now trust him, finish the course in trusting him. You recognize that the purpose of his ministry was to benefit you in a very specific way, let's jot it down that way, number 2; we need to be assured of God's purpose for you. (29:39)

2. Be Assured of God's Purpose For You

Which is not temporal relief. Be assured of God's purpose for you but it's a permanent relief, it's a permanent freeing from the enemy to where he is locked up in a place called the Lake of Fire where you're not locked up there with him. Where you're in a place that's free from his harassment where he's no longer able to mess with the brothers again in the terms of the book of Revelation. That's the place I want to be. I want to be at the table with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the Prophets sitting there in a feast in the kingdom of God. That's where I want to be away from the enemy's harassment forever. That's where I'm headed and when it comes to sin, I need the sin problem taken care of and you know what? That's the focus; let's call it this, redemption. When it comes to God's purpose for you it was to finish a course of redeeming you, buying you back from the enemy's work and from sins consequence to redeem you. I know you don't think of the word redeem in this way probably but if you were to study this word in the original language of the New Testament it's like begin extracted from something. It's like the Seal Team coming in and taking you out of a place where there's a lot of problems and judicially, forensically, legally, relationally God is plucking you out of that place. Redemption, that's the goal. (30:54)

And I need to say this, are you assured that his purpose in completing his task of dying on a cross for you, took you out of that, to put it in terms of the book of Romans, out of the slave market, redeeming you as a slave of sin and making you his own to where now you're a slave of Christ? That transaction, are you confident in that? Are you sure that he accomplished it and here's the thing, I know there's a lot of people hearing my voice right now I know you need to hear this because Satan's strategy to accuse you, to get you to be slandered in your own thinking as he slanders you to get you to think, well you know what I don't know if you really believe that you're forgiven but I just don't, I mean look at your life, look at what you did last month. I mean, I know that you love God and you kind of chosen to follow him, you've repented and all that, but I don't know, I mean when you die there's I mean, when you think about your demise you should doubt, I mean you should wonder like the rest of the world who crosses their fingers and hopes that they're going to make it, I mean it's kind of arrogant for you to be confident in this. I



mean Satan would love to get you there. (32:03)

But here's the thing, the Bible is very, very clear, he did something on the cross that for those who have responded to that, he has granted them some kind of judicial categorical forgiveness that will never be revoked and because he's sovereign, nothing you do can be a surprise to him. Remember we said that about him and Herod, think about him and his work in your life. Is he sovereign in your life? Is he ever surprised at what you did last month or next week? Never. Never. Is it somehow you've aligned yourself with Christ but somehow you're going to slip through his fingers because he's just not powerful enough to keep you? No, not going to happen. Is there any way that he can make a promise to you and say, "You know what? Believe in me, trust in me and even though you die yet shall you live." And say, "Well I kind of changed my mind on you. I'm not sure I'm going to keep that promise." No because he's faithful. His sovereignty toward his purpose in your life is upheld by the same tripod that we talked about in terms of his course. And that is that he's omnipotent, he's omniscient and he's faithful. That means this if you've responded to his call, and I know that you're going to say, "Well there's the rub, you know you can say he's faithful but I don't know if I'm really saved." Now let's just solve that right now. (33:21)

Really, think about that, John chapter 10 and I know I quote that often but in that great analogy of the good Shepard, I mean there's so many great nuggets in that chapter. But when he says, listen there are some of you who don't believe, it's much like John 6, and you don't hear my voice because you're not of my sheep, you're not of my flock, but those who are of my flock, here's the thing, I call out to them, they hear my voice, they know me, I know them, they follow me and I give them eternal life. Now here's the picture. Christ calls to them, they know his voice, they respond to his call, they follow him, there's the fruit of their faith, and he says I give them eternal life. Here's the rest of that verse, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. And he says if you're struggling with the cloaked humanity of deity as though you don't believe the reality of my full deity then here's the thing no one is stronger than the Father and no one is going to snatch them out of the Father's hand. What's the picture here? I know it's hard to believe that this man standing here in sandals and a robe is the omnipotent God; it takes the transfiguration to kind of peel the curtain back on that one. But as you sit there and look at me in my humble state just know this no one is going to take you out of the Father's hands. Omniscient, omnipotent, faithful. All you got to look at is have you had the call of God on your life? Have you felt that conviction to be drawn to Christ? Have you responded by faith and are you following him? Well, yeah it's imperfect, I understand that. Look at Peter's life. I mean look at so many people in the scripture, of course this is something that is going to, it's going to cause a great deal of, "Oh I don't know, I'm not perfect." Great, welcome to the club, who is? Now that's not an excuse for us to be lackadaisical or lazy about our sanctification. But you do understand that when Jesus says I'll give you eternal life and no one is going to snatch you out of my hand and you're not going to squirrel off some how off the table. You are his child. Well if that's the case you got a testimony, it's a real testimony of real response to the real conviction of Christ and you are following Christ? Well then stop sitting here saying God I don't know, not sure, I have a lot of doubts. Listen don't offend the divine attributes of the triune God by telling me you don't know. You better know, you better know as much as the disciples should know that Herod is not a threat to Jesus and his plan and purpose. He's got a purpose in your life. (35:47)

One passage on this, Romans chapter 8, turn to that passage, look it up, call it up on your device and take a look at Romans chapter 8, Romans 8. There is a picture here that utilizes some words that Peter used in his preaching in Acts chapter 2 when he talked about the death of Christ. To parallel the plan and course of Christ and his purpose in our life I love the connection of these words. The foreknowledge of God, it says in Acts chapter 2 as Peter was preaching, listen Christ was crucified according to the definite plan and the foreknowledge of God. So there was no messing with the plans of Christ, no one is going to impede it, no one is going to thwart it, no one is going to defeat it. He was going to die in Jerusalem exactly as was determined from eternity past according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. Now he takes that word, Paul does, and he uses it here regarding those that God has set forth a purpose in their life. You can glance at verse 28, called according to his purpose. Now verse 29, this is Romans chapter 8, Romans 8 talks about God's purpose and plan in our lives and he says this, verse 29, those whom he – there's our word – foreknew, this is an omniscient, omnipotent, faithful God, he also – now this is the decretive word this is a word of resolution – he predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. Not a weak reflection of but ultimately to be like Christ, we're going to be like him when we see him as he is. That's a picture of glorification which he is about to replace that image with that word in a second in verse 30. In order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers, that we would all look like him in terms of our glorified completed state when sin is completely eradicated from the picture. Therefore, verse 30, and those he's predestined, decretive plan, determinative decision about you, he foreknew you, he predestined you, now here's the word he's called you, much

like in John chapter 10, you've responded to that call, he then has justified you, he's declared you to be righteous, your sins are nailed to his cross, Christ's righteousness imputed to your life, God sees you in Christ now, and those he's called he's justified and those he's justified – now underline the word w-i-l-l – he will glorify. Is that what your translation says? If it does say that, return it to the bookstore for a free exchange that is not what it says here. And yet you know I just quoted 1 John chapter 3 that this is a future reality when I'm going to be like Christ, to be conformed completely in the image of the Son isn't going to happen until I see him face-to-face, that's not now, it's a future reality. But here it says those he justified he also glorified. Perfect tense, completed tense. Now how does that work? (38:36)

I'm not, you're right, I'm not. But to God, this God who is omniscient, omnipotent and faithful, he is sovereign, his sovereign plan will not be thwarted. Just like Jesus would respond with such confidence, listen I'm going to die in Jerusalem. A prophet can't die outside of Jerusalem, which of course is a poetic way to put it. It's killed so many of them, I'm going to be the ultimate one that dies there. I will finish my course, on the third day I finish my course. There's such a resolute, complete, absolute, confidence in that reality. And here it is too, listen if you've been foreknown, if you've been predestined, if you've been called, if you've been justified the reality of your glorification is as though it can be said in a grammatical completed tense. It's done, it's done. In God's mind it's done. (39:19)

So do I have a right to sit here and question whether or not, I don't know, I may surprise God. I don't know he may not keep his promise. I don't know may be I'll run away and slip out of his hands. God is all powerful, he's omniscient, he is faithful, he is sovereign and he is sovereign when it comes to him completing what he started in your life. Be assured of God's purpose for you. (39:43)

By the way as long as we're in Romans chapter 8 verses 29 and 30, I made you glance up at the last phrase there in verse 28 there, but we might as well read that whole thing because let's get, I mean we've been talking a lot about eschatology and end times and after this life is over, let's talk a little bit about next week. Let's talk about what's going to happen on Wednesday. Verse 28, and we know that for those who love God all things work together for – now here's a good word to underline – good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Do you see how this all this fits together? Called, justified, glorified, okay there's going to be a good that God works out? Yes, all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose. Now I know this is not explicit in this text but we were in the neighborhood, so let's fill it in here. The idea of that, his purpose for me is not only I gave you this title to redeem me and he's going to complete that and I can be assured of that, but here's the other thing, he is going to – instead of using the word good because people misunderstand that for you know boats in the harbor and expensive stuff in my life, that's not the good he has in view here – his good is for your life to glorify him, to use a biblical word, to make him look good even the things that you think well how can this be a part of God's good plan for me? It means you're going to be a kind of person who looks and says I know what God is working out in my life is for his glory. That's why the Westminster Catechism first question what is the chief end of man? It is to glorify God, that is your purpose. And as a Christian you've now have been associated with Christ he is going to do that in you. Even the twists and turns of your life, even the things that you look at I don't even know why that's there. Well Paul was a blasphemer and a persecutor of the church, how can that glorify God? Well, it was an example of Christ's perfect patience. Even his sin glorified God as mind blowing as that is, now think about that, there are things in life, even like Paul's imprisonment in Philippians chapter 1 he says this, even if I die in this prison I know this whether by life or by death Christ is going to be glorified in my body. That's what's going to happen, even if I die as a martyr this will serve to advance God's own glorification because I'm his and he's going to work out his purpose in me. Now how confident are you in that? With all the twists and turns of your life, I call them the left turns in life that you would never plan. That you say because I'm Christ's, because I'm his, because I follow him and I hear his voice, I know that the mess of my life is going to work to glorify him. And I know, it may not be the way I would planned it but I'm going to bring glory to God with my life and God is going to work that out. We need to be assured of that. (42:26)

We know that for those who love God all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose. Much more could be said about that, that's not just a trite thing to say when people are hurting, it's something to say to people sometimes wonder whether God's purpose will be fully worked out in our lives. Paul had it right, man. My eager expectation and hope is that I will not at all be put ashamed but I will have full courage that now as always Christ will be honored in my body whether by life or by death. You know the next verse, for me to live is Christ but to die is gain. There's both of them, he's going to redeem me, I know in the end I'm redeemed and



to live right now I'm going to live for Christ and God is going to make something good in his tapestry of glorifying himself in my lowly life whatever it might be, whatever twists and turns and weird contortions I might see in it that I would never plan. Be assured of God's purpose for you. (43:18)

Now you see in your worksheet I trust if you look at the third point that we're now going to get to, you'll look at the reference and say, "We're going to go through this passage again?" Well I just want to make a quick observation. Let's close this way. Christ had a mission and he's not going to be deterred by his fear or his intimidation by some obstacle or somebody named Herod Antipas, wasn't going to happen. He was fearless, he was determined, he was resolute. Now when it comes to our life, you're not the Son of God, I'm not the Son of God, we're not going to die outside the gates of Jerusalem to redeem anybody or atone for anybody's sin. But God has a purpose for us and we've hinted at that. It's to glorify him in our lives. It ultimately has us redeemed. Now there's nothing I can do about being redeemed, he's got that locked up through the work of Christ but when it comes to glorifying him I'm making decisions everyday in that regard so what I want to do is to purpose to do that. And I want to do it the way Christ purposed to do what his course was in his life. I want to do it, and here's the key word and it's already written for you there, number 3, fearlessly, I want to fearlessly pursue, now here's an important word, God's revealed will. (44:22)

3. Fearlessly Pursue God's Revealed Will

I know a lot of us can speculate with great imagination sometimes what his will is for our lives but let's just start with this. His revealed will for you, it's what the theologians like to call his perceptive will. What are the precepts that he written for us that we can say, well if I'm a man and I'm a Christian man well what's a Christian man suppose to be in a home? What's a Christian person suppose to be in the workplace? What's a Christian person suppose to be in the church? The precepts, the perceptive will of God, or some would even say the prescribed will of God. What did he prescribe for me to be? Or the written word of God. What did he tell us to do? This is the revealed, the prescribed, the declared, the perceptive will of God. We spend a lot of time trying to find out the mysterious hidden will of God but let's understand the Bible calls us to be certain in people. In this world, in our homes, and in the church and in the workplace that is very clear and spelled out for you and I'm just wondering how fearless you are about living that out in a world that seems to be pushing you back every single day. You've got your own Herod Antipas that like to strike fear in your heart and I want you to be as fearless and as bold as Christ was finishing his course because that's what the Bible calls us to do. (45:36)

1 John chapter 2 says if you abide in him you ought to walk as he walked. What does that mean? You ought to live your life the way that he did. Let me prove that to you. Turn to Hebrews chapter 12, Hebrews chapter 12. When you look at this text I hope what you see here is the clear implication of us taking this passage in Luke 13 and saying this is an example to me. How do I finish my course? Let's start in verse 1. Therefore, Hebrews 12:1, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of testifiers, of witnesses. When you look back at chapter 11 you see that great line of people flawed as they were living on the promises of God and following him without compromise, at least in a major macro sense. He says; let us lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely. Now I know that's a big word, sin, it can represent a lot of things. Here's some sins that you may not think are so bad but they're horrible when it comes to running our race, how about fear, anxiety, timidity, worry, cowardice, these are big sins in the Bible bigger than you and I think they are. There's a lot of sins you'd be embarrassed to tell your home fellowship group about but these are the acceptable sins, they're not acceptable. These are the sins we need to lay aside. We need to be ashamed of these. I mean the wicked they flee when no one pursues them but the righteous are suppose to be as bold as a lion. Well that would be easier if we were living the Christian life in the 1950s, you're not living the Christian life in the 1950s. God has called you to live the Christian life in this generation, in your family, in this society, in this culture, in this zip code so we're suppose to do it as bold people. And you need to lay aside the sin that clings so closely and let us run with endurance, hang in there, stick-to-it-tiveness. Don't stop the race that is set before us. (47:28)

Now I told you the race set before Christ is a little different than your race and my race but there's a principle to learn there. Looking to Jesus, you ought to look at him running his course. The founder and perfecter of our faith. Want to look at someone who trusted with this unswerving commitment to do what was right without any fear or intimidation or trepidation saying I'm going to finish the course? Well here's a great example over in Luke 13 and here he says this, listen let's run like he did, look to him, let him inspire you in this who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. Now think about that, the cross was set before him, but there's certainly nothing

joyful about that. What was joyful about the cross was doing what he was told and getting to the other side. Matters of fact the bottom of this verse says he's seated at the right hand of the throne of God. That's the joyful part, that's the part after the humiliation where he is seated there on the throne and he's given a name above every name, the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. That picture in Philippians 2 is on the other side of the cross. The cross before the crown. The crown was the joy to finish the race. So he set that in the far field and in the near field was the cross. Well what did he do with that? Well he endured it, endured the cross, now here's a great word, despising the shame. The cross was something he didn't want to do, that was a deep dark valley with some really dark shadows and he's said I'm going to despise it. Despise it, that's a great Greek word. New Testament written in Greek, very vivid language, a lot of compound words with prepositions, they always paint great pictures for us, kataphroneó, have I used that from the platform before? Kata, down, that's the preposition down. Phroneó, to think, ponder, to contemplate, to consider, to think down upon, to consider it low, to think less of it. He took the shame of the cross, hanging naked on a Roman execution rack, having been beaten by burly Roman soldiers, and he says, "I'm going to think down on that." And I'm going to look past that in the near field to the far field, the joy set before me in completing the race. (49:32)

Now consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself. Now clearly when you think of the cross you think of those burly soldiers, you think of the Cat o' nine tails, you think of the crown of thorns but that wasn't all. You can think here in Luke 13 of Herod Antipas saying, "I'm going to kill you." Instead of sitting there and shaking in his boots or his sandals like we would have in grade school he saying, "Fearless" Why? Because well, if you want to put it in human terms for us as human beings not as the deity and the Son of God, well, because he looked past all the shame, all the threats, all the violence, all the things that cause fear, all the things that can intimidate him, and he said, "I just want to finish the course. I don't care what it might cost me. I don't care what pain there might be involved in it." Now consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself. Why should I give that thought? Why should we have a sermon that ends on a third note that's all about following the pattern? Here's why, so that you may not grow weary or faint hearted. You've got a struggle against sin in your life. Be sure to go the distance. He says in your struggle against sin, verse 4, you haven't resisted to the point of shedding blood. Only in this case let's think of sins like this, compromise, being willing to conform to the world, being willing to shrug my shoulders, well yeah maybe I am on the wrong side of history, maybe it is outdated, maybe I shouldn't think this way. Listen that's sinful and when it comes to that struggle against that, the timidity the fear the anxiety, I'm not going to do that. I'm going to look at Christ who fearlessly endured opposition. And I'm going to fearlessly pursue God's revealed will in my life which is for me to be the kind of Christian that may be harder today than it was for our grandparents, perhaps it is, it certainly wasn't harder for a lot of first century Christians in Rome though. Let's do this without and fear, let's do this resolutely. (51:18)

So much good stuff there to ponder unfazed – I love that word – unfazed by the opposition and the pain. Was Paul like that? Absolutely. I love this verse, jot down the reference at least, Acts 20:24, Acts 20:24, he says I don't count my life as of any value, nor as precious to my self if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord. You got a job to do, if you're a parent, you're a Christian parent now, you're following Christ? You've heard his voice? Live that out, finish the course, do it the right way. Christian employee, Christian in the church, servant in the church, citizen of this government as an ex-pat heaven citizenship but you're here under this, hey do it, and do it in a way where it doesn't matter what it might cost you, but finish the course. Be that, set that joy before you, I can't wait to finish the course and to testify to the reality of our calling. (52:14)

Daniel, we quote this one all the time but, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, AKA Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, didn't care. When it came to the cost, oh I'm sure it cost them in their humanity some fear but in their spirit they said listen you can threaten us with the fiery furnace but God is able to keep us from that, but even if he doesn't, Daniel 3:18, let it be known to you, O Nebuchadnezzar, we're not going to bow down to your idols of gold. We're not going to do it. There's people that are willing, much like the people in Revelation that are cheered at the end of time. They overcame him, that's the devil, the adversary, he said why? By the blood of the lamb they were called, protected by Christ in terms of their relationship and by the word of their testimony. It wasn't going to shut them up because they did not love their lives even unto death. We've got to toughen up man. We really do think it's the lazy river, you know we just get in it and we're going to cruise through the Christian life. God has put us in a place where you're going to have Herod Antipas' and you need to fearlessly pursue the revealed will of God unfazed by opposition and pain. (53:25)

And you need to be tireless about it, look at verse 33. Nevertheless I must go on my way, this is Luke 13 printed on



your worksheet, today and tomorrow and the day following and I'm going to just do it. I'm going to go, I'm going to go on and do it. There's going to opposition. (53:41)

So the Rams are coming back to LA, I hear. Is that true? You don't care apparently, there's no response to that but they could get to town, they could start fighting for their fans here in So Cal and if they do and they go on their news conferences and say, "Well, we try but every time we try to advance the ball down the field those Cardinals they keep pushing us back. Every time we try to get a first down they try to stop us. Every time we try to move down the gridiron and make a touchdown they are constantly opposing us. So they're going to keep opposing us we're not going to try anymore. Go back to St. Louis man, I mean we don't want you then. Seriously what good are you? You're sissies, you're fools, you're idiots, you're losers, you're pansies, why? Because you don't understand the game of football I guess. The whole point is that you get success and score on the board when you push down the field with people trying to keep you from pushing down the field. That's the point, that's how the game works. This is not the lazy river Christianity, that's a false theology that does nothing but set people up for disappointment. You're called to be in a world that's going to press hard with lots of Herods pushing up against you. And you need to recognize the success of the Christian life is going to be with much opposition, but be tireless about it, be unfazed by opposition. Fulfill the will of God and for you. And you know more than the revealed will of God in the scripture don't you? There are things you put together in your life and you say, "Well, God's called me to this, God's called me to that." And you know what? We can't be as emphatic of knowing about those things as we can about the things written in the scripture but I mean we can have relative confidence. I have relative confidence that in my life God has gifted me to be a teacher and so I'm suppose to do that, so I need to do that. I can get tired of it, I can have a lot of opposition but I got to keep doing it. I've got to finish my course that God's called me to. And you've got to finish yours, you've got to be light and salt in this world wherever God has posted you and if you know you're in the right place then live that out to the end and do not be fazed by opposition or pain. Keep on going, tirelessly work at it. (55:54)

J Oswald Sanders, does that name mean anything to you? J Oswald Sanders? We often recommend one of his books, very popular, probably the most popular book he wrote, *Spiritual Leadership*. It's often on the back of the worksheet, not this week, but we talk about leadership issues it's just a great classic Christian book written in 1967 by J. Oswald Sanders. Which you may not know about J Oswald Sanders, is he wrote that book at age 65. Fifteen years after a bit of a crisis in his life, when he had such debilitating chronic arthritic pain throughout his body that he could hardly get out of his bed. Now he thought about retiring at that point and most people would look at his life and say, "Take it easy man." The reason they would say that was he was a very very successful lawyer and attorney, made plenty of money, he could easily retire and just you know chill out. But at age fifty he had a conviction that he wasn't running the race the way he ought to. He had a real interest in missions and supporting missions and eventually the China Inland Mission as it was called in that day called him up and said, "Listen we want you to be more involved in a place where he became the director of the China Inland Mission" at age 50. In great pain in his own life, leaving aside a lucrative career and he started working in that job and his wife died. I'm thinking at that point, I don't know may be it's time to slow down and chill out. I mean you're hurting, you're a widower, well he doesn't. He keeps going, he works and works and ends up becoming someone who gets the mission on track and he takes a job in New Zealand at the Bible Collage and he becomes the President and Director of the Bible College there. He remarries and it wasn't too long after that his second wife died. Wow, twice a widower. In chronic pain in his body and joints of his body, he didn't stop, he wrote books, lots of books. As a matter of fact the book that we know at age 65 he wrote, 1967 was one of 78 books he wrote the second half of his life. He kept on going as a two time widower and with great pain in his body and died at age 90 in the middle of his 79th book that he was writing, half way completed, having 300 speaking engagements per year on his calendar, traveling all over to preach the word of God. Here was a man if anyone exemplified one of my favorite verses in 1 Corinthians 15:58, who is steadfast and immovable, didn't let anything get in the way. Always abounding in the work of the Lord, as Paul said to the Corinthians, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. Talk about a guy who said you know what I don't care what kind of opposition I have in my body, in my health, in my life, in my mind, in my emotions, in the missions field, in the church and institutional higher Christian learning, I'm going to keep pushing. I'm going to run through the tape. I'm going to finish the race. (58:59)

I don't know what it is that invokes you to pull back or slow down but let this passage do a few things that we've studied this morning. Just three verses, but let it inspire you to the Christ we serve is not a superhero he is God incarnate. His purpose was to redeem you and glorify himself in your daily life, get to work that's no excuse for us to lay back and simply a prompting to remind us to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the



Lord, know that our work in the Lord is not in vain. You may not be called to be a missions organization leader or a Bible School president, I understand that, but what ever it is God has called you to do, do it, don't quit, be faithful, don't fear, fulfill your calling. Let's pray (59:44)

God help us in a day like this when it seems like the opposition ramps up more than it ever has before. To be like the Apostle Paul resolved and convinced that we will seek everyday to see Christ glorified in our bodies and our lives whether by life or death or much less than that, whether by good days, bad days, opposition, conflict, we're going to live for you, we're going to serve you in a world that desperately needs Christians to be Christ-like, so make us more like Christ as we seek to live as he lived. Dismiss us now God with a new resolute sense of boldness and courage to live in this dark world for Christ. In Jesus name we pray. Amen (1:00:27)