



Courageous Endurance – Part 8

The Work Yet to Be Done

Pastor Mike Fabarez

When I was a little kid and the adults came up to me and asked me, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" And then I always say, I may have mentioned this to you before, I wanted to be a Hollywood stuntman. I just thought you could roll around in the dirt, jump off a high, you know, rooftop, you know, rip your jeans, not get in trouble and get paid for it. I thought that's it. That's the ideal job for me. But the older I got things started to change. Actually, you may not know this, but in my early teens I was drafted to play on the Stanford basketball team. I actually wanted to go into the NBA. Stanford Junior High School in Long Beach. (audience laughing) And the week I thought I could maybe go into the NBA was the week between the time we got our uniforms where you'd stand in the mirror dressed in uniform thinking this looks great, I'm just made for the NBA, until our first game, our first real game.

Scrimmages, you know, can only go so far with your own team and then you meet the real competition and you realize how terrible we were. So the NBA aspiration went away pretty quick. But in high school, if you had asked me, "What do you want to do, you know, with your career? What do you want to do with your life?" I wanted to be, believe it or not an L.A. studio musician, that's what I wanted to be. That was my aspiration. And, you know, I had enough opportunity where I thought I was, you know, decent enough to maybe make it. And so I always had an answer. Every season of my childhood, I had some aspirations. And I never said to people when they said, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" I never said it, even at the youngest age, I never said whatever. I never said that. And I never said foolishly like, I just want to be everything. But you can't be everything, right? I mean, good and wise adults will tell a kid, well, you don't say whatever, because if you aim at nothing, you'll hit it every time and it'll be a waste of your life. Right? You just end up, you know, going wherever or if you say everything you can't do everything, you got pick something, pick something good and do something.

You know as Christians we have a Christian life and it wouldn't be bad for us to think about what we would like to be when we grow up spiritually. How would we like to be known? What would we like to do? Matter of fact, at your funeral we're going to see a little bit about how you did because people are going to talk about your life. They're going to talk about what kind of person you were, how you lived your Christian life. There's going to be certainly an evaluation here on earth and more importantly there will be an evaluation when God calls you to the Bema Seat and finds out what kind of person you were, particularly as it relates from your conversion till the time where he calls you home and there's going to be an evaluation of how well you did based on your priorities. You can't necessarily know like how God is going to use you in specific ways, but we better be able to aim at some general categories that exclude a lot of other things. And we start to really cement those categories in our mind they will determine how we spend our weeks and our months and our years. They will determine where we invest our time and our resources and our efforts and we better lock those in pretty clearly. We don't want immature goals. We want mature goals.



And as we got to the last verses in Acts 28 now verses 23 through the end of the book, verse 31, I certainly read and read and studied this section and I thought, well what does this do for us? And I thought to myself it really just brings together one more time the priorities of the Apostle Paul. And I look back at his life in the book and I look previous to his, you know, showtime in the book to Peter's and the early apostles, even back to the first chapter. And I think these things were reflected throughout the lives of the heroes of the book of Acts. And so as we come to the end of our long study of Acts, I thought what a great passage for us just to see things in Paul's life and say these are the things that we should all aspire to. Not specifically. You're not going to be a traveling apostle or missionary perhaps, but whatever it is that you're going to do, these four things certainly ought to be clearly in view, and they will start to determine how you spend your life. And frankly, at your funeral people are going to stand up and they will say things as it relates to where you spent and invested and prioritize your life. And I'd sure like them to say things like this.

Take a look at this text. We'll read from his last few recorded actions here in the book of Acts. You remember that he was in Rome now, after the long voyage across the Mediterranean, he's under house arrest and he's called the leaders of the Jewish people in the environs of Rome to come to his home and then he has this discussion. Take a look at it with me. Acts Chapter 28. We're going to study verses 23 through 31. 23 through 31. It says, "When they had appointed a day for him," they, of course, are these Jewish leaders, "for him," that's the apostle Paul. They're going to hear him out. "They came to him at his lodging in greater numbers." So we got a lot of people now who want to listen to him. "From morning till evening, he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets." Those were the two major sections of the Old Testament. Sometimes they add the words "the Psalms," like Jesus did in Luke 24, the end, the last chapter of Luke's first volume that we studied before we studied Acts, and the Psalms at the beginning book in the canon of the Old Testament, which it was often called the Writings. So the Law and the Prophets and the Writings. It's just a way to shorthand talk about the Old Testament written Bible that they used.

Verse 24. "Some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved." Right? They weren't buying it. "And disagreeing among themselves," what Paul had said had created a disagreement among them all, "they departed after Paul made one statement." What was the statement he made? He said, "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet," and here we come with a quotation, it comes right out of Isaiah Chapter 6 verses 9 and 10, where Isaiah was being commissioned to go and be a prophet. And what's interesting about this passage is that when Isaiah is starting his ministry, Jesus says this and it's not a good forecast of how his ministry is going to go. And here's what he quotes, Isaiah Chapter 6 verse 9.

And the Bible applies here to you as it relates to what you are doing in response to what I am saying. And that is, "Go to this people, and say," the Jewish people "'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." Well, that's interesting. Here is Isaiah going out in his ministry. And remember the whole passage, he sees God in this vision and God says, "Who's going to go for us" And Isaiah says, "Here I am! Send me." And he goes great. And he now is going to send him into a preaching ministry in the Old Testament and God says it's going to be really hard, a lot of people aren't going to listen to you. And that is the reality of any ministry of any spokesman for God in the Bible is that there are a lot of people who aren't going to listen to you and Paul quotes this passage.

Now, some of them are believing but most of them aren't. And because of that, it's like that passage. It's like Isaiah telling the truth and people reject it. So his response to them, verse 28, "Therefore, let it be known to you that this salvation of God," which they talked about all day long, "has been sent to the Gentiles." And of course, had they started with and I'm sure Paul mentioned it at some point, the Abrahamic Covenant recorded in Genesis 12 reiterated in 15, 17, 21. It goes on as a constant reminder that God is going to work for the good of the whole world through the nation of Israel. Abraham and his descendants were chosen so that God could send his Redeemer for the sins of the whole world as people from every tongue, tribe and nation are called to God and the redemption that's provided through the Jewish Messiah. And he says the leaders of the Jews in the most important city in the first century, at least governmentally speaking, the city of Rome, you guys are going to reject this? Well then just know this. This salvation I've been talking about, I know it's for you but you're rejecting it. It's going to go to the Gentiles. And I love these last three words, "They will listen."

Now, of course, that doesn't mean that every last Gentile is going to listen. But here we sit on the other side of the world 2,000 years later, and I'm looking at largely a bunch of Gentiles. We may have some ethnic Jews here. That's fantastic. But most of us here in the church are Gentile nations, were from Gentile groups. Gentile is simply the category of non-Jews. And we have a lot of non-Jews all over the world, all these countries, worshiping Jesus, looking to Jesus. And Paul says, you know what? This is what we're going to do. We're going to go and we're going to share this message to the Gentiles and they're going to listen. Not all of them, but many of them.

So "He lived," verse 30, "there two whole years at his own expense." Now, that little phrase, by the way, it means that he's in rented quarters. I don't think they're letting him out to go make tents during the day to pay the rent. I mean, maybe there's some of that. There's some confusion about that. But this particular line simply means these are rented quarters. He's under house arrest. And we already learned there's a stationed soldier right outside the door. But he's got freedom to have people come and go. And so he's welcoming them. He wants them in here, "Welcomed them all who came to him." And what was he doing when they came in? "Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and by God's grace and without hindrance," they were letting people come. Now, even reading that, I hope you say, okay, yeah, this is what Paul has been doing, he's been doing it on all of his missionary journeys, and now he's under house arrest for 24 months here in Rome and he continues to do it. Different environment, different place, same approach.



And what it starts with is the fact that he doesn't get isolated in the house arrest thinking finally, finally I can get to working on my hobbies, right? Or do you know what I really want? It is just some peace and quiet. I want to withdraw. I kind of want the monastery life of being kind of a monk who sits here and I can pray all day and I can just read about... No, he is all about the people. He's always about the people. There's one thing I hope at the end of your life they stand up and say at your funeral is that there are a lot of people testifying to how you invested and prioritized them.

Number one, if you're taking notes, this whole passage reminds me of what Paul has been doing from the beginning. And we need to, as we try to continue the task of the book of Acts, we need to keep prioritizing people. Number one on your outline, "Keep Prioritizing People." Keep it, keep it as a major priority because no one at your funeral is going to stand up and say, "You know what was great about this guy? I remember when he had like a 900-square foot studio apartment and then he got into that great house. He had 2,400 square feet. That's amazing." No one's going to care, right? No one's going to talk about that. "And you know what was really cool is how clean he kept his car." No, no. I mean, that's somebody who has nothing else to say, right? I mean, they're stretching. No one's going to say, "You know his index in his golf game got really low, it was awesome. You should have seen him hit the golf ball." I mean, really, I hope there are more important things to say about you at your funeral than what it was that you did in your hobbies or what kind of car you drove or what kind of jewelry you had or how cool your knives or your watches were. I'm just telling you, it's not what's important. The things that people are going to cry over are thinking about how you impacted their lives. If you want to go live in the desert and be a monk. No one's ever going to come to your funeral. What's going to matter at the end of time is your investment in people, your prioritization of people.

I know that we as Christians should be known for loving God and of course we should. But when Jesus was asked to give him the greatest commandment, that's a singular noun, the greatest commandment, Jesus couldn't answer singularly. Oh it is to, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind." That's great. But the second is like it and is just as important. It's right at the top because people who love God should be known for this and love "Your neighbor as yourself." See we need to love people because Jesus loved people and he says my people are going to love people. And every time we turn around, he says, if you know me, if you love me, you should care about people. And it really should determine what you're going to do on Tuesday morning or maybe Wednesday when you don't have to go into the office early or Thursday night. What you're going to do with your time, the expendable hours that you can spend how you want, you'd better look into your life and say what I want to be when I grow up as a Christian is someone who can look back and say, I invested in people. I made a difference in people's lives.

No one's going to stand up at your funeral and say, "You know, he streamed so much in Netflix. It's amazing how many shows he binged. He's great. He can recite the lines from all these shows." Nobody cares about your recreational or leisure activities. Do you need them? Sure. Do you need a vacation? Yes. It is nice to have a hobby, I guess if you got time for it, have a hobby. But you know what's really going to matter is the people that you invest your

life in. And you better say to yourself one of the goals that I'm going to have is the same goal Peter had, the same goal Paul had, the same goal Jesus had, and that is he invested in people. So much did Jesus invest in people that Mark even recorded that scene where Jesus was so just focused on serving people. "I didn't come to be served but to serve," and ultimately, "to give my life as a ransom for many." But as he was serving, he didn't have time to eat and his family came. His mother and his brother said this guy's gone crazy. He so prioritizing people that he has no time for himself. He needed to take a little break. He needed a little vacation. He was working too hard. And Jesus looked around and said, well, if that's what my mother and brothers are saying, let me tell you who my mother and brothers really are. Right? People here. People who are doing God's will. And apparently my mother and my brothers are not interested in God's will because God's will is always targeting people.

Turn with me to First John Chapter 2. I just want to drive this home because if you can remember this simple point, the book of Acts has been about God's heroes investing in people, going across the sea to minister to people, traversing the land and going through all the political problems that they encountered to get to people. Here he is arrested and he wants people coming day and night to his rented quarters, welcoming whoever would come. He was all about people. First John Chapter 2. I want you to look at this passage which may sound familiar. It's not unrelated at all to what I'm saying. Matter of fact, this is the key word Jesus used. You need to love God and you need to love people. Look at how it starts, verse 7. First John Chapter 2 verse 7. What's the first word here? "Beloved." Right? Even John, as he writes this. Right? He's written the gospel of John, he's writing First John, he's going to write Second John and Third John. And he can't help but just so often say beloved.

He loved to talk about him being the disciple whom Jesus loved. Right? Jesus loved me. I love you guys. This is the priority of the Apostle John. Hey, beloved, guys that I love here. I love you guys. "I'm writing to you no new commandment." Now look at the heading above. If you're reading from an English Standard Version it's got a heading just above verse 7. What's that heading? "New Commandment." Well, it seems like they've titled this wrong because it says, "Beloved, I'm writing no new commandment." Okay, well, it says a new command. No, it's an old commandment. "A commandment you've had from the beginning." The old commandment is the word that you've heard. What's that? Well, back to Leviticus. "Love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus said the greatest commandment of the Old Testament, love God, love people, love your neighbor as yourself.

"At the same time, it is a new commandment that I'm writing to you," and here's the key phrase, "which is true in him." That pronoun, of course, we're talking about Jesus, the Messiah. John's written this whole gospel about Jesus and it's all about Jesus being very clear that we should "love one another," John Chapter 13. Right? Just as, he says, "I loved you." Now we shifted there and in that sense it's the same command, love people. But the old command was love people as you love yourself. The new command that he explained in the gospel that he wrote, he says is that you love one another as Christ has loved you. And you know what that takes the standard and moves it way up. In that same context he says, "No greater love has anyone than this, that a man would lay down his life for his friends." It's one thing to love myself. When it comes to killing myself or dying for the sake of loving myself, I'm



not interested in that, right? There are certain limits to loving you like I love myself. But if I'm going to love you like Christ loved us, well that changes everything. That makes this a new commandment. But this is a new version of the commandment.

That might be a better way to put it. The heading is "The New Version of the Old Commandment," and it is. You ought to love the way Christ loved. And according to Romans Chapter 5, "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." See it's one thing for me to feel good about myself on a day I like myself, but what about the day I don't like myself? All I'm saying is Jesus' love goes beyond the kind of love that we might have with the old standard. The new standard is love like Christ did. And Christ came on the scene and said, I didn't come to be served. It's not about me. My weeknights aren't about how can I make myself happy. How can I do something fun for me? I came to serve, so much so that I'll miss a meal to serve. As I like to say around here Jesus is willing to go the extra mile, stay the extra hour and spend the extra dollar. He did it over and over and over again.

We're going to study in the new year, as Pastor Roy told you, Second Corinthians and in Second Corinthians it is a great example of the Apostle Paul looking back to the time he had in Corinth and the letters that he wrote to the Corinthians and one of the things he says near the end of the book, he says here's the deal. "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls." A lot of us, we don't want to spend. And if we do, we complain a lot about it. And we certainly won't be spent at the end of the week because I spent every night out this week. One night I was doing Partners and another night was with sub-congregation. Another night I was on the phone helping someone through their problems. We don't like to be spent and if we do we're going to tell people what a struggle it was. But here's the thing. Paul says, here's the kind of love I have for you, Corinthians. And if you read First Corinthians, they're a bit of a mess. He says, I'm glad to do it.

I just want your priorities to be that you have prioritized people in every season of your Christian life, that your goal is to reflect the priorities of Christ and the people in the book of Acts who have done great things. They've gone the extra mile for the souls of other people. Care about people. Stuff won't last. Because the temptation is going to be, drop down in this passage, if you would, to verse 15. First John Chapter 2 verse 15. Here's the challenge. The world is going to say this, right? There are things in the world you need to love. "Do not love the world or the things in the world." And by the way, the word "things" is helpful here because God is asking you to love people, not things. You go to Ecclesiastes Chapter 5, start in verse 10, and you can read the problem with falling in love with things "you'll never be satisfied." It is "vanity, it is chasing after the wind." You will never quench your taste, your appetite, your thirst for stuff. What you need to do at the end of your life is say, "I've fought the good fight, I've finished the race, I've kept the faith." This was all good. I'm ready to go because you spent your life serving people, not serving to get more things. Because if it's about that, look what it says, "The love of the Father is not in you." Right? I know that's a perpetual temptation.

And what are we talking about? Verse 16, "For all that's in the world -- the desires of the flesh," this makes me feel good, "the desires of the eyes," I like that, I want more of that



around me, "and the pride of life," that makes me feel good and important. I'm going to do more of that. The world's got a lot to offer. And I'll tell you what, every night this week there are a lot of things in the world that say if you're not working, you're not tied up with family stuff, hey, we got a lot of stuff that you can do to make yourself happy. Or you can do what it says here at the beginning of the passage, love people. You've got to invest in people. You got to prioritize people. Again, I am not saying and don't quote me that I'm saying that you can't take a day off, that you can't have a hobby or you can't take a vacation. You can but notice how many times when Jesus got in the boat and told his disciples we need a little rest and he went across the Sea of Galilee. When he got to the other side and there were people there, he didn't say, "We don't have time for you. We're on a break right now." He sat down and served them. People were Christ's priority and people need to be your priority. And I mean, it's if this one point that I'm just beating to death in this sermon right now, if this one point can help you when you're on the precipice of, okay, it's Friday night, I can either sit here and binge Hulu or I can go and invest in people, I want you to invest in people. I want you to deal with people. People are what lasts, right?

They are, according to First Corinthians 15, they're going to be immortal. They're going to put on immortality, as Daniel Chapter 12 says, either to everlasting shame or to everlasting glory. We need to make sure that we're investing in people. People are what matters. Don't let things overtake your infatuation that this is what it's all about. Matter of fact, if you have a lot of things praise God. Right? Praise God for all of your things. But before you start saying I'm going to amass more things by taking this promotion that's going to take me away from people and put me more into tasks, all I'm saying is I want to make decisions even about my career path based on my investment in people. But if you do have a lot of things, what does the Bible say about things? Even in First Timothy 6 which we quote all the time. If you got a lot of stuff, praise God, enjoy it, it's fine. But you ought to "be rich in good works ... and ready to share," so that you can take hold of real life it says, you can take hold of what life really is about. And it's not about the things. It's about you serving people. And that would be a great thing for you.

Well, let me get very specific, Luke Chapter 16, Jesus tells a story in Luke 16 about the unrighteous steward. Remember the guy who says, "Take your bill and change it?" Why? Because he's about to get fired and when he gets fired he wants places to go. People like him because, you know, he saved them a few bucks on his deal, on their deal with the master. And so he does that and they welcome him in after... He's not penniless because people are taking care of him. Why? Because he made friends by helping people not have to pay for what they owed. Jesus says, you know, "The children of this world are much more shrewd in their dealings with each other," than the children of the kingdom. And here's the problem. You don't use your wealth to make friendships for eternal purposes and you should. Right? If you got the money to pay for lunch then you ought to do it. If you have the money to host people in your house or you got a big, you know, 4,000 square foot house get people in there, use these things to build relationships and invest in people. And the Bible says you might one day welcome a lot more people into eternal dwellings, which implies a couple of things. You might get a bigger eternal dwelling based on how you dealt with funds and riches, as Jesus said, who's going to entrust true riches, lasting eternal riches to you if you weren't faithful in dealing



with temporal riches? Riches that fail. Make friends by means of money or mammon or material wealth, that you might have this payoff in the next life.

I'm just telling you, even if you have a lot of things and you think well, I got to keep doing this because I'm a great moneymaker, I'm a great businessman, I'm a great entrepreneur. Just realize even if you have amassed wealth, use your wealth for relationships so that you can invest in people. It's a great way to open up doors, but don't try to get rich. The Bible says if you want to get rich that's a sin. Don't do it. That is not the way you should approach the Christian life. You should approach the Christian life like Christ. I want to be investing in people. You may have a job making widgets. I understand that. That's great. Go make the widgets. But even in that, I hope you're praying for how that's going to be used to help humanity flourish and for the good of society and it's good, honest work, do it to the glory of God. But at the end of the day don't just say I'm just going to go home and do whatever it is that the world would say would make me feel better, make me look better, or make me more prideful. Just I'm not interested in that. I mean, the problem is I am interested in that but I got to stop being interested in that and I got to start saying it's about people? How can I invest in people? Have I made that point? I mean, it's clear I'm trying to emphasize one singular point here. The book of Acts is about people investing in people. Let it be our ongoing priority. If we're going to finish the task of Acts you got to focus on people.

Verse 23b. Look at the second half of verse 23. He invested in hosting these people. How long? Well, he stays the extra hour, "from morning until evening," it says in verse 23, "he expounds to them, testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus." And then here's what happens in verse 23. It's all coming "from the Law of Moses and the Prophets." And then in the middle of the discussion watching their response, he goes I know a passage that applies here. Isaiah. Isaiah Chapter 6. And he quotes this passage. I'm assuming he didn't pull a scroll down and read it. Maybe he did. But he's quoting Scripture because he knows Scripture and he says this is what applies here. You need to know this is not foreign, this has happened a lot, that well-educated Jews have rejected the truth and that's what's happening right here. Let me show you where the Bible talks about that.

And at the end, verse 30, he's got two years, 24 months, where everyone is being welcomed into his home. And what is he doing? Verse 31, he's "proclaiming to them the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ." New Testament truths because it's in the process of being written. We don't have a codified New Testament yet. Old Testament truths about the Kingdom and how it relates to the New Covenant Age. He's talking about that because he's got the printed scrolls of the Old Testament, at least in his mind, if not in his presence already. And what do we have? A guy who knows biblical truth and is sharing biblical truth. Here's the thing. You can invest in people. A lot of people invest in people. They're people persons, right? They're investing in people, but they don't have any real important purpose in investing with people. Matter of fact, they use people like things because it makes them feel better. They like investing in time with people because it does. It helps their "desires of the flesh" or it helps their "desires of the eyes" or it helps their boastful "pride of life." Well, that's not what we use people for. People aren't to be used like things. People are made in the image of God



and are very important for you to invest in because they last forever. That soul is going to last forever. It's going to get a resurrected body back and last forever.

What am I doing with these people who I'm investing in? Well, the book of Acts has been all about people who are heroes in this book, imperfect as they are, being used because of their focus on people to get the Word of God into their lives to help them do good. Let's put it this way. Number two, you need to "Keep Studying and Teaching the Bible." You need to keep studying and teaching the Bible. The whole point is that you are learning and growing every Sunday you come and I hope you come every Sunday. You better have a good reason for not coming. And you ought to learn the Bible. You ought to be doing the Daily Bible Reading with us every day. We've got all kinds of things. Pastor Kellen and his flyovers and Pastor John and his daily snapshots, all these things we're doing to make sure that if you've been here for five years, you've read the Bible through from cover to cover thoughtfully and carefully taking some notes on it for at least five times. If you've been here for 15 years then 15 times.

It just came to my life in such a dramatic way. I saw it in the discussion someone had with me about how they were reading Isaiah in our Daily Bible Reading this week and how it had an effect on how they viewed the world. And I thought to myself that is happening because they're getting the whole of God's counsel into their head year after year after year after year. We need to have it in our lives. We need to learn it. We need to study it. We're about to publish some things, I hope, coming up here in Compass Press that are going to help people do what they learn to do in the Partners manual, which is to do the tanning every day, "Then Always Now," the T-A-N method of Bible study to make sure that we know this. I mean, this is hundreds of pages on multiple books of the Bible where we can get this out to help people get the Word of God in their lives by their own inductive Bible study. This is important.

Our Partners manual. Speaking of Partners. Right? The whole thing is about you learning in ten weeks with ten meetings so that you can turn around and teach others what you've learned. It's about learning and teaching, learning and teaching. And some of you think well that doesn't apply to me. I'm glad you said that. Let's turn to Romans Chapter 15. Romans Chapter 15. Some of you think teaching, well that's what the Apostle Paul does, because his business card says missionary, teacher, prophet, apostle. No, I get that. And you can look at First Timothy or Second Timothy and say well these are pastoral epistles. When it says in Second Timothy Chapter 4 verses 1 and 2, "Preach the word in season and out of season," as he appeals to God, the "judge of the living and the dead." Those are for preacher types. I'm not a preacher. Well, speaking of the Romans where Paul is now incarcerated, I want you to look at Romans 15 and drop down to verse 14. He's talking to the rank-and-file people who are just Christians in the environs of Rome and he says this after his time with the Romans, "I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers," talking about rank-and-file Christians, "that you yourselves are full of goodness," you're really Christians and you're "filled with all knowledge," you've learned biblical truth, "and are able to instruct one another."

We often talk about encouraging one another. How do you encourage one another? Well, you "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly." You learn Scripture and then you share Scripture. You learn what it is to study the Bible and you share it. You learn to understand the Trinitarian



nature of God and you share it. You learn how to battle temptation and you share it. You learn how to pray and be logical and consistent in your prayer life with prayer guides and prayer lists and then you share it. You're able to instruct one another. And here's the thing, you can be a Christian for ten weeks and probably learn enough to help someone who's been a Christian for ten hours. At least learn the basics of what you've learned in ten weeks. All of us need to be teaching. It is the essence of instructing and encouraging one another. Teaching. That's what it is. The Bible says we should be gathering together and "all the more as you see the Day drawing near," the book of Hebrews says. And how is that going to work? How are you going to stir them on to love and good deeds? I got to know what love and good deeds are. What does it mean to love God? What does it mean to love people? What are the good deeds that we're supposed to be performing?

Daniel Chapter 12 verse 2 talks about the coming resurrection, it talks about the resurrection of the lost to shame and the resurrection of the righteous. And it talks about them, the righteous, they shine like stars. I can't help but read this to you. Let me read it in its context. Daniel Chapter 12 verse 2, "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise." This is what I want from preaching the Word at Compass today, I want you to be wise. The "wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above." Why? Because they "turned many to righteousness." I love that. Your whole effect in investing in people is that when you leave their house or their apartment or you're done having an hour and a half, two hours with someone in the Compass Cafe in the middle of the week, that you think to yourself, you know what I did, my influence, my impact, our discussion, the things that we did, made them leave committed to and focused on and aiming at more righteousness than when they came. Whether it's getting their tongue under control, whether it's fighting temptation, whether it's dealing with their spouse in a godly way, whatever the challenges, you've helped them, you've led them. I just loved the phrase you've "turned many to righteousness."

I want your life to make a difference in other people's lives, and it's never going to make a difference if you just... I'm a people person, too. I love that first point. You said invest in people. I do that every night. Do you do it for the intention, this is what people who love people are doing, I'm doing it for the intention of making their lives better. How do I do that? I turn them to righteousness. I want them to walk on the path of righteousness. Well, how do I do that? It's a lamp, right? This lamp is called the Word of God. It's a lamp. It's "a light to our path and a lamp to our feet." It gives us the way. It shows my friends here's how you conquer this habit. Here's how you deal with this sin. Here's how you pursue righteousness at work. Here's how you stand up to the dilemmas that you're facing. You help them with biblical truth. You need to learn God's Word and you need to share God's Word. You don't have to be an apostle. You don't have to be a missionary and you don't have to have a microphone strapped to your cheek to learn to do what I'm talking about. And that is just like these Romans you should be able to instruct one another. That's what we do as Christians.

Now, is there a different role for the preacher, verse 15? We don't need to even deal with that. But yeah. "On some points I've written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given to me..." What? To be a minister. Yeah, there are people who are doing it on a



different scale probably with more people listening to them and don't worry about their job. Because their job is like your job. You're doing your job on a much more personal level and I can tell you a lot more is taking place dynamically in a one-on-one conversation or in a small group than often what happens here, although a lot of good stuff happens in the preaching of God's Word in the congregation. But I just want you to know you have an effect on people and there will be those people who stand up on this platform at your funeral, if we do your funeral here, and they will say this person changed my life. They directed my life to righteousness. That's what you want to hear. I don't know if God's going to let you hear it. But not only will people hear that at your funeral but you'll hear from God. Well done. Well done. You did just what Jesus did. He was always talking about God's truth to people. He didn't care if he missed a meal. He didn't care if he missed out on a vacation. He was willing to invest. I came to serve. To do what? I want to direct people to God. I want them to love God and love people. I want them to know how to do good works. Keep studying the Bible. Keep knowing it.

Jot these two references down. Second Timothy Chapter 2 verse 15. Early on in my Christian life it became such an important verse to me. Matter of fact, it's sandwiched between two verses that say don't wrangle about this. Don't argue about this. Don't quarrel about this. Don't get into irreverent babble. But in the middle it says, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." The idea of your life and mine is saying I want to handle God's Word accurately. I want to work hard at it. I'd rather not binge something on some streaming service and read a good book that helps me care for other people. I want to go to a Compass Bible Institute class so I can pass on what I know in a classroom to someone in their lives. I want to go through our counseling program and get certified as a biblical counselor so I can help people. You will be at the end of your life so pleased that you aimed at something good, that you said I want as a Christian to grow up to be like this, someone who prioritizes people and God's Word.

Isaiah 40 says God's Word is never going to pass away. Jesus comes on the scene with New Testament truth, he says just like that my words will never pass away, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." Heaven and earth are going to pass away but here are two things that won't, people and God's Word. Those ought to be the priority of your life. They've been the priority of the Apostle Paul. They've been the priority of Peter. They've been the priority of James. They've been the priority of Barnabas. That's the priority of Scripture. Let it be your priorities as we finish the task that was started in the book of Acts.

Verse 24. In verse 24 it says after he did all of this, "Some were convinced about what he said, but others disbelieved." And it started a disagreement, verse 25, "And disagreeing among themselves." And then he quotes Isaiah 6 because they were disagreeing. And that means there are some pretty prominent alpha males there discussing how Paul was just ridiculous and it wasn't right and it's inaccurate and he's wrong and this is heresy, that he said it's just like Isaiah. It's just like Isaiah. And look at the words, right? Look at the bottom of these phrases, verse 26. Never understand, never perceive, hearts grown dull, barely hear, eyes are closed. Oh man. Is that what he's enduring? That's hard, right? Why not just say things they can all agree on? Which is, by the way, the philosophy of a lot of churches these days, "Let's just talk about stuff everyone can agree on." Right?



Here's the deal. Paul wasn't going to do that. Paul was willing to tell the truth and he knows one thing for sure. By this point, by the 28th Chapter of Acts, does he not know this? He's going to tell the truth and a lot of people aren't going to like it. Matter of fact, a lot of people are going to reject him so much so that some people are going to reach down for a rock and throw it at him. That's how much he is just in tune with it. He's got scars on his body that remind him that a lot of people are going to reject him because of the truth. So what does he do? He does what we do, right? He gets his feelings hurt and he says I'm never going to do that again. That's the Apostle Paul, right? No, that's not how he operates. He gets rejected and he doesn't just endure it. Some people think enduring is just sitting there crying with my Kleenex box in the corner that I've lost all my friends because I stood up for truth. No, it's rebounding. It's pushing back and saying, do you know what? If this isn't going to work, I'm going to keep on talking over here. It is the kind of resilience that says even if I get rejected 100 times, I won't stop.

Number three, let's learn this from the book of Acts, "Keep Rebounding After Rejection." You will be rejected. You can truncate and simplify the Bible down to the few things that everyone agrees on, but you'll never be providing as Paul said to the Ephesians "the whole counsel of God." So what you need to do is to say I know when I start talking about sexual ethics or gender or hell or the exclusivity of Christianity, I'm going to get pushback and people will reject me but that's okay. I'm going to continue to do what I'm called to do.

Speaking of my time on the Stanford basketball team, one thing that they taught us in junior high is, you know, if somebody takes a shot, say the right guard takes a shot, all of us once the shot goes up just kind of pray that it goes in and run the other direction. Is that what they taught us? Especially in junior high. Right? The odds of it going in are not really high. So what we need to learn to do is to make rebounds, right? The ball's going to bounce. Hopefully it hit something and when it bounces off the backboard or the rim can you run toward the ball and try and get it and try again? Rebounding. But that's not what I thought of when I came up with this word. Actually, I almost worded this, you know, Paul really endured rejection, but that's too weak. He didn't endure it. He not only endured it but he rebounded.

I was on The Price is Right. Did you know that? I was on The Price is Right. Yeah, I know. Me and Bob Barker were like this. (audience laughing) Well, I won the showcase. I know, I know. A different story, a different time. I even spun a dollar on the wheel. If you want the secrets I can tell you afterwards how to do all that. God's providence. It's a great story, though. Do you know what I won on The Price is Right, among other weird things? I won a Gottlieb professional model commercial pinball machine. What does a guy living in an apartment do with that? I take it to the church. I end up giving it to the church. Right? The church is going to have my pinball machine. But I played it. I thought this is awesome because I had the key, right? I didn't need quarters for that. I'd open up that thing and flip that little tiny wire. Ding, ding, ding. That put in 30 credits. Close the door. Key in my pocket. It's like, awesome. This was awesome. And I would play. I really enjoyed that. I liked it. I didn't have a lot of time for it but I liked it. And I really like when that big steel ball hit those bumpers, those charged electric bumpers, they hit the bumpers and bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam.



That was the rebound I had in mind when I wrote the word "rebound" here. Paul ran into opposition and it was like nothing lost, right? Almost velocity coming off the reject. It was almost like the rejection steeled his determination to keep on speaking. And when he doubted, and there were times like in Corinth when he doubted. We learned about this in the book of Acts, Jesus shows up and he says, "Keep on speaking. Do not be afraid. Don't be silent." He said, "For I have many in this city that are mine." Keep going. You cannot let rejection stop you. And if you think, you know what, I would hope that in the Christian life that the wonderful nature of the gospel, it's good news. Everyone's going to like it. You know this by now. Not everybody likes it. You're past that because you've tried it and you failed. In your mind you fail, but you didn't fail. That's the whole point, by the way, of Isaiah Chapter 6. It's not a fail. Jesus says this is going to happen. And all of this is about making clear your life choices and your rebellion against me, here comes the Prophet telling you the truth. You're going to reject it and you're not going to turn and be healed. You are going to be confirmed in your decisions and choices because of your rejection of me.

And the preaching of the word is essential in making it clear when you stand before me one day the prophet came, told you the truth, and you rejected it. And these leaders of the synagogues, these leaders of the Jews in the environs of Rome, they're going to stand before God one day lost. I mean, those who didn't turn later and they're going to hear from God. Do you know what? Paul told you exactly what the truth was. And so it is for the people at work in your workroom. So it is for the people in your neighborhood. So it is for your non-Christian relatives. You have to speak the truth and be ready for rejection. Jesus was a "man of sorrows, acquainted with grief."

Do you remember on the cross when Jesus was there and they misunderstood him because he went from Koine Greek, which I think he spoke a lot more than scholars think, and he broke into Aramaic and he said, Eli, Eli Lama Sabachthani. Do you remember that line? And they thought he was crying out for Elijah because Eli, Eli sounds like Elijah. But he was crying out to God. And you Sunday school grads know what he was saying. What did that mean? Eli, Eli Lama Sabachthani. What does that mean? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He cries out. And that's always a question people have when they call in on my shows. Like, what is that about? How could that be? How can the Son of God, the fullness of deity dwells? You say God has forsaken him.

Well, more than just quoting one verse, he's taking people in the shadow of the temple and all the leaders of Israel, many of them gathered around watching him being crucified. Hey, do you remember Psalm 22? Do you remember Psalm 22? Matter of fact, let's look at Psalm 22. He's giving a psalm about David being rejected by people. It starts with, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" I've been praying and you've forsaken me. Well, of course, there's something deep and profound about the propitiation and substitutionary penal atonement. Clearly, there's something about that deep theologically in the statement. But it's more than that. It's about the fact that you need to think about this psalm just like David was the king but no one saw him as the king. Just like you're going to tell the truth and no one's going to think you're telling the truth. You're going to lose your job, some of you, because you



stand up for what's right, you're not going to go along with the Diversity, Equality, Inclusion (DEI) stuff. You're not going to bow to the gender confusion. You're not going to cheer on the perversion that God says is an abomination. You are going to lose your jobs over this and you're going to sit there and have people say, "Hey, Christian, God couldn't even keep your job." That's what's going on in Psalm 22. Look at it.

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of of groaning? My God, I cried day," and night, "but you don't answer, and by night, but I find no rest. Yet you're holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our fathers trusted you; you delivered them. To you they cried and were rescued." But here I am, verse 6, "I'm a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads at me," and they say stuff like this, "He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!" That's exactly what the people were saying when Jesus was on the cross. Hey, even the thief next to him said save yourself and save us too. Jesus hanging completely naked, completely dirty from being rolled around by the Roman soldiers, whips his back, blood pouring down the back of his body, nails in his hand, nails in his feet, completely nude, with his head now bleeding profusely. He looks like a monster on a cross, everyone jeering at him. He quotes the first line from Psalm 22 and says this is what doing the right thing ends up looking like sometimes, as it was predicted in Psalm 53, "a man of sorrows acquainted with grief." And you and I are saying, well, if it hurts to say what's true I'm never going to say it. One thing we learn about the book of Acts is the tenacity of people who rebound from rejection and they keep on speaking.

Now, I'm not asking you to shove your religion down someone's throat. That's what they say we do on the first time they don't like. On the first time they don't like what you say they say that. I'm not doing that, right? If you don't want anything to do with that, that's fine. Matter of fact, that leads us to our last point. Please look at this. The end of the book of Acts. Here are the last lines. Verse 28, "Let it be known then that the salvation." we've been talking about, "has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen." You won't listen. They'll listen. "So he lived there two years ... and welcomed all who came to him," a lot of Romans, a lot of Latins coming in there, "proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord," Yeshua, Christos the Messiah. Yeshua Hamashiach, you are the Old Testament Messiah, the son of David. And he's talking to all these Gentiles about it, "with all boldness without hindrance."

And the whole thing is a shift. How many times have we seen the shift in the book of Acts? If you won't listen, if you don't count yourself worthy of salvation, we're going to go here. You're not going to listen then we're going to go here. Where'd they get that? Jesus taught it. You go into a village he said to his 12 or the 70, go into a village, if they do not receive you, he says, turn around and leave. No. Knock the dust off your feet in obvious protest. I just want to be clear. You don't want us, right? Okay. Knock, knock, knock. We're done then. We're not even going to take your dirt with us and we're leaving. I'm not asking you to shove your religion down anyone's throat. I am asking you to stand up for the truth because that's why you're here. People, Scripture, trying to put those together. What's going to happen sometimes, like



my old pinball machine, ding, ding, ding. You're going to have to bounce off of those people and turn to where you find receptive people.

Number four, you need to "Keep Investing in the Receptive." Paul had plenty of Romans who were very receptive. Go read the last chapter of the book of Romans. Paul writes a letter. He got scads of names that he lays out that he knows are Christians in Rome because they were receptive. And however you look at your life and you say rejection, I can't keep talking. Well, it may be that you don't keep talking to that person. Here's how I like to end it. Hey, sounds like we're not getting anywhere here. Sounds like you don't want to hear this. I just want to let you know you're always welcome to talk to me about this. Put out the welcome mat for those who reject you. Right? And then say I won't talk to you about it anymore and you move on. And I want to tell you, if you want to live your life with a productive, good investment in people who you turn to righteousness like Daniel 12:2 says then you got to keep finding the receptive.

I've had a lot of people who I've tried to minister to and at some point they say I don't want to hear this. I think of Partners. I was in Partners with this guy years ago and he had published two books. Here's a Christian guy publishing books. So he wanted me to take him through Partners. All right, I'll do it. And so I take him through Partners. We get to the chapter on the Church and one of the ordinances is baptism. And I said, you know, I learned from the first chapter you're not baptized, so let's sign you up and get you baptized. "Nah, I don't want to do that?" Why? "Well, I don't want to get in front of people that..." You don't want to get baptized? Okay. Mr. I'm a published Christian author. Hey, you don't want to get baptized? "Nah, I don't want to get in front of people and do that." Okay. So I said, no big deal. And we worked hard on the last five chapters, right? No. Mr. Sarcastic Pastor Mike. No, that's not what I did.

I said, well, we'll all meet one more week and we'll talk about this again but if you're not interested in getting baptized, it's been nice knowing you and you'll have my number. And if you ever want to talk again then great. But you, Mr. Christian, a published author if you're not willing to do what Christ said, are you denying this is what Christ tells us to do? "No, I know what Christ says. I know he wants me to do that." No, he doesn't WANT you to do it, he's TELLING you to do that. "I don't want to do it." Okay, done. I went through five chapters with Mr. Christian published author because he wouldn't take a simple step of being baptized. And you know what I've done since taking people through Partners. They want to go and get baptized because they're hungry to do what God says. And you know what? Great. I'm not going to spend time with people who say, I don't want what you're telling me. Okay. I'm going to look for the receptive.

This is the pattern of the book of Acts. And here, Jewish leaders, they don't want to hear it. They're debating among themselves. Hey, if you want to keep hearing it, I'm sure some of them did come back. But whoever is going to listen he "welcomed all who came to him." I love that. And the second to the last verse in the Bible, "he welcomed all who came to him." Do you want to talk? I'm happy to talk. I know there are people who you should probably never share the gospel with again because they have been vehement that they don't want to hear it. Don't jam your religion down my throat. Don't. Don't. Okay. I don't think it's snide to say what Jesus said or what Paul said. You know, if you don't want information that'll get you right with



your creator, I will go to people who do. I'll talk to people who do. But in the big scale, I'm not just talking about the conversation. Can you just look at the remainder of your life and say, I'd like to spend my Christian life talking to people who want to talk about Christ, who they're interested in moving forward in their Christian life.

My old pastor used to tell me, hey, Mike, you got to run with the runners. Not everyone's going to want to do what the Bible says, but you find those who do and you run with the runners. That's been a mantra in my life from the beginning of my ministry. And I think it's very important because a lot of people don't want to hear God's truth. OK. In evangelism and in discipleship, I've got to find the receptive. Acts 13, Acts 18. We've seen it all throughout the ministry of the apostles. Let me turn you to one passage that's even more gravitas in this because it's Christ himself. Luke Chapter 14. Drop down to the bottom two verses of this chapter. Jesus is telling a story which I would say reiterates a lot of what we've said already. He gives us an illustration, a parable, if you will. "Salt is good," it says in verse 34, Luke 14:34. "But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?" Well you can't. Well, let's put it here. This little granule of salt. Let's try and make it salt again. Forget it. Just throw it out. "It is of no use for the soil, is not for the use for the manure pile," forget it. "It is thrown away."

I've said to you, it's one thing for you to invest in people even if you're doing that. But if you're not investing in people for good, if you're not making a good influence and a good difference in their lives, then what good is it? Then he says this. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." He's training people about their lives and about the influence they should have and he says if you can hear me, if you're understanding, if you can perceive this, then you should hear it. Now, there are people who don't want to hear it. There are people in this auditorium who don't want to hear what I'm saying right now. All I can say is that people who have ears to hear, please hear what I'm saying. Prioritize people. Prioritize Scripture. Right? Don't let rejection stop you and invest in the receptive. Okay?

With that in mind, look at the play on words between verse 35 and verse 1 of Chapter 15, the very next verse. "Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to," what's the word? "Hear him." Here's the Greek word again, "Akouō" is to "hear" him. They wanted to hear him. Oh, okay, he's got a receptive audience. Great. Lean in. And he does. He teaches them. But look at verse 2, "The Pharisees and the scribes they grumbled saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.'" Do you mean you stopped Partners with a published Christian author? I did. I did. I did. Guilty as charged. I did. And you took some plumber and you took him through Partners. And then... And like a plumber. I'd love to be a plumber, man. They do okay, most of the plumbers. I should pick something else. I don't know. A pastoral intern? I don't know, whatever. So pick someone... A junior high pastor. I don't know. You took someone through it. You had this big cheese that you said you wouldn't take through the last five chapters of Partners. Yeah, that's true. And if they grumble about it, Jesus is like, oh well, he tells them a story. He actually tells three stories, he tells them a parable.

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one doesn't leave the 99 in open country and go after the one that's lost, until he finds it. And when he's found it, he lays it on



his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice.'" Man, I lost the sheep, but I found him. "Just so, I tell you, there'll be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents..." Well, let me put it this way, one Christian who obeys to be baptized than over a bunch of others who think they are too righteous to do it, right? Over one sinner who repents and over 99 righteous persons who have no need of repentance. And that, by the way, should be in quotations because it was the self-righteous Pharisees who thought they were righteous, when indeed they weren't. They wouldn't even listen to Christ. But he found people who would listen.

The biggest effect you're going to have in this world is your investment in people trying to use the knowledge of what you've learned from the Scripture and what you put into practice to influence others around you. Right? Either the non-Christians for salvation or Christians in growing in Christ. And if you let rejection shut you down, you didn't learn the message of Acts. And now all I'm saying is you might have an eclectic group at your funeral because you've reached out to a lot of different people. It didn't matter what jobs they were in, it didn't matter what their income was, it didn't matter what their age was. But you found receptive people who are ready to learn what you know, who were ready to be guided by you, who were ready to have you impart to them things that would help them pray and study and resist temptation and be a better husband, whatever it might be, you helped them. And they will be forever grateful for the way God used you in their lives.

The work of the book of Acts started 2,000 years ago and it's still going on. I know the job isn't done because Second Peter 3 says it's going to be finished and when it's finished, God's going to wrap up human history. So it's not done yet. The book of the Acts of the Apostles, it ends abruptly. Every commentary comments on that. But it's because the job is not done. And the job to be done needs these priorities and these priorities you will thank me that we've made these a focus of your discussions in small groups, because you will say at the end of your life it was good for us to shift my activities, my resources, my investments, my concerns toward people and God's Word and joining the two, not letting rejection stop me. And I kept finding the receptive. I invested in the receptive and bore a lot of fruit in this world. That will matter.

The Acts of the Apostles, it's in the books. What's not are the Acts of the CBC'ers of the OC, let's put it that way. That book is still being written, and it's never going to make progress unless we take these four priorities and we say this is going to be our priority. And may God increase our tribe if there are those among us who say that's what I want to do. We say no to stuff that might be nice, but really is not the most important thing. Invest more in the important thing. If you've got to take a break then take a break, but make it short and then get back to work and say with the Apostle Paul, you're "glad to spend and be spent for souls." Stand with me. Let me commission you into the Acts of the CBC'ers of the OC. I like that. That sounds good to me. Let's finish writing our book because you know what? Jesus is keeping track. It's being, quote unquote, written down and I want to commission you to do the work and finish well. It's the best kind of work. It's hard, really hard, I get it. People are hard. Ask Jesus about Judas. Ask him even about Thomas and Peter. It's hard work. But it's good work, right? Make decisions this week that show these priorities and I think God will honor that in eternal ways.



Let's pray. God, please help our church. We do know we're writing the history of this church. We're writing the history of this group of Christians, even those listening on the radio. And there are many across the country and around the world I know that want to make a difference wherever they are planted and I pray that they would. That they'd be the kinds of people who love people because they love you, but they're not entrapped in the things of this world. They're not just constantly looking for leisure and breaks and vacations and entertainment. But they're actually wanting to get into people's lives. They want to make a difference. And when they get their feelings hurt, when they get their hand slapped, when something sets them back, may they just remember Christ and what he said that when they accept and hear us, they're hearing you. And when they reject us, they're rejecting you. And if they reject you, they reject the Father. What an amazing thought. We've got to just keep going.

And God there are those who will listen and say what can you teach me about prayer? What can you teach me about God? How can you help me live a better Christian life? How can I be a better employee, a better boss, a better husband, a better wife, a better child? God, please, just let our church be so fruitful. Let us use this great lobby that these people have donated and built. Let us be here as much as we can. "All the more as we see the Day drawing near." Connecting in people's homes. Being involved in sub-congregations and home fellowship groups and knowing that that's really the key. It's the pinnacle of priority. We can do that at work of course, we can do that in our neighborhoods. Yes. But I pray that we'd work hard because often it's in the church that we assemble the receptive. I pray that you just be pleased with the way we spend and are expended. Thank you for this group. Thanks for their great attentiveness to the last 133 sermons in Acts. I pray it would be remembered like an old friend that maybe we're not in, not talking to as much as we used to, but still speaks to us, still reminds us of the lessons we learn just as we encounter things in life. May our study of Acts just be something that resonates in a positive way in our minds as we turn to Philemon and Second Corinthians and whatever else you allow us to go, I just pray that you would be honored by how we studied and responded to this great book. Thank you for it.

In Jesus name, Amen.