

Of Things To Come - Acts 21:1-20

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[0:00] As we look at this section of scripture, it kind of seems almost haphazard. Paul stops here. Paul goes there. Paul stops here. And I think there's a principle there that we're going to look at, that we continue on the path the Holy Spirit has placed us on, trusting God to make a way forward.

So as God puts us on a path and a calling, we continue on that path. And we trust that God's going to make a way forward. You know, we don't have to always, we don't always have to recheck ourselves in the sense of like, Lord, this is the direction you've called me to go, but I can't see way forward. Should I go forward? Yes, go forward. If God's called you to go forward and he's going to make a way, but we have to walk forward in that. Many times, if God's called us forward and we choose not to walk until we see the way made open, well, God's kind of waiting for us to step forward and just see if we're going to walk by faith. And then he just makes the itinerary work.

So starting here in verse one, and I'm going to throw the map back up there. And it came to pass that after we were gotten from them, so he's left Miletus, he's left the elders at Ephesus and had launched. We came with a straight course onto Coos and the day following under roads and from fence under Patara and finding a ship sailing over onto Phoenicia, we went to board and set forth. Now, when we had discovered Cyprus, it doesn't mean they were the first ones to find it.

It just means they came upon it. We left it on the left hand and sailed into Syria and landed at Tyre. For there the ship was to unload her burden. It was like three verses and Paul just traveled most of the known world across the Mediterranean. There's a bunch of places on there that he stops.

And it's very detailed where it says we left it on the left hand side, Cyprus. And you think, well, why is Luke giving us all this? There is a man named Sir William Mitchell Ramsey. And he was the late 1800s and the early 1900s. He was a skeptic. He didn't believe the Bible and he went about to disprove the book of Acts. And in so doing, what do you know? He became a believer. He was a British archaeologist and New Testament scholar. By his death in 1939, he had become the foremost authority of his day on the history of Asia Minor and a leading scholar in the study of the New Testament.

[2:12] And he had said this. He said, further study showed that the book, speaking of the book of Acts, could bear the most minute scrutiny as an authority for the facts of the Aegean world. And that it was written with such judgment, skill, art, and perception of truth as to be a model of historical statement. You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian, and they meet the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment. And so here's a man, he went about to disprove the book of Acts. And what he found was it was such an airtight, lock solid historical document that it stands head and shoulders in the world of academia for historical document. And so when you read sections like this and you're like, well, Paul went here and then Paul went there and Paul went here.

It's like, well, why do we need all that? How does that edify me? Just give me something like spiritual and uplifting. It's like, well, that is, that is the, that is the bedrock of the Bible, that it is airtight, is not contradictory, and it will stand up to the heart of scrutiny. And here's a man who went about to disprove it. And the Lord said, Hey, what's going to happen is I'm just going to prove that you need a savior. And so in the verse four, this is where they tarried seven days.

In, uh, I'm sorry, here we go. We're at Tyre there. So he gets all the way over. He's in, uh, what's called Syria at that time. And this is where Israel is in Judea.

We landed at Tyre for the ship needed to unload her burden. This is where they wanted to get to. And verse four, in finding disciples, we tarried their seven days who said to Paul through the spirit that he should not go up to Jerusalem. What an interesting phrase, interesting phrase that through the spirit, they said to Paul, Paul, the Holy spirit's telling us do not go up to Jerusalem.

I don't think exactly what they said. Um, if you remember back in Acts 20, we saw this last time that Paul said to the Ephesians there in Miletus, he said, and now behold, I go bound in the spirit unto

Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, except that the Holy spirit witnesses in every city saying that bonds and afflictions abide me, but none of these things move me.

[4 : 36] Neither count I my life dear unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I've received to the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And so Paul says, Hey, all I know is that in every city, the Holy spirit witnesses to me. Well, how is the Holy spirit testifying to him? How's it witnessing to him? Here we see there's these disciples there and they said through the spirit to Paul, you should not go up to Jerusalem. So what's going on here?

Prophecy. The definition for prophecy is to speak forth by divine inspiration. Now the prophets of old, and there's going to be a prophet in this account, Agabus, he's going to speak forth divine inspiration. That's going to foretell an event. Um, there's a couple of things about being a prophet. If you want to raise your hand and say, I'm going to be a prophet. Well, you have to be a hundred percent accurate. If you're in the old Testament and you were 99.8% accurate, you'd be stoned. Right. And the new Testament, unfortunately not to our current day and age of the new Testament. If you get it wrong, well, you just try again and you try again and you try again. And people keep sending you money. And for some reason until you get it right or whatever. But if you want to be a prophet, you know, God's not wrong. God knows what's going on, but to prophesy and to speak forth under divine inspiration, you better hope that's what's happening here. Right. I'm not speaking forth of my own ideas or volition or whatever. When we interact with one another, when we speak words of encouragement to one another, we're just talking and you go away from a conversation. You go, man, they, they spoke right to what I was going through. They didn't even know that they were telling me something about themselves and it just hit my heart. Well, that's the Holy Spirit. That's the Holy Spirit working in the body to bring edification, exhortation and comfort through a word. We don't call it that. This past Sunday, I was talking with one of the guys over here and he said some things that man, it was like so wise. Now, if you go by first Corinthians four, um, 12 and 14, well, that would have been a word of wisdom, but I didn't say, Hey, let me just tell you, you just gave me a word of wisdom. You know, then I was talking to someone else in the last scripture we use Sunday. He was pointing out something I hadn't seen in it and he hadn't seen.

[6 : 43] It was like, Whoa, well, he didn't know, but he just prophesied. He spoke forth under divine inspiration, right? But we don't call it that. We don't, but we interact with one another in the gifting and working of the Holy Spirit. And here in Acts and right, what is doctrine? Doctrine is Jesus preached on by Jesus, practiced in the book of Acts and expounded on by Paul in the epistles. And so we see that with the giftings of the spirit that that works. Why don't we celebrate the Sabbath? Jesus didn't teach us to celebrate the Sabbath. It's not practiced in the book of Acts. And Paul does not teach that the church should keep the Sabbath. So we say, okay, we don't keep the Sabbath for that reason. But anyway, first Corinthians 14 and speaking of prophecy in verse three says, but he that prophesies speaks unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort.

Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you? Except I shall speak to you either by revelation or by knowledge or by prophesying or by doctrine, right? That's what happens. That's what's happening is the Holy Spirit's working among us. When you come and we study the Bible together, God is giving revelation and knowledge and doctrine. He's speaking forth divine truth. This is divine truth and we are speaking it forth. That's what's happening in the working of the Holy Spirit. But we also know first Corinthians 14 32 tells us, and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. Well, what does that mean? It means God can speak to you and will speak to you many times, but he doesn't make you do something with that. You could be in a conversation with someone. The Lord puts something on your heart and says, pray for them. Happens to me a lot, guys. I'm just going to tell you. I'm like, I don't know if I want to do that. Or is that really you, Lord? Should I? Or he gives you a word. You're like, boy, that would be awkward to say right now.

Right? But when you step in faith and you begin to practice, right? We can, you cannot learn the gifts, right? A gift is given to you, but we learn to use them through operating in them, by practicing using them. Thank the Lord for that. My first Sunday was rough. You can all text him. I was nervous. I was like, oh. And the Lord just, he, he, I remember trying to figure out a system for studying week to week and I was so stressed out and the Lord's so good and he can change that at any time. And I'm open to that, but he's got me in a rhythm right now that, man, he's just so good. And he does all the work and I just get the, the blessing in that. But I know I have to be faithful. I have to be faithful to sit down and exercise the gift, which is what? Open my Bible and start studying it, trusting

that God's going to give me, you know, understanding in the text, but the gift of prophecy. So speaking forth divine inspiration to somebody, God gives me a word for you, right?

[9 : 28] It is not given so that I might tell someone else God's will for their life, right? What did we see the parameters were for edification, exhortation and comfort, not direction, right? I can't come to you and say, Don, God has given me a word for you. And then he takes that and he thinks about it and he says, wow, you know, that kind of speaks to an area of my life. And next time I see him, I say, well, did you do what I told you to do? Because God told me to tell you what to do. Didn't you do it?

That's not how that works. So what I think is happening here. I think that Paul shows up in Tyre. And just as he said, in every city, the Holy Spirit is witnessing saying bonds and afflictions abide you. And so as he's here with the believers and he's worshiping with them and he's praying with them that, Hey, the Lord spoke and confirmed through a brother, through a sister and said, Paul, dude, don't go up to Jerusalem. The Lord just showed me what's awaiting you. And Paul to Paul, that's confirmation. Now to them, they're like this. No, don't do that because we don't want to see people hurt. Right? So the Holy Spirit, yes, showed them what was to come. And so they said to Paul, you should not go up. We don't want you to go up, Paul. But before we move on, because we're going to look at a prophecy. There's a lot of that in here. And it's a section loaded with prophecy and prophets. And I was like, what's going on? What is prophecy? Well, prophecy is divinely inspired.

First of all, it's not something that we cook up on our own. And we see here, they said through the spirit. It's also divinely understood that the Holy Spirit speaking to you, it's not for you to interpret what he's saying to you. It's for him. It's the Holy Spirit will give you understanding.

There's a lot of false prophets today. They'll say, you know, the Lord has been speaking to me and he told me that I've got a word for it. I'm supposed to say, and I've been up to heaven and there was this room and I saw this room and there's all these body parts. And God told me that. So when I pray, he's got body parts to heal people. Like there's a lot of stuff out there. Okay. You can get lost on YouTube. And I like to keep up to date on the winds of doctrine going through the church and it can be discouraging what people buy into. But I was thinking about that, that man, if you don't have the word, even if you are a well-meaning Christian, Katie and I were listening to some Christian music on the way here, some worship music. And there's this one guy and I was thinking about him. I think he's a believer, but I don't think there's a lot coming from his life. But I was thinking if you're not in the word, then everything in your life is being processed through your own understanding, through your own feelings, ideas, emotions, views. And so I could look at something, and I think, and I could be a genuine believer and have a heart for, for people and a love that comes from the Lord. And I could look at something. Oh, I don't want to do anything to hurt them.

I don't want to make them uncomfortable. I'll call them a they, right? I'll affirm them. But man, if you don't have the word informing you, and it's kind of like, almost like this program that kicks in. Like you see something and all of a sudden it's like, you know, the, the old, uh, where like the, um, you know, the record would go and the arm would come in and drop down. It's kind of like that.

[12 : 27] The Lord kind of, and it just begins to go. And the, and the word, and you're like, Oh, that's what's going on there. Well, I know that because the word tells me and gives me discernment without that, man, I would be lost. It's divinely understood. It's divinely recognized. They knew that this is the Holy spirit speaking to them. There wasn't a question about it. Was that really the Lord moving? Was it not?

And lastly, though, it is spoken by fallen man. Those three things divinely inspired, divinely understood and divinely recognized are all God's part. But then lastly, though, it is spoken forth by fallen man, right? There'll be things I will say and you'll go away and think, I don't think that was right. And if you came and talked to me about it, I would say, I don't think that's right either. Right? Cause that's just, it happens. You say something, it comes out. Um, and we'll look some more as we go down through this, but to kind of give you an idea of the foundation here of what's happening and what we see as we see going forward, that God is using the body to speak to Paul and verse five. And when we had accomplished those days, so their entire, uh, and their entire seven days, they're there a week. You got to think once they hear the story about what happened, you know, in a Troas, you know, Paul's here a week and they taught him this on this on Sunday and poor Eutychus fell out the window. I bet they met on the ground floor after that.

And when they had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way and they all brought us on our way with wives and children till we were out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed with the entire body. And when we had taken our leave, one of another, we took ship and they returned home again. I like that. You know, it didn't say, um, except for those in the children's ministry, they stayed over there. This is our children's ministry. Yeah.

I think it's going really well. If you ask me, um, again, that was divine inspiration. It is just, and the Lord has used that, that idea that Alison came up with the, for the sheets and the questions, man, to really engage the kids. It's been great. I wish I had one of those when I was a kid, I might've actually paid attention, but for the more, what do we see here? Paul's leaving, right? Paul's going to leave and he's going to continue to travel on down towards Jerusalem, but they all went home again. All of these people, they went home, the families, the wives, the children, the, the, the elders, the men. And I think for the majority of people, the majority of people, for the majority of people, the majority of their ministry will take place at home. That's just how it is. And we're not all Paul's, right? Well, not all Derek Forbes who go and minister on the other side of the world a lot. A lot of us are just home.

[15:04] You know, we live in an age where you can travel and you can talk to people so easy. You go back a hundred years, you back 200 years, go back a thousand years, and you lived in a very small world, right? Yet it's the same Bible and it's the same spirit and it's the same work. So we don't have to have, you know, a reach of hundreds and thousands. We have our families and most of our ministry will take place at home. Paul writes in first Timothy chapter two, I exhort you therefore that first of all, supplication, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings, for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. Can you do that at home? You can.

You can, all supplications, prayers, intercessions of giving and giving of thanks. You can pray for kings and authorities. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. And right smack in the middle of that is that we may live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty. Most of that's going to happen at home. Your quiet and peaceable life, you know, we're not going to be out there running down the streets and with our placards. It's just not how it is. And so ministry is not confined or is not restricted, I should say, or is not confined by our home and is not restricted because we don't have this great reach like we think Paul has here. And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Potomaius and saluted the brethren and abode with them one day. So if we look on our map, they actually took a ship to go from Tyre and came around to Potomaius there and saluted the brethren at that time. Paul, if you remember in Acts 15, when he had come, he was heading back. He was going to go back to Antioch to have the church council because of the brethren who've come from Judea and they were teaching you must be circumcised after the manner of Moses. They were teaching the law.

And in verse two, it says, when therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them should go to Jerusalem under the apostles and elders about this question and being brought on their way by the church.

They passed through Phineas and Samaria and all that. And at that phrase and being brought on their way by the church, that's what's happening. Paul's just going from church to church and the church is bringing him on his way. You know, we're told to be hospitable. We're supposed to be ready to entertain angels unawares. Well, we're supposed to also be ready to entertain God's ministers, God's people unawares. We don't always have to be giving out an invitation ahead of time. And so Paul is just being brought on his way by the church here. And the next day, we that were of Paul's company, if you remember back in Acts chapter 20, it told us that Paul's company, there was Sophtor of Berea and Aristarchus from Thessalonica and Secundus and Gaius of Derb and Timothy of Asia and Tychicus and Trophimus as well. So he has all these guys and they're all bringing this offering from the Gentile nations back to Jerusalem.

And the next day, we that were of Paul's company departed and came unto Caesarea and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven and abode with him. So now Paul jumps to Caesarea and this is his last stop before Jerusalem. And that's just in the

northern part there of Israel. And we are reintroduced to an old friend here, aren't we? Philip says, and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven and abode with him. Remember we last saw Philip?

[19 : 03] Well, in Acts chapter six, if you remember, there was the issue that the Grecian widows were not receiving their portion of the administration, the giving out of food.

And so they came and complained. And so the disciples, the apostles said, look, it's not neat for us to leave the teaching of the word of God to wait on tables. Let us appoint seven men of good repute, full of the Holy Spirit and full of wisdom. And then Stephen is one of those seven and they're all Grecian proselytes. He's one of them. And it said that, and the saying pleased the whole multitude and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit and Philip and Proculus and Nicanor and Timon and Parmenas and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch, whom they set before the apostles. And when they prayed, they laid their hands on them. Remember the last time we saw Philip, our buddy, Philip, there's a revival happening in Samaria and the Peter and John are sent up there. So they might pray for them to receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit, separate from salvation experience of the Holy Spirit, because they were already believers.

They're praying that they might receive what we would call the baptism, the filling, the anointing, whatever you want to call it, of the Holy Spirit, the empowering of the Spirit. And then right after that, the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip saying, arise and go toward the south unto the way that goes down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. Unto where? To Gaza. And he arose and went to behold a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning and sitting in his chariot and read Isaiah the prophet. And then the spirit said unto Philip, go near and join yourself to this chariot. He does. He expounds to him, you know, expositively teaching through Isaiah. And he says, Hey, here's water. What prevents me from being baptized? Philip baptizes him. And when they were come up out of the water, the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, harpazo, same like snatched away, same as what we use for the rapture, same wording, that the eunuch saw him no more. And he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus, which is south of Caesarea. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea. And for these last 10, 15 years, Philip has been in Caesarea. Well, Philip meets a really nice girl in Caesarea. He gets married. That was a great wedding. Should have been there. Verse nine. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. That's what I mean. It's a for-profit ministry. For-profit. And they did prophesy. Just means they're young, unmarried girls, right? They're of marrying age. They're young, but they're not married. They've not been married. They're at home. Four daughters. I thought I was going to have four daughters.

[21 : 48] Henry rescued me from that. I got three daughters, which I love. But I would say, I could say the same thing. I would say the same thing like Philip. Hey, I've got three daughters to prophesy. Now, if you want to come to my house expecting to be told in your future, that's not going to happen.

But if you want to hear divine, divinely inspired truth, they'll give it to you. They will. In Galatians chapter three, Paul tells us, for you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There's neither Jew nor Greek. There's neither bond nor free. There's neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus, right? There's no junior believers. There's no second tier or second class Christians. It wasn't like, well, I mean, Philip, you know, if you want to get to the big daddy in here, the good prophecy, you go to Philip. You know, if you can't get to him, see one of the daughters, one, two, three, four. And if you get stuck with four, well, you know what? It's better than nothing. No, it wasn't like that at all. And that's not how it is. That where there's neither male nor free, I mean, male, bond or free, male nor female, junior, junior Greek. It just means that, that in Christ, there's no respecter of persons. There's no special tier, right? Gnosticism is that there's some kind of knowledge out there that you can attain special knowledge. It's only for special people that reach a special place. But you have Jesus who comes along. He says, no, there's no special knowledge. All that the father has said unto me, I've told you, and I want you to go and tell everybody.

He didn't say, well, except remember that one thing I told you I didn't let you write down. That's super special. Not at all. In Acts chapter two, on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit is poured out on the church and they're all speaking and everybody's hearing their own language and they think they're drunk. Peter stands up and says, these are not drunk as you suppose, seeing it's

but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, a prophet giving a prophecy that has come to pass. It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I'll pour out my spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams. Now my servants and on my handmaidens will I pour out in those days of my spirit. Excuse me. And they shall speak forth by divine inspiration. They shall prophesy. And that's what we see here with these four daughters of Philip. And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea, a serpent, a certain prophet named Agabus. So here we've got these four daughters. It does not say they are prophets. It says they do what? Prophecy. Now here we have Agabus who is a prophet, right? Ephesians 4.11 tells us that the Lord, he gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastor teachers. So there are those offices or callings within the body of prophets. Those who God has called to specifically speak to the church in a way of authority with divine inspiration. And so Agabus here, he is a prophet where it says that these daughters of Philip, they prophesy, but it doesn't call them a prophet. We saw Agabus back in Acts 11.

And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. There's multiple of them at that time. And there stood up one of them named Agabus and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world. There should be a famine, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. And here comes Agabus. If you remember, his name meant locust and he prophesized a famine.

Here he shows up again and everybody's like, oh goody, it's Agabus. But this is where we don't, we don't get to interpret what the Holy Spirit speaks to us. We don't get to decide what it means. Agabus speaks some pretty hard things. He had to tell about the famine. He's coming now to give a hard word to Paul. He didn't say, well, you know, this is really going to cut down on my church attendance, Lord, if I say that. He would not be a true prophet if he didn't speak forth what the Lord had given him. I want to look at a section of scripture here in 1 Corinthians 13.

[25 : 56] There is a form of theology called cessationism, right? The things that the gifts have ceased for today. And then there are those that are continuous, continuationists who think that the gifts are still in existence today. And usually what you'll find is it's polar one side or the other. And usually it's someone reacting strongly. Somebody's in a hyper charismatic church where everybody supposedly teaches speaking in tongues, but they got that way because they were taught that. And I had read something recently. It was a blog post by this guy who was in a movement like that. And they told him, well, you have to speak in tongues to have the Holy Spirit using you. And the pastor said, well, you need to learn to speak in tongues. And here's some maybe triggers that'll trigger it.

Recite a passage of scripture so fast that you can't understand it anymore. Maybe all of a sudden it'll just explode into tongues. And then he said, empty your mind of everything because the scripture says that tongues is a language unto the Lord which no man can understand. So empty your mind of everything. Just repeat these four phrases over and over. And it's like, keep saying that over and over and over and over until maybe something happens. What is it called? It's called a gift.

A gift is given by the Lord. If the Lord wants to give it, he will. If he won't, he won't. But there's nothing you're going to, you can't, you're not going to twist God's arm, shall we say. But in 1 Corinthians 13, this passage is often used to show that, well, the gifts have ceased today. They were for a specific time and they're done.

And Paul writes that love never fails. That's charity there. Agape, it never fails. But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail. Whether there be tongues, they shall cease. Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. Right? So they said, see, right there.

Well, you know what the Bible also says? Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word shall not pass away. Is heaven and earth still here? Has it passed away? No, it hasn't. But they say it has passed away, and this is why.

[27 : 54] For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. They say, well, what is perfect come is the full canonization of Scripture. When the Bible was fully complete, then we no longer needed these gifts any longer.

But if you look in the context of what Paul's talking about here, and in no way is talking about the Scripture. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

When I was a child, I spake as a child. I understood as a child. I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things. He's just talking about maturity. There's a maturity and a full growth that happens.

And when you are fully grown, you don't need the things you needed when you were immature. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as I also am known.

And now abides faith, hope, and love, these three. But the greatest of these is love. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Face to face with who? With what? With Jesus. When we are face to face with him.

[28 : 57] It wouldn't make sense for Paul to say, hey, now I only know in part. Paul's writing the Scripture. Sure. I don't really know if this is Scripture. I only know in part. But when the whole thing is canonized, then Paul says, oh, well, then I'll know even as I am known.

He was not saying that. He's talking about when Christ returns, that then he will know as he is known. Will we need faith in heaven? Not a chance. No way. Do I need hope in heaven?

No, I don't. Do I need prophecy? Do I need tongues? Do I need a word of knowledge? I don't.

Because I'll have the fullness of Jesus. But what will I have for all of eternity? Love.

We have love for all of eternity. The gifts are not gone. But I think where we get it wrong is, we like to insert what Scripture doesn't say, that the gifts should be the normal, everyday experience.

And that doesn't seem that. Scripture doesn't seem to say that these showing, outworking gifts like tongues and prophecy, that we think of it as normalized.

[30 : 00] Like that should be like every time we get together, someone should stand up with a word of prophecy. And over here is this, and over here. Well, Paul specifically chastised the Corinthian church for that. He said, look, you all come together with a word.

You all have a prophecy. It's just a mess. And then he has to give them specific instructions. If you're going to speak in tongues, only one or two, then there has to be interpretation. And then he says, if you're going to prophesy, two or three, and then let the others judge that sit by.

Well, there's churches today that love to speak forth prophecy. The word, the Lord told me, well, you know what? It says someone sitting by needs to judge. They need to judge according to God's nature, God's character, and God's word. So is the Holy Spirit operating?

Yes. You know what the gift is? The gift of God is the Holy Spirit. That is the gift. And then it tells us that he will decide how he wants to use the gifts among us. So we don't have to think that just because I'm not ooga-ba-booga-bing all over the place, or shunda-ba-long-bing all over the place, that like, the gifts aren't operating in me.

They are. They are. And whenever we give the Holy Spirit freedom to do that, right, we cannot, in our own effort, we cannot grow in grace. But whenever we move out of the way and say, Lord, you just take over.

[31 : 07] He will do things. We were praying Wednesday night, you know, a prayer here. And nobody was doing anything crazy or overt. Nobody was dancing or anything. And I remember sitting thinking, and the Lord put in my head this idea of like, just, I think it was Lord.

It was like, just that there's people that are, having fear and afraid. I'm like, Lord, is that something you want me to pray about? And then I think it was, Allison, up in praise for someone in the body. She knew it was struggling just with anxiety.

And the Lord just kind of spoke to my heart and said, see, I am working. I am working among you with the gifts. Just because they're not super visible, doesn't mean they're not operating.

So, at Calvary Chapel of Charlotte, we do not believe that the gifts have ceased. But neither do we think that just because we don't see the outworking, flashy show of them, that God is not operating. God is operating. The primary means by which God operates is through his word. And we've seen that through Acts. We've seen that. What does Paul do? He preaches and teaches. He goes to the synagogue and preaches and teaches and preaches and teaches, preaches and teaches.

[32 : 10] Paul says to Timothy, you know, continue in sound doctrine, teach the word, preach the word. that God mainly moves in our hearts and lives through the word administered to us by the Holy Spirit.

All right. Anyway, we'll continue on. That was my spiel about that. And again, what is the purpose? He that prophesies speaks to men to edification, exhortation, and comfort.

And when we heard these things, so what did they hear? They heard from Agabus, our buddy Agabus, in verse 11 there. When he had come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and he bound his own hands and feet, and said, thus says the Holy Spirit, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

So Agabus says, this is a word from the Lord. For you, Paul. And when we heard these things, so this is Luke, we, and the men with him, and all the company, both we, and they of that place, besought, begged him not to go up to Jerusalem.

So you have Philip and his family, you have all these people, they're begging him, do not go up to Jerusalem. Don't do this. Their response is what? Genuine. Genuine.

[33 : 21] But it's an emotional response to what God is doing among them. The moving of the Spirit very often creates an emotional response. We're emotional people. God created us to be emotional. Many times when the Spirit moves, there's an emotional response.

However, emotion is never to be used as an interpreter for the Holy Spirit. I cannot interpret what the Holy Spirit is doing based on how it moves me emotionally. Sometimes worship may be like, oh, and you just like, feel like you're gonna weep, you feel connected.

And sometimes you just kind of stand there like a limp fish. You know, it's like, has the Holy Spirit not moved in that instance? That doesn't mean he hasn't moved at all. It just means you're trying to interpret based on your emotions.

What is the trap of that? Well, you get on the emotional hamster wheel, right? If you don't have that emotion, that feeling, it can't be the Lord. It must be, something's wrong. And that's the, unfortunately, the burden that's put on so many people in the charismatic church.

Why don't speak in tongues? What's wrong with me? You know, or I haven't had that kind of experience like that person. And so you see a lot of emotionalism to counterfeit an experience just to kind of validate themselves.

[34 : 26] We're told in 1 Corinthians 2, but it is written, eye has not seen nor ear heard neither entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love him. Only God can interpret what he's doing.

But God has revealed them unto us by his spirit. For the spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. And here we see these people who loved Paul deeply. Their emotional response was actually a hindrance to the Holy Spirit's work.

Paul was to go to Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit was sending him to Jerusalem and confirming to Paul all along, this is where he's going. But this emotional response actually put a weight upon Paul.

It can be a hindrance when we respond emotionally to what God is doing. It doesn't mean we don't have emotion. It just means we don't let emotion drive us. Then Paul answered, what mean you to weep and to break my heart?

For I'm ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. If you remember back in Acts chapter 9, Paul has just met the Lord on the road to Damascus.

[35 : 31] He's three days sitting in the house blind and blanked on the guy's name. Whatever. Who's told to go and Ananias.

Yes. Go and pray for him that he may recover his sight and be filled with the spirit. Ananias doesn't want to go. So the Lord says unto him, go your way, Ananias. For he, Paul, is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. So Paul has bore the name of Christ before Gentiles and now he goes to do it before the children of Israel.

And then we're eventually going to see as we get further next, he will bear the name of Christ before kings. So Paul is ready to go. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased saying and we ceased and said, the will of the Lord be done.

And that word there persuaded is to put faith in. They were trying to get Paul. Trust us, Paul. But Paul put his faith in God's word that had been spoken to Paul and not in well-intentioned words of those who loved him.

[36 : 38] They were well-intentioned. They loved him. But Paul knew that wasn't what God wanted. We must always act according to God's will, not according to how we feel or think about his will.

No matter what I feel about it or think about it, if I know God's will, it's for me to act upon it. And I was thinking, maybe the reason that God so rarely reveals the future to us, you know, you think, oh, prophecy, a word of prophecy, what was to come, is because he knows our tendency to avoid

difficulty and pain.

If we knew pain and difficulty was coming, hey, there's a trial next month that's gonna wreck you. You're gonna be on your face before me. We're like, oh, really, Lord?

And we spend all our time trying to figure out how to navigate around that thing. I don't wanna go through that. I don't want pain. Maybe that's why God doesn't reveal the future to us so much, because he knows that we would try to avoid what is most needful for us.

And after those days, we took up our carriages. I love the King James. Picturing Paul in a bunch of carriages with like white wigs on. And went up to Jerusalem. And there went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea and brought with them one Manasin of Cyprus, an old, or literally what it means an early disciple with whom we should lodge.

[37 : 54] So it seems like this guy had some lodgings in Jerusalem. Here he's a guy that they're looking at, you know, 20 some years, 25 years after the ascension. And this was a guy who was there. One of the witnesses, one of those 500 who saw Jesus, an early disciple.

And his name means remembering. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James and all the elders were present. And when we had saluted them, or when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And so here, it specifically points out to us that Paul went into the elders and unto James.

There were multiple elders, but there was only one James. And everybody was okay with that. They recognized that, hey, God has ranged up James to lead the church in Jerusalem.

And Paul gives his missions update. Paul says, hey, let me tell you all that God has been doing. It's amazing. Paul's not always had it very comfortable with the church in Jerusalem.

[39 : 01] Remember, at first they wouldn't see him, then Barnabas had to bring him, and then there was kind of, he was creating so much problems with his zeal that once they kind of like got him out of town, it said, then had the church's rest.

So here he's back again. Right? And I think Paul, the way he responds to his return to Jerusalem is instructive for us. When he returns to Jerusalem, we see what?

He returns in respect when he goes to them. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present.

And when he had saluted them, he shows respect. He shows deference. He doesn't say, well, I'm Paul the apostle, one born out of due season, James. I'm right up there with you. There's deference. And then he was thorough and specific.

He didn't just say, yeah, God did a bunch of work. It says that he declared particularly what things God had wrought. But the interesting thing is Paul took no credit for this. Paul just says, hey, God did this.

[40 : 01] God did this. God did this. But he did take ownership. He said, this was my ministry. Paul said, this is what God did through my ministry. I'm going to, I'm going to own this, but I'm not taking any credit for this.

And when they'd heard it, they glorified the Lord and said unto him, and we'll stop there. We'll go into that whole mess next time.

You see, for Paul, there was no credit to be taken, only joy. Paul didn't take any credit. In 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 19 and 20, Paul writes, for what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Paul didn't say, it's because I did a good job, it's because my ministry was so big. It's because look what God did. He says, are not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ that is coming, for you are our glory and joy.

Paul says, man, the thing that gets me hyped up in my ministry is knowing that at the rapture, when Jesus returns to bring his bride home, you're going to be there and you're going to be there and you're going to be there and I'm going to look and I'm going to go. It wasn't in vain.

[41 : 02] Ha! Look at that. All the beatings. He's got one coming up. All of that. So Paul didn't take any credit, but man, he took a lot of joy from it. He said, yes, this is my ministry.

This is what God did and I'm going to own this and man, there's going to be joy. You know, we can own this. We can own, this is what God is doing right now. We didn't come up with this. We said, let's just do Calvary Chapel Charlotte.

Let's all leave our churches that, you know, we like really well and come and start a new church. God is doing that and there's some of us still have other churches and it's great as God brings us together. But man, we have joy and someday we're going to be there and we're going to be able to say, look at the fruit that came from that church with the silly pink carpet.

Man, we sat there and God's word spoke to our hearts and the Holy Spirit worked and I didn't know what gift was happening, but it was good. It was good. And so, we'll leave Paul there on a good note and in two weeks we'll see, we'll finish up the chapter and see where where Paul knows he's going.

You know, it's hard sometimes to accept that there's trials and troubles ahead of us. But Jesus said that through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom.

[42 : 14] So we shouldn't be surprised. But we know that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared because of the exceeding weight of glory that they result in. So yes, there's trials, but every one of those trials has exponentially greater fruit that can happen, that God can work through that trial.

We just can't avoid them. You know, we have to accept like, Lord, if you've spoken this to me, it's not for me to say, no, no, I'm not going into that. I'm not going through that. It's for me to say, okay, here I am.

As Paul would say, I didn't look at this scripture, but let's look at it real quick. Where he says, here it is.

In Romans 9, where he talks about Israel, he says, I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart so that I could wish that myself were cursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh.

Paul says, I'm willing to undergo the trials because I know that's going to work fruit and life in someone else. I think it's in Corinthians, he says, we die that you might live.

[43 : 27] And he recognized that. It's okay to die and it's okay to be in trials. God is doing a great work. But don't forget the joy, right? Don't forget the joy of the Lord that's there as we go through that.

So Father, we thank you, Lord, for, thank you for trials, Lord. Trials and tribulations, struggles and troubles. Who would we be without them, Lord? Lord, I can specifically think of extremely hard times in my life, Lord, where my faith failed, but you did not.

And Lord, my faith came forth like gold, tested in a fire. And I had this little nugget I could look at and go, that didn't fail. God kept me through what I thought would destroy me. Lord, when the emotions, when the desire to have something fulfilled in your life isn't, and faith says, forget that, walk this way, those are hard times.

It's hard to release that to you, Lord. But Lord, as we look at the life of Paul and we look at how he navigated this and his friends and brothers in Christ and sisters in Christ, Lord, he recognized there was something greater than these relationships, Lord.

And he wasn't going to sacrifice his calling and his relationship with you and the fruit and the life that was going to be worked in someone else just to make somebody else happy.

[44 : 51] Lord, when we choose to appease someone or just one step on the road to compromise. So Lord, instead, let us stand before you ready to follow wherever you lead us, Lord.

Thanking you for what you do reveal and Lord, thanking you for what you don't reveal. But thanking you, Lord, that in all things you are sufficient, Lord. You have equipped us. You've given us the Holy Spirit. We don't do this on our own.

We're not going to grow in grace on our own. We're not going to walk by faith on our own. Lord, that you said you would present us faultless before the throne. I don't have to do that. We are kept by the power of God. I don't have to do that. You'll do that.

But Lord, I have the opportunity to step out of the way and ask you to work in my life. Whether I can see it or not, whether it's an emotional response or not, whether it is super visible or super overt, or whether it's just that quiet, hidden man of the heart, Lord, that you are doing a work.

Whether I'm just one of those called to say, hey, you may be home, but you can pray. You can pray for the believers. You can pray for those in authority. You can pray that we would live godly and peaceable lives, that the gospel would go forth, that all men might be saved.

[45 : 54] And Lord, we know there'll be fruit from that. And someday we'll stand before you and with joy, we will look around at the fruit from our lives, Lord. And we won't go, ha ha, look what I did.

We're gonna stand there and we're gonna say, Lord, look what you did.

Look what you did. You took that meager offering I gave you. You took that pitiful attempt at serving you. Look what you did through it. Wow. Thank you, Lord.

I am so blessed. Lord, I pray for my brothers and sisters tonight that you'd fill them, that you'd bless them, that you'd pour out your spirit upon them. Lord, they would operate in the grace and the giftings of God, not worrying about the nuts and bolts, but Lord, just keeping their eyes fixed upon you.

You are so good and faithful. And in Jesus' name, amen.