

Hillside Fellowship Church
October 26, 2020
Gospel Impact - Acts 21:1 - 40

Transcriber -- Melani Wendling

[worship]

Pastor Dave: And Father, we again just to applaud. You have been good. You are good. And we look forward to your goodness for all eternity. Until then, we live in a fallen, broken world and there is mess all around us. So we gather just to hear from you, words of truth and light and life and strength and hope and help and healing. So thanks for giving us good news in your word. Father, I pray, even as I read through Acts 21, that you'd fill us with hope that you've done, through your son, you've done all the hard work.

And you've called us simply to come rest in him. And so I pray you would help *me* do that today. I get so anxious and nervous and worried even about preaching. And so I just want to repent of that. Would you allow me just to rest in you today; to enjoy the fact that you've done it all? Would you help us to enjoy the ride and to glorify you in the midst of this mundane world? And so I ask it, in Jesus' name, amen.

All right. Welcome. Welcome. I've met a whole bunch of first times, newcomers. So glad that you're here. You've joined us, not just online, but you've come to be with us. My name is Dave. There's absolutely nothing important or special about me except that Jesus saved me. I'm a recovering addict and alcoholic who now gets to tell people about Jesus.

And so we gather together as a whole bunch of broken people who found life in Christ. And that's what we want to share with you. So if you don't know Jesus, if you don't know where you're going to go when you die, you've got no purpose, direction in this world, so glad you're here.

Again, the word of God is going to point us to the Son of God and that's what I want to do this morning. We believe that there is no sin, no struggle too great that Jesus won't save you from, set you free and give you life in. And so, so glad you're here.

We've been going through Acts. And we're in Acts chapter 21. And I'm so grateful for Acts 21 through 28 because it's totally boring and totally mundane.

[Laughter]

And I don't mean any sacrilege or irreverence or -- I mean, it truly just reflects life. Let me show it. You go through. The only cool thing that happens is Paul gets bit by a snake and lives. Like, that's eight chapters summed up.

[Laughter]

It will make more sense. Let me read and I'll show you. Here's what the next eight chapters have for you. Acts 21:1 through 4. God says, Luke writes, 1 "When we had parted from them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos and the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara; 2 and having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail.

3 When we came in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we

kept sailing to Syria and we landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload it's cargo."

It's groceries.

4 "After looking up the disciples, we stayed there for seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem."

What we get for the next eight chapters is really travel log, star date 36. I mean, that's it. And so as a pastor, let me be very honest. This is why we tend to bunch eight chapters together, because it's like, what do you do with that? You literally have the diary of somebody who's on a boat for a long, long time.

You go through. The next one, Paul in the temple. Paul before the Jews. Paul before the counsel. Paul to Caesarea. Paul to Felix. Paul to Festus. I mean, it's one thing after another. Paul sails, gets beat down and we're like, what are we supposed to do with this?

Let me give you a big theological picture. Genesis 1 and 2, God, the maker, made everything majestic. Marvelous. It's big, isn't it? If all we had was the universe to look at, we'd be like, wow! God, the maker, makes things marvelous, majestic, they're huge. You can marvel at them for the rest of your life and still not -- I mean, it's amazing.

Here's the small theological picture. This is going to hits you where's it at. That's why I struggle with not just alcohol and substance abuse, but really numbing in all kinds of ways. Because of sin -- here's the small theological picture -- even the marvelous and the majestic become mundane to us,

don't they?

How many of you have been to the Grand Canyon? How many have been more than once? How many have been a dozen times? I can go and drive right by it now. I'm like, it's a big hole, a bunch of layers, super duper cool. Seen it. What's next? Isn't that amazing? Isn't that sad?

How many of you still get a thrill when you hold your mate's hand? Do you remember the first time and there's this amazing thrill. This person loves me and is for me. But something happens after a year, five years, 10 years. How does the marvelous become mundane? This is what sin has done.

Most of my life -- and this is the hard part for me -- most of my life is very mundane. I was going to call this sermon, "Filling up your car with gas for the glory of God."

[Chuckling]

I wake up and my days are mundane. Sometimes I shave. Generally I don't. Sometimes I shower. Sometimes I don't.

[Laughter]

I try and brush my teeth. But I spend a lot of time driving and I'm like, God, when I stand before you, I kind of imagine you being like, Dave, I was looking at your life and most of it was super duper mundane.

[Laughter]

Right? Because in this world, most of our days are filled with

mundane. So much so that most of my life is a blur. Changing diapers, feeding kids. It's just a blur. Does any of this matter to God? I'm so grateful for Acts 21 through 28. It's totally mundane and what you're going to see is that our majestic, marvelous maker entered this mundane world to bring meaning and mattering things into the mundane. There is no more mundane.

You see, if anything is meaningless, then most of my life is meaningless. If there's anything meaningless, then most of my life in this mundane world is meaningless. And I think that's why we struggle. So we try and do very big things. We try and change the world. Jesus wants to change us so that those mundane things become mattering things.

I'll show you in Paul's life. I'll show you maybe -- we've got 28 minutes left -- I'll show you maybe a dozen things. Paul is one of the most -- next to Jesus, he's one of the most influential people in history. Like, I don't know anybody here, even my atheist friends, would say, no, that's not true. Paul founded churches everywhere that changed the face of the world.

He is one of the most impactful, influential people who's ever lived and I want to show you how his life was so impactful and influential. It was through the simple mundane things where the Maker meets us and turns the mundane into meaningful mattering things. This is what I love about Jesus. Honestly.

You see, he puts greatness in reach of all of us. See, in this world only certain people can be great. If you have a lot of money, you have a lot of power, you're from a family line of power. In this world, only certain people can be great

according to the world's standard. Do you know our King has made greatness available to all? If you want to be great in the kingdom of God, learn to be the . . . servant of all.

Anyone and everyone in God's kingdom can be super duper great if we'll just humble ourself, love and serve. He's made greatness available to all of us. Watch. Paul's going to walk it out. I'm going to begin in Acts chapter 20, verse 36, 37. We'll go through. I want some runway on this to show you the first thing that made Paul's life super influential.

How did Jesus work in Paul to change everything? And therefore the question is, how can he work in me to change me; to change the system I'm in? Watch this. Chapter 20, verse 36.

36 "When he had said these things . . . " That's Paul " . . . he (Paul) knelt down and prayed with them (the Ephesians) 36 and they began . . . " Watch this. " . . . they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul and repeatedly kissed him; 37 grieving especially over the word which he had spoken. That they would not see his face again. And they were accompanying him to the ship."

Acts 21:1 "When he had parted from them and had set sail, . . . " 21:1 is very interesting. Anybody have the NIV? Really? Oh, really? What is 21:1 instead of "parted from them?"

Member: Torn ourselves away.

Pastor Dave: Yeah, I like that. He actually uses, in the Greek, a word that means withdrawals. Well, I'm not going to ask you who's been through withdrawals. Horrible

question. When I was in rehab and withdrawing, there comes these shakes that come with, where you're tearing yourself apart or away. It's probably a better translation.

When we had torn ourselves -- actually it's in the past. We had been torn from them. Jesus said, we had to go. You want to live a life of impact and influence? You want to have a high impact life? Learn to love like Jesus. Learn to give yourself away. You live in a world that rejects vulnerability. I'll just throw it out there.

Therefore, we never seem to connect with anyone. I call it my Bug Out Bag Principle. Again, I won't ask how many have bug out bags. I will say, how many have heard the term, "Bug Out Bag?" I think when President Obama came, most of us republicans were like, get ready.

[Laughter]

We're going to have to but out. It's funny. I don't know where we'd all go, but some of us have a plan to go somewhere. But even the places that we would bug out to, they've got bug out bags. And I'm like, where are you guys going?

[Laughter]

You are where everybody is going to. Anyway, here's the point. Most of us live bug out lives. That is, we know we're only going to live in a place for three to five years. So why get connected? Why be vulnerable? Why share yourself? I'm just going to have to move again. Paul was here for three years and he was so vulnerable and shared his life with them that he connected with them.

Many of us have been in our neighborhoods three years and don't even know our neighbor's name. That's just data. That's just stats. I'm not making that up. It's like, well I'm probably going to have to move again. People equal problems and pain. Why would I want more problems and pain? So instead of being vulnerable, we become invulnerable, we armor up and we keep people -- we Heisman. We Heisman this junk.

We are going to be different because we're actually going to live vulnerable lives with one another. 1 Peter 1:22. "Be devoted to one another in love." You know, as dads, most of our kids grow up never seeing us cry. Because that would just be too much. What if my kids saw me cry? They would think we're weak. We interpret love and vulnerability as weakness. But it's actually strength, isn't it?

You see, you want to know how Paul made an impact and influence? It wasn't because he was super duper smart and had a huge IQ. He did, but he actually gave himself away. You want to live a life of high impact and high influence? Learn to love like Jesus. He gave himself. He did not hold back. He was open. Watch what comes next. Beautiful.

Watch this. 2 "When we had parted from them and had set sail, we ran a straight course . . ." This is where it gets mundane. ". . . straight course to Cos and then the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara; 3 and having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. 4 When we came in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, . . ." So we turned right. ". . . we kept sailing for Syria and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload its cargo.

5 After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem."

Again, just a travel log. We went from here to here to here to here. But then when we arrived -- did you see it? "When we arrived at Tyre; . . . " We were going to stay there for a while because they were unloading cargo. So what did we do? We looked up the disciples. Well, who? I don't know. He doesn't say. But he's like, we're here for seven days, let's find somebody to love. Isn't that amazing?

You see, in this world we tend to focus our time on accomplishing things? Where are my task list people? We'll just write lists down. Nothing wrong with that. I think list people help get stuff done. And I'm totaly a list person. But you know your lists can actually cause you to miss the mattering things? They just do, because you lose sight of the meaningful, mattering things.

You want to live a life of impact and influence, here's what Jesus wants to do in you. He doesn't want you to be fast, famous, furious and fancy. That's America. This is how we run church in America. Let's do more, let's get faster, let's go fast furious, let's be fancy, let's be famous, let's have famous pastors.

Jesus is the famous one.

Member: Amen.

Pastor Dave: Like we can all agree on that, right. Therefore, no matter how much the church grows or doesn't grow, how

big, it's not about running fast, furious, fancy and being famous. It's about being faithful. Paul simply shows up. He's like, hey, we're here for seven days. Let's love somebody.

Here's the bottom line; what I would write down. This is true. I can't love everybody everywhere. But we tend to take that out and say, because I can't love everyone everywhere, I'll just love nobody and I'll stay at home. You can't love everybody everywhere, but you can love somebody right where you are.

So you want to live a life of impact and influence, love the person God has you with. Start there and watch. See, we typically want him to change everything out there, but he wants to change what's in here. You want to live a life of impact and influence just be faithful to love the one that Jesus has put you around. Start there.

Paul goes. What were their names? I don't know. Paul didn't even know. They didn't even make it. They were just the disciples that were there at Tyre. Which is interesting because they come from chapter 12, verse 20 when Herod got -- I don't have time.

[Laughter]

It's beautiful. But that's not part of the sermon. Watch this. 21:5 and 6. It's hard to skip it. It's hard to skip it, but I'm trying to be faithful to the time. Let's go. Verse 5 "When our days there were ended, we left and started on our journey, while they all, . . ." The saints there at Tyre. ". . . with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said

farewell to one another.

6 "Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home again." See? These are just mundane things, right? You read through and you're like, Lord, thank you for your word. I don't know what to do. Two times in the last 18 verse, Paul has done something incredible. Did you see it? He seems to live on his knees. There's something about Paul, where he's going he's like, man, I'm not in control of the ship.

I know that trouble is waiting for me at Jerusalem, but I'm not in control of this thing. I'm not driving the ship. So what Paul does is he lives a life of deep impact and influence. He just humbles himself. You want to live a life of impact and influence, here's what Jesus wants to do in me. He wants to humble me.

You see, in a haughty world where everybody is bickering, arguing and fighting, he wants to grow me to be a humble man of God. That's what he wants to do in you too. He wants you to surrender. There's so many people here this morning that aren't Christians. We know the message. Don't get me wrong. We know the message, but we've never humbled ourselves. We've never submitted to Jesus.

We're still running the ship. I call it the Home Depot Principle. Anybody ever take your kids to Home Depot? Or HEB for that matter. I could call it the HEB Principle but I take my kids to Home Depot more than HEB. They've got these kid carts that are amazing. HEB's *and* Home Depot's, they look like little race cars. You gotta take your kids!

[Laughter]

What kind of parents and grandparents are you?

[Laughter]

Because you put them in there and they've got steering wheels. And you're kid's like [making car noises with mouth.] They think they're driving until they get to like three or four. And then my little baby girl, she's like this. "Daddy, it's not turning!" I'm like, because you're not steering. It's not -- baby, there's no rack and pinion. It's not connected. She'll start crying, because she literally thought she was controlling this mug. She was driving.

What Paul shows here, read through chapter 21, every time Paul leaves, he just does something simple. He'll get on his knees, because -- God doesn't demand that I get on my knees, that you get on your knees, but there's something about the physicality for me of getting in a physical posture saying, I'm not steering the ship and I'm not in control that helps release and surrender my soul that wants to be in control and wants to be in charge.

You want to live a life of impact and influence in your home, as a husband, as a dad, as a boss? Learn what it means to walk in humility. You're. Not. Steering. The. Cart. Enjoy the ride. I'm so glad you're not steering the cart. I'm glad that Jesus hasn't let steer this mug. We would've run into andromeda. We would've taken this whole Milky Way and run it into andromeda 1000 years ago. We would've made a mess out of this thing.

The steering wheel isn't connected. Humble yourself and enjoy the ride. Learn what it means. See, God's opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble. What would it look

like today to humble yourself and just say, Jesus, help? I can guarantee you that the problem you're in, if you've not humbled yourself and asked for help, then you're not getting help. He loves to give grace and help to the humble.

Try it today. I can guarantee your life will be one of impact and influence. Watch what comes next. This is 7, 8. This is hilarious. You're not going to pick it up unless you've got your Greek texts and you see tau tah show up. But it's been several chapters since that word now has showed up. And it shows up in a weird place. Like, Luke and Paul are shocked by this.

Watch this. Let's start with verse 7. "When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and after greeting the brethren, we stayed with them for a day. 8 On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, . . ." That's Phillip. ". . . and entering the house of Philip . . ."

Remember him? Philip the evangelist? You go back earlier, he's telling -- like, amazing guy. ". . . Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him." Verse 9. Here's the shock. NOW! Now you can read through your text. That's like a camera shift, like angle shift, like, we don't know what to do with this. Look over here.

9 "Now Philip had four (unmarried or) virgin daughters who were prophetesses." This to a Jew would be shocking. Even western evangelicalism, we don't know what to do with this so we try and just speak it away. Because, to us, God expects to lead. And therefore, in the west, the west has been very detrimental to femininity. Very detrimental to girls.

It's basically saying, y'all don't really have a role in the

church. Let us guys figure it out. Paul would have been raised every morning to pray, God, thank you that you did not make me a gentile. Thank you that you didn't make me a slave and thank you that you didn't make me a woman.
[Chuckling.]

Nobody else finds that funny. See? This is why we just skip over it. We're like, well, we don't know exactly what they did. Let's just move on.

[Laughter]

You want to live a life of impact and influence? Don't be a religious, rigid cat. Be someone who's gentle. Guess what? I don't have it all figured out. The more study, the more I read, the fewer answers I have. How many of you know somebody who will argue with anyone at any time, anywhere; they just have to be right? That's called rigidity. Living inside of a box and you force everybody else to live inside of that box. And if they don't, you just dismiss them.

I call this politics in America.

[Laughter]

So 50% doesn't listen to 50%. We just argue. You don't fit my box. I'm done with you. The church does it as well. You want to live a life of impact and influence, just realize -- how do I make this equal? How many of you dudes have tool boxes? In that toolbox, how many of you have multiple tools? Not just one. Okay.

Here's how I make it even. How many of you gals have shoe closets?

[Chuckling]

In that shoe closet, how many of you have multiple shoes? Yeah. So we're even. Stop whining about her shoes, dude.

[Chuckling.]

Now for you ladies. Totally on your side. Honestly, whenever Brooke wants shoes, I'm like, do it. Go for it. I've got extra tools too. God's got a big toolbox and he's got a big shoe closet. Because he's got a big job to do and it requires all kinds of different tools or shoes. Sometimes flats don't work. You need pumps. You need heels. You need running shoes. We could go on and on. We could get into the tools too.

God's going to use the tools that he's going to use to get the job done that he wants to get done. Learn to be gentle. Learn to be gentle. You know? Read through the gospels. This is the one characteristic that Jesus gives about himself. I am gentle, lowly, approachable.

You want to live a life of influence and impact, quit telling everybody where they're wrong and how dumb they are. Be gentle. Be approachable. Why were Philip's four daughters prophetesses? I don't know, but I'm sure they told a lot of people in a lot of places about Jesus, and I praise God that he gives us all exactly how he wants us.

Learn to be gentle. You'll see it changes everything when you learn to be approachable and not reactive. Watch what comes next. Okay. We'll go 10 through 14. Beautiful. This is what Jesus wants to do in you and through you. Watch.

In a world of panic, he wants to make us into a people of peace. Watch how Paul interacts on the subject matter.

Verse 10. "As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, 'This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the gentiles.' "

12 And when we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began begging (Paul) not to go up to Jerusalem." If you go through the pronouns, even Luke turns against Paul here. Watch how the pronouns shift. It's Paul versus everybody else.

13 "Then Paul answered, 'What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' 14 And since he would not be persuaded, we (Luke and all the group) fell silent, remarking, 'The will of the Lord be done.'"

Honestly, you see, Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He purchased peace with God through his shed blood. He has sent us out with a message of peace and we are to be a people of peace in a world of panic. Have you seen the world panic? It's all that the world has. The world without Jesus Christ cannot answer the biggest question of life; what happens when you die?

The world has no answer for that. Now, you can try and do away with it, you can take an evolutionary approach. Well, we're just accidents. Therefore when you die, nothing. But our souls won't let us stay there. And that is why when we

have a pandemic, and even a small fraction of the populous dies, we panic and freak out. It has nothing to do with the pandemic. It has to do with the fact that we're being confronted with our mortality.

And I'm sorry. It's a shock to me as a pastor that some of us live 50 and 60 years never experiencing anyone around us die. That's a shock to me when I sit with you and you're totally crushed and broken down because it's the first time in 60 years you've ever been confronted with death.

You want to live a life of impact and influence? Answer the deepest question in life. What happens when you die? You see, this is the CDC Principle. Every year I get a report from the CDC that tells me the top 12 killers in America. Now they're pretty standard. They're usual suspects. Heart disease. You go through and they're pretty normal suspects that kill us.

But the truth is, and this may come as a shock to some of you, 100% of us will die. You *will* die. Maybe from a heart attack. That's the number one. Maybe from a stroke. Maybe from an accident. That's like the number three. It's pretty high up there. There's a whole list of things that kill you, but you *will* die.

And if you want to live a life of impact and influence, answer the question. Death shines a dark, dark light. But that dark light is very bright. And if you haven't answered that question, you'll always live with a sense of panic, either over-functioning, under-functioning, withdrawing or going to war. But you *will* react to it. You see what Paul said? Guys, get off my back. I'm not only willing to suffer, but I'm willing to die at Jerusalem.

You see, this is why Jesus matters. Only Jesus defeated death. Therefore, if you don't know Jesus, you don't know peace and you will be bitter, frustrated, angry and you will live in panic. And you create panic all around you. Paul says, dudes, chill out. It's okay if I die. Jesus rose and has given us hope beyond the grave. So let's follow him. And they're like, his will be done.

Like, his peace brings them peace. And that's what you're to be. An agent of peace wherever you go. Watch what comes next. This is 15 through 19. Five minutes. Doing well. Kind of. Because -- oh, I'm doing poorly. There's a whole nother page. [Chuckling.]

[Laughter]

I thought I was doing awesome. Awww! Well, let's go for it. Let's just have fun. Watch this. 15 through 20. A life of impact, influence. Watch where he goes here. This is so good. And I'll, I'll, I'll -- let me read it.

[Laughter]

15 "After these days we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem. 16 Some of the disciples from Caesarea also came with us, taking us to Mnason of Cyprus, a disciple of long standing with whom we were to lodge. 17 After we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18 And the following day . . . " Watch this. " . . . the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present."

Verse 19. "And after he had greeted them, he began to

relate one by one the things which God had done among the gentiles through his ministry. 20 And when they heard it they began glorifying God; . . . "

Have you read in all of Acts up to this point? Paul has been beaten, stoned, dragged around, plotted against. They thought he was dead. They thought they killed him, but then he got up. Not a lot of good things have happened to Paul. I'll just throw it out there. But when Paul finally gets back to Jerusalem, did you see what he highlighted?

You live a world that happens to be jaded. And whenever someone's heart is jaded, all they can see is negative. And this is why we live in one of the most toxic environments known to mankind. Filled with criticism, cynicism, skepticism and complaint. These are radioactive to our souls, because it's just begin to take us over. That radiation spreads.

Did you see what Paul did? There's a secret in here. There's a secret to overcoming the jaded, critical, cynical world around us. It's called joy. But joy is almost impossible to get. For hundreds of years we've been pursuing it with all of our might. The pursuit of happiness. But did you know that pursuit of happiness, after 250 plus years -- and we don't talk about this because we consider it to be rude -- but now after 250 years of pursuing happiness, we are the most in debt, obese, hypertensive, stressed out, jaded that we've ever been since we've been taking the report.

Since we've been collecting data, we are the most in debt, obese, medicated, stressed, hypertensive people that this world has ever known. We don't know joy. We've become jaded. If you want to live a life, if you want to live a life of high impact and influence, it's not going to look like the

world. If you look like the world, you'll become jaded.

So what Paul does is gives us this little antidote to being jaded. It's gratitude. You can't have joy without gratitude. The two are inexorably linked. You don't believe me? June 6, 2017, UC Berkeley.edu, "How Gratitude Changes the Brain and the Body." You would think that Berkeley became Christian and started studying the Bible. I read the report. It's like, you've got to be kidding me.

[Chuckling]

I tell you all the time, science is catching up to the Bible. It's going to take several thousand more years because they've done away with God. Science will slowly catch up to the Bible. Even Berkeley is coming out saying, you can't be happy if you don't learn to be grateful. What Paul did here is he recounted one by one, the blessings that God had done. Sound familiar?

So if you don't know joy, if you've become jaded, there's a jaded anger angst in your marriage, start by just giving thanks. It's a practice. It doesn't come natural to the flesh. You're like, but Dave, I don't like my spouse. Start by being grateful that *anyone* married you.

[Laughter]

Like, if nobody has ever told you this . . .

[Laughter]

Honestly, I get all frustrated. I'm like, oh, I can't believe Brooke! She didn't wash my clothes! Then I look in the

mirror.

[Laughter]

Then I remember, she loved me while I was still in rehab. Like, that's something. Right? And so when you can get honest with yourself and sit in front of the mirror, then you can be grateful and that will take the jadedness away and you can actually give thanks that God allowed somebody to love me in this broken world. And that is beautiful.

Paul sits down and they're like, Paul, how's the ministry journey been? He could've said, they beat me, they stoned me, they left me for dead, they broke my ribs, here they flogged me, here they locked me up. Then I was in jail. They tortured me. Remember that? He doesn't. He said, God has been doing amazing things and he recounted one by one the things that God had done.

Now watch what comes next. Oh, five seconds. All right. But we're going to do it.

[Laughter]

Watch this. We'll go 20 through 26. Because if you want, honestly, if you want to see Jesus work through you, it's not something big. It's a whole bunch of little things. Here's what I should've done. I'm so sorry. I'm just preaching Galatians chapter 5. The fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. This is what the Spirit of God wants to grow in you.

And as he does that, he will flow through you and your life

will be that of impact and influence. It'll look totally different from the world. Look what Paul does next. Verse 20. "And when they heard it they began glorifying God, and they said to him, 'You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law;

21 and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs (of the law). James says, 22 "What, then, is to be done (Paul)? They will certainly hear that you have come.

23 Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; (they've got to go to the temple) take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the law.

24 But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, (back in Acts 15) having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.

25 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them."

This is such a beautiful -- I would cross-reference -- I would write down 1 Corinthians chapter 9 where Paul said, I've

become all things to all men so that for the glory of God, I might, by all means save some. You see, he rejected this religious rigidity that said, it has to be my way.

Paul was free. Jesus had set him free from the law. Paul was free to enjoy creation. He was free to enjoy everything that God created. But he chose to set that freedom aside. It's kindness. It's a simple thing that's actually a fruit of the Spirit. A kindness. Unwilling to assert your own rights in order to accommodate somebody else. We've totally lost this in America.

We've become all about individual rights. These are MY rights. I fight for MY rights. Forget everybody else. See kindness says, I don't have to have my rights anymore. Kindness seeks to meet someone else where they're at. It's kneeling down to look a child in the eyes and love them. So you're not speaking down to them! I'm up here and you should be up here too.

It's accommodating them. Tell me more. You're on level with them. It's just called kindness. It's angled entry. Study the Space Shuttle. Reentering orbit. It matters how you enter somebody else's orbit. The Space Shuttle doesn't enter between 37 and 43 degrees. Guess what happens?

Member: Burn up.

Pastor Dave: yeah. Unless you're a conspiracy theorist and say we never went to the moon. But that, we'll have a different talk.

[Laughter]

But honestly, if you do not adjust your angle of entry, the relationship will burn up. Will you have your rights? Yeah. And you'll be all alone. You want to know why we're in a loneliness epidemic? Because we don't care what anybody else thinks. I'm right and I'm going to enter at Mach 5 and if you don't like it, you can deal with it.

I love this here. Paul says, I'm going to be very careful how I enter this orbit. Now, does that always make a difference? Does that actually impact how the conversation goes? No. Haters are going to hate. Watch this.

[Laughter]

27. No I tell you. You can do everything right. Jesus did, didn't he? Never sinned. His angle of entry, the light shined in the darkness. He entered perfectly. Endured the heat. Landed at Houston. And guess what happened? We crucified him. He did everything perfectly.

So your angle of entry with your spouse, with your community group, at work, with your neighbors, with the HOA. [Chuckling.]

[Laughter]

It's still going on. I'm so sorry. That happened. It can be perfect and you can have all of your arguments in place. But watch what happens.

27 "When the seven days were almost over, the Jews from Asia, upon seeing Paul in the temple, began to stir up . . . "

Watch Paul's self-control. This is just beautiful. You want to

make an impact in this world? Watch what they do to Paul and watch how Paul responds. You're not in control of anybody else. Remember, the steering wheel isn't connected. Enjoy the ride. But God is going to hold you accountable for whether you can control yourself. And I want you to see what the Spirit of God did in Paul. Because the Spirit of God used Paul to change everything. I'm just going to read through and then I'll land the plane very quickly.

27 "When the seven days were almost over, the Jews from Asia, upon seeing Paul in the temple, began to stir up all the crowds and they laid hands on him." Was Paul's angle of entry perfect? Yes. Did it make a difference? No. They still laid hands on him.

" . . . and they were all 28 crying out, 'Men of Israel, come to our aid! This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere'"

They'll always use hyperbole. Pauls preaching to ALL men EVERYWHERE. That's not fair, is it? Hyperbole is never fair in an argument. You've painted me into a corner. If I *always* do this, if I *never* do that.

" . . . he's preaching to all men everywhere against our people and the Law and this place; and besides he has even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place."

Is that true? No. Even Luke says, 29 "For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple."

It was a supposition. It wasn't true. 30 "Then all the city was provoked, and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut. 31 While they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the commander of the Roman cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. 32 At once he took along some soldiers and centurions and ran down to them; and when they saw the commander and the soldiers, (finally) they stopped beating Paul."

Now I don't know if you've ever been in a street fight, gang fight, mob riot. Anybody ever been part of a riot? Okay, one. One. Awesome. California.

[Laughter]

California, Oregon, Washington. That's my people.

[Laughter]

When you're there, when you're in the street fight, in the riot, in the gang fight, gunfire is going off, the last thing you do is typically sit back and think, what's going on inside of me right now and how do I function in self-control?

[Laughter]

No, honestly. You literally go -- some people flee, some people pick up bricks, rocks, sticks, guns and fight or you freeze and you just fall to the ground. Watch what Paul does because this is what the Spirit of God does in us.

Verse 31 "They were seeking to kill him, a report came to the

commander of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. 32 At once he took along some soldiers and centurions and ran down to them, and when they saw (them), they stopped beating Paul."

Verse 33 "When the commander came up and took hold of him and ordered him to be bound with two chains; and he began asking who he was and what he had done. 34 But among the crowd some were shouting one thing and some another, and when he could not find out the facts because of the uproar, (this commander) ordered him to be brought into the barracks.

35 When he got (into the barracks), he (Paul) was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob; (so it got really bad) 36 for the multitude of people kept following them, shouting, 'Away with (Paul)!' "

36 As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, . . . "

Watch this. See this is where I would cry out, unfair! I didn't bring a Gentile into the temple! I haven't done anything wrong! This is unfair! This is wrong! Watch what Paul says.

36 "As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the commander, 'May I say something to you?'"

[Chuckling.]

This is the first time Paul speaks here. And he says, commander, may I say something to you? Well that threw the commander off. The commander looks at him -- where are we?

The commander looks at him "And he said, 'Do you know Greek?'"

This is profound and you'll miss it in the text. Paul saw the commander. Knew he spoke Koinia Greek. So Paul's like, I'm going to enter in at the right angle with this commander and speak Greek to him. The commander was like, so you know Greek? Which meant, you are educated. You can't be what they're saying about you.

So he says, 37 "'Then you are not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?'. 38 But Paul said, 'I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city, and I beg you, allow me to speak to the people.'"

How many of you, if you had a mob of thousands wanting to kill you, just got done beating you, they're all running after you would say, sir, may I speak to this crowd.

[Chuckling]

See this, if you want to live a life of impact and influence, learn to function under the control of the Holy Spirit. You see, he's not going to take you to be frenzied or freak out or fight or flee or freeze. He really will give you what you need at the moment to enter into whatever conversation or situation. I don't know what it will look like. He'll give that to you though.

Now watch verse 40. "When he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the stairs, . . ."

So he stood above the people. Watch what he did. Again,

you'll miss this just in the English.

" . . . he motioned to the people with his hand; . . . "

What this meant was Paul was a professional speaker. Back then, school of Tyranus in the marketplace, when somebody wanted to speak in a Socratic, platonic way, they would let the crowd know, I'm a professional speaker and I have something to say.

So Paul stood and up and he's like, guys, you want to kill me, but first let me speak to you. " . . . and when there was a great hush, he spoke to them in a Hebrew dialect, . . . "

So now he's going to enter the Jewish orbit at a Jewish trajectory to speak to them. " . . . saying, . . . "

Now you'll have to wait 'til next week to see what he says.

[Laughter]

I don't know who wrote up the sermon outlines or the preaching schedule, but I'm so mad at him. It's just ridiculous.

Here's the bottom line. The Spirit of God wants to work in you. Love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. You want to make a difference, you want to be a person of impact and influence in this world. I'll tell you this. We live in a world with zero self-control.

Again, we don't talk about it, because to do so would be to call out the actual issue. Our world has no self-control.

Again, I will point you back to the data. We are the most in debt, obese, over-medicated, hypertensive, stressed cohort there's ever been. We have zero self-control. And because of that, we seek to control others. You'll see it all around.

If I can't control me, maybe I can control my spouse. Maybe I can control my kids. Maybe I can control politics. Maybe I can control the country. We do that because we're unable to control what's going on inside so we seek to control what's going on all around us.

Jesus wants to change what's going on inside of us and grow us in what it means to be loving, joyful, peaceful, patient. This is why the gospel is so brilliant. Jesus came to show us, in this mundane world, how to live a magnificent life. Jesus simply loved perfectly and laid his life down for the well-being of others. And that love changed history as we know it.

You want to live a life of impact and influence? Allow Christ Jesus to reign in your body. Submit to him today and watch, the Spirit of God will grow you to look more and more like Jesus, which will change everything inside of you so that a lost and dying world might see you and say, that's what Jesus looks like.

Let's pray. Father God, thank you for this morning, for the time. Your word is wonderful, delightful. It's so good. Would you help me to know what it means to submit and surrender that you might grow me to be a man who's self-controlled; ruled by the Holy Spirit? Would you grow me in what it means to be loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, filled with goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control so that your message won't just be a message that I speak,

but will be a message that's lived out through my life?

Would you do this in us so that we might impact this community for Christ? It's in his name I pray, amen.

[Ending song]