

## Gospel Expansion / Acts 13:1-41

Pastor Dave: Father, we gather to simply say, thank you for all that you have done for us. You've met our every need through your Son, Jesus Christ. And so, I'm grateful for this group of people that we can gather with and worship you. There's so many needs represented this morning and I'm overwhelmed just to think of a handful. You know what we need. You know where we're struggling with addiction and depression. You know exactly where to meet us this morning. So I pray that as I open your Word, I've got nothing to offer, so as I empty myself I ask that you fill me through your Spirit. Would you care for, shepherd, serve, encourage, equip your body for your glory?

Father, I pray that you would use this time to strengthen the weak, to feed the hungry, to comfort those that are afflicted, that you'd be glorified through this time. So I give it to you, even as we get ready to read your Word. Would you prepare our hearts to receive truth from you that we might be transformed by you to look more like you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, I have missed you guys. It's so good to see you. Brooke and I missed you. And I want to say thank you for your incredible gift to us. Just being able to spend time together. Life really does go by quick and you've given us an amazing gift. So from Brooke and myself, we love you and thank you for the time. We missed you. We looked forward to being back.

And so, to the guests and visitors, I see some of you for the first time. Tommy. Man, my Sunday is made. I love you, man. Glad you're here. To guests and visitors who haven't

been here before, my name is Dave. I get the honor of serving as lead pastor. I get to teach. Hillside simply believes that Jesus changes everything. He has continued to do that through the body of Christ. He changes us individually. But Christianity isn't a solo sport. I can't do it alone. I can't stay sober alone. So he puts us together in the body so that we might grow together. So that as we are being made one, a world that can't get along looks at us and is like, what? Maybe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Look at what he's done with this diverse group of people. We're so glad you're here.

We've been walking through the book of Acts looking at how Jesus, historically has changed everything. Today, you'll see the church continue to expand through Paul and Barnabas. We've been walking through Acts because as Hillside, we don't want it to be just about us. We want Jesus to use us to start new works in new places, new churches in new places so we can serve more people and watch more people come to Christ Jesus. And he's doing it, y'all. Even today, I'm looking out and seeing people who have been Christians for days. I'm seeing people who have been Christians for decades. But also for days. So he's bringing more people in.

Let me read Acts 13, verses 1 through 5.

If there's any way you can turn down my mic just a bit. It's ringing up here. It's messing with my had.

Acts 13:1-5, it's just going to be names. Let me tell you the struggle we're going to have before I read it. This is actually a lot of names and geography and then Paul's first sermon. So I'm going to give you a sermon about a sermon with

some names and geography. You see the struggle? Sermons are bad enough, amen? It's okay we live in America. I get you for 30 second chunks of attention. But then a sermon about a sermon? Oh, man. But watch. This is going to be delightful. So we'll walk through it. Let me read 13:1-5.

[Reading: Acts 13:1-5]

Now I'm not going to read through all 43 verses. I just wanted to give an intro. Let me give you a big theological picture and then a small theological picture so that brand new Christians can understand this passage in light of the whole Bible.

If you read through the whole Bible, one of the main truths, the main doctrines about God you'd walk away with is God is trinity. He exists in perfect community and unity and harmony from all eternity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That matters because you have been created in God's image so you need community.

Here's the small theological picture you also see in the Bible. Sin crushes community. Sin divides and always leads to isolation. It will kill you. This is why we have a loneliness epidemic right now. You've got apps. You can swipe right and swipe left and all kinds of ways to connect with people, but we don't know how to be in community where we walk through conflict together and we're filled with courage through the gospel to face a broken world.

God exists in community, unity. Sin crushes community which leads to isolation. This Bible tells one story of one God who has one plan to reconcile us to himself through his

Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus came, lived a life without sin so he could die on a cross, taking our sin. He was buried, paying for sin, removing sin. He rose again and now he gives us salvation that's by grace. You can't earn it. Through faith, not of works. In Christ Jesus. And he reconciles us to himself and to one another creating community that can walk through conflict and be courageous.

That's what we need whether you realize it or not. We need a community. I need a community as a recovering addict and alcoholic that I can walk through conflict with and have the courage to face a world that rejects Christianity and Jesus Christ. The church is going to expand through that community that is willing to walk through conflict together and be courageous because you and I have this same message.

Here's the big point. I'll end with it in 32 minutes. I'm afraid I'm going to lose you in the midst so let me proclaim it to you. If you take Paul's sermon from 2000 years ago and preached it today, it's just as applicable. Because you're going to die, I'm going to die and we all have to deal with that. Therefore, the resurrection is for everybody. You need this. Even those here that are not saved. You need this because you're going to die and you're going to look for something to live for. So Paul tells you what to live for that matters eternally.

Let's walk through it together. We'll start with community. I'll prove it through the Rubic's Cube that it's a necessity. Does nobody have a Rubic's Cube? Honestly. Have I come back to a worm hole time warp? Does everybody know what a Rubic's Cube is?

Watch. Here's where community starts. [Reading: Acts 13:1.] It started in Jerusalem but now Antioch's the epicenter of the church. So Antioch is going to be where the church begins to spread around the world.

Luke starts out by saying the word Antioch means prophets. Prophets are those that foretell. They say what God has said. It's not anything weird like Nostradamus like there's going to be an earthquake at some point at some time and somewhere in some way. That's just weird and we'd call that prophecy. A prophet just says what God has already said. We don't come up with anything new. So there's prophets and there are teachers.

Teachers help you apply and walk through the truth so you know how to live it out. The church needs both prophets, thus says the Lord, and teachers. Here's how you apply it.

Here's the really good news that I want you to know. God has given the church everything she needs, every day she lives, for everything he's asked her to do. We're not deficient.

If I were sitting where you're sitting, my argument would be, well then why is the church so messy? Has anyone ever looked at the church and said, man, that's messy? Yes, he's given us everything we need every day we live for everything he's asked us to do. But there's still some assembly required, amen? Just because the present came in the box, you still have to assemble it. This is what 1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14 is all about. This is what Ephesians chapter 4 is all about.

Yeah, he's gifted each one of you. Now we've got to learn

how to take those gifts and use them together for the admonition, exhortation, equipping and growth of the body. This takes decades, not days, yo. This is an ongoing work. Not only is assembly required, sometimes reassembly is required. Have you ever bought anything from IKEA? You don't have to admit it. I'll admit it. I'll buy stuff from IKEA and I don't really like directions. I think directions are a waste of paper.

[Laughter]

At least 50% of the things I've gotten from IKEA, there was some assembly required and I knew that. I just didn't know reassembly would be required. I'd have to take it apart. It happened at your house too with the chairs. You have to take it apart and put it back together.

The church does that. And that's okay. That's how we learn what it means to walk with Jesus. Listen, just because you have to reassemble -- this is what marriage is. Right? You make it to one point and then you have kids and you gotta reassemble the whole mug. Marriage is tough enough with just two people, amen? Then you throw a kid in there, you have to relearn it. Then the kid grows up and goes to school and you have to learn it again and reassemble again. Then they go off to college and then you're stuck with your partner again and you have to relearn it again.

The church goes through this. But God has given us everything we need, every day that we live, what he has asked of us. But it requires that each of us use our gifts, as a body, so that Jesus Christ is made much of.

This is going to be a long time. I'm down to 18 minutes. I've

got more verses to go.

Watch the rest of verse 1 on community. [Reading: verse 1.] Watch the team. Jesus puts together terrific teams, y'all. Watch this. [Reading: verse 1.] Barnabas was a Cypriote Jew. He wasn't from Jerusalem. He was from Cyprus. But he was a bi-cultural Jew. So there's one of your teammates.

Who's next? Simeon. He was called Niger. He was from Africa. He's a black dude. So you had a Cypriote, a bi-cultural Jew, and a black guy. Now watch this. And Lucius of Cyrene was on the team. Lucius of Cyrene would have been from Africa but more northwest. He would have been Arabic. So you have a black guy, an Arabic guy, and a Cypriote Jew.

And then there was Manaen. He had been brought up with Herod. He puts that in there because this cat would have been rich. He was a *somebody*. He was no niner, yo.

[Laughter.]

I don't know if that's inappropriate, but you taught me that. So if it's inappropriate, that's you. But that's what you taught me. Minaen would have been a wealthy, well-to-do guy who hung out with the while Herodian dynasty. Not only that, then you have Saul, who's just like a mega brain. He was like a Braniac. This dude was like a professor. He was a Pharisee. He was a Jew. You see the team that Jesus has brought together here? This team was totally and profoundly diverse. So diverse, this is your leadership team and there's nobody that's alike here.

You know when God builds teams, he builds very diverse

teams. He'll bring people from all over and bring them together. You know, we would call that a recipe for disaster. Right? That's called "tension" because I guarantee they were from all different political backgrounds. They had different philosophy on politics, society, and life. Yet, Jesus brings them together in this tension.

Let me tell you what I learned from physics class. How many have ever taken any type of physics class? Dr. Dave was amazing because he shifted my perspective on tension.

See, life is lived in tension. You may not realize this. But in physics there's a name for tension. It's called potential energy when talking about elastic potential energy. If you take a rubber band and stretch it, do you know what you have there? You have tension and you can say, well that's a bad thing. But actually in physics, that's called potential energy. And if it's aimed correctly and if everybody is in a great mood, you can have a good time with potential energy. It's called a rubber band war. Have you ever had one?

[Laughter]

Listen, COVID's got you locked up and stressed out. Go home and have a rubber band war. Experience potential energy, y'all. A lot of fun and that's what marriage is, that's what church is, that's what the body of Christ is. Ends up we're all different. Ends up, did you know males and females are different? Therefore marriage is filled with potential energy. If you'd just add a little humility, a little grace, a little forgiveness, that's potential energy and God can point that in any direction and do something good with it.

Now if you don't have any humility, any grace, any

forgiveness, that stretches it too far and then it destroys all potential energy because it breaks. But Jesus put a profound team together. Where are you feeling tension today? Because I bet Jesus wants to use that as potential energy to show grace, to show forgiveness, to show mercy, to show the gospel in your marriage and your team and your family to a lost and dying world.

So, Jesus makes teams but they're different, man. They are really profoundly different. Now watch this. I'm going to go from 2, 3, 4, and 5 and we're just going to look at the plural pronouns. I'll prove from the Rubic's Cube why Christianity isn't a solo sport. Watch. Follow the plural pronouns because they're profound. If you don't what it is, it's "they, them, those, their."

[Reading: verse 2]

Just a side note on this. As we move to plant churches, it's not up to me to pick where to plant a church. It's not up to us to pick where to plant a church. It's not up to us to pick who we send out. I want to invite you to pray with us saying, Jesus, all that we have is yours. Where do you want to plant a church? Who do you want to pick to send out.

[Reading: verse 3-5 emphasizing the words "they, them, and their."]

Did you see how many "theys" and "thems" and "theirs" there are here? I don't have time to go back to the enlightenment and how it has impacted our culture as far as individualism. But all of us have been encouraged towards rugged individualism so much so, that when we come to church now, it really is about me and my relationship with

God. If I asked people why did you come to church. Well, I want to grow in MY relationship with God because Christianity is all about ME and MY relationship with God and I want to have a good relationship with God. I don't know what the rest of the people are here for. Right?

It really has impacted us that profoundly, to the extent that now, as a pastor, I have to say, Christianity is not a solo sport. It's simply not. In fact, I would say you CANNOT do, I cannot do Christianity alone. I have to have the body of Christ to mature in Christ. You see, without the body of Christ, I have no one to practice the "one anothers" with. Well, if you don't have the body, who are the "one anothers?"

Here's the major argument that I face almost every day in the pastorate. "Dave, I love God. I'm all about God. I love Jesus. I'm just not down with the church." Ever heard it? Nobody wants to cheer because a lot of you have said that to me. Like, "I just don't like the church. So I don't have to be in church to be a Christian." And there's some truth in that. Right? You're not saved because you go to church.

But here's the lie in that. You'll never mature and look like Jesus without the body of Christ. That's simply true. Isolation from the body of Christ will always, always, always lead to deformation. Does it mean that church life is easy? No. I'm your pastor. That's messed up.

[Laughter]

Amen? It's okay. I'm more shocked than you are. We can just own that. So there are going to be some difficulties, and yet, you have to realize, we need to know Christianity is not a solo sport. You want me to prove it to you? Okay.

How many of you have ever heard of Feliks Zemdegs? Anyone? Anybody have a Feliks Zemdegs poster on your wall at home? None. How many of you watched the World Cube Championships on TV? Really? You've never heard of Feliks and you've never watched the World Cube Championships. [Sighs.] Oh, man. You want to know why? Feliks Zemdegs is astounding. He's amazing. He's the only person to ever win multiple world cup championships for the Rubic's Cube. He won the  $2 \times 2$ ,  $3 \times 3$ ,  $4 \times 4$ ,  $5 \times 5$ ,  $7 \times 7$  blindfolded, yo. You blindfold this kid and he can still rock the Rubic's Cube.

You want to know why you didn't watch the world championships? Because here's what it looked like. A whole bunch of nerds like me sitting in a room quiet with their Rubic's Cubes. First off, not really exciting. Second, when it was time to go, they go like this. Ready, set, go. Done. 2.66 seconds. Lame, huh? Nobody's cheering. Nobody's excited. I totally missed my audience on that one. You guys are like, this is lame.

[Laughter]

I don't even think Feliks Zemdegs is a real person. That sounds like a made up name. But no. Google it. Google machine.

Now, watch this. How many of you have ever heard of the NFL Superbowl? How many have ever watched the Superbowl? See? There's a beauty when you take a whole bunch of diverse parts and you put them together and you're carrying out different roles, different jobs in different ways at different times all for one mission. The touchdown and

winning the Superbowl. There's something beautiful about that. I don't even enjoy music that much but I'll cry when I go to a symphony because of all the diversity and beauty that comes together in harmony to make that sound.

You see, that is a picture of Christianity. "They, them, their." And in a world that can't get along, it matters how we love one another. That's the community that God created and it matters because conflict is unavoidable. And you can't walk through conflict alone. It'll crush you.

Watch the next story in this. It's a story of conflict. You're going to have conflict in your life. I'm going to have conflict. I need the body of Christ to walk with me. I'll show it to you.

Chapter 13, verse 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. And then we'll talk about conflict a little bit. And your philosophy of conflict, how you deal with conflict and how the gospel might shift that paradigm on how you view conflict through an intervention I went through.

Watch. Verse 6.

[Reading: verse 6.] This is weird.

[Reading: verse 7.] So this proconsul of the island is like, I want to hear about God. The one true God. Saul, Barnabas, come tell me.

[Reading: verse 8.] There's your conflict. Elymas was standing against Paul and Barnabas. Watch what Paul says to him. We don't talk like this much anymore. Watch this.

[Reading: verse 9-12.] So, community is essential because

we're going to walk in conflict. Right now, man, we live in a whole nation of conflict. But it's going to be the world and the church at some point. Here's why conflict makes sense on a cosmic, eternal scale.

We'll first walk through that. God dwells. He is light and life and truth and love. He dwells in light, life, truth, and love. He happens to have an enemy who dwells in darkness, deceit, death and lies. Well, lies and deceit? Same thing.

So there's going to be a conflict between those kingdoms. Now, you and I, as we walk through this life, we are going to be in conflict. Sometimes between truth and lies, darkness and light, love and indifference. We're going to have this conflict. In fact, you've grown up with that. So right now, all of you have a philosophy of conflict. Do you know that? All of you do. We don't talk about it much in America because that would be exposing.

But I can show your philosophy of conflict. How many of you are avoiders? You just avoid conflict. It's like, get me out of here. See? Even the avoiders don't like raising their hands. I don't know if you saw but it's like this. [Raises his hand slightly]

[Laughter]

No. In all honesty. That's what I expect when I ask that question, because it's like, "he might call on me." They go through their whole list of things that could go wrong.

Now watch this. How many of you are attackers? You're like, "yeah, it's conflict. It's time to get it on." It's like Shark Week. Let's just devour it. They laugh. But they're like,

"that's not weird. That's life. Everybody should do that." I know. You're from the north. It's okay.

[Audience member comment]

I know. I'm sorry. And then I just called out the whole north. But anyway. Some of us are from the north. And when I mock Rhode Island, it's my fault. It's all on me. I've got my own issues.

We're avoiders or attackers. That tends to be true. You have a philosophy of conflict and I want to shift that perspective for you very quickly. What the gospel is, it is conflict. Again, let me take you to a truth from physics. Newton's a really smart dude. He came up with some really smart stuff. Physics proves theology.

How many of you have ever heard that an object at rest will remain at rest until it's acted on by an unbalance or an outside force? That's true. In line with that, an object in motion will remain in motion until it is acted on by an outside force. See? In the church, we sing a song and we'll often say, I'm prone to wander, prone -- how does that song go?

Prone to wander. Prone to leave the God I love. That's true of me and that's true of me every day. That wasn't at one point in my life. You realize that, right? Like, every day I'm prone to wander. And in my wandering, I will continue down that course until I am acted on by an outside force. We would call that repentance. That's what the gospel is. All of us sinned and were heading to hell and God loved us and sent his Son to conflict with us so that we might change course and repent. That is good news.

See, this is where the church is really good news. Do you know that we conflict constantly? And it doesn't have to be bad and avoided nor does it have to be bad and attacked. Conflict just is and it will expose your heart.

You can look at this story and say, man, Paul was really harsh. "You son of the devil. Will you never stop distorting what is good and righteous?" I see it as very loving. Paul was inviting him to live in line with reality as reality really is. He was spiritually blind so Paul says you're going to be physically blind so your spirit and your physical body can line up with reality. We call this an intervention.

Anybody ever been part of an intervention with an addict or alcoholic? If you did, you wouldn't want to raise your hand because I've never seen them go well. I've been intervened upon. I have buddies, Hans, Judd, Chris, Tommy. And when I was intervened upon, you secretly invite the addict or alcoholic to come to your place. Because we won't come to your place if we know you're going to do an intervention. So it's a secret invitation.

And then when the addict or alcoholic shows up, everyone is there staring at them. Now, I can tell you from the addicts standpoint, we know what's going on. We're just a little mad because we thought we had hid it pretty good. Now I didn't think anybody could see it. So I sit down and all of a sudden there's conflict. The guys begin to share what it's like to be my friend.

We love you. We're for you. It looks like meth is killing you. You look like you're going to die.

That is conflict where they're inviting me to walk in reality as

reality really is. And that is what the body of Christ does for one another. It's not bad. But we have to have connective community in order to enter into conflict where we're transformed in the image of Jesus Christ. Listen, if you don't have that community and you're not willing to enter into conflict, you will move towards isolation and an isolated Christian. Isolation always leads to deformation. It's never good.

So the church advances through this community that is willing to enter into conflict and trust Jesus Christ to use it. Jesus has always used conflict to advance the gospel. He does it here. Elymus is trying to distort things. Jesus uses conflict in order to bring the proconsul into faith.

Now watch. I'm already a minute over and I've got the majority of the text to cover so stick with me. It's my first week back. I knew I wasn't going to nail the dismount on time. Can I get some grace? I may be better next week, but I doubt it. We'll see. I don't know.

Watch how beautiful this is. Paul is now going to enter in and give his first recorded sermon. This is Paul's first recorded sermon and it's so good that from now on, Barnabas fades to the back and Paul takes main scene. He's going to outline for us why we can have courage as this community walks into conflict. Where do we get courage?

I was reading a study. I can't remember the source. I think it was out of Harvard. It might have been in the Harvard Review. You know 66% of us are afraid to speak what we believe now in America? 66% are afraid to say what we believe because "you'll be canceled." You'll be written off, destroyed by whatever media or power source. We're afraid

to say what we believe. We're afraid to say, "I believe the Bible is God's word." Because we're afraid people will say we're a homophobe or a xenophobe or any number of names.

So we're afraid. Where do you find the courage to stand in this culture that will crush and cancel you if you say, "hi, I'm Dave. I'm a new creature in Christ. I'm a recovering addict and alcoholic. I believe the Bible's God's word. I believe God is. I believe he sent his Son. Sin is really bad. It separates you from God. Salvation is by grace through faith alone and Christ alone. There is no salvation apart from Jesus Christ." We're afraid to say that. We're afraid to say who we're going to vote for. Right? Nobody wants to say because there's this conflict.

Let me walk you through where to find courage because it matters what you love. It matters what you love. Watch what Paul does. First, he gives him a history lesson. How many of you like history? There's a lot of you. I love history. I just don't like names, dates or places. But other than that, I totally dig history.

[Laughter]

It's just the names, dates and places that throw me off. Paul literally expounds the entire Old Testament from verse 13. If you just want the cliff notes on the Old Testament, watch. I'll give them to you. You're about to read the entire Old Testament.

[Reading: verse 13-17a.] That's Genesis. That was his summation. You want a summary sentence of Genesis? Paul just gave it to you.

[Reading: verse 17b.] There's Exodus. Aren't these great summary statements of the books of the Bible? That's Genesis and Exodus. Two books of the Bible.

[Reading: verse 18 and laughing.] There's Numbers and Deuteronomy. That's multiple books of the Bible. And that's a joke. How do you sum up the people in the wilderness? "God put up with them."

[Laughter]

That's great! [Laughing.] All right. He keeps going.

[Reading: verse 19.] That's Joshua. 450 years. Boom. Just happened. Verse 20.

[Reading: verse 20.] There's the book of Judges. He just said, he gave them judges. He totally thinks they know the Old Testament. He's still going. Verse 21.

[Reading: verse 21.] That's 40 more years.

[Reading: verse 22.] 1 and 2 Samuel.

[Reading: verse 23-25.] Now the question is, if we're going to be a community that walks through conflict together, where do we get the courage to preach Christ crucified, buried, and resurrected? You see, you live in a post-modern, secular-humanist, naturalistic society. That when you say, I believe the Bible's God's word, I believe Jesus is the Son of God, I believe that no one comes to the Father except through Jesus Christ, most likely you will get scoffed at, sneered at, dismissed, or even worse, indifference.

"That's good for you." "Man, that works for you." "That's your truth." I get this regularly.

So where do you find the courage to face down a world that has rejected Judeo-Christian ethics, rejected the Bible, and rejected Jesus? Paul's sermon is so spot on. Let me tell you the bottom line of where all of post-modernism is going. Where our society is going.

You see, it's not a mystery. We've actually been here before. Where we're at isn't anything new. So when you take a child -- and I grew up in this; it was happening in the 80s -- when you take a child and say, "hey, you just need to know you've evolved from nothing and you're going nowhere."

[Phone ringing]

That's not my phone. It's one of yours. I've gotta check. I don't see Brooke here. Babe, are you here? Nah. I've got this loop in the back of my head, "I hope she's all right." So right after this, I'll go call her.

Anyway, you came from nowhere. What question am I answering? Because I got distracted by your phones. You did this to me.

[Laughter]

How do you have the courage to live in a community and walk through conflict? Let me tell you where post-modernism is going. When you take a child and say, "hey, you've evolved and you came from nowhere" -- see what every child longs to hear is that I'm a profound accident. Nobody wanted you Dave. You're accidentally just here.

And you take a kid and you tell them that and then tell them they're going nowhere. "After you die, I don't know, there's nothing. You don't need to worry about it because there's nothing."

So all this longing for love and belonging. "Ah, don't worry. It'll just be gone. The thing that brings the most joy to your life will be gone for all eternity. You came from nowhere. You're going nowhere. Your purpose right here for today? I don't know. You come up with that. Power, pleasure, profit. You've got to define something big enough to live for for 67 years maybe." What you've just done is you've absolutely destroyed that child intellectually. That's how you end up an addict or an alcoholic. Seeking different ways to end your life. Because there's nothing. I have nothing to live for. You have taken everything from me. It is nothing but purposeless and that child will chase after pleasure, power, profit until they are empty inside. And that's where we get to introduce them to Jesus Christ. Because Jesus changes everything.

You see, what Paul is saying here -- why did Paul outline history? Some of you like history. Many of you don't. Paul loved it because what Paul is saying is history matters. History is meaningful. History is directional. Today, we don't have a very real philosophy of history. Do you know that? I took a philosophy of history class. Super boring. It's right up there with geometry and trigonometry. Not fun.

But it's very interesting to me. There's different philosophies on history and I'm sure you have a philosophy on history. How many of you have ever said, "history repeats itself?" As though history is a living and breathing thing. It's like, "you know what I want to do today? I want to pull a Groundhog

Day and just do the same thing." History doesn't do that. People repeat themselves because we're insane in sin. History doesn't repeat itself.

How many have ever said, "well, time marches on?" These are different philosophies of history. Paul would say, it's not that history repeats itself or time marches on. History is purposeful and meaningful and it's heading towards a point. It's heading towards Jesus Christ when we all stand before our creator and maker.

You see, it's appointed to man to live once and die and then judgment. Paul is saying, all of history points to Jesus Christ. Therefore, live wisely. Because history matters.

Now watch this second point. Because you're going to ask, Dave, how do we live in a day where there's presidential chaos going on, there's racial riots going on, there's all kinds of madness going on and people have dismissed Jesus Christ, people have dismissed the gospel and dismissed Christianity. What do I do?

Watch what Paul says. You see, many people think the Bible is just out of date and it doesn't have anything to say to us today. I'm going to tell you, if you take Paul's sermon and lay it over our current culture, it speaks directly to where we're at today.

Watch how many times Paul speaks of the resurrection. Watch the repetitiveness of, "but God raised him." I'll read Paul's sermon to you. Start in verse 26.

[Reading: verse 26-29.] Now watch the repetition.

[Reading: verse 30.] Now this is brand new. You may think that these early hicks, these Flintstonians were more likely to believe in the resurrection from the dead. I will tell you, they're not. The Jews weren't. The Sadducees weren't. The Pharisees weren't. The Essenes weren't. The Romans weren't. The Greeks weren't. Nobody thought about resurrection from the dead. Nobody! They all knew that when you died, you were dead.

So Paul says, but God raised him. Verse 31.

[Reading: verse 31-41.] Where do you get the courage to speak about Christ in a post-modern world that has rejected him. Where do you find the courage to enter into this conflict day after day. It's constant conflict about anything. We will fight about it. Masks. We'll fight about it. We'll fight about politics. How do you find the courage to enter into conflict day after day and remain a community?

The Bible speaks to it. Listen, I don't care what you struggle with. I know some of you don't believe in Jesus. I know some of you have rejected it. I've got Muslim friends, addict friends, I've got friends who are Hindu and Buddhist. I know some of you don't believe.

Here's what I want you to know. These parts of the Bible we can all agree on. There's a problem. And the Bible says that the problem is that sin entered the world and death through sin. And the Bible says that everyone HAS sinned and therefore death has spread to everyone. You're. Going. to die. Everyone you've ever loved is. Going. To. Die.

Your family is. Going. To. Die. See, the argument in America tends to be how do we extend life for days, maybe

decades. And that's great. I'm not against that. We argue against things. How do we extend life and we set about trying to extend our life by decades. I'm going to work out so that I live longer. That's great and you should. You should work out. I work out. Sometimes I even like it.

[Laughter]

Most of the time, like this morning, I'm sore. But sometimes I like it. But I bet I'm going to live an extra decade and I'm going to get to tell people about Jesus for another decade. You should do that. I'm going to die skinny. That doesn't mean I win anything. I still lose. I'm still dead. I may only need two pallbearers. Right? Yay!

[Laughter]

It's still dead. It's still a loss. So like, well, I better take my Co-Q10 so my heart's healthy. Good. Do that. I don't want you to get cut open and get a bypass. But you're still going to die. [Laughs.] You're just going to die with clean arteries. That's not a win.

You're Buddhist. Love that you're here. You're still gonna die. You're Muslim. You're here. I love that you're here. Still gonna die. Right? You're an atheist. You're here. Glad that you're here. You're gonna die. And we all have to deal with that whether you extend it by days or decades. It doesn't matter. That's not an argument I'm going to have with you.

The Bible looks at the big picture and says, death is a problem. It was a problem in Paul's day. Still a problem in our day. You know the market's going to take off when they

announce the COVID vaccination? Dude, trillions are dollars are about to be pumped into this mug. By extending life for a decade? Do you know the Bible speaks of the greatest cure the world has ever known? And we walk by it day after day and we're embarrassed and we don't have the courage to proclaim Jesus defeated death. Jesus rose from the grave. Jesus changed everything because Jesus was the first one that was publicly executed, put into the ground, and then he rose again and he divided history in two and he promises eternal life to whoever will come put their faith in him and just say, I've sinned. I was wrong. I'm sorry. I believe in you. And he'll say, praise God. Come with me for all eternity and experience light and life and joy. It's called salvation by grace. That's what the gospel is. And he's given us that great news to proclaim.

Now some of you still -- I still haven't convinced you. So let me go in a different direction. Let me turn the wheel a little bit. Let me tell you how the resurrection from the dead has changed everything for me. I've told you before -- my life is simple. I really only have three problems. And you think, well, three problems? That's pretty easy to deal with, right? It's only three problems.

But my problems are my past, my future and my present. So it's pretty all encompassing. My problems are pretty major. You see, in the past, I've done some horrific, horrific things. Anybody else? Like things that I would not want anyone -- I mean, things that when I think about, I'm like [groans], oh, my goodness. I can't believe I did that. And because I did those things in the past, there is guilt. You've done something wrong. And there's shame. You are bad. And I bring those into the present. And when I think about the future, because the past was kind of bad, 2020 was bad, yo.

Amen? I mean, we're only a little bit in and it's been pretty crazy.

I saw a meme. It was like, "2020 be like" -- and there's a dumpster on fire floating down a flood in the middle of a city. It's like, that's 2020. So when I think about the future, my mind goes to anxiety, panic, fear, stress, and worry. That's my future. Both of those things make my present pretty jacked up because I've got guilt and shame, anxiety, panic, fear, stress and worry and that's what I'm living with today. Anybody else? It might just be me and I'll share my experience with you.

So I your have three problems but they're pretty major problems. This is why you need the resurrection of Jesus. This is why you need the gospel. Paul says in Acts 17:31 that God furnished proof to all men that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And that proof that he furnished was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It's the receipt. It's the proof of purchase that he gave to us. Anybody else love receipts? Anybody else collect receipts? One.

[Laughter]

Listen, for recovering shoplifters like me, I love receipts.

[Laughter]

CVS is my favorite store. They don't just give me a receipt. They give me a banner. Anybody ever been to CVS?

[Laughter]

Go today and buy something. Anything. Just buy a \$0.25

pack of gum. You'll get an 18 foot receipt. For recovering shoplifters, I love that. I don't know what CVS is thinking. I don't know why they do it. I love it. I don't just hide my receipt and put it in my pocket. See, when you've been busted for shoplifting and tackled in a parking lot and locked up .... multiple times ... receipts matter! You'll see me walking out of CVS like I got it out and like I'm in a ribbon ministry.

Woohoo. Woohoo. I don't hide that junk. It's waving in the wind. Because I've got this internal issue. Everybody is going to think I stole something. Because I used to steal for the adrenaline rush. I just needed to feel something. I would go to a store just to feel something. But that receipt changes everything. That's my proof of purchase. Somebody stops me now and I'm like, look! I got 18 foot of proof that I bought that.

This is what the resurrection of Jesus Christ is for me. What the resurrection says is, Jesus took all of my guilt, all of my sin, all of my shame and he buried it. But, Dave, how do you know it's paid for? Because he rose again and it's gone. Because a sinner can't rise from the dead because the wages of sin is death. So when Jesus took my sin, took my shame, took my guilt, he was buried, he rose, I have no more guilt and shame today. I can talk about my struggle with shoplifting.

You know what still comes on at times. Isn't that shocking. I'm 45 and a pastor. I might be 46. I don't even know how old I am. But I'm still at least a pastor today until this sermon goes out.

[Laughter]

And it will still come in my mind. "You don't have to buy that." But you know what? That no longer defines me because Jesus took that, Jesus died for that, Jesus paid for that. So now my present is no longer guilt and shame because it doesn't define me. I'm a new creature in Christ. He has cleansed my past. Check that off. Well what about your future? The resurrection of Jesus Christ showed me that there is a resurrection of the body. That I get to spend eternity with the ones I love. So I have love, I have belonging. He has said, I will never leave you and I will never forsake you.

He has secured my eternity. Check eternity off. It's no longer anxiety, fear, panic, stress and worry. Because he's taken care of my past. Because he's taken care of my future. Because he's given me that proof of purchase. You know my present? Because of the gospel, because of the resurrection, my present is filled with a peace that surpasses all comprehension. That's real. That's the gospel. I can't do that.

You ask, Dave, how did you stay sober today? Well, he's removed my guilt and shame. He's secured and taken away my anxiety, fear, panic, stress and worry and he has, right now, given me a peace that surpasses comprehension. Even if you don't believe in the Bible. My Buddhist, my Hindu, my Muslim friends, my atheist friends, my agnostic friends, you need the gospel because it changes everything.

So today, Jesus is calling to you. Would you surrender to Him? That's what the gospel calls for. Simple surrender.

Jesus, I've been carrying my guilt and shame, my anxiety,

fear, panic, stress and worry. I'm so sorry. Because the proof of purchase of the resurrection changes everything. You want to take all that and you want to be with me and abide with me and me abide with you in this moment today.

Would you surrender to Jesus? Would you simply say, Lord, I'm yours. 2020's crazy. And you've given me a community that's willing to walk through conflict and be courageous because you've defeated death. Would you surrender to him today? Let's pray.

Father, God, thank you so much for this morning. The time that we've had to simply like at the proof of the resurrection. And Jesus how you changed everything. And so again, I pray for the sheep here. Even as I've seen faces, I pray for those that are heartbroken over relational conflict. I pray for those who have been abused. I pray for those who have abused others. I pray for those, who even this morning are addicted and broken. Father, I pray for those who are anxious and worrying and panic. I pray for those that are walking with secrets. Would you shine your light on our hearts and set us free so that we might be that community that walks through this world of conflict with courage? Because Christ Jesus has given us good news and defeated the grave. Would you do that work today for your glory? In Jesus' name. Amen.