

How a Messenger Makes a Mess

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Take your Bible and come to the book of 1 Kings. I said last week, as I got started, we started a little bit late. You have to give me a little bit of credit, we had a baby dedication last week so we did get late but I did lose track of time last week and I realize that after I got done, I did not realize it was 12:30. That's not just a Baptist trick or a joke, I really lost track of time and I apologize for not being more aware of that but I will do my best to try to get you out of here at least at a decent hour today and hope and pray it's not too much of a difficult thing.

Let me say this to you as we start this: last week we talked about other people trying to tell you what the will of God is for your life. Basically what we talked about was the pressure that some people can apply to you to try to get you to do what they think is spiritual. We also talked about the fact that sometimes the Lord's got you in a holding pattern for a while and he's not done with you yet and he's not ready and got everything else orchestrated for your time to get in the game. One of the most difficult things is that when you're in that holding pattern, when you're doing what you believe the Lord wants you to do, somebody comes along, if you remember I used Brother Daniels here to push or to pull or to drag you into services they see fit. God never intends for you to do that. The will of God is not something you have to be pushed into or dragged into. Let me just caution you here also, it's not something that you go into on the behalf of somebody else who determines what you should or shouldn't be doing.

Now, that being said, there is another guard that you've got to keep up when it comes to the will of God for your life and that is that you have to also guard against yourself. Sometimes our own self-will and pride in our own heart will cause us to do things or try to convince ourselves we've been called to things that God never called us to do because it's something we want to do or maybe it just so happens, there happens to be a need and so because of that need, you jump in and say, "Oh well, I'll take that need then. It must be the will of God for my life." And the next thing you know, you're running along for years sometimes and doing something God never intended for you to do. Now, I'm for God finding whatever the purpose is for your life and for whatever God would have you to do, I'm not talking about a purpose driven life but sometimes you spend too much time looking for a purpose instead of just doing what you know to do and then all of a sudden, you'll find God's purpose on the road to duty.

So with that being said, I want to use this as my text today and we'll be in a few places in the Bible. Notice the Bible says in 1 Kings 1:5. I must not have given you the passage. Good, I like to hear it turning. Let me say this as you're turning you encourage these guys that are working in the schools. Sometimes they are doing stuff, you might not see them present, but they're doing stuff just about on a daily basis in order to stay caught up with school. Not only the ones that are in the school but the ones that are grading papers and stuff. They're working jobs and taking care of families and they have to sit down in order to stay caught up with that stuff. They've got to sit down and do that stuff and it takes time so you pray for them and for their families and pat them on the back every now and then.

Verse 5, "Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?" so he must be in the will of God, right? "And he also was a very goodly man; and his mother bare him after Absalom." So he was Absalom's brother and he's coming along here and the Bible says, "he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him."

Father, we pray now that you might help us as we look into these passages and many more. And, God, give us direction and help us as we look into it so that we through our own self-will, might not find ourselves out of your will. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

If you would, please, turn now and you can remember this passage, come to Isaiah 14 and we'll see how this thing plays out just a little bit. This is one of those things, ladies and gentleman, that is happening across the country. I'm going to address something that's probably going to make me unpopular in some circles but the church has taken the place of God. Sometimes pastors have taken the place of God or teachers or church administrators or people that are involved in ministry, have taken the place of God and taken your right to choose out of the equation. What they do is, that they say that the need determines the call or the burden determines the call. The need and the burden do not determine a call on your life nor does any person and nor does your desire to be self-promoted and self-propagated and say, "You know what? I want to do something so bad for the Lord, I'm just going to pick up and do something nobody else wants to do." The danger of that is, if that's your attitude today, what'll happen is, you will find yourself in a church somewhere where the preacher is all about building a work or building a business or building a building or whatever, he will slap you in the harnesses and run you until your tongue is hanging out because he's saying, "Hey man, everybody has to have a purpose in life."

So we have now, because of that, the Purpose Driven Church and the Purpose Driven Life and, by the way, both of those things are demonically inspired. They are not correct in their doctrinal statement and they are doing nothing but getting rid of the Bible as the road map for Christianity and instead replacing it with somebody who says, "Let's build a mega-church or mega-theology." Now listen: you can get a lot of people that way. So

did Adonijah, did he not? I mean, even his Daddy didn't say, "Well, I don't think that's a good idea." You go a little bit further and guess what? Joab, one of David's great generals, said, "Hey, I'm for you, man. It's working for me." Abiathar, the priest, said, "Hey, it's working for me."

So, Adonijah then goes out and sacrifices a bunch of things and he promotes himself to the throne and he says, "You know what? Nobody got in my way. It must be the will of God for my life to be on the throne because nobody opposed me and look who's following me." So what he's determining is, that he hadn't gotten the king's approval, he hasn't got the approval of God but hey, because guess what? "It must be okay. I must be in the will of God. There has not been any opposition to it." But sometimes what you have to learn about the will of God is: the will of God oftentimes is preceded by a path through a minefield. It's not always wide open with no opposition and no trouble and no problems. I'll get back to Adonijah in just a little while because as a result of Adonijah's choice, he not only winds up out of the will of God, he winds up dead because that ambition that he has on his inside, doesn't die off even after Solomon gets promoted and even after King David said, "Solomon is the one that the Lord wants in that position right there."

So, here's what you need to understand: he said, "Well, okay, fine. I'll go ahead and submit. Let him be there." But then he tries to work his way into the kingdom by getting Abishag, which was David's concubine that was there, because he knows if he gets him then that entitles him to the kingdom. He winds up dead because his "dream" never died. Now, I'm all for motivation and I'm all for you doing whatever you have to do to succeed in life and I'm all for you getting with motivational speakers and that kind of stuff in the secular world. I'm not at all for it when it comes to the church. I'm not at all for trying to turn this into a rah, rah, pep rally to get behind you so that you can get some people to decide that you can be successful in the spiritual realm because you can be successful sitting on the pew in God's timing as much as you can be in a pulpit or in a class or behind an instrument or anything else. No one of us knows the will of God for your life except that you should be saved and that you should try to do something so that at the Judgment Seat of Christ you don't come up empty handed.

But this motivational stuff that's going on in our churches today of "find the will of God, find your spiritual gifts, take this test and line it all out so that you know what it is that God has called you to do and then get busy, busy, busy, busy, busy. People are going to hell. Christians are not doing what they ought to be doing because you're not busy." Here comes the guilt monkey. Now we're motivating people with fear, we're motivating people with guilt and guess what? You'll be surprised and amazed to learn that when God lays a calling upon your heart and you're doing what God would have you to do, you don't have to have all that motivational stuff. You don't have to be poked and prodded and pled with and pulled and begged and all that other kind of stuff. You just, "You know what? Hey, guess what? I'm doing what God wants me to do."

The second thing that happens is: you don't get upset if nobody else is doing it. Paul comes over there in the New Testament, I'll get to Isaiah in just a second, Paul comes

over there in the New Testament and Barney doesn't want to go with him and so Paul says, "Guess what?" Listen, Paul and Barnabas are having an argument there and then John Mark comes up there and Barnabas says, "Hey, listen man, you ought to take him." Do you know what Paul says? "Uh, uh. I got off the ship and blinded a guy over there and he got mad about it and was ready to quit the ministry so he can, as far as I'm concerned, he's out. You take him if you want him but I'm leaving without him. I don't have to have his approval. I don't have to have his support. I don't have to have him behind because me being called to the ministry, it doesn't matter how many people I have following me." Paul said, "I'll go by myself but I ain't doing it."

Look at this thing in Isaiah. You've got to watch this; you've got to watch your own heart. Sometimes that progressive stuff that we have in the world, this wanting to be promoted, this wanting to be recognized, this wanting to be appreciated, all that kind of stuff, it transfers itself into the church so much so that you would think it's spiritual. Listen, that Bible says, "He must increase, I must decrease." Enoch walked with God and he was not. The more he walked with God, all people could see was God and all Enoch talked about was God. He wasn't talking about himself. One of the things that happens is that that secular mindset comes in. Listen, I see it happening over whether or not somebody gets called on to sing a song, whether or not they get a particular place in a play, whether or not they get recognized for sweeping a floor or playing an instrument or whatever it may be and that's this thing of saying, "Wait a minute, I thought that God called me and if I did, all these things must be going to happen to confirm that I'm called."

Guard against somebody hooking you up in their harness and running you until you're dead. Really, I know, doesn't that sound like an odd sermon for a preacher to talk to you about because all of the other sermons are, "Get busy. Get busy. You bunch of lazy bums. You're good for nothing. You're rotten. You're terrible. You're sorry. You haven't done anything for God. How many did you witness to this week? How many tracts did you pass out this week? How much money did you give? How much did you fill up your bus? Hey, did you get this done? Did you get this done? Did you get this done? Have you come to Bible study? Did you come to visitation? Did you come to this? Did you come to this? Diddddddd, go, go, go!" I'm saying just the opposite. I'm saying, "Do what God tells you to do."

But you aren't spiritual because you're doing something that your own heart is telling you, "Well, if I do this, I'll be spiritual." I've seen people that allegedly have been called to preach and to pastor because they fill a hole or a need and because of that it's like, "Hey, I am." Okay, great. "Well, I am." Okay, good. What are you going to say about that? I've seen people go to the mission field and be there for years because their own heart deceived them that, "I'm willing to go," but be careful. Be willing but also be willing to wait until you get confirmation. Don't be in a big hurry to jump to make your decision.

Notice here in Isaiah. Notice this "I will" thing show up. Verse 12, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which

didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” You know what happens whenever that “I will” comes up? It always gets people in trouble. Jonah? “Yes sir.” Go down to the people of Nineveh. “I will go to Tarshish.” It didn’t work out too good for him but he said, “I’m going to go the other way.” Hey Peter, you know what? You’re going to deny me. “No, I’m not. Though all others forsake ye, yet will I not I,” he says. “You may say I’m going to, Lord, but I’m not going to.” Guess what? The chicken crowed and he wound up denying him three times. You know how the story goes. Because you know what he said in his mind? He said, “Listen, I’m so close to you, God, there is no way I can be deceived by my own mind and my own heart to think that I won’t do what you say I’m going to do.”

Now, if Peter could get deceived and Jonah can get deceived and might I also say, would I use maybe Elijah. Elijah goes up there and calls down fire from heaven and winds up out in the desert under the juniper tree and you know what he says? “Enough, Lord, I quit.” Because why? No response, I must be out of the will of God. So, “Lord, it’s enough now. Just let me die.” Suicidal thoughts. Why do you think that is? You say, “Well, he’s depressed.” Yeah. “He’s discouraged.” Yes, there is no question. “He’s downtrodden.” Yes, 100% right. Why? Because what he thought would happen when he did what God told him to do, was going to change the entire nation of Israel and when he didn’t see take place what he thought should take place, he said, “You know what? Just kill me. I’m out of here. I’m no good to anybody.” Then the Lord, of course, comes down there and says, “Listen man, it’s not a matter of whether or not they respond, it’s a matter of whether or not did you do what I told you to do.”

Now, the question I’m going to ask you today: are you doing what God wants you to do? But not in the sense of: are you doing what God wants you to do, are you going and doing and being and all that other kind of stuff, are you doing what God wants you to do? And would you be willing to quit doing something that God never called you to do? Don’t throw up yet.

Let me give you an illustration and then I’m going to show you the greatest apostle in my eyes, that had a little bit of a problem, deceived by his own heart. Wanted so bad to do something God had set firmly in his own heart. “This is what I’m going to do. This is what I’m going to be. This is how it is.” So much so that he even will not listen when God talks to him. But let me, kind of maybe if I could, just sort of illustrate it. If you stop and think for just a minute, “Preacher, I’m doing exactly what God wants me to do.” Okay, when Genesis 17 or 18, when the Lord comes down there to Abraham and he tells him he’s going to have a kid and then Sarah and Abraham have a kid, right? That kid grows old, right? And God wanted to bless Abraham through that kid, Isaac. Is that right? Now watch what happens in Genesis 22: he said, The very thing I gave you, are you willing to give it up? “What Lord? I’m in the will of God here.” Yeah, you kind of messed it up there, you got an Ishmael along the way but let’s forget that for right now. By the way, the Lord doesn’t recognize Ishmael, he only recognizes Isaac. He calls Isaac his first born. It’s kind of weird but anyhow.

He looks at that thing right there and he says, "Okay. I'm doing what I want to." He says, "How about taking that thing and kill it?" What? "But Lord, I know that this is what you want to do and I know this is who you want to bless and you said you're going to bless me through this guy right here and he's my son and now what do you want me to do?" I want you to be in my will, so take him up there and kill him. My question to you would be this: whatever it is that you're doing, are you as willing to quit it as you are to do it? Because the devil will get you doing something that may seem right and may seem spiritual but it's a matter of the heart. Why are you doing it? Are you doing it to impress other people? Are you doing it to fulfill a burden or fulfill a need? Are you doing it because God said, "Hey, I want you to do it?"

Can I ask you this: would it be okay to take it before the Lord and say, "Lord, I want to ask you a question. Am I doing this for me for my own self? Have I been deceived by me? Or am I really going to school, being a preacher, being a pastor, doing these kind of things, Lord, am I really doing this because you want me to do it or because I chose to do it because I get recognition or appreciation? Or because it's just got to be done? It's just got to be done because if it's not done, the whole thing is going to come unraveled. What will they ever do without me?" I mean, what would Abraham do without Isaac? This is really serious because our attitude is, "Hey man, I'm not expendable. Man, good night. The Lord cannot do without us and our ministry."

So sometimes what we do is we put all our efforts and we put all of our energy and we do all of our struggles to try to keep ourselves and whatever it is that God's doing and God's like, "I never told you to do it in the first place." But somebody convinced you and then you allowed your own heart to deceive you and the next thing you know, some of you today are in bondage to that calling because you've been trying for years to prove to everybody, "God really is using me." And the heart has deceived you and because you're busy, you think you're in fellowship and the Lord is like, "You're on your own." That's why you're so tired and worn out and so frustrated and irritated, agitated with everybody else, it's because you're running along out there and you've forgotten, "Hey, I decide who does and who doesn't. I'm looking at your heart."

Every man will be tried at the Judgment Seat of Christ, yes or no? The saved people? Every man's work will be tried of what sort it is. What is your heart thinking? Why am I going to school? Why am I preaching? Why am I pasturing? Why am I a missionary? Why do I have any other ministry? "Hey, it's a business. It's how I make my living." Better check it. "Well, it's how I want to do something for the Lord." Okay, good. Are you sure you're doing it for the Lord? Or are you doing it for yourself?

Let me give you a hard fact right now: one of the ways to know that you're doing it for yourself is you get frustrated when two things happen, 1. you're not recognized or appreciated and that's a sign that the Lord is telling you, "I didn't call you to do it or I'd have you recognized or appreciated," or 2. it wouldn't matter to you if you did or didn't and you don't care if anybody else helps you or not. "Preacher, we need a whole bunch of other people." Did God call you to do it? Okay, good, have at it. "Where is everybody

else?" I don't know. Maybe he called you to check you out, to show you the deceitfulness of your own heart. Maybe what happens is the Lord says, "Yeah, go ahead and do it because you just kept on pushing me and pushing me and pushing me and pushing me and so I finally said, Alright, if that's what you want to do, go ahead. It's in my permissive will but it's not in my perfect will."

"I beseech ye therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your body as a living sacrifice wholly acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service." Verse 2, "Be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may know that which is the good acceptable and perfect will of God." It might be acceptable but it isn't perfect and because of Romans 8:28, he may still use it but it isn't perfect. And it might even be good but it isn't acceptable to God and it isn't perfect but it might still be a good thing.

Everybody says, "There are three wills of God in the Bible, Preacher." Good, acceptable, uh, uh. If it's good, how come good didn't come after acceptable? It can be good but not acceptable. Don't be mistaken that just because everybody else likes it and appreciates it and pats you on the back and says, "Oh my God, we couldn't live without you. Man, if it wasn't for you, this whole thing would fall apart. Oh my Lord, I don't know how we would have made it without this kind of a thing." It may be a good thing, that doesn't mean God accepts it.

But it can also be acceptable and not be perfect which I'll show you in just a second. But let me ask you this as we look into this today: if God were to tell you today, Put it down. Doesn't that sound like apostasy? Listen, I'm supposed to set captives free. I don't want you to be caught up in religion. I don't want you to be caught up in all this pressure on you to perform. I believe if your relationship is what it ought to be with the Lord, then your producing will be as it ought to be. But too often, we're replacing the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5 with our own perceived personal perception of what we think fruit is. "Oh they must be saved, they witness. Oh, they must be saved, they're passing out tracts. Oh, they must be saved, they're going on the street. They must be saved, they're using their talents for God. They must be saved, they're working in the nursery, they're cooking in the kitchen, they're preaching in the church and they're preaching out in other places. They must be saved, they're going to Bible school. They must be saved, they're going to the mission field. They must be saved." And have no fruit of the Spirit.

Boy, you've got plenty of perceived fruit from everybody else because everybody else is looking at you thinking, "Man, you are the poster child for Christianity. You must be saved, you started all of these ministries to minister to the people. You've got a jail ministry, a prison ministry, a juvenile ministry, a nursing home ministry, a hospital ministry and a ministry to everybody in the world." "Hey, I'm a minister. I'm a minister. I'm a minister, therefore, I am," and God's like, "Yeah, well, I didn't tell you to do that."

Just wait a minute, I'm going to give you some Bible here in a second. I'm trying to kind of give you the meat of the message to set it up and then I'll give you the support, the foundation underneath it. But too many people nowadays have been put under pressure to

try to prove their spirituality instead of just learning to walk with the Lord and talk with the Lord, have fellowship with the Lord, learn some things about the book. Guess what happens? They go out before they're ready to go. I know a little bit, not a lot, but a little bit about police work. I did a little bit of it for a while and I know this, I know that we can take a guy that's say, 21 years of age, and maybe he even has a college education, maybe his major was even criminology and maybe he's watched a lot of, "Bad boys, bad boys, what you gonna do" stuff and he thinks he knows all about police work. We can take him and put him in a car, throw him the keys and he might survive but probably he is going to be one mess after another and he's either going to get himself hurt or killed or somebody else hurt or killed or he's going to get the sheriff's office sued because nobody taught him anything. Can you get that illustration?

Sometimes we get them saved. Get them in, boy, get them in the new members class. Get them ready to go. Get them out there. Tell them to go witness. We have not even prepared them for the lions they're going to face and guess what happens? They go witness and the guy flips the table on them and says, "Have you got the baptism of the Holy Ghost? Do you speak with other tongues?" They're like, "What? I don't even know about that." They say, "Oh, let me show you." And they're like, "Oh man, I need to learn about that." The next thing you know, they're like, "Preacher, I've got to leave the church because I'm going over here. I found the truth." Because somebody pushed them before they were ready.

I submit to you that a lot of people that are doing the pushing nowadays are pushing because they're bitter that they're in it themselves. They want you to have a burden for their calling. They want you to have a burden for their ministry. They want you to say, "Oh, well, I feel the same way you do." And they push and they push and they push and sometimes they even bilk you out of a lot of money. I mean, man, they publicize it up here how much money we're giving to all these people. "Hey, if you're spiritual, let's have a round of applause for the amount of money that we're giving to the mission program." I'm for missions but I'm not for holding a gun to your head and trying to show how spiritual you are by broadcasting how much money you give.

Some of you are getting nervous. "Well, I've never heard this and I'm in a Baptist church." Well, it's time you did. It's time that you realize that that's not a mark of spirituality at all. You say, "What is that?" It's blackmail. That's exactly what it is, it's called spiritual blackmail. It's taking that book right there and holding it to your head and saying, "God is going to blow your brains out if you don't have a heart for missions, if you don't have a heart for the indigent people. But by the grace of God, there you go. You'd better do something or God is going to kill you or blow up your family or kill your water heater." Then you know what you do? "Oh, okay, well, I know I need to pay my bills but I know I need to pay for gasoline, I know I need food, but I'll just give it all and say, God, I gave it to you to spend. Will you bless it with a shovel full?"

Give up your coffee and give up your cold drinks and give up your cable and give up your newspaper and give up your life and living and don't go out anywhere and don't enjoy any kind of thing. The ones that are telling you that, they're able to enjoy all that

stuff and still give a whole lot more. They're driving Bentleys and Mercedes and Cadillacs and living in a big house and all that and they're telling you, "Hey, give up all that stuff." You go to their house and they have a big satellite dish out there. I mean, they have all the channels. Swimming pool in the back, screen over the top of it. Keep their cars in the garage. Somebody is taking care of their lawn. Somebody is taking care of their house. Somebody is doing everything for them and they're telling you, "Give sacrificially. You need to give up the luxuries in life." I'm preaching, now, Amen? You ought to throw the ball back, it would go a lot quicker. They're telling you, "Give up all of those things," but they're able to out-give you a ton because they make a whole lot more money than you and because you get a burden and because you want to see the numbers roll, you wind up throwing a lot in it.

If Elijah could be deceived by his heart, if the devil could be deceived by his heart, "Until iniquity was found in thee," right? Perfect in beauty. If Jonah can be deceived, if the Apostle Peter can be deceived. Let me show you one more, I think this will be interesting to you. Look if you will, please, in 2 Corinthians. Is this making any sense to you? One preacher said to me one time, he said, "You can't build a church like that." I said, "Well, then I hate to say this: I guess it just won't be built because if you've got to do things the wrong way in order to build something, then it isn't right to begin with." Amen. I don't believe it's okay to do wrong to get a chance to do right. "Well, if you just kind of hook them up and get them in there, once you get it where it's supposed to be..." No, you'll never get it where it's supposed to be. It'll always be built on what you think it ought to be. The foundation will be whacked out so when you start laying the rock, the first few courses aren't going to look bad but you get on up about three or four feet and the higher you go, the more all of a sudden, guess what happens? You say, "What's wrong with the leaning Tower of Pisa?" The foundation. That whole thing is catty whompus. You say, "Why?" Because what it's sitting on is crooked. I'm not going to do it that way, God helping me.

2 Corinthians 1. Look if you will, please. Now, is it fair to say that the Apostle Paul knew there was a purpose in his life? Can I show you real quick for those of you that don't know? Some of you are like, "Yeah, I...yeah, I think." Come to Acts. I won't be long, I promise. I'm going to try to go real fast. I don't know if I'll get done in 20 minutes or not but I'm going to try to go fast. You don't really care how long the guy is talking if it's coming time for you to get out of jail. Amen? It's like, "Talk on. Talk on. Just get me out of here." It'll take me a little while to untie the things that are binding you up.

I believe God can still build a church without human intervention. I didn't say without human instrumentation. I'm careful about my word, without human intervention. I think God can build a church without us getting in God's way and saying, "God, this is how it's got to be done because it's how everybody else has done it." I think God can build a church his way and bless it his way and the people be rejoicing because they're like, "Yeah, I like going to church. It's not based on all I do, it's based on what he did and I rejoice when I go to church and I have a good time when I go to church because guess what? It's all about him."

Acts 9, the Apostle Paul, of course, gets knocked off his horse and all that. He's riding down. Look if you will, please, verse 15. When he's in the dirt right there, the Bible says after Ananias comes and he's going to get the scales knocked off him, he said, "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me." So, that's the Lord talking to Ananias about Paul. Are you with me so far? Watch what he says, "To bear my name," #1, "before the Gentiles," #2, "and kings," #3, "and the children of Israel." Right? So his purpose is made clear.

Look in 2 Corinthians 1. The Apostle Paul clearly knew what his purpose was, what his intention was. I'm going to show you where this gets in the way, in a second, where he makes his own private interpretation. Notice what the Apostle Paul says here in 2 Corinthians 1:17. The Apostle Paul says this, "When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness?" in other words, it was serious to me, "or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh," notice do I purpose according to the flesh, "that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay? But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay." In other words, he's saying two things you've got to get in order to grab the center of this message. 1. The Apostle Paul said, "My purpose," in Acts 9, "was set forth by God not by my own human intervention, not by my own will, not by my own design, not by my own choice." Paul is saying, "I didn't put myself in the ministry." Paul didn't say, "Man, I see that my folks or these people have a need and so therefore I'm going to go fulfill the call." Paul said, "First of all, my purpose wasn't after my flesh. I didn't choose to do it." #2, he says, "Once I knew what God wanted me to do, I wasn't doing it one day and not doing it the next day." Yea yea and nay nay. "I'm called. I'm going to do this. I don't really think I'm called to do that anymore. Well, I'm called to be the youth minister. No, I'm not called to do that, I'm called to be a missionary. No, I'm not called to be a missionary, I'm called to be the song leader. No, I'm not called to be the song leader, I'm called to be an evangelist. No, I'm not really sure. I think maybe I was called to be a missionary."

God hasn't called you to any of that. That's your own purpose in your own flesh saying, "I want so bad to be doing something for God, I'm bouncing around like a ping pong ball in a boxcar and I'm yea yea one day and nay nay the next. God called me to preach. Well, I thought he did but that message sure did flop and nobody came to the altar and people are mad at me and upset. I don't think I'm called to preach. I'm going to go sit on the bench. God called me to preach but my wife left me so I've got to get out because the brethren say." By the way, for those of you visiting, my wife is right there. She's the only one I've ever been married to. So before you disqualify me or go hunt your little pet peeve Scripture out to say, "He ain't qualified to be saying what he's saying," because you're bent out of shape right now about what I'm saying so now you're going to go and do that. Then you're going to hit them with, "Well, you know, you're not ruling well your own household." That's my wife. That's the only one in my household. My granddaughter may be visiting with me for a little while but she isn't staying. Amen. I'm trying to help but I'm telling you right now, if you doubt my calling, I'm not doubting it. I know that following God comes with minefields, I get that.

By the way, while I'm on it, don't be doubting the deacons and the trustees either because you're looking too close at somebody's personal life because there's something wrong in your life. The Apostle Paul is saying, "Listen, when God called me, I was sure of what God called me to do. I settled it." In other words, he's saying, "God confirmed it before I worked and moved out on it. Before I acted on it." I call it take the phone off the hook or pass the salt. You say, "Why?" You'd better know God called you to do what you've been called to do, that you say you've been called to do because when time and trouble comes, nobody else is calling your life or your own deceptive heart will not keep you in the will of God.

While I'm on it, that has to do with some guy trying to talk you into marrying him because he said God told him to marry you. He's the devil. Devil, devil, devil, devil, devil. Amen. "I've been talking to God and God told me..." Get out of my face, God hasn't told you anything. "Get thee behind me Satan." That's what Peter said, "Lord, I done been talking to the Lord and he told me you aren't supposed to go and die." He said, "You'd better get behind me devil."

I get wore out with that "God told me" society. Well, let me ask you a question: if God told you, how come he didn't enlighten me? "God told me, if she comes up to me and says, God told me to marry you." I'd say, "Man, I think God made a good decision there, baby." I mean, it's funny how sometimes those "God told me" things are a little self-serving, aren't they? You try to talk yourself into it, "Well, I must be in it." Here's what a guy told me, it must have been several months ago now, back toward the first of this year, he said to me, "I've been called to the mission field." I said, "Praise the Lord, tell me about it." He said, "Well, I felt like I was supposed to go to this place. I started seeing car tags and billboards that had those things on it. I turned on the television and there's a whole thing there, one of those documentary things, and it's on the nation. That must have been God." I said, "Where's your Bible verse? Let me ask you a question: have you been working?" "No, I graduated from Bible school and I'm going on deputation." I said, "Really, are you married? Have you got a family?" He said, "Well, I just figured, you know, I'll go on deputation and go out there." I said, "What do you know about life?" You see, I'm real practical about that stuff. They say, here's the one they throw at you, "Don't let them despise your youth." Okay, fine, but they're going to. You're 22 years old and you haven't ever worked a job in your life and you want people to give you \$1,000 a week to go over in some country. You haven't been proven. We don't even know if you can hold a stinking job.

I know a lot of moochinaries and I mean that literally, that are in the so-called ministry because they're too lazy and because they're rebellious and mavericks by nature and they don't want anybody telling them what to do. But everybody says, "We're so glad. They're called in the ministry." I'm not glad because somebody should sit their behind down and say to them, "Hey man, you had better stop a second and slow down. You are fixing to step out of the will of God and start letting your own heart impose the will of God on you. Now you're going to try to do like Adonijah." "Don't you think I'm in the will of God?" I'm behind you, brother. "Don't you think I'm in the will of God?" I'm with you, brother. "Man, look at all this, I've sacrificed and nobody told me I'm not so I

must be.” Then guess what happens? Six years later: how long have you been on deputation? “Eight years. Got a trailer and seven kids. Man, I’m doing great. Glory to God, hallelujah. My quiver’s full of arrows.”

Don’t get nervous. See, I’ve got a little bit for everybody today. Maybe the more kids you have doesn’t make you more spiritual, it just makes you more stupid. Maybe you don’t know when enough is enough. Amen! Maybe you want to have them and somebody is trying to tell you if you really are spiritual, then you should have them. Maybe the Lord said, “I don’t want you to have none.” How’s that for you? Are you all feeling like throwing up now? We’ll put barf bags in next week.

I really want to help you but there is propaganda in the church today. Do you hear me? There is propaganda, people trying to use God to manipulate you. One thing you aren’t going to do, at least as I’ve gotten older, you aren’t going to accuse me when I’m laying up in that box, of trying to put you under bondage and hold you with guilt or fear to make you do something God never called you to do. If you found out what God’s purpose is for your life, then set at it and guess what? It changes. God’s purpose for me in my life for a while was to be a policeman and then it was to teach a little and then it was to preach a little and now, can you imagine, it’s to pastor. But thank God he didn’t start with that when I was 25. That would have been scary. Everybody got real quiet there. “Well, I’m not going to say anything.”

Take your Bible if you will, please, and look at 2 Timothy 3. Does this make sense to you? I mean, isn’t it maybe a little bit like fresh, like, “Wow! That’s refreshing to hear in church. Now that I’m here, I can just enjoy being here and if that’s all I can do, praise the Lord.” I wish some of you would get a hold of that. Everybody doesn’t have to be doing something, Martha, maybe they’re doing all they can just to get here. I wish you could get that and just enjoy them being here. “Well, I done made the taters and the sweet potato casserole and I made the string beans. I’ve been here cutting up this and getting that and doing the turkey and getting the prime rib and all they’re doing is come to sit at the table and eat and leave.” Why did you do it in the first place? “Oh, I forgot. It was for recognition.” You weren’t really wanting the family to come. You are the martyr. “Oh, I prepared all the Christmas dinner for everybody for the last 900 years, since Methuselah was here. I walked four miles in the snow with holes in my shoes to get that turkey. Oh, I’ve been sacrificing and taking a little bit of my paycheck to get the money. Picking up Coke bottles along the way to be able to buy that dressing that you’re eating and the water it takes to wash the dishes.” Get paper. Can I get a witness? There isn’t a man in here that doesn’t like paper plates. Hallelujah! That’s good preaching. Paper plates. “It’s Christmas dinner.” Good, that means you’re going to put a lot on there, so get you an extra one underneath it and when you’re done, throw it in the trash can. The dishes are done. Hallelujah! Cook in that disposable foil stuff, forget the pots. Let me just help you with something, let me help you just a little bit: just leave it set on the stove and let them dip out the pot. Whoever came up with the idea of taking it out of the pot and putting it into another pot so that now you’ve got two pots to clean up? Dip it out of the pot. Listen, it took you five hours to get it ready and 25 hours to buy it and it’s going to be gone in 20

minutes. Amen. Throw it in the trash. Hefty bag, tie a knot in it and say, glory. You get to the presents quicker that way, anyway.

Are you in 2 Timothy? Look in chapter 3. I said I was going to hurry but I'm trying, but I've got to show you this. Paul is talking to Timothy here, right? Paul says to Timothy in verse 10, "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions," so on and so forth. Do you know what Paul says? He says, "Hey Tim, you know what I'm here to do." Right? Paul writes this after he stepped off the track for just a little bit. Now this scares me, what I'm about to tell you: the Apostle Paul's heart for his people was so great that that love blinded him and even though I'm going to show you where the Holy Ghost warned him four times, he decided I'm going to do what I want to do anyway and he got the tar beat out of him for it. God didn't say, "Hey, you're suffering for Jesus. You're suffering because you're stupid." That's what 1 Peter 4 says. Peacock translation but do you know what he says? "You're happy if you suffer for Christ but if you suffer because you're a busybody or an evildoer or a murderer, so on and so forth," do you know what he says? "You're suffering because you're stupid."

A fellow tells me, "I'm going to jail for Jesus." You're going to jail because when the policeman told you to go you said, "I've got a right." And he said, "Okay, you have your rights. In my car." Amen. This close encounter of the fourth kind and you know, they don't have a right. Hey, he isn't out there arguing rights, stupid. You're out there propagating the gospel. I don't care if it's got a long tail and horns on it and comes up to you, fire breathing out of his nostrils and said, "Let me have your ID." Do you know what you say? Yes, sir. No problem. Here's my ID. You can't be standing there, "Okay, sir, well, I checked with the officials and they said I could but if you say I can't, then no problem. Tell me who I need to see or whatever but I'm done. I'm through." You know, the Lord says, "Yeah, I need you to get on down the road. There's an Ethiopian eunuch running down the road over there." Philip didn't say, "Lord, the meeting is going on here." He said, "Hey, Philip." He said, "Lord, there are 3,000 people and we're having a revival meeting. Man, I mean, the glory of God is coming down. The Shekinah glory. I mean, 3,000 people are added to the church. Pete's preaching like I never heard him preach before. I mean, hallelujah. Glory to God." He said, "Hey, Philip, there's one I need. How about coming with me?" The fellow over there driving around the corner. You need to step over on the corner and say, Hey, man. You might think you're dealing crack but ask him, "Man, listen, do you understand what you're reading?" He'll get that in a second. The guy said, "How can I except somebody explain it." Philip said, "Well, I must be the guy. That's why God sent me here."

You mean for one guy? Yeah. But if you're rebellious and stubborn and think, "I already know where God wants me to be and God hasn't got any room to change my plans and ask me for Isaac because I already know the will of God for my life. Bless God. I'm not changing. My purpose is set. My goal is set. My faith..." Hey, stop comparing yourself to Jesus, okay? Jesus is the one who set his face like a flint. I don't know that you've got that in you. You've got human in you. Human instrumentation. Amen. At least I didn't say the devil.

Come if you will, please, over to the book of Acts 20. I'm almost done, believe it or not. Did you ever notice in Acts 16, the Apostle Paul is over there and he's happy and he's rejoicing. He's in prison, right? And he's singing and people are getting saved and people are being stopped from committing suicide? Did you ever look at all that? Do you know why? Because that time, Paul was in prison because it was the will of God for Paul to be in prison. This last time Paul winds up in prison, he's in there keeping the cockroaches company. They're fighting over dinner. There is no singing. There is no praying. There is no praising. There is nobody getting saved. There is nobody jumping up and down and there isn't anybody getting turned loose. He's in bondage. He's in prison fixing to get beat. Do you know why? He didn't say, "Not my will but thine be done," he said, "I know what's best for me and because I love those people, I don't care what you say." Okay, God, I already know for a fact, God. I'm positive you gave me Isaac. You don't want him back. You gave me this ministry. You don't want it back. The Lord said, "Maybe I do. I'll take it. Would you give it?"

Let me show you 3-4 verses real quick and we'll close. Acts 20:22. Paul's over here testifying to both Jews and Greeks. By the way, when Paul is supposed to minister to the Jews, he kind of misconstrued that. That's the Jews of the dispersion, that's not the Jews over in Judea. Kind of twisted it just a little bit, didn't he? The Apostle Paul say, "Well, I'm ministering to the Jews." The Lord said, "I didn't want you to go to Jerusalem." By the time you get to the end of this story, do you know what you're going to find out? Paul wasted two years of his life out of the will of God and he wound up going third class instead of first class to Rome. God said, "I'm going to take you to Rome," he never said, "I'm going to take you by Jerusalem." But Paul decided to make a detour.

I'll show you the positive. The Lord still let it wind up working out because Paul's heart was right when he did it but it cost him two years where he is out of the will of God, not doing what God wants him to do and Paul is over there trying to convince himself and others that that must be where God wants him to be. I'm going to show you in the Bible where God warned him four times not to go and Paul said, "I'll be jumped. I'm going and I don't care what you tell me." You haven't ever been like that, have you? God says, "What are you holding onto that for?" Because it's mine. Somebody's got to do it. "Okay, well, just give it up. Don't worry about it. Somebody will pick it up if it's that important." It's got to be important, I'm doing it. "Really. Well, maybe I'm tired of it being done." When I get to it in just a second, I'll show you the passage where God says, "You may want to go but I don't want you to go. And your motive may be that you want to see those people get in, I'm done with those people. So I don't care how heartbroken you are over thinking the job's got to be done, you're out of my will going to do it."

Verse 22, "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." There is no question at all the Apostle Paul is ready to die for his cause. The Holy Spirit has already warned him one time that he's going to be bound up in Jerusalem. Do you know what the Apostle Paul says, "Well, I'm ready to die anyway so it doesn't make any difference. I'm willing to suffer for the cause of Christ

so I'm going to go ahead and do it." Do you know what the devil says? "Yeah, that's right. Come on. Let's go. Suffer. Get your life cut short on purpose, Paul." Out of order, Paul. That's what we want you to do. Although I told you I was going to send you to Rome but no, Paul, you think you've got to go to Jerusalem. 1 Corinthians 13, he loved him.

Skip over if you will, please, jump over to chapter 21:4, "And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit," capital S not little s, spirit of man. Through the Spirit, they're not deceived as all the commentators say because they wanted to fit in that Paul should have been where he was. He was not supposed to be there. Even though he was doing the right thing, it was the wrong time and the wrong place. "And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem." God told him, now the brethren told him. Two witnesses. Paul says, "Yeah, okay, I hear what you're saying to me. Amen. Hallelujah, Praise the Lord.

Verse 10, "And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost," capital H, capital G, not as the commentaries say that Agabus was deceived and was telling Paul the wrong thing because God would want Paul to go to Jerusalem, we all know that, so why would a loving God tell them, "Go, go." That can't be real. But the Bible says it is and I'll show you confirmation of that in just a second about who is right because God is going to settle it.

The first time there, God warned him. Second time, the brethren said something to him. Verse 11, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle," Paul's girdle, "and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem." Hey Paul, he's telling you the truth. He's telling you what we told you. Don't go.

Verse 13, "Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Don't ever forget: God knew Paul's heart about that but so did the devil. Some of you are willing to die for the cause of Christ and you're suffering burn-out right now because you're working, working, working, working, working and you're doing it in your flesh not through the Spirit. You say, "Preacher, if you preach like this, nobody will work in the nursery and nobody will work in the Sunday School and nobody will play an instrument and nobody will hold a church office." Then maybe the Lord's done. So, is it okay not to tell you this stuff because it hurts the people that want to volunteer for stuff? Or is it right to give you the choice? I'd rather you be happy sitting on a pew than miserable doing some job God never called you to do and that includes preaching in the pulpit.

“But also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.” I guess we ought to turn it over to the Lord. I heard one preacher preach and he said, “Paul made up his mind that no matter what anybody said to him, he was going to do what God had called him to do. Acts 9, the Apostle Paul was told to go to Jerusalem,” and he said it just like that. Very emphatically. “And because of that the Apostle Paul had a purpose driven life and nobody could derail him. Oh.” What you’re trying to do is hold people in positions and say no matter if anybody tells you not to, oooohhhh. Puke.

Paul was stubborn and hard and prideful in manner. The love Paul had for his people blinded him to the will of God for his very life. The Apostle Paul, the greatest apostle that ever walked upon two feet on this earth, was deceived by pride in his own heart and saying, “You know what? I’m willing to die.” The devil said, “I’ll take that. As long as I can keep you from getting to Rome where God wants you. I don’t care where you die in the name of Jesus. Just don’t go to Rome. Whatever you do, don’t fill out what God wants you to do.” Can we come just a little bit further?

The Apostle Paul begins to preach and he winds up getting ceased there and taken advantage of and he winds up getting the tar knocked out of him. They are wearing him out. Look in 22:17, “And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw him saying unto me,” the “him” there is the Lord, “Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem.” No, Lord, that can’t be you because that’s what Agabus said and that’s what the brethren said and that’s what I thought was you but it couldn’t have been you back a long time ago. You cannot want me in Jerusalem because I want to be in Jerusalem. I want to be in charge of this. I want to be the boss of this. I want to run this. I want to do that. I. Me. I. The pride of your own heart and God’s saying, “Hey, get out! I told you not to come here in the first cotton picking place.” And when he deals with me, he’ll say, stupid.

“Get thee quickly out of Jerusalem for they will not receive thy testimony.” No, Lord, they’re going to receive me! I’m casting my bread upon the water. Lord, they’re going to respond in droves by the hundreds and by the thousands. “Paul, they aren’t going to listen to you.” Lord, I’m a great preacher. Lord, I’m an apostle. I can persuade them. “No, Paul. You cannot persuade someone who is not ready to be persuaded. No, Paul, unsolicited advise is not ever heeded. Paul, the reason I told you not to waste your time there was because they’re not going to listen to you.” It can’t be true, Lord. If I can just get there and if I can just sit down with them, they’re going to listen to me. “Paul, I said, get out.”

Now, watch: Paul does what we do. I’m almost done. Watch: and he said, “Lord, they know that I’m in prison and been in every synagogue, them that believed on thee and when the blood of the martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by and conceding unto his death and kept the raiment of them that slew him.” Paul said, “They know, they’re Jews. They know what I did. Lord, that gives me an inroad with them.” He’s arguing with the Lord. He’s saying, “No, Lord, you’ve got to be wrong about that. I’m supposed to be in Jerusalem because I decided I’m supposed to be here.”

“No Paul, I never told you to leave where you were. I said when the time comes, I’ll send you a first class ticket and put you on a 757 and send you to Rome, but no, Paul, you’ve done decided how it’s going to be. I told you to stay put. You just had to be going somewhere. I told you to settle down but you had to be running off somewhere.”

Watch what happens. To show you that all those other ones were right and the Lord is right, now this is the third time the Lord is actually warning him. There are a total of five times. Watch at verse 21, “And he said unto me, Depart. I’m not arguing with you Paul. Get out. For I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. And they gave him audience.” Paul winds up staying there and tries to avoid the beating there, verse 25.

Move very quickly to verse 11 and let me show you what happens when you decide to go ahead and do what you want to do anyway. The Lord says to him, 23:10, it’s getting pretty bad there, wouldn’t you agree? “And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force.” He’s already gotten the tar knocked out of him. The chief priest ordered that he be smacked in the mouth. Paul loses his cool.

Can I get you to listen to this one thing real quick? Just this one thing and then you can go back to chewing your gum or whatever but this one thing. Because Paul had gotten there in the flesh, he’s now using the flesh to support his staying there because what Paul now does is use fleshly instrumentation to come against those people that are attacking him in the flesh. He’s not there in the will of God so you know what he said? “The Lord smite thee,” and he invokes God. The Lord smite thee. The Lord said, “My, my, my, Paul. Is that the way a Christian responds? When they reviled me, I didn’t revile. What’s the problem, Paul? Are you trying to justify being here when you know you weren’t supposed to be here in the first place? You’ve got the wrong foundation for your calling do you, Paul?”

Paul hangs his head, shuts his mouth, endures all the stuff that goes on and gets problems going on because he’s pretty smart with arguing things between the Pharisees and the Sadducees and then watch what happens. Paul says, “Well, I done made a mess of my life,” and he’s sitting in a jail cell. Verse 11, “And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.”

“Oh see, Preacher, Paul was in the will of God the whole time. God wanted him to be in Jerusalem.” Really? I just showed you five places where the Holy Spirit himself told him, “Don’t go.” Did I not? How can you take that passage unless you’ve been educated in modern theological seminaries, how can you take that passage and say, “Paul was on the right road the whole time.” You’re an idiot. He was not. Do you know what that is? Right down in your Bible, Romans 8:28, that in spite of his foolishness, because his heart was right, God said, “I’ll tell you what I’m going to do, I’m going to go ahead and send you to Rome but it’s going to be a rough trip for you, buddy. I’m going to send you shackled. I’m going to send you by way of a shipwreck and a snake bite and be in freezing out in

the jungle. But, Paul, I'm still going to use you. I'm not going to cast you aside just because you made a mistake."

"Preacher, maybe I'm doing something somebody else called me to do. Maybe I'm doing something because I thought everybody that's spiritual does this. So I can't really say God ever called me to do it. I just thought that's what you did." Okay. You know what? Suffering here with the Apostle Paul, his own self-will, for the right reason, prevented him from hearing not just the preacher, Agabus, not just the brethren who were concerned, prevented him from hearing what God was saying to him. Did you hear that? That's important. His own right desire if we were to look at it that way, "I'm going to Jerusalem. I've got to go and do something for those people. I mean, they're blind, they can't see. I'm willing to go over and even die for them." In Romans 9, do you know what he said? "I'm willing to even die in their place and go to hell for them."

So blinded by that desire. It wasn't by drinking and smoking and cussing and all the other kinds of things. He was so blinded by the right desire, the love in his heart for somebody else that he couldn't even hear the Holy Spirit saying to him, "Paul, uh, uh. That isn't where I want you." What did it hurt for him to go? If the Lord wanted somebody to go, he would have sent somebody. He wanted Paul in Rome. What should he have done? Well, I don't know. Maybe he should have thumped him and got him out altogether, but the Lord decided to delay everything there and wait until Paul got things right. But you go on in that passage and you know after he gets through talking to Agrippa and Felix, the Bible says, "And after two years." Paul, what have you been doing? "Well, I've been down there in Jerusalem witnessing." Did you win anybody? "No." Get anything done? "No." Where have you been? "I've been sitting in jail for two years. In bondage to my own thoughts, my own dreams, my own desires, my own will, my own way. Prison is just an outward manifestation of me being locked into myself. I put myself in prison to what I thought and said and it wasn't what God said. I'm doing something that I wanted to do, not what God said for me to do. I'm in prison. I'm in bondage."

No joy in that prison cell. No singing in that prison cell. No praising in that prison cell. No escape from that prison cell. No one saved from that prison cell. Just Paul sitting stagnate. Stale. Bound up. What are you doing, Paul? "Nothing." Hoping and praying that one day God will...and that night, the Lord comes in and says, "Hey Paul, how are you doing?" He said, "Oh wow, fancy meeting you here." My own interpretation. He said, "Well Paul, I'm not done with you yet. I'm not through. What I'm going to do with you now, Paul, is I'm going to send you where I intended to send you in the first place. Did you learn anything, Paul?" Yes, Lord, I learned that sometimes you can think you're in the will of God and be completely out of the will of God." Even if it looks right on the outside. Even though God may take it and still use it in spite of us. Nevertheless, it was a prison cell. Nevertheless, he couldn't get anything done. He lost his freedom. Him and the rats and roaches fight over the meals when they come under the table. He doesn't get to find out anything. Nobody visits him, talks to him for two years. Idle.

Our churches are full of people just like that. Do you know what they are? They are in a prison of their own making. Sitting there because they thought, "I should do this. I

thought I should do that. I'm trying to do this. I'm trying to do that. Nobody will help me. Nobody will do this. I've got to...I've got to...I've got to." And churches become nothing but bondage to them. It's just a prison cell. It looks nice but it's a prison cell because God said, "Hey, I want you in Rome. Why are you over here messing around with them for?"

"Hey, Jeremiah." Yeah, Lord. "What are you praying about?" My people, Lord. Man, they need you. "Well, you're wasting your time. Quit praying. I'm done with them." Excuse me? "I'm taking them into bondage. I'm sending Nebuchadnezzar down there shortly and taking them, so just tell them I'm coming to get them but quit praying. You're wasting your breath. I done made up my mind what I'm going to do." That can't be the will of God.

"Yeah, Paul, what did I tell you to do? I told you to go to the Gentiles, Son. Now I'm going to send you right back where you started to begin with." Guess what he does? He goes and preaches to kings.

I don't know about you. I can't tell in your personal life where you're at. I know this, I've been around church since nine months before I was born and I see a lot of people in Paul's position trying to convince themselves that, "I know I'm doing what God wants me to do," because their own heart has deceived them and the pride of their own heart has tried to convince everybody. You know, it takes a real person to say to the Lord, "Lord, if you didn't call me, here you can have it back. I was wr..wrr..wrong. I thought I was called to preach but I'm not. I thought I was called to be a missionary, I'm not. Thought I was called to do such and such, I'm not. So Lord, I'm going to go ahead and head for Rome. What do you think about that?" It's about time.

Maybe that's you today. The Lord is wanting to set you free. Yeah, you've got to watch out what other people tell you about them hooking you up but the only way they're able to hook you up is if it plays to the pride in your own heart. How many times you attend, how many did you win, how much are you giving? It's endless. It never stops. How many verses did you read? How many times have you been through your Bible? How many mission trips have you taken? It's sickening.

Head are bowed, eyes are closed and we'll stand together and we're going to be dismissed and I'll give an altar call today.

