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So let us rise. As we come first to hear the word of God, read Acts chapter 9, verse 20, through 30 Act 9, verse 23, through 30.

These are the words of God immediately. He preached the Christ in the synagogues that he is, the Son of God, then all who heard were amazed and said, is this not, he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them down, to the chief priests, But Saul increased.

All the more in strength and confounded the Jews. Who dwelt in Damascus, proving that? This Jesus is the Christ. Now, after many days were passed the Jews plotted to kill him but their plot became known to Saul and they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.

And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him and did not believe that he was a disciple, but Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that he had spoken to him and how he had preached boldly at Damascus, in the name of Jesus.

So, he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out and he spoke boldly. In the name of the Lord, Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him. When the brethren found out, They brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus that sends this reading of Gods, inspired and inerrant word.

We rejoice now to worship Him in the hearing of it preached. Please be seated.

One of the things that we saw at the beginning of the book of Acts when he was introducing it as the second volume and he said, in my former volume, my told you of the office and says he describes what he had done in the Gospel of Luke, as describing, all that Jesus had begun to do.

And to teach. And the implication of course, was that the book of Acts is those things that Jesus continues to do and to teach. So that if you have one of those Bibles that says, the act of the Apostles at the tops of the pages, as you go through the book of Acts, you could well at least in your mind, look at the word apostles and maybe give it a thin strike through and know that it really says the continuing acts on earth of the risen Lord.

Jesus Christ from heaven That is what's going on in the book of Acts. And that is this apostle, the apostle Paul who is still here is being referred to using his Aramaic or Jewish or Hebrew name Saul. That is his own interpretation of these events. When he looks back on them, He's going to repeat the account of his conversion especially in chapter 22 and chapter 26, but then in second Corinthians 11, when he begins, discussing his own weakness, as an apostle, and the fact that as an apostle, what he does and what he says, come by the power of Jesus.

And the speaking of Jesus, he refers to this incident in Damascus. As an example of how he's nothing, he's a weak guy who has to escape out of windows and be let down in baskets. It's Jesus His power and his word that does everything And then when he is reminding the

Galatians that man doesn't get to give his own spin on the gospel And so when he is writing to the Galatians and especially in chapters one and two, but it's really throughout that entire letter, he does not speak the way that the Bible scholars do at the seminaries and talk about the petrian Gospel in the pole in gospel and the Johanning gospel.

In fact that kind of speaking to the Apostle, Paul is almost literally anathema that it must be the same gospel and there's not one or another's take on it. Well, one of the things that he does as he's making that case in Galatians 1 and 2, is he refers back to this period in his life.

And he talks about how the Lord Jesus personally appeared to him and converted him and how the Lord, Jesus personally trained him in his ministry. And that when the Lord Jesus had done, that only 14 years later and maybe that's 14 plus the three that we'll hear about shortly.

So, perhaps 17 years later, he goes back up and he compares notes with the apostles at that time. He does after the three years. But then again at the end of the 17 and concludes that, yes, they got the gospel from the Lord Jesus. And Paul got the gospel from the Lord Jesus.

And the way they knew was not by each, one of them having claimed it. But by then comparing notes and concluding. Its exactly the same gospel. And so the apostles own recollection of the portion of acts that is before us this morning and afternoon. Lord willing is that this was the time that Jesus began using him in the ministry.

This was the time that Jesus began using the last apostle, the focus is on what Jesus is doing And that of course, has been the point throughout the book of Acts so far and I hope that as we have been working slowly through it by God's help that the Holy Spirit has been opening our eyes on you to see that even more than we ever had before and we'll see that again Lord willing Lord sparing us to one another until we get to the next passage perhaps next Lord's Day.

And seeing that the particular events that the spirit carries Luke along to select when he switches over to Peter, our that make you say, oh It's the Lord Jesus doing this and that when Peter speaks to Inaeus in the next passage, he actually tells him, it's the Lord Jesus doing this, and then in the passage after that, when Peter is to go and preach to and baptize Cornelius's household, the Lord, Jesus prepares him by telling both of them, that he is the one who is doing this, and when it comes time for baptism, which displays that it is, the Lord.

Jesus, who does it? They do the same thing. Jesus goes first. He pours the spirit who falls and Peter. Very nervously says, can we withhold the water when it's? And this is the implication, the Lord Jesus who is doing this. And so the emphasis in this entire book, and particularly in this section that we are in now, is that it is the Lord Jesus, who is now using this last and unique apostle.

And so we pay attention to what the ministry looks like. There is I think in the churches a sense and understanding that, what we need is apostolic ministry and that's true. But that's about as far as it goes, well, for many. Because when they say that there are many, who don't mean, we need only that ministry that the Lord Jesus does from heaven.

And so we need to do only that ministry, that the Lord Jesus describes in the Bible. And so we need to do only that ministry that the Lord Jesus wants us. We need to hear and speak only that message that the Lord Jesus has given. Usually that's not what people mean.

When at least in our day and age when you hear we need apostolic ministry. They usually mean things like we need to babble like fools in a way that the apostles never actually did in the Bible

and we need to have the healings of paralytics but never the restoration of amputated arms or the resurrections of of dead people.

That's a little too difficult and we need these ecstatic experiences. Well, there is going to be the healing of the paralytic and the resurrection and next week's passage. But what we find in Jesus's use of the apostle. Paul in the beginning. Now, of his apostolic ministry, here are the things that we actually really need the most.

We need zeal among the servants of Christ, and boldness. Not to back down from the offensive bits or to allow shame over. What we have been to keep us from proclaiming who Jesus is and what Jesus has done. We need patience and persistence in difficult ministry and we need the development of skill and training with the humility to say.

I need more education and I need more strength. We need perseverance in the face of persecution. We need this sort of apostolic ministry. The one that Jesus describes to us in our passage And so we'll hear those things. We hope by God's help in the first place. Zeal and boldness.

Yes, those of you who are cleverly, observing can see that. It's really sick six points, but if you put two each on under three headings, it looks like three. And then if the six-point has five subheadings, then it's really 10, but let us not bother ourselves with that. We'll organize it under the three in the first place.

Zeal and boldness verse immediately. He preached the Christ. He did not say, I've been converted now. I've been called now, I will wait for an opportune time to begin my ministry. It is daunting, especially if you have a reputation, as he does here. The first response that you see is, is in this, the guy who came to drag off anybody, who, who believes in this name or proclaims.

This name, there is never an opportune time to do something good. When you are waiting for it, If you wait for that perfect moment to do it, it will never come and you will never do it. In fact is only very rarely that we come into a season or come into a moment or come into a relationship where the Lord gives us the clarity or the foresight to see that this is an opportune time And as many of you have discovered in your lives, perhaps not with respect to ministry but with other things there have been those that you thought were going to be opportune times.

That it did not turn out the way that you have expected myself had a ministry that is still desperately needed and for which I pray that the Lord would send someone to do. But it was not the opportune time that I thought and and bless God's name for his wisdom.

But many of you will also be able to affirm many things that we thought were the most in opportune times and circumstances turned out to be the ones in which the Lord Himself was pleased to work. Most powerfully and most clearly. And as the apostle looks back on this period in 2nd Corinthians 11 going into second Corinthians 12, he highlights that The Lord saying, my strength is made perfect in weakness.

And so it was even here in Damascus being let out of window and down in a basket that the apostle was getting those first lessons in the fact that God's grace is sufficient, and that would mature in his boasting when he is weak for. Then it is strong. He is strong zeal.

He immediately preached Christ. He didn't wait for a more opportune time and that zeal is matched with boldness.

Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues that he is the Son of God. He goes to the place where he has access. He actually has access by letter and you can almost see in in the passage as they are as they are amazed in saying in verse 21, is this not, he who destroyed those who hold on this name in Jerusalem and has come here for that purpose so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests.

They know it seems the very text of the letters that he brought in hand to have access into the synagogues to have privilege of the floor. And so, he comes to the synagogue leader of the synagogue ruler and hands him. His papers are all, it comes from the chief priests.

This is very official, very impressive and, and Sim back his papers and, and saw the great Pharisee. That's the star pupil of Gamaliel. From Jerusalem, stands up in front of the synagogues and he starts to preach. And what does he say? He says, the Christ is not the Son of Moses, or the Son of Aaron, the Son of David.

The Christ is the Son of God. God became a man to be the prophet that Moses had said would come and supersede him. God became a man son of David according to the flesh, but declared the Son of God with power. According to the Spirit by the resurrection of the dead.

God is the Christ. So immediately, he preached the Christ where in the in the least receptive place in the synagogues with the most offensive. But most crucial part of the message, verse 20, that he is the Son of God. He did not back down from the most offensive bit.

He didn't get on the talk show and get a question about homosexuality or abortion put to him and ham and whore about how well, Christians have all of their sins to. And There are a lot of people who find themselves and difficult situations. No, He went straight for the most offensive thing.

If it was a question on homosexuality and say, it is an abomination and he would say, as he did in chapter 1 of Romans which we heard preached a few weeks ago, in the midweek meeting that particular lust, is called a vile passion and is against nature as a demonstration, that all sinners are under the wrath of God against all of their unrighteousness and ungodliness.

But in the gospel which is the power of God for salvation righteousness from God is revealed even for such sinners as that through faith. In Jesus Christ. Hear the difference not backing off of the most offensive bit, but going straight for it. Because it is there that God the Son became a man to bear God's wrath in the place of sinners, so that they might have God's righteousness instead of their guilt.

It's there in the most offensive bit that the gospel is most clearly hurt. And so he doesn't come in and start preaching, the great continuity between what the Jews thought the Old Testament said, and what the gospel is, he comes, and he goes straight for the jugular, and he says, your whole old testament taught you, and you should have been able to see that.

It was God, the Son who would come and atone for sinners. The Christ is the Son of God. He goes for the most defensive bit because that's the clearest part of the gospel boldness. All who heard were amazed and they say is this not He who well they knew who he had been and he knew who he had.

Been There's a great temptation among preachers and cousins and sons or daughters or brothers or sisters that we have been and particular way and it's grateful. This wasn't my first call, This is the third congregation in which I have functioned as preacher and pastor the grateful to have had an experience in which my previous call as a church planter and I kind of tried to acclimate a little bit.

I didn't didn't come in throwing all my reformed elbows with all of my right angled, black and white. Wonderful. Glorious reformed biblical theology and I found it difficult to transition as as they had and we were all believers and we were all called. Reformed Presbyterians had been made it difficult and I needed grace from God to grow in the boldness to be among them opposite.

What they thought. I had been. And some of us have not been as clear with our mom or dad, or our siblings, or our childhood friends about the difference now, and some of us even within the congregation as the Lord awakens us and brings us mourn to conformity with the mind of Christ.

As the Spirit applies him to us using the the scriptures. We we kind of try to to function in this continuity of inertia. And lack of boldness. Keeps us from amazing. Those who have the book on us. They had the book on Saul, they knew what he was like, but what he was suddenly like because of the difference of what he knew about.

Jesus was very different. There wasn't inertia, There. Wasn't that gradual? Melding of one into the other. So, the first thing that the apostle remembers that Luke by the Spirit preaches, to us about that time. When Jesus began, using the last awful was his zeal and his boldness. But how many take the idea of Zealand boldness, and use it to excuse, lack of patience and lack of skill?

That is not what the Lord does with the apostle Paul here. The next thing that we see this is especially in verse 22 and we're going to need help from Galatians for some timeline things here. The next thing that we see is patience and skill, but Saul increased all the more in strength and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus.

Proving that this, the Son of God is the Christ. I know. It says Jesus there in the passage. If you have one of those copies of the New King James that puts the supplied words in italics, you'll see that Jesus is italics, because the name Jesus is not in the text and the the continuity from verse 20 into verse 22.

Really means that this the Son of God is the Christ. So, in the first part, we have patients, but Saul increased, all the more in strength. And in the second part, we have skill and he confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus. So at first, he's just preaching, and there's some pushback already and he increases all the more in strength and that's the patience part.

But as he's increasing in strength, he's now not just preaching that the Christ is the Son of God, but now he is proving that the Son of God is the Christ. There's a development in in skill, in ability here. Paul has all of this Old Testament knowledge, all of this Bible knowledge and much of it is very good, but he's, he's just at the beginning of understanding.

What it means that the scriptures are those that speak of Jesus? When Jesus is talking to Pharisees, he says you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have in eternal life but it is they that speak of me and it is the there is an opening of eyes that we need from Christ by the Spirit to walk us through all the scriptures.

But beginning at Moses showing us how they teach us about Christ, they proclaimed Christ to us from the beginning to the end from Genesis to Malachi, yes from Genesis to Revelation. But at this point, the scriptures they have are Genesis Genesis to Malachi. And so there was a learning curve for him and the apostle actually there's a break that he takes here.

That is almost certainly under this phrase at the beginning of verse 22, but Saul increased, all the more and strength and confounded the Jews, who doughten Damascus, proving that, this Jesus is the Christ. Now after many days or past the Jews plotted to kill him and their plot became known to Saul and they watched the gates day and night.

You get the feeling as you read this incorrectly, if you get this feeling, you're getting directly that this all happens very quickly. Although the word, many days should give you a clue. One of the helpful things though is that Scripture interpreting scripture, God being His own best interpreter. We have another account of this in Galatians, chapter 1, and the Apostle, begin reading in verse 15.

Although it's verse 17 that we're really going to use for understanding verse 22 of our passage. But when it pleased, God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through his grace, it's not marvelous. That the chief of Sinners, the self-righteous Pharisee, the murderer of the early church was called from his mother's womb that God hadn't wasted a day in Saul's life.

Even those soul had wasted a decades of Saul's life. But God when sorry, I won't preach all of Galatians. When it's just some things you have to point out, but when it pleased, God, who separated, from me, from my mother's womb and called me through his grace. Now we're up into Acts chapter 9 right to reveal his son in me that I might preach him among the nations.

The Gentiles just say nations wherever you see Gentiles, that's what the word is that. I may preach him among the nations. So he's remembering back and he's remembering that that first moment of calling that first moment of grace that entering into the ministry. And what was he preaching? He was preaching.

God, the Son, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood. Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who are apostles before me. That actually does end up happening by the end of our passage. But here we are at the end of verse 17. But I went to Arabia and returned again to Damascus.

You don't get that from from our passage, right? You have to understand that somewhere in and where we are. And from between between verse 20. And verse 23, there's a trip to Arabia and it's almost certainly here when we have but Saul increased, all the more in strength because in in Galatians 1:17 he understands his need to confer with someone.

He needed help organizing his message working on his proclamation. And when he's talking about that in Galatians 1:17, he's saying I didn't even go up to the apostles for that help. I went into Arabia. Now, what you need to know is that when he says Arabia, he doesn't mean what we say when we say Arabia.

Usually, when we say Arabia, we mean kind of like the peninsula, right? Saudi Arabia and the other ultraterritorial, Islamic states that make up that Peninsula and you have reformed brothers and sisters in those nations by the way, the something for another time. But at this time, Arabia was a region that had that in the Roman Empire that included the trans Jordan, the across the Jordan area.

So that if you're thinking, yeah, kind of Israel and Damascus and you got the Jordan River coming up from the Dead Sea. This eastern region all the way up as far as Israel goes down. And then, of course, much of what they called Arabia. We actually do call Arabia now, but the old nabatian Empire Basically, what Paul, what Paul or Saul is doing here.

Is he starts preaching, that Jesus is the Christ, He's not yet able to confound and prove the way young Stephen had done in his home church, back in Jerusalem. We'll think about that in a little bit And so he crosses over the Jordan and he goes into the desert and the Lord Jesus who had appeared to him on the road does as he had promised to him.

He gives him instruction. He gives him training And so Saul has patience. He continues to increase in strength. He went to as it were theological seminary, and if Jesus is your professor, then you don't need any other ones and you don't need any other classmates, He did not confer with flesh and blood.

He says in Galatians 1. What he means is he conferred with the Son of God, whom he was preaching. Very interesting that he refers to Jesus, not according to his human nature now. But according to his divine nature and Galatians 1:17 and that ultimately is what you need at seminary.

Whoever the professor is he better be opening the scripture to you under the authority of Christ, by the help of God, the Holy Spirit. That's what you need in the preaching, isn't it? That's why you. I hope will keep coming back because it is Christ through His servant who opens up his words that had been in scripturated on the page and attends it by his spirit and makes to take root in your heart.

What he proclaimed. That's what Paul was saying to the Galatians in Galatians 1 and 2. And that's what he was. Strengthened by verse 22 of our passage. But Saul increased. All the more in strength You see he needed physical food in verse 19. There's a, there's a connection between that verse and this one in the local context, literary context and acts.

So when he had received food, he was strengthened verse 19. Then, verse 22. But Saul increased all the more in strength and we are not to think that that means, oh, he kept on eating, like it said in verse 19. No increased. All the more in strength because he recognized that he needed help and the Lord Jesus was his help.

Those who say, or think or communicate some other way that zeal and boldness are demonstrated by refusing, education and study, and training and preparation. They're liars, the zeal, and boldness of the apostle, as Jesus began to use. Him was matched with training and education and preparation, and it was through those things.

As Jesus strengthened his apostle. That he came to develop this skill to confound the Jews who dwelt in Damascus. And of course we've seen this before, but last time it was in Jerusalem and it was in the synagogue of the Freedmen, that Hellenistic culture background church, which was Paul's home church since he's from Tarsus and Stephen spoke with a wisdom and a spirit, that was confounding then.

So what does Apostolic ministry look like? It looks like zeal and boldness. It looks like patience and skill, but it also looks like perseverance and persecution verse 23. Now, after many days were passed. Then you say well, how many, as many? Well, we know the answer because he tells us in Galatians chapter 1, Galatians 1:18 after three years, and go ahead and read that to you.

Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and remained with him 15 days but I saw no none of the other apostles, except James, the Lord's brother and so forth. And we'll come back in a minute. When it says, after many days were past, he's talking about three years, Three years of them saying, what is this guy doing?

Isn't he supposed to be on the other side? Three years of them arguing with him and him having spent, we don't know how long an Arabia and come back and now confounding them and proving them that the Son of God is the Christ. Three years of their increasing, in their hostility, towards him, exasperating them.

And and having, as the primary fruit of his ministry, not only their exasperation, but eventual murderousness towards him. That's some perseverance, It'd be very difficult on any of us to minister to people who the primary fruit of our proving to them. The more we showed them that this really is what the Bible says about Jesus.

The more they pushed back and the more not just hostile to the message they became. But even hostile to our person so that the end of three years. Now, the Jews have been murderous for long enough that not only are one or two of them willing to take matters into their own hands, but they are agreed to conspire to commit murder.

It's not a moment of passion. Like at the end of Steven's trial, there's perseverance In a hard place in this apostolic ministry. Not like all of those frauds that call themselves apostles and go to Africa and preach in a place, their prosperity gospel and collect the local wealth and as soon as it starts to appear that they don't actually have anything to offer, they run and go somewhere else and do it again.

Know in true Apostolic ministry, there's perseverance with the gospel even in the face of fruitlessness, even in the face of hostility and persecution. This is what we need In our own hearts, in our own homes, in our pulpit. And in all the pulpits of Christ's church, not just Zeal and boldness, not just patients, patience and skill, but perseverance sticking to what the Lord has called us to even when the fruit has been disappointing.

And even if it includes the hostility of those around us, This is why it had this experience recently, get on a church website and you read itself, description and the word winsome features prominently in the first line of every paragraph. You know, it's not wrong to be winsome. The gospel is winsome, But there are not just some but many who are not one by winsomeness.

Not think that the culture is going to like what you have to offer necessarily. God may give it and it should be likable to God and and pan out at the judgment. You know, you don't put grouchy as the first line sentence, The featured word in the first line of it.

Every sentence either. But what we need and what was a mark of the beginning of Paul's apostolic ministry was perseverance in an unpopular ministry. Perseverance in a painful ministry. Perseverance in a frustrating ministry because it was perseverance in. Christ's ministry it. Belonged to Jesus, it wasn't up to Paul to do a different thing to do it in a different way.

And the one who was doing it through him, had done everything for him and was worthy of that perseverance. Some of you need to hear that in your parenting, perseverance and persecution. They should tell you this in seminary. I think maybe I had one professor who really highlighted it.

Paul told it to Timothy When Timothy went to polling theological Seminary, second Timothy chapter 3, when he's explaining to him, how things are in the church, and know, the church has a whole lot of preachers in it that aren't like, you are, like you. I have been Timothy, and you must now, be says the Apostle Paul.



He tells them, everyone who desires to live a godly life in Christ. Jesus will be persecuted. Second Timothy chapter 3, you don't say, I'm gonna go out and see how I get myself persecuted today because being persecuted is a hallmark of apostolic ministry. And so you go out and in your flesh and all of your unskilledness and lack of wisdom, seek to offend people with yourself.

Instead of proclaiming Christ, who is offensive to the flesh. You say I got persecuted. I must be godly. Now, that's a converse error. For those of you who are, who know logic, but isn't the contrapositive true? If godly. Then persecuted, It doesn't mean if persecuted then godly, but it does mean, if not persecuted not Godly, The apostolic ministry will always have enemies.

And so we see this persecution in multiple ways here and we'll just run through them fairly quickly. The first is a deadly threat. The Jews plotted to kill him. They had they had given up arguing with him, They plotted to kill him. It's a persistent threat. It says they watched the gates day and night verse 24, so they plotted to kill him.

Saul found out about it at this point, it appears that solves public ministry stopped. We'll talk about that in a moment but they know one public place where they can get in. So they watch the gates day and night, so it's a deadly threat. It's a persistent threat. The godlier, not the only ones who have persistence and perseverance.

Those of you who are in a fight with your flesh. You know, how persistent you're remaining centers, It's an increasing threat. This is another one where scripture interpreting scripture. It enhances our knowledge of the passage Second Corinthians chapter 11. If I must boast I will boast. This is verse 30 in sync Corinthians 11.

If I must boast, I will boast in the things, which concern my weakness, The God, and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ who was blessed forever. Knows that I am not lying in Damascus. The governor under a Rita's, the king was guarding the city of the damacines. People are from Damascus with a garrison.

Desiring to arrest me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped from his hands. Now That opens up your understanding of verses 23 to 25 a little bit, doesn't it? Because if you just reading the book of Acts, it sounds like there's a bunch of those, you know, irritable hostile, murderous Jews.

It kind of like the ones who later enacts are gonna either that kept their word and starved to death because they weren't able to get Paul. You remember the ones who take the the vow not to eat or drink until they killed him. You know, if you're just reading acts, it sounds like it's just a few Jews, right?

And you're like, why, you know, just a few Jews, why? The whole through a window in a basket thing, You know, one of the first Cena felts that, I can remember from my, my childhood Sunday school classes. But it's not just a couple of Jews, is it? There's a garrison of men who are being led by the local governor and I think Pilate in Jerusalem but now it's whoever has counterpart would have been in Damascus but it's not just the local.

Governor is actually in in cahoots, with the, the figurehead king, a Rita's in the region, think Herod in Jerusalem, but a Rita says his counterpart and Damascus.

Apparently proclaiming that God, the Son has become the Christ and that He is. Lord over all and it's not Kaiser curios, it's Chris. Tosh Kurios, not Caesar is Lord, but Christ is Lord. That upsets more than Jews doesn't it? You're preaching. The gospel plainly and clearly you're

gonna upset more than the status quo people in the church and the self-righteous don't need atonement.

Just a little bit more credit people in the church. You're preaching Christ. Well, you're gonna upset everyone who isn't a Christian or isn't being brought to be one by the Spirit So it's not just a deadly threat and a persistent threat, it's an increasing threat. And we should expect that for a faithful ministry, a zealous ministry, a bold ministry, a patient ministry, a skilled ministry, a persevering ministry, that it will be a persecuted ministry.

Deadly, persistent increasing threat. But in God's providence and escapable threat, then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket. Second Corinthians 11 verse 33 which we read adds that it was in the window in the wall. Now the Apostle doesn't remember this.

As a moment of cleverness, I thought it like that for much of my life going back to the Xena felts unionized know what. Xena felt is, we'll have to

Another time. And childhood Sunday school classes. I thought it was a moment of great. Cleverness. The Apostle second Corinthians 11 verse 33, Well that whole 30 to 33 or so there Remembers it as a moment of great weakness. He had to humble himself, to say it's okay to retreat.

I've been given an opportunity in God's wisdom and God's providence. I've been given wisdom from God. I've been given a calling, There are other people to preach this gospel to

He's exposed as being weak But he also becomes for us and is an example of using wisdom. In our weakness. It's kind of like it's similar to, I should say it that way. What this same apostle commands, all of us by the Holy Spirit and Romans 12 verse 3, Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought.

But think of yourself with sober judgment in accordance with the measure of faith that God has given you. We are limited of opportunity. We are a limited of ability. We are limited of grace.

You know, you it's not. Why isn't good to break your child's sleeping patterns? Skip their nap. Feed them sugar and then demand perfect obedience from them. There needs to be instruction and discipline when the sin exposes itself. But they're also ought to be adaptation when the weakness comes out.

And you exercise the wisdom, The Apostle Paul did not say, I am immortal until my work is done and march to the palace of a Rita's. The king in front of the governor and his garrison and start proclaiming the gospel. Would God have saved him? Well, as a hypothetical question, that doesn't deserve an answer because the way God saved him was giving him the humility and wisdom, not to do that, but it's similar to one of the temptations with which Satan tempted Jesus.

Isn't it cast yourself from this temple display that you are immortal until your work is done? There's a temptation to thinking that pride or invincibility or laboring beyond the constraints or good counsel of what how God has designed us and how God has saved us and how God is grace.

Does to thinking that those things are zealous or brave in the face of persecution? No, it's okay. It's okay to admit that you don't have all the knowledge yet and take that time for study. He took the time in Arabia, it's okay to admit weakness and retreat to preach another day and

be let down through the window in the wall is okay, to accept the help of Barnabas the son of encouragement.

When you get to Jerusalem and all the Jews are afraid of you and rather than running around announcing to them how Jesus appeared to you. So you better listen to me, letting the man who already has the rapport with the congregation in Jerusalem. Bring you to the apostles. Apparently it's Peter and James specifically to whom Barnabas brings them and that's just harmonizing properly with Galatians 1:18 to 20 and then at the end of our passage, it's okay when the brethren find out that Paul's home church the Hellenists and the synagogue or maybe not in the synagogue, but the Greek culture Jews in Jerusalem.

They think about him about the same way they thought about Stephen, and they're ready to do to him, what they did to Steven, while he was holding their coats and he retreats again. Sometimes persecution is an escapable threat. You need to be willing to love, not your life, even unto death and to overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of his testimony, right?

Revelation 12, you need to be willing for that but you also need to be willing to be humble and exercise wisdom and take what providence gives you for your calling. Some of your husbands and fathers, some of us have health challenges as husbands and fathers. It's not super spiritual to ignore our health or Christian liberty.

It's not super spiritual to ignore our health so that we can do a ton more, spiritual things, it's not Christian liberty to ignore our health and entertain ourselves to death. While we let being a good husband and a good father slip, it's just one example.

In the case of the persecution, it was an escapable threat and it was a recurring threat. It did happen again to him in this time instead of it taking three years like it had in Damascus. It took 15 days in Jerusalem. So, what are the marks of this apostolic ministry when Jesus begins to use the last of the Apostles?

Zeal. Boldness, patience. Skill person perseverance and persecution. If we can agree on that biblical definition, then we can agree to say, oh, that we had an apostolic ministry. Still today, Not meaning. The speaking in tongues and the raising of paralytics. But men used by Jesus to proclaim, that Jesus is the Son of God, who became the Christ who lived and died for sinners, and rose again.

And that it is he by His Spirit who is sending these preachers all over the world to proclaim who he is and what he has done. I'm in let's pray. Our Lord. Jesus Christ. We pray that you would bring the gladness of obedience to the gospel, faith in you.

That you would bring that gladness to the nations that they would all go from being persecutors to praisers and proclaimers of your name. Just as you did to Saul just as you used salt to do to many so that you we pray that you would raise up, many men in whom you do.

Similar works by your same Almighty power. According to your same grace and your same spirit to preach the same gospel, O Lord. We pray for our preacher. Our elders, the husbands and their marriages, the moms and dads in their parenting. And for all of us as brothers and sisters and neighbors that you would give us zeal and boldness and patience and skill and perseverance, even in the face of persecution and give us wisdom and knowing how to navigate it all, and glorify yourself by the work that you do now in our place.

And in our time, we ask Lord Jesus in your own glorious name. Amen.