Acts Chapter 1-16 Summary

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Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0:00] Growing up, I watched a movie called The NeverEnding Story.

! Any of you guys ever heard of the movie? It's kind of a weird movie. Kids movies back then were pretty weird. Kids movies today are weird too, but weird in different ways. For those of you who were here when I began this Bible study in Acts, you might think that this is the never-ending Bible study on the book of Acts.
Because I began teaching a Bible study on the book of Acts back in 2017. Some of you guys may remember when the last time that I taught on Wednesday night in Acts was back in 2022.
Hopefully, Lord willing, it won't take me another eight years to get through the rest of Acts. But it's been so long that I couldn't remember where I left off, and I was surprised that I made it through 16 chapters.
I didn't think that we had got that far. But instead of going back and starting all over from the very beginning, I'm going to go through an overview tonight. Hopefully, we'll get completely through the first 16 chapters of Acts.
[1:21] And then next week, we'll start in chapter 17. The book of Acts, though, is in a way a never-ending story. It's the story of how the church was born and the obedience of the apostles and the early followers of Christ to obey our Lord's commands, to go to the nations, to proclaim the gospel, to make disciples, who make disciples as churches were planted and the gospel continued to go.

The human author who was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the book of Acts is Luke. And Luke is only mentioned three times in the New Testament. What we know about Luke is that he was a close companion of the Apostle Paul.
Colossians 4.14 tells us that Luke was a physician. He was a doctor, which meant that Luke was pretty smart. And we see that in his writing style and in his research, as he displays his knowledge of Roman culture and customs and also the geography of Israel and the surrounding regions.
Luke obviously knew Paul. He also knew the other apostles who bore witness to Jesus' life and death and resurrection. The Gospel of Luke, which was also written by Luke, records the eyewitness encounters of the apostles and their personal testimonies to what they heard Jesus say and what they saw Jesus do.
Luke was an eyewitness to many of the events he records in Acts, beginning in chapter 16, where he switches from talking about what happened to including himself, using the first person plural pronouns like we and us.
[3:07] The evidence of this letter suggests that Luke finished Acts sometime before Paul's first Roman imprisonment, which was in AD 60 to 62. So that helps to explain why the book of Acts seems to end abruptly with Paul as a prisoner in Rome, awaiting his trial before Caesar.

If Acts was written after Paul's first imprisonment, Luke certainly would have recorded that information, and subsequently he would have told us what happened to Paul and what happened, you know, leading to his second imprisonment in Rome and how he was martyred for preaching the Gospel.
But Luke doesn't provide those details, which indicates that this book was completed before those events happened. As I mentioned before, Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke, and Luke and Acts are meant to be read together.
They were like a two-volume set. Acts is kind of like the sequel to the Gospel of Luke. It continues the record of what Jesus accomplished through the early church.
Both the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts were written to a man named Theophilus. Luke begins his Gospel with these words, Luke 1, 1 through 4.

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[4:21] And as much as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

From that passage, we infer a few things about Theophilus. First, he was most excellent. We don't talk about people like that. Maybe we should. Most excellent Willard is going to teach the Bible study tonight.
But the Greek word translated as most excellent means strongest or noblest. So Theophilus was an honorable man in his society, in his culture.
Perhaps he was a Roman dignitary who was one of those members of Caesar's household that Paul talks about in Philippians 4, 22, who were saved by faith in Jesus Christ.
And so maybe Theophilus wondered, after his conversion, how did this news about Jesus get to me? How did the gospel get from Jerusalem to Rome?
[5:36] And so Theophilus, like all Christians, was probably eager also to know more about his Savior, Jesus Christ. What we do know is that Luke wrote this gospel and Acts to provide Theophilus and other followers of Christ certainty about the things that had been taught.

He provides the names, the places, the events, the details, all of which could be verified by Theophilus, and all of which confirmed that Jesus is the Son of God who died for our sins, who rose from the grave, and who ascended back to heaven, commissioning then his disciples to go and to proclaim the gospel and to make disciples, something that the church did and something that the church still continues to do.
It's amazing for me to think about how just a few hundred followers of Jesus living on the other side of the world from us were obedient in the infant stages of the church to proclaim the gospel with the results being that here we are tonight in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, a place that they, I'm sure, didn't even know existed, and how amazing it is that the gospel has come all the way over here and has reached people in this place.
God has been gracious to save millions of people, and it all started with a small group of faithful men and women who endured all kinds of hardships but who were obedient to go and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.
And I think it's fitting that Acts ends the way that it does because the story continues. The mission has not been completed. The church continues to be the light of Christ, and it continues to carry out His command to go and make disciples and disciple those disciples who have been made.
[7:31] So now we're going to look at an overview again of the first 16 chapters, and this will be like a 30,000, maybe like a 50,000-foot view of these first 16 chapters, and I've provided a one-sentence summary of each chapter along with a scripture from each of those chapters to serve as a kind of highlight about what God was doing.

And there's a lot of things that I'm not going to be able to hit on, but I'm going to hit on some of the things that I think are really important just to catch us up as we begin studying chapter 17.
So this is kind of like an Acts highlight reel. You know, if you ever watch the news or SportsCenter, they don't replay the whole game, but they show you the highlights. This is what happened. And so that's what I'm going to do tonight. Acts chapter 1.
Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to His disciples, ascends to heaven, and Matthias is chosen to replace Judas. Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to His disciples, ascends to heaven, and Matthias is chosen to replace Judas.
Acts chapter 1, verses 8 through 11. Jesus, before He ascends, says, You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem.
[8:44] And in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. And when He had said these things, as they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him right out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, angels without wings and without halos, if you were here a couple of weeks ago on Sunday morning.

Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven. What I think is interesting about this passage is that there's no question in Jesus' mind as to whether His apostles would fulfill the

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task that He had given to them.
He speaks with absolute certainty. You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. And that's what happened, isn't it?
Jesus does what He says He will do. Also, we have the promise from Him of the Holy Spirit. Jesus knew the apostles would accomplish what He commissioned them to do because the third person of the Trinity would empower them to do it.
And today, we continue to trust that Jesus will do what He says that He will do. We share the gospel and trust the results to the Holy Spirit.
[9:59] We also trust the words of the angels, that they spoke to Jesus' followers. Just as Jesus ascended into heaven, one day, and hopefully we pray that that day will be soon, He will descend.

He will come back for His church. He will establish His kingdom on the earth. Acts 2. The Holy Spirit descends, Peter delivers a powerful sermon, and thousands are added to the church.
Acts 2, verses 37-39. Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brothers, what shall we do?
And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, and for your children, and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord, our God, calls to Himself.
There's a lot of highlights in this chapter, especially what comes after this text about the love and the fellowship the church experienced. But I think what is really important for us to see is how the church got its start and how it experienced its immense growth.
[11:07] Again, obviously the catalyst was God, the Holy Spirit, the supernatural ability of those who were gathered in Jerusalem to share the gospel in languages that they didn't know to people who were hearing the gospel in their own languages.

But what I think is significant here is God's vessel, what He chose to use to give birth to His church, and it's preaching. It's preaching about Jesus, who He is, what He's done, preaching that was convicting, that told the truth about who we are, and what we've done in our sin.
The church didn't start with a bunch of programs. They didn't protest and riot. Peter preached about Jesus, and like Jesus, he called his listeners to repent.
He shared the bad news about sin and how our sin separates us from God, and then he shared the good news, urging his listeners to repent, to turn from their sins, and to obey Jesus, the only one who can save from the punishment our sins deserve.
And this is a good reminder for us to continue to prioritize the preaching and teaching of God's Word in God's church. This is what God does, empowering us through the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel.
[12:26] And there are a lot of ways to grow the church, but God's way, and the only way that works, and lasts, is to preach the truth about who Jesus is and what Jesus has done as He's given it to us in His Word.

Acts chapter 3, a miraculous healing provides another opportunity to preach the gospel. And miraculous healing provides another opportunity to preach the gospel. Acts 3, verses 4 through 10.
And Peter directed his gaze at Him, as did John, and said, Look at us.
And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. This is the lame beggar. But Peter said, I have no silver and gold, but what I do have, I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.
As He took Him by the right hand and raised Him up, and immediately His feet and His ankles were made strong. And leaping up, He stood and began to walk and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw Him walking and praising God and recognized Him as the one who sat at the beautiful gate of the temple asking for alms.
And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what happened to Him. So what we learn here is that salvation is better than silver or gold. And that salvation cannot be earned.
[13:40] And that salvation comes to unlikely people. That God is a gracious Savior and He uses miracles to confirm the truth of the gospel.

Acts chapter 4. Obeying the Lord may at times require civil disobedience. Obeying the Lord may at times require civil disobedience. Acts 4, 18-21.

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So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God you must judge for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.
And when they had further threatened them they let them go finding no way to punish them because of the people for all were praising God for what had happened. So Peter and John again they're arrested for proclaiming the gospel.
The rulers and elders of Israel commanding them to stop it. Stop saying Jesus' name. Stop preaching about Jesus. But Peter and John politely but boldly said, No.
[14:41] We're not going to stop doing that. Passages like Romans 13 command Christians to obey those who God puts in authority over us but our allegiance as Christians is ultimately not to them.

It's always to Jesus. And so as Christians we will seek the peace and welfare of our nation but we will not make peace with sin and with those who command us to stop talking about Jesus.
Acts chapter 5 The Holy Spirit purifies the church. The Holy Spirit purifies the church. Acts 5, 1-5
But a man named Ananias with his wife Sapphira sold a piece of property and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet.
But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold did it not remain your own? And after it was sold was it not at your disposal?
Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but God. When Ananias heard these words he fell down and breathed his last and great fear came upon all who heard of it.
[15:50] And then likewise we know the same thing happened to his wife Sapphira. And what we learn here is that God will not tolerate hypocrisy in his church. He will not share his glory with another.

And it's a grave sin to lie to the Holy Spirit by making promises that you don't plan to keep to trick people into thinking that you are more holy than you truly are.
Acts chapter 6 Deacons are appointed to address the church's physical needs allowing the apostles to devote themselves fully to preaching and prayer.
Acts 6 verses 1 through 2 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number a complaint by the Hellenists arose among the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.
And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. So as the church grew so did the physical needs of the membership.
[16:51] Notice though that the apostle solution isn't to do more work to please more people. they delegate that responsibility to deacons so that they can focus on meeting the church's spiritual needs.

They prioritize the spiritual needs of the church over the physical needs. Healthy churches follow this example. Deacons meet physical needs so elders can focus on the spiritual needs.
Acts chapter 7 Persecution intensifies! Against the church Stephen becomes the first martyr but the gospel continues to spread. The gospel continues to spread.
Acts 7 51 through 54 And this is Stephen in his defense of the gospel. He says What we learn from this passage is that when we preach the gospel there will be results.
When we are faithful to talk about sin and we're faithful to talk about the consequences of sin people will respond either in faith or in refusal in rejection and sometimes in rage.
[18:15] We are like the farmers in Jesus' parable. We are called to scatter seed. It falls on different kinds of soil some good some bad but it's God who causes the growth.

But even when the truth we proclaim is rejected God accomplishes a greater good. The church had reached Jerusalem but that wasn't the only place that Jesus commanded them to go.
Persecution forced them out and forced them into other areas to other people who had yet to hear the good news of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done. Acts chapter 8 God is winning even when it looks like the church is losing.

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God is winning even when it looks like the church is losing. In the beginning of Acts 8 we are introduced to Saul, Paul, who was ravaging the church. It was his goal it was his ambition to put an end to Christianity.
The Lord will have plans for him but at this point the enemies of the church appear to be winning. Philip goes to Samaria people are being saved there. Peter and John go to visit.
[19:19] They meet a man named Simon a false convert who thinks he can buy the Holy Spirit and use the Holy Spirit to perform miracles and gain a fortune. He is sternly rebuked by them and this is another reminder to reject those who seek to use Jesus for sinful profit.

Philip then is taken up miraculously by the Holy Spirit and parachuted down into a meeting with an Ethiopian eunuch who is reading Isaiah but can't understand it.
Acts chapter 8 29 through 35 And the Spirit said to Philip go over and join this chariot. So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked do you understand what you're reading?
And he said how can I unless someone guides me? And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the scripture that he is reading was this like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shears is silent so he opens not his mouth and his humiliation justice was denied him who can describe his generation for his life is taken away from the earth.
And the eunuch said to Philip about whom I ask you does the prophet say this about himself or about someone else? And Philip said I know the answer Philip opened his mouth and he began with the scriptures and he told him the good news about Jesus.
[20:35] What we learn here is just confirmation again that all of scripture is about Jesus. He is the interpretive key to unlocking the true meaning of God's word.

Acts chapter 9 Saul is converted transformed from a fierce opponent of Christ into the apostle to the Gentiles. Saul is converted and transformed from a fierce opponent of Christ into the apostle to the Gentiles.
Acts 9 through 36 on his way to Damascus again seeking to arrest Christians Saul meets Jesus. Now as he went on his way he approached Damascus and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him and falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him Saul Saul why are you persecuting me?
And he said who are you Lord? And he said I am Jesus whom you are persecuting but rise and enter the city and you will be told what you are to do. What I think is really awesome here is to think about how closely Jesus associates himself with his followers.
Paul was persecuting believers but Jesus says that his persecution of them was truly persecution of him. Notice also the grace of God to save someone who hated him so much and this is a good reminder to us that we should not think that anyone is too far gone for God to save them and do something awesome through them for his glory.
[22:00] Acts chapter 10 salvation comes to the Gentiles. Salvation comes to the Gentiles. If you aren't a Jew you're a Gentile. Peter was confused by God's command to go to Cornelius a Gentile.

Again the people Peter was raised to believe the Gentiles that they were unclean and beyond God's grace and beyond God's salvation. But Peter receives a strange very strange vision of a blanket that unfurls and it contains all these unclean animals and he's commanded to kill and eat.
He's being shown here that Jesus is not just the Savior of the Jews but the Savior of the world. Acts 10 44-45 While Peter was still saying these things the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word this is when he goes to Cornelius' house and he preaches the gospel to them and the believers from among the circumcised who had come he's telling them the results after this happened Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.
This is another reminder that we are to go where God tells us to go. We are to share what God tells us to share and we are to trust the ability of God to save those who we think aren't savable.
Acts chapter 11 Peter defends the salvation of the Gentiles. He defends the salvation of the Gentiles. When word got back to the apostles and the other believers throughout Judea that Peter had gone to the Gentiles and that they were saved they were critical of this.
[23:26] They were critical of him. And so Peter told them about his experience and what God had done in Acts 11 17-18. If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ who was I that I could stand in God's way.

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When they heard these things they fell silent and they glorified God's saying then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life. This shouldn't have come as a surprise to them. This is what God said that he would do. Back in Isaiah chapter 42 verses 1 and 6 and 49 verse 6 that the Gentiles would be saved. This shouldn't have come as a shock again to the Christians converted from Judaism but it did.
However, they didn't deny what God had done and were thankful to include the Gentiles into their fellowship. Acts chapter 12 God is winning even when it looks like the church is losing.
We might see that one again. Herod orders the execution of James and he arrests Peter. James was the first apostle to be martyred. It looked like Peter was going to be the next but he is miraculously freed from prison.
[24:32] Herod's pride leads to his death and another enemy of the church is removed as verse 24 tells us but the word of God increased and multiplied and Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their service bringing with them John whose other name was Mark.

Acts 13 The church sends out Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. Chapter 13 marks a turning point in Acts.
Paul now takes the center stage as the focus shifts to his calling to spread the gospel to the Gentiles. They go to Cyprus and Pisidia Antioch and again we see the accurate and faithful proclamation of the gospel and that it will produce results.
This chapter could also be summarized as God is winning even when it looks like the church is losing. Acts 13 48-51 says, Acts 14 God is winning even when it looks like the church is losing. Paul and Barnabas are threatened with stoning at Iconium and then Paul is stoned in Lystra. Acts 14 19-23 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and having persuaded the crowds they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city supposing that he was dead.
[26:23] But when the disciples gathered around him he rose up and entered the city and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch strengthening the souls of the disciples encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

And when they had appointed elders for them in every church with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. So again Paul and Barnabas were faithful to preach the gospel even though Paul was stoned stoned to the point where the people who were stoning him thought that he was dead he didn't stop preaching the gospel he didn't stop being obedient to the Lord's commands to go and to proclaim the good news to the Gentiles.
Acts chapter 15 the Jerusalem council meets and decisively affirms that circumcision is not required for salvation.
The Jerusalem council meets and decisively affirms that circumcision is not required for salvation. Jack is reading in his Bible and he is reading somewhere in Genesis and he hollered down from upstairs he said dad what's circumcision?
So I said well come downstairs and I'll tell you. So I did and he understood what was being communicated there. I don't think I need to share that with you.
[27:56] If you have questions see most excellent Willard afterwards and he'd be happy to let you know. Judaizers false teachers believe that in order for the Gentiles to be saved they had to first submit to circumcision.

They basically taught that a person had to become a Jew before they could become a Christian. Barnabas and Paul were instrumental in shattering that erroneous belief that false teaching.
They shared what they witnessed God doing amongst the Gentile believers. They weren't saved after performing some kind of religious ritual. They were saved by hearing the gospel and believing it in faith.
James the half brother of Jesus and the leader of the church in Jerusalem then stands up and he says in Acts 15 19-20 Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols and from sexual immorality and from what has been strangled and from blood.
And all God's people who enjoy bacon and pork chops and ribs said amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Acts 16 God is winning even when it looks like the church is losing.

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[29:21] Paul and Barnabas go their separate ways at the end of chapter 15. If you remember they had a dispute over John Mark who had left them on a previous missionary journey.

Barnabas being the encourager that he is wanting to give him a second chance. Say let's bring him back. Let's give him another opportunity. But Paul was concerned about Mark's dependability.
And so we can ask well who is right? And it depends on who you ask. But this breakup truly accomplishes God's will. Barnabas takes Mark and we aren't told what happens on their missionary journey but we do know from other scriptures that Mark matured in his faith.
That Mark took advantage of this chance that Barnabas had given to him and he wrote the gospel of Mark and was later a useful companion and minister with the apostle Paul.
But Paul takes Silas and he also takes Luke. And they meet Timothy who would become like a son to Paul and who would later serve as an elder in the church. And then we read about the conversion of Lydia in chapter 16 verses 11 through 15.
[30:34] who is a great woman of the faith. But not long after Paul and Silas are arrested, after that they're arrested and they're humiliated for preaching the gospel in Philippi.

But a prison cell could not disrupt their joy in the Lord and it could not keep them from fulfilling their mission. What I love about this passage is Paul and Silas are in prison.
And if you were in prison, I don't know that you would think, you know, let's worship God. Let's sing hymns of praise to Him. Well, that's exactly what they do. And so they're worshiping the Lord and then God sends an earthquake which flings open all the prison doors.
And the Philippian jailer is alarmed by all of this and he pulls out his sword and he's ready to end his life because back then if you were a jailer and you allowed your prisoners to escape, well, you would pay the price with your own life.
And so he thinks that everybody is left, that he's going to be executed, but instead something awesome happens to him. Acts chapter 16 verses 27 through 34.
[31:43] When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.

And the jailer called for lights and rushed in and trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household.
And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds and he was baptized at once, he and his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them and he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.
God. So what we learned from this passage and, you know, obviously from many other passages in scripture is that things in the world may not be going the way that we want them to go.
We, and that might be tempted to question what God is doing or what God is allowing to happen. But the truth from Acts to this point is still true for us today.
[32:55] That God is achieving the end that he ordained from the beginning. And our task is not to question, it's not to doubt, but it's to be lights in this world.

Our task is to continue to carry out the great commission that the Lord has commanded all of his disciples to partake in, to share the good news of who Jesus is, to share the good news of what Jesus has done, to support missionaries as the church supported Paul and Barnabas and then Paul and Silas as we're supporting Alyssa and as we support the mayors and others.
Our job is to support missionaries who are called to go outside of our nation to share the good news, but we're also to understand that we're missionaries as well, that our mission field is the place we're God has you right now.
In your home, in your neighborhood, where you work, wherever the Lord would have you to go, Walmart, the doctor when you're sick, that's your mission field, that's your place to let your light shine for Him.
Sharing the gospel and trusting the results to the Lord. And this was a good reminder for me, especially just thinking about all that's happening in our nation and all that's happening in our world, how angry it can make us, how angry it's made me, and how you can think, what's wrong with people?

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[34:27] Why do they think like that? That's just completely irrational and that doesn't make sense and they don't even realize it. And then that anger, if we're not careful, it can morph into a kind of hatred.

And we think that, well, the solution is you all just need to get up out of here and go somewhere else. Or maybe we need to do that. Maybe we need to get up out of here and go somewhere else. And I was reminded of Jonah and how much Jonah hated the Ninevites.
He hated the Ninevites and he was afraid that God was going to be gracious and save them. Remember that? He wasn't afraid of what the Ninevites would do to him.
He was afraid that God would be gracious and save these people who he hated. And so that was a good reminder to me, you know, how much do I pray for people who are lost? How much am I lifting up politicians who I disagree with?
How much am I praying for all that's happening in Minnesota? How much am I praying for, you know, even what's going on in Iran? I'm not as much as I need to. And so that was convicting to me and a good reminder for me and I think for us as Christians is that our job is to trust the Lord.
[35:34] Our job is to pray. Our job is to go. Because ultimately what's going to help most is that people hear the good news of Jesus Christ and they're saved.

That's what's going to bring transformation. That's what our nation most needs. That's what our world most needs. And thankfully we know the end, don't we? We know how all things are going to turn out.
And so no matter what happens, we have reason to be faithful and reason to be hopeful because we know that even when it looks like Christianity or faith, it looks like God is losing.
Reality is he's winning. That's the case in Acts. That's been the case throughout all time is that no one can frustrate the plans of God. Nobody can overrule God.
No one can unseat him from his throne. Nobody can vote him out of office. Praise the Lord. And if you're on God's side, you're on the winning team and we want others to be on the winning team as well.
[36:41] Lord, we thank you for the truth that we see throughout your word, that even when it looks like things are out of control and that the enemy is winning, Lord, we know that you are always in control, that you're always sovereign.

You're never unsure. You're never afraid. Lord, you've ordained the end from the beginning and all things will work toward the end that you already have in place.
And so, Lord, we thank you that we can trust in you no matter what's happening in our lives, no matter what's happening in our state, in our country, or our world, that, God, we know that you are sovereign and you are ruling and that we don't need to worry about these things.
What we need to do is just be faithful to the task that you've given us, which is to proclaim the good news of who you are and what you've done in the hopes, Lord, that you will save more.
And so, God, help us to be mindful of that. Help us also, Lord, to see the unbeliever as you see them. Lord, to resist the temptation to have cold and hardened hearts towards them, but just to see how much they really need you and be willing to be the ones whom you use to warn them about their sin and the eternal consequences of it.
[37:58] And so, Lord, help us to be faithful in doing that. God, thank you for this place that we have together and to study your word. And, Father, we thank you for our church and we thank you for the good that you've done through it and for those who are faithful to teach and proclaim your word.

God, to you we give the thanks and we give the glory. And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.
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