Not Too Busy to Minister

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Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0:00] Amen. Well, good evening. Good to see you all.

! And as we continue our study here in the book of Acts, tonight we're in Acts chapter 9 still.! And we'll come to the end of this chapter.
We'll cover verses 32 through 43. So Acts chapter 9, verse 32 through 43.
If you have your Bible and want to turn there. So we've been going through the conversion of the Apostle Paul. And now, as we saw last week, Paul goes into the background and Peter comes back.
And he's in the foreground and will be for the next few chapters. And so if you're there, beginning in verse 32, I want to read along with me. It says, Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda.
[1:09] There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Rise and make your bed. And immediately he rose.

And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord. Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which translated means Dorcas.
She was full of good works and acts of charity. In those days she became ill and died. And when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him urging him, Please come to us without delay.
So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them.
But Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes. And when she saw Peter, she sat up.
[2:16] And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout Joppa. And many believed in the Lord.

And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner. I've heard that in other countries, countries like Australia and England, they love hiring Americans to work there.
Many of the companies there, they love whenever an American applies for one of their positions. And they give that American great consideration whenever they look through the applications that they've received.
Do you know why that is? Wonder why? Well, because of the American work ethic. Americans wrap so much of their identity into what they do for a living.
We are a nation of workaholics. In our country, many people live to work, whereas in other countries, people work to live. But it's different here.
[3:32] And we take a certain level of pride, don't we? In the work that we do. And we take pride in the fact that we like to be busy. And we use oftentimes our busyness as an excuse for why we don't have time to do anything else.

Sometimes our busyness gets in the way of our church service. Many people probably feel like they've had a busy week at work.
And then when Sunday comes around after Saturday, they've had a busy day, you know, running around, doing errands, spending time with their families and whatnot. And Sunday comes around and they think, well, you know, this is my day.
This is my opportunity to catch up on my rest and to sleep in. And church members often, unfortunately, we've seen, prioritize their work and social activities over their weekly meetings with the rest of their church.

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And also sometimes this happens to pastors, too. Pastors often will complain or talk about how busy they are with things like sermon preparation and that they don't have time to do much of anything else.
[4:51] Maybe even giving the impression to the people whom they minister to that they just don't have the time to spend with them individually because they've got so many other responsibilities that they've got to focus on.

When I was in Leavenworth serving as a youth pastor before I became the pastor there, our senior pastor, his name was Pastor Blaine.
And his office door was always open. Whenever he was there, his door was always open. Rarely, if ever, do I ever remember seeing it closed.
And, you know, in my time with him, I realized that the people really, really loved him. And his sermons were great. He was knowledgeable in the word.
He had good Bible studies. He sang really well. He would sing oftentimes. And people loved it when he sang. But I realized as good as he was at all those things and as much as people appreciated him for those things, what they really loved the most about him was how accessible he was to them.
[6:03] And they felt comfortable that they could walk in and they could walk right into his office and know that he wouldn't be too busy to spend time with them individually.

And so that's something that, you know, I know in seeing that from him, I tried to follow his example. And when he retired and I stepped into his place, in that church building, the pastor's office was right next to the front door.
So it was almost like if you came into the church, you kind of felt obligated to at least peek your head in if the pastor's office door was open. And at least say hi or at least let him know that you were there, you know, so they weren't afraid that, I don't know, somebody was breaking in or something like that.
Not that that would have happened. But, you know, anyhow, it just people felt comfortable that they could come in. And here my office is way far out of the way, which in some, sometimes I kind of, you know, don't like that because it's, if you're going to come and see me, it's because you really, you have to see me.
You can't just, you know, walk by. If you want to see me, it's because you've got a reason to, which is good. But, you know, it kind of, people might feel like, well, it's so far out of the way and, you know, I don't want to go down there and bother or whatever.
[7:25] Plus, you've got to go through one room to get into the other room where I'm at. So, anyhow, sometimes there's advantages to that, but other times there isn't. And so one thing I learned from Pastor Blaine was how important it is that as ministers of the gospel, we be accessible to our people.

And they feel like they could come in no matter what we're doing or how busy our day may be, and we will give them time of ourselves because that's important.
Some advice I once received, I don't remember who said it, probably somebody really important who said it, and then somebody else heard it and liked it and said it again.
And it was this statement, people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.
And so a Christian can know the Bible forwards and backwards, but if they don't seem to care or they don't seem to even like the people that they are ministering to or trying to share God's word with, it won't have that much of an impact on that person because they don't seem to truly care about their spiritual growth.
[8:35] They don't really seem to care about their salvation. And so you can display your knowledge, but they don't care how knowledgeable you are unless they know that you actually care for them when you try to communicate that to them.

No matter how large their ministries may have been, God's noblest servants have taken the time to minister to individuals. If you remember, Moses nearly wore himself out because he was taking care of ministering to each individual until his father-in-law came along and stepped in with the wise advice and encouragement that, you know, you've got to stop this, you've got to delegate, otherwise you're going to wear yourself out.
So there is danger in overdoing it, but still we see from that example that Moses truly cared about the people whom God gave him to lead.

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Despite the large crowds that pressed consistently upon Jesus, he consistently showed concern for individuals. Remember the woman who was suffering from a hemorrhage who touched him and was healed, and he stopped what he was doing to acknowledge her.
We remember when Zacchaeus was up in the sycamore tree and Jesus stopped and addressed him. Remember the children who the disciples at first were trying to prevent from going to Jesus because they didn't want Jesus to be bothered by them, and he cleared the way for them to come and be with him.
[10:04] So Jesus as well was somebody who cared deeply about the individuals who followed him and making sure that he was available to them. Stephen, before he was martyred, was involved in the church's ministry to widows.

Paul, though consumed with reaching cities and nations, endeared himself to people whose names, as you read his letters, are scattered throughout. He names people, he names individuals whom he has come to know very well as a result of his ministering to them and caring for them.
Stories are also told of the great reformers, men like Martin Luther and John Calvin, how they made themselves accessible to their congregations whenever they were needed, despite how busy they were or how much they were doing for the church.
They were accessible to their people. Martin Luther would often entertain people in his house late into the evening, and he would just go around the table talking about them over theological matters. Charles Spurgeon gave much of himself to his congregation. He was the prince of preachers during that time. He was so well known and so beloved and so well thought of, but he still made sure that he gave of himself to his seminary students.
[11:26] He would make sure that he spent time discipling them. He was involved in the care of orphans and of ministering to widows. Their people were not a means to an end for them.

They didn't see the people as something that they could use to gain more success for themselves. The people were the means. The people were who they truly cared about. The idea of a man of God who ministers only to large crowds is foreign to Scripture.
God expects not just pastors but all Christians, all leaders, all teachers within his church to pour of themselves into others.
We are to go and make disciples, but then we're to continue into teaching them, into training them to be like Christ. That means that we've got to spend one-on-one discipleship time with the people in our church.
Paul's encouragement to Timothy, a young pastor in this regard, we see in 2 Timothy 2, where he says, And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
[12:37] Peter now, as we'll turn back to Peter and his ministry in this passage, he preached to large crowds. He preached on the day of Pentecost to a large number and continued to do so afterwards in Jerusalem.

But though he was a very important man in the church, he also still made sure that he made time to minister to the individuals within the church.
And in this passage, he shows us how effectively we are to minister to people on an individual basis. And so here's the main idea for our study tonight.
Any believer, that's the fill in there, any believer can have a faithful, or a fruitful, excuse me, any believer can have a fruitful ministry for the Lord if they are willing to be used by the Lord.
Any believer can have a fruitful ministry for the Lord if they're willing to be used by the Lord. And so as we go along here, Peter provides us with an example of how we as Christ followers should act, how we can minister to people on an individual level, and the results of that will bear a lot of fruit for the kingdom of God.
[13:56] And so the first thing that we see from Peter that we need to model from his example is that Peter was present. Peter was present. Verses 32 through 33, I'll reread those.

Now as Peter, it says, went here and there among them all. He came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed.
And Peter said to him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed. And immediately he arose and all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him and they turned to the Lord.

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So again, the scene here shifts from Paul back to Peter, who will again be the central figure now over the next few chapters. The church we know at this point was growing and the church's growth required Peter to be constantly on the move.
And so he was going here and he was going there. And as he was going here and as he was going there, what was he doing? Well, he was ministering to the followers of Christ on an individual level.
[15:05] And so again, as important as he was, Peter made the time. And Lydda, where he went to, was an important city during that time. It connected the roads between Egypt and Syria and Joppa and Jerusalem.

Today, it's the location where the international airport of Israel is at today. It's located in what was Lydda back then.
And so when Peter arrived, as he's ministering to people, as he's making himself available, as he's present, he found a man named Aeneas who had been bedridden for eight years because he was paralyzed.
Luke doesn't tell us how he was paralyzed, but it's clear that his paralysis was beyond the ability of the doctors and the medications at the time or the treatments that they had at the time to be able to heal him.
And so it was going to be the case that this man who had been bedridden for eight years would probably be bedridden for the rest of his life. And so Peter's making himself present as a result of his desire to minister to individual Christians gave him then an opportunity to minister to Aeneas and as a result of that to share the gospel with him.
[16:18] And we see that it continued to spread from there. You know, one thing I've learned as well is the importance of hospital visitations as a pastor.

And not just pastors do that. Deacons do that. Elders do that. People in the church do that. But one thing that I've come to realize is that whenever a member of the church is in the hospital, that's a great opportunity to go and visit them.
Not just to give them encouragement and to pray for them, but a lot of times what happens is that you meet their family members. Sometimes it's a spouse who hasn't been in church.
You meet their children. You meet different people. And through those interactions, I've seen a lot of people come to faith in Christ. I've seen a lot of people who left the church come back to church because of those hospital visitations.
Now, the one thing we've got to realize is that it can be very intimidating for somebody who's never been to church or who hasn't been to church in a long time to go into a church building.
[17:22] That can be a very intimidating experience. Sometimes you think about being the new person in any situation. That's not always a comfortable position to be in.

And so a lot of times it's those interactions where we're able to go and interact and minister to our Christian brothers and sisters in Christ on an individual level outside of the church.
Those are great opportunities to share the gospel. And so that's what Peter's doing here. He's going. He's accessible. He's making himself present.
Another reason why I'm involved in Jack Sports is for this very reason. It's an opportunity for me to get to know and to minister to his teammates and also to their parents.
And a testimony I'll share with you is that one of the boys on his team, his grandparents, talked to me about Pastor McBride.
[18:18] Many of you guys were here when Pastor McBride was here. And he had all kinds of great things to say about him. And the thing that impressed him is how he was so present within the community, umpiring games or coaching Little League teams.

And so, you know, it's again, you know, to me it was confirmation and also something I encourage you to do. Be present and active in our community because those oftentimes are the opportunities that we have to share the gospel with people.
How are you going to let your light shine if all you do is come to church and then go home? You know? I mean, hopefully you're doing that in your neighborhood, but that's why it's so important to be active and visible in the community because people are watching and it has a huge impact.
And those often provide us with the opportunities to get to know people and to share the gospel with them and hear, you know, how long has it been? 20 years or so? I don't know if it's been that long, but that example is still having an impact.

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So be present. Secondly, Peter's ministry sought to bring glory to Christ. Peter's ministry sought to bring glory to Christ.
[19:31] Verses 34 and 35. So Peter is present. He sees that Aeneas is paralyzed. He goes to him and he says to him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you.

Rise and make your bed. And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him and they turned to the Lord. So again, Peter wasn't out making the rounds in order to sell his latest book.
He wasn't out trying to gain a greater social media following for himself. He was present and his ministry focus was to exalt Jesus, not himself.
Peter's selflessness and humble attitude stands in sharp contrast to many in ministry today who seek their own fame and their own fortune instead of seeking primarily to exalt the name of Jesus Christ wherever they go.
And so we see here that Peter took seriously our Lord's commands spoken in his hearing in John 15, 4 and 5. There Jesus says, Abide in me and I in you.
[20:38] As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.

For apart from me, you can do nothing. And so Peter understood that his ministry effectiveness was dependent upon Christ's working through him, not how stylish he dressed or how eloquent his sermons were.
He needed to make sure that he was abiding in Christ so that Christ could work powerfully through him. Likewise, the apostle Paul understood that same thing. And he talks about it in Romans 15, 17 through 18.
There he says, In Christ Jesus then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience by word and deed.
And so Peter healed Aeneas by the name of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. And as a result of that healing, many in Lydda came to faith in Christ and the surrounding plain of Sharon.
[21:52] They were hearing out there and they were coming to faith in the Lord as well. So be present. When you're present and you're ministering, make sure that the glory that you're seeking is Christ's glory, not for yourself.

And then third, we see that in order to be effective ministers of Christ, that we need to follow Peter's example of being available. So the third thing we see is that Peter was available.
He was present. He gave the glory to Christ and he was available. And that point comes from verses 36 through 39. So again, he's going here and there. And so now he's ready to go on the move again.
It says in verse 36, Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which translated means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. In those days she became ill and died.
And when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples hearing that Peter was there sent two men to him, urging him, Please come to us without delay.
[22:53] So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing him tunics and other garments that Dorcas had made while she was with them.

So again, Peter's presence in Lydda made him accessible to the individual believers there and also available to other believers who were nearby.
So while Peter was in Lydda, tragedy struck in Joppa. There, Dorcas, a believer, who had an incredible ministry that was a great blessing to many of the believers there, had died.
And so her death was a severe blow to the believers who were there. However, you've got to give them credit in their faith. Instead of burying her immediately, as was the custom, they laid her body in an upper room because evidently they had something other than a funeral in mind.
And so they reached out and they called for Peter to come and they urged him to come right away. And again, despite his consuming duties, despite all of his responsibilities, we see that Peter answered the call.
[24:10] And he didn't put him on hold. He didn't say, well, I'll come tomorrow. Peter, it seems, dropped whatever he was doing and he went right away in order to minister to another group of

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believers in another city and to minister there.

He was never too busy or too concerned to preach to large crowds that he wasn't making himself available to meet the individual needs of the church.
And so when he arrived, he saw just how beloved Dorcas was, how great of a loss her death was to the Christians there, particularly to the widows of that community.
They had been extremely blessed by her ministry. During that time, employment opportunities for women were scarce, if there were any at all.
And so back in that day, a woman whose husband had died and who didn't have children to provide for her lived in poverty. She didn't have many other options.
[25:17] And so that's why it's so important we see that encouragement from the apostles to us, to the church, to make sure that we are caring for orphans and widows. And that shouldn't be any different today.

But Dorcas took that command seriously. And so she was a tremendous blessing to these women who didn't have much of anything else. Again, orphans and widows, they were not cared for by the government.
They were not cared for by many other people in the cities they were in besides the Christians who took them in and who cared for them. And so her ministry was important.
Here's the thing too, I think that we've got to understand as well. Dorcas wasn't a pastor. Dorcas wasn't a preacher. Yet her ministry, making clothes for these widows, was so important to them. You know, they're weeping over the fact that she had died. And so you can have a powerful ministry in your church without ever getting behind a pulpit, without ever even teaching a Sunday school class.
[26:20] So again, going back to Sunday, you know, you have a gift. Identify what that gift is and then ask the Lord to have you put it to use for him and you'd be astounded by the impact that it will have.

Look, she made clothes for widows and they loved her and adored her for that and that made a big impact on their lives. So again, Peter was available. He wasn't too busy.
He didn't think of himself as being too important to answer this call to serve and to minister to other believers who were in need. I remember back in seminary, we would often have, well, we had chapel every week and sometimes we would get some chapel speakers that we were all really eager and excited about having come.
A lot of guys, I could name their names and you would know who they were and that was neat. That was really always something that we looked forward to and I'll never forget that one of those speakers who came was John MacArthur.
And what would happen most of the time, I noticed, is that when the speaker would come, you know, he'd sit in the front surrounded, next to the president, surrounded by the other faculty and then we students, you know, filled up the back and then, Michael knows what I'm talking about, and then they would get up and they would preach, always great, always impactful, and then they would go back down to their spot, president or somebody would come up and close in prayer and then what would happen a lot of times that I seem to notice was that that person would be then kind of whisked to the back where they would be going off to their next place or going home and now sometimes they really were, they really needed to hop on a plane and get to wherever they were going to next but sometimes you wondered, you know, why can't they come out and why can't we talk to them?
[28:19] And so when John MacArthur came, I kind of figured that would be the same case. Here's a guy who's got a very large ministry, very impactful man, very busy person as well and so after he preached, I expected the same thing but he stayed around and he stayed right in the front of the chapel and, you know, it was like throwing out, you know, raw meat to the sharks, you know, and all the students converged on him and wanted to talk to him and wanted to take pictures with him and they had books that they wanted him to sign.

As a matter of fact, they had John MacArthur study Bibles that they asked him to sign and he signed them, you know, which I thought was interesting and the president told us later that I asked him about that and he said, yeah, I just signed whatever they put in front of my face but he made himself accessible and he was there long after I left and I just, that was profound to me because I thought, here's a person who doesn't see himself as being too important to interact with the student

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body and so that was something that was always impressive to me and I think that's something that we've got to keep in mind as well is how important it is that we as believers make ourselves accessible.
You know, if you teach a Sunday school class, a Bible study, whatever the case may be, I think it's important that you hang around and you interact with the people who you're teaching and give them an opportunity to ask their questions and give you their feedback.
That's important. So again, Peter was accessible. He was available. Fourth, Peter's accessibility resulted in fruitful ministry. Peter's accessibility resulted in fruitful ministry.
And that point comes from verse 42. And it became known throughout Joppa and many believed in the Lord. So again, we see God's greater purpose in raising Dorcas was that the gospel would spread.
[30:28] And so just as in Jesus' ministry, continue to be the case with the apostles in Acts that God used miracles as confirming signs that the gospel is true and also to authenticate the ministry of the apostles as truly being his messengers.

And so God used the raising of Dorcas as the spark that resulted with the salvation of many throughout that city. Just as was the case with Aeneas, Peter's presence, his desire to exalt Christ, and his availability resulted with many coming to faith in Jesus.
And so again, when you make yourself available to be used by God, he will use you. And he will take your little, again going back to Sunday, like the loaves and the fish, and he will take your little and he will multiply it in ways that will astound you if you will make yourself available to be used by him.
So his ministry was fruitful as a result of his going, as a result of his being present, as a result of his being accessible, as a result of his wanting to give God the glory for everything that he did. And then fifthly, Peter, we see, was willing to minister to all types of people.
He was willing to minister to all types of people, and that's what made him such an effective minister as well. From verse 43, and it says there that he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner.
[32:05] And so that footnote there serves as a bridge from this passage to the next passage to the next chapter in chapter 10, where we'll see the gospel continue to go out to the ends of the earth, and that we'll see the salvation of Cornelius, who was a Gentile.

Before that, though, Peter stayed with a tanner whose name was Simon. This time was a challenging time for Peter and for the other disciples, as the Lord was showing them and revealing to them that many of the hostilities that they had towards non-Jewish people had to be torn down. They had to be destroyed. We saw that with the Samaritans, whom the Jews despised, whom these disciples once despised, that they were hearing, that they had believed the gospel, that they were being saved, that they were being brought into the body of Christ, that Jesus was revealing through them that he wasn't just the Savior of Israel, that he wasn't just the Savior of the Jewish nation, but that he was the Savior of the world.
And so they are experiencing this as he is having them go to people whom they once thought beyond salvation, whom they despised, whom they did not want to be saved.
And so Simon would have been one of those people. He was a tanner. And in the first century, again, Jews would have despised tanners because they handled the skins of dead animals.
[33:44] And so therefore, they were unclean. And so therefore, if your job was a tanner, you would not be allowed to enter into the synagogue. And if you had any interaction with somebody who was handling unclean things, who in this case was handling the skins of dead animals, then you also were seen as being an unclean person.

And so from there, we see that prejudice is detrimental to any ministry. Any ministry. And unfortunately, in many Christian circles, those who do not fit into a particular mold are often rejected.
If not outright, they're made to feel rejected by the fact that they always seem to be on the outside and never are allowed in. And so again, there is no room and there is no place for any kind of prejudice to exist in God's church.
The Apostle Paul, we know, was once a zealous Jewish nationalist. As a result of that, he was a very prejudiced man. But then when he came to faith in Christ, the Lord tore down all of those old dividing walls that he had established to keep out all of those people whom he thought were unclean, all of those people whom he thought were beneath him.

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And so we see that as a result of his salvation that he was transformed. And part of that transformation was that he saw people the way that Jesus sees people. And he talks about that very thing in 1 Corinthians 9, 19 through 22 about his desire that everyone come to faith in Jesus Christ, no matter what they look like, no matter what their social status is or their economic situation.
[35:29] And so there he says, for though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all that I might win more of them. To the Jews, I became as a Jew in order to win Jews.

To those under the law, I became as one under the law, though not being myself under the law, that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law, I became as one outside of the law, not being outside of the law of God, but under the law of Christ, that I might win those outside to the law.
To the weak, I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people that by all means I might save some.
And so we've got to understand that as believers, we cannot look at a person and make the assumption that they are unsavable.
Or we can't also have the thought that, well, I, you know, it'd be great if that person was saved, but I don't want them to come to my church, you know? That doesn't, that doesn't do it.
[36:34] That's not Christ-like. We can't have that attitude. And so, you know, I encourage you to be praying that our congregation would continue to grow in diversity, which I think that we've seen, and we should praise God for that.

And, you know, as we look around the neighborhoods that our church is surrounded in, you know, one thing I'll never forget, somebody telling me is that, you know, your church congregation should look like the neighborhood that it's in, no matter what, no matter what that case may be.
And so, again, you know, how well are we going out and reaching to those even in our neighborhoods to let them know that we are here? But again, Jesus is the Savior of the world.
He is the Savior of all peoples. We've seen in Revelations when we get there, when the church is united before him, that it will be made up of all people, of all tribes, of all tongues, of all nationalities.
And so why shouldn't it look like that now? You know, I think that's something that we've got to, that we've got to push for and pray for, especially right now during these times.
[37:43] Because, you know, politics and social reforms, they can do some things to mend the division, but they can't accomplish what the gospel can accomplish.

And so if we're able to show the world, hey, look at us. You know, we're not all the same age. We don't all look the same. We don't all make the same amount of money. We don't all have the same stuff.
But look, we love each other. We are united together. We genuinely care for one another. And we can say the reason why that is is because of Jesus Christ.
It's because the gospel that unites us. The common denominator that we share is Jesus and our salvation. And that's most important. And if we're able to do that, then we're able to communicate to the world how powerful the gospel of Jesus Christ is.
And so again, Peter knew the principles for an effective ministry. He lived them out. As a result of that, his ministry was blessed. It was used mightily by the Lord. And his small acts of service were able to produce great results for the church.
[38:53] As even in those small deeds that he did, the gospel spread far and it spread wide. So now we turn to application. How can we or how should we best apply this text to our lives?

First of all, make your presence known and felt in our church. Make your presence known and felt in our church.
So if you're going to be a member of a church, then be present in that church and your presence should be felt. Which means that you participate now and we've got to understand too that as a body of believers, we've got to help new people feel welcome and we've got to help them identify what their spiritual gifts are and then encourage them like Andrew to put those gifts to use here.
That Christ would be exalted. That the gospel would be spread as a result of our church going and sharing the good news. So make your presence known and felt in our church.
One thing that I really don't like about the way that a lot of churches have gone is they've made it so that you can come to church anonymously and leave anonymously and now some people want that but again, you look through scripture, these people knew each other well and they loved each other

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and they were involved in each other's lives and so you shouldn't be able to go to church and leave anonymously, right?
[40:26] We want to be and should be a part of each other's lives. Second, make sure that Christ's glory is the glory that you seek. So in all things that we're doing we are most concerned and really it should be our only concern that Christ is glorified as a result of it.

You know, I want to serve in this ministry and I hope that it increases but I hope that it increases for the glory of Jesus Christ and not for me. And so in all that we do our biggest and greatest and really only concern should be that Christ is glorified by whatever it is that we do.
You know, it's great to have a growing ministry. You know, we have 200 kids if we were having VBS show up. Oh, that's great and that's wonderful but you know, we should all give the glory to Christ in that case.
It shouldn't be that well, we got all those kids because we have the greatest decorations in town or anything like that. You know what I'm saying? Third, make yourself and resources accessible to help others in need.
Make yourself and your resources accessible to help others in need. That resource may be your time, could be your talents, could be your treasures, whatever the case may be.
[41:44] Make yourself accessible to the Lord. And again, the more present you are with your church, the more you know about the people who are in your church, the more you know what their needs may be, you pray for them or you seek to be the one whom God uses to meet that need with whatever resources that he has blessed you with if you can do that.

And then lastly, confess and repent of whatever prejudices you hold towards others. And so, you know, if you heard that last point and you thought, well, you know, there's some people that I might be uncomfortable having to come to church here.
And, you know, it's not always a race thing. Sometimes it's an age thing. It goes both ways. Whatever the case may be, we should never have that attitude that there is a certain person or a certain type of person that we don't want to worship with us.
And so, if that's the case, I just encourage you to pray and to ask that the Lord would change that attitude within you, transform it, help him to see people, ask him to help you to see people the way that he sees people.
All right, I'm going to pray and then James will come up with the prayer sheet and some announcements and things like that. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word.
[43:02] We thank you for its instruction. God, we pray that by your spirit's power you would help us to apply it to our lives. That we would see that Peter was an incredibly important individual in the church.

He had tremendous responsibilities that you entrusted him with. yet, Lord, he made sure that he was in tune with your spirit, that he went wherever you sent him, that he wasn't primarily concerned with the following that he had or how large a crowd of people that he got to preach to.
He cared about each person individually, Lord, as you care about each of us individually. And so we pray that as a church we would reflect the same attitude, that Father, we would make sure that we are present and active and accessible and that we are willing to do whatever it is you call us to do, Lord, knowing that you can take even our small offerings and multiply them in ways that astound us.
And so, Father, we pray that as a church that you would continue to press it on our hearts to give you our best because you've given us your best. That you have come, that you have died on the cross for our sins, that you have risen again, Lord, that you have saved us from our sins and that we have salvation in Christ and eternal life that awaits us.
And so, Lord, I pray that we as your church would do all that you've called us to do to go and to make disciples and to make sure that in all that we do that we are seeking the glory of Jesus Christ, your Son.
[44:34] In his name we pray. Amen. Amen.

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