

# Sticking to the Mission

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Take your Bibles and turn to Mark chapter 1, Gospel of Mark, Matthew, Mark, chapter 1. I'll begin reading at verse 29. Jesus has been teaching and healing at the synagogue on the Sabbath, and that's where our story picks up.
- In verse 29. As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew.
- Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. So he went to her, took her hand, and helped her up.
- The fever left her, and she began to wait on them. That evening, after sunset, the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed.
- [ 1 : 1 3 ]     The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak, because they knew who he was.
- Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went off to a solitary place where he prayed.
- Simon and his companions went to look for him. And when they found him, they exclaimed, Everyone is looking for you. Jesus replied, Let us go somewhere else, to the nearby villages, so I can preach there also.
- That is why I have come. So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. Many institutions and ministries have started out well, but then drifted off far from their original mission.
- Harvard is the oldest university in the United States, and it was founded in 1636 by godly Puritan colonists with the mission to train men for the ministry of God's Word in New England.
- [ 2 : 5 0 ]     And though founded on biblical principles, it has strayed so far from its mission that two years ago, an atheist was chosen to be Harvard's chief chaplain over all the other chaplains on campus.
- I wonder how that's going for them. The same departure from the original mission can be seen in most all of the mainline denominations of Christian churches in our land.
- They're now solar systems away from where they began, approving now of homosexual marriage, transgenderism, and a host of other deviations from God's Word.
- And so the winds of change and of popular opinion are often followed rather than the clear teaching of God's Word. And it leads them far from the original mission that they had.
- Now, in the Gospel of Mark, we've been introduced to Jesus' ministry on earth, and we've seen something of His identity. He is God in the flesh. We've seen something of His mission, and we're going to see more of the same today.
- [ 3 : 5 6 ]     We're also going to see the winds of popular opinion that would pull lesser men off course, but not at all moving our Lord Jesus.

We find Him sticking to His mission that the Father had given Him. Let's just work our way through the passage. Four events in this passage that was read for us just now.

The first is the healing of Peter's mother-in-law. They moved from the synagogue where Jesus was teaching and casting out the demon that suddenly shouted out in the midst of the service.

And verse 29 says, As soon as they left the synagogue, they then went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and immediately they told Jesus about her.

Now, the first thing I want to say is just the obvious, that according to the Bible, Peter had a mother-in-law, which means that he was married.

[ 4 : 59 ] According to the Apostle Paul, Peter took his wife along with him on some of their ministry trips. And all of this is a bit difficult for the Roman Catholic Church that claims Peter as the first pope and demands vows of celibacy for its priests as part of their dedication to Christ.

That simply does not square with the Word of God. 1 Timothy 3, Paul says that one of the very qualifications for an overseer in the church is that he be the husband of but one woman.

In other words, if he's married, he needs to be a one-woman man, faithful to one woman, and to have his family managed well. He goes on to say in 1 Timothy 4 that to forbid to marry is a doctrine taught by demons.

You see, one does not need to be married or to be unmarried to be in the ministry of God's Word. Many men, including myself, have experienced both.

Both have their advantages and their disadvantages, which by the grace of God can be overcome. And if one is called by God to singleness, then that's what he must do.

[ 6 : 15 ] But if not, it is unnatural. It is demonic. It is dangerous to require celibacy of all ministers. Well, that's just by the way of Peter's mother-in-law.

She wasn't able to get to the synagogue that day because she was laid up with a fever in bed. Dr. Luke tells this same story, event in Jesus' life, and he lets us know that it was a great fever.

Of course, being a doctor, he would notice those kind of distinctions. Not a slight fever, not just 99 and 100. This was a fever that was like fire in the bones.

And immediately, they told Jesus about her. Isn't that lovely? They come into the house and they tell Jesus about Peter's mother-in-law.

There's a lesson here for us. Their first resort was to tell Jesus about her. You may have concerns for loved ones, physical concerns, spiritual concerns, otherwise concerns.

[ 7 : 24 ] Is it your instinct, your first resort to go and to tell Jesus about them? When John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, was beheaded in prison, the Bible says, John's disciples came and took his body and buried it.

Then they went and told Jesus. There it is again. Got to get to Jesus. Got to bring my burden to him. Is that where you go? Is that what you do with your concerns and burdens?

Tell it to Jesus. Tell it to Jesus. He is a friend that's well known. You've no other friend or brother. Tell it to Jesus alone.

You know, we can tell him what we can tell no one else. Because he's able to do what no one else is able to do. He's always available. He's always welcoming.

And he's always able to help. So be anxious for nothing. But in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to him.

- [ 8 : 33 ] Is it some sickness? Some trouble? Some pain? Some loneliness? Discouragement? Sorrow? Fear? Concern? How many times, when we've gone and told Jesus, have we found the peace of his presence and the power of his grace to be exactly what we needed?
- Go and tell Jesus. Well, that's what his disciples did. And so Jesus went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.
- In other words, the great fever met the great physician. And Dr. Luke says he rebuked the fever. Just like he had rebuked the demon in the synagogue just hours earlier.
- And the great fever obeyed the authoritative word of the great physician. Just as quickly, you remember, as the demon obeyed and fled. So the fever left her. But that's not all.
- The greatness of this miracle is not only in the leaving of the fever, but in the giving of instant strength. In that she got up and started serving the evening meal to Jesus and his disciples and those in the house.
- [ 9 : 52 ] Let me ask you how it is with you when you've had a great fever. Maybe the flu or COVID. And when the fever breaks and you no longer have it.
- Do you feel like busting out of bed and getting right to work? Or is it not that maybe with a few days we finally gain strength? Well, there is none of that here.
- Great fever. Great physician rebukes the fever. It leaves. And immediately she's out of bed and serving our Lord Jesus.
- She's wanting to use. So that's a double miracle, if you will. And notice she's wanting to use her restored strength to serve her Lord. Isn't that in itself a resemblance to her Lord and Master?
- Who, as the glorious Son of Man, did not come to be served, but came to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. So she wants to use her restored strength to serve the Lord.
- [ 11 : 02 ] What are you using your health for? Your strength, your physical strength, whatever measure of it that God has given you. What are you using it for? Is it to serve your Lord and Master with it?
- In whatever he's called you to do. In the home. In the church. At work. At school. At play. To serve the King of Kings.
- Who gives you every ounce of energy that you have as a gift to you. Some have taken from Luke's statement that this could have been a life-threatening disease.
- We don't know exactly. But she was given her life back. If that's the case. Why do you want to live? We have that instinct, don't we?
- We want to get better. But why? Listen to the prayer of David. Psalm 119, 175.
- [ 12 : 00 ] Let me live that I may praise you. Is that why you want to live? Not just to live to live. That's how the heathen live. No. Let me live in order that I might praise you.
- That I might praise your name. That I might spread your kingdom. And that I might do your will. That I might serve the Lord, his people, and others.
- Well, that's Peter's mother-in-law. Secondly, we see the masses healed and demons cast out. This news about the miracle worker's whereabouts, that he's over at Peter's house, it's spread like wildfire.
- And soon we read in verse 32 and 33, that evening after sunset, the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door.
- Well, what would you do if you lived in Capernaum? And you had a family member or a friend who had some sickness or disease or some demon.

[ 13 : 06 ] You'd be at Peter's door too, wouldn't you? I would. And that was the effect of Jesus' reputation and how it was spreading throughout Capernaum.

Now, they may have waited until after sunset, which would have been the end of the Sabbath day. They might have done so because of the Pharisees' teaching, wrong teaching, I might add, that healing on the Sabbath was a sin if it wasn't an emergency.

And we'll see how Jesus will deal with that in later chapters. But at any rate, after sunset, the whole city showed up at the door of Peter's house.

And what a sight it must have been. I do believe that Peter told Mark all about it and Mark wrote it down for us. They showed up, the whole city at the door. And they weren't disappointed. Verse 34 says, Notice Mark distinguishes between diseases and demon possession.

Those are two different things, but they both obey the Master's voice. And when Mark says Jesus healed many, don't think that he left some behind unhealed.

[ 14 : 29 ] That's not the inference that Mark is giving us. In fact, Matthew says in his account of this, he healed all the sick. And Luke says he healed each one.

And Mark does not contradict this, but just wants us to know that the all and each one were many. There were a lot of them. And Jesus healed them all.

You know, that's the hallmark of Jesus' healing ministry. He left none unhealed. Not like modern so-called healers who don't deal with the really serious cases.

Johnny Erickson Tata, in her book, testifies how that after that diving accident that left her a quadriplegic in a wheelchair, she went to a faith healer, a famous faith healer.

And she, along with the others who were seriously diseased or injured, were shuffled off into some side room. There's no healings for you here.

[ 15 : 29 ] It wasn't like that at the door of Peter's house. All that had diseases of various kinds were healed. The hallmark of Jesus' healing.

And he is willing to remove the greatest burden of all, the burden of sin. The burden of sin. What a contrast, then, we see between Jesus and the devil.

Now, I think we need to just pause. This is the first time we're coming in Mark's gospel to Jesus' healing ministry.

I think we just need to pause and answer the question, why the miracles? Why does Jesus work these miracles of healing and demon expulsions? And we'll see them throughout Mark's gospel.

Well, there were many reasons, and let's consider four or five. First of all, his miracles were evidences of the loving kindness and mercy of his heart toward all the afflicted.

[ 16 : 32 ] Many times in the gospel, we read of Jesus looking on the sufferers with compassion. A compassion that was followed up by moving toward them with mercy to relieve their burdens, whatever it was.

He went about doing good, is the summary of his life. And he left behind a whole bunch of happy people and healed people.

What a contrast, I say, between his love and mercy on afflicted people and Satan's heart to want to afflict people and to damn them.

So, Jesus' miracles show his heart of mercy for all sufferers. Secondly, they are proof. His miracles are proof of his identity as the divine Messiah.

He did works requiring the very power of God, works that no man was able to do. And Nicodemus the Pharisee realized that. This is what he said when Jesus came to him.

[ 17 : 39 ] I'm sorry, I'll save that for later. When Jesus did these miracles, they were in fulfillment of what the Old Testament had prophesied about Messiah.

And so, if you'll remember, when John the Baptist, after he had proclaimed the kingdom of God and Jesus the king, he was arrested, thrown in prison.

And so, he's been preaching about this kingdom of God. And here's the king. And now, here I am in prison and in some dark dungeon. And this doesn't feel like the kingdom of God that was promised in the Old Testament.

What's happening? And he begins to doubt and wonder, is Jesus of Nazareth really the one? And Luke tells us in Luke 7 that he sent two of his disciples to the Lord to ask, Are you the one who was to come or should we expect someone else?

And when the men came to Jesus, they said, John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, Are you the one who was to come or should we expect someone else? And at that very time, Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses, and evil spirits and gave sight to many who were blind.

[ 18 : 53 ] And so, he replied to the messengers, Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard. The blind receive sight. The lame walk. Those who have leprosy are cured.

The deaf hear. The dead are raised. And the good news is preached to the poor. What's he doing? And he's quoting Isaiah about all the things that Isaiah prophesied 700 years earlier about what Messiah, the anointed one, would do when he would come.

He would preach the good news to the poor. And in that day, he will open the eyes of the blind. The ears of the deaf will be unstopped. The lame will leap like the deer.

The mute tongue will shout for joy. And on and on. These prophecies. John, you know Isaiah. It talks about the forerunner as the voice crying in the wilderness.

You know yourself to be that voice. And it talks about the Messiah as being the one who would do these works of God. And that's what I'm doing right now. Take this message back and encourage John in prison.

[ 19 : 54 ] You see, the miracles of Jesus confirmed his identity as the Messiah as he had been prophesied. But then, thirdly, his miracles show the happiness of his kingdom.

They give us a foretaste of the coming kingdom of God. Yes, the kingdom of God came with Christ. But there's more to come at his second coming. So as Jesus coming was twice, so the kingdom has two aspects to it.

The present and the future. And Jesus' miracles are giving us a foretaste of what it will be like when he comes back again. And all the diseases that have taken our loved ones to heaven will be no more.

And then we will rejoice in Psalm 103 and verse 3 that he is the one who heals us from all our diseases. They'll all be gone. These bodies that had the diseases will be raised incorruptible.

And with no disease, but rather like our Lord's glorified bodies. Blessings, Isaac Watts says, blessings abound wherever he reigns.

[ 21 : 08 ] The prisoner leaps to lose his chains. The weary find eternal rest. And all the sons of wonder blessed. That's what Jesus' kingdom will be in that day. Don't you want to be there?

Don't you want to see it and experience it? And Jesus is letting them know, this is the kingdom that I'm going to bring. And I'm giving you signs of it, even a foretaste of it, even now.

And then his miracles were evidence of God confirming his message preached. A lot of people were going around preaching things, claiming I'm the Messiah, I'm this, I'm that.

Many false teachers. How do we know which message is from God? God confirmed the message by the miracles of Jesus. This is my word that he's preaching.

It's not the word of man. This is the word of God. And I'm showing that, verifying it by the miracles that he does. And that's what Nicodemus the Pharisee said in John 3 and verse 2 when he came to talk to Jesus at night.

[ 22 : 09 ] He said, Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. Oh, how do you know that? For no one can perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.

Nicodemus spoke the truth. That is absolutely true. Jesus' miracles proved the divine authority of his message.

He's defending his claim to be God's son in John 10, 38. Even though you don't believe me, believe the miracles that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.

And so the miracles certified the message, the gospel of Jesus as being the good news from God, not a man-made message. And then lastly, miracles were signs that were meant to point them to faith in Jesus Christ.

And I think this is the key thing that we need to walk away from this brief study of miracles. You know, they're called miraculous signs. Signs.

[ 23 : 14 ] Signs point to realities outside of themselves. If you've got a pregnant wife in labor and needing to get to the hospital and you come and you see a little blue sign that has an H on it for hospital, you don't pull over there and say, I guess this is it, dear.

You go to the place that that sign is pointing you to. And that's the way Jesus' miracles are. They're not an end in themselves. They're pointing to someone, indeed to Jesus Christ.

And they're meant to lead people to faith in the one who's doing these works that no other man could do. So John records some miracles that Mark doesn't even mention.

Some of his first miracle in Galilee was changing the water into wine. You remember that, John, too. And at the end of that account, John says this. This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee.

He thus revealed his glory and his disciples put their faith in him. What are miracles, miraculous signs and wonders that Jesus? They're signs pointing to his glory.

[ 24 : 31 ] John says we have seen his glory. The glory is of the one and only God. And that's what was being shown in his miracles. And they're pointing to Jesus, his identity as God in the flesh.

Worship him. Trust him. Obey him. So miracles are signs pointing us to the glory of Christ and to have faith in him.

Well, besides the miracles of healing, we're told that he also drove out many demons. This is that cosmic conflict we saw in the synagogue as Jesus begins to preach the gospel, the good news that will save sinners.

All hell breaks loose. And it's opposition. The greatest enemy of Jesus is not the scribes and Pharisees and this and that and the other. It's Satan, his demons, the kingdom of darkness.

And they're here as well. Many of them showing up at Peter's door. And Jesus shows his superiority over the kingdom of darkness.

[ 25 : 31 ] He is that seed of the woman who's come to crush the head of the serpent. The reason the son of God came was that he might destroy the works of the devil. And that's what he's doing outside of Peter's door.

He's going to cast them out of people that he's inhabited. And on the cross, he would make an open show of him and completely disarm him.

And one day, we'll cast him into the lake of fire. There will be the torment. The smoke of his torment will go up forever. So miracles as well.

Driving out demons. And then we have this statement that he wouldn't let the demons speak because they knew who he was. We saw that last week. We'll see it later on in the same chapter again.

And I'm going to wait till then to deal with it more fully. Why didn't Jesus let them talk? We'll see that in the last message on chapter one. So the masses show up and are healed and have demons cast out.

[ 26 : 37 ] Third, Jesus' non-negotiable devotion to private prayer. Now, this is Sabbath day in Capernaum that we've been studying. And it was a long and a full day for Jesus.

If you just take the things that were spoken of in chapter one of Mark. He's been preaching at the synagogue. He's been walking to Peter's house.

Healing the woman. The mother-in-law of Peter. Eating supper. And then at sunset, the whole town, a city of Capernaum, shows up with all the sick and disease and demon-possessed.

And a healing ministry that must have gone on into the wee hours of the night or the morning. And there's a passage in the Gospels where the woman reached out and touched Jesus.

And he says he felt power go out from him. So I'm not sure, but that Jesus felt something of the drain of this powerful ministry over the demons and over the healings that he did.

[ 27 : 52 ] And so here he is the next morning. Talk about preacher hangover on Monday morning, brother. No one would have accused Jesus if he had slept in a bit on the day after Sabbath like he had just had.

But for Jesus, prayer was more important than more sleep. And so very early in the morning, while it's still dark, he got up, left the house, went off to a solitary. Place where he prayed.

You know, the Lord Jesus wanted to be alone with his heavenly father. Do you? Do you want to be alone with him? He enjoyed fellowship with his heavenly father as friend with friend.

Do you? As a man, he needed God. Jesus, remember, is God and he is man. And as for his humanity, he needed God.

He was dependent upon God. And so he asked God for wisdom and discernment, discretion, for strength, for all that he did and for the Holy Spirit to attend his words.

[ 29 : 05 ] Do you pray for God's help and strength in all that you do? He gave thanks, perhaps, even for yesterday's help. That full day, Father, that was a day.

Thank you for that. Do you give thanks? If our Lord needed to pray, how much more do we? We have not because we ask not.

Jesus asked for a lot. And therefore, he received a lot. And that's what we see in the Gospels. The fruit of his prayer life. J.C. Ryle says, private prayer is the pulse of our Christianity.

When the doctor wants to see how you're doing, he may take your pulse. It will show your health. What's the pulse of your spiritual life? It's your private prayer is what J.C. Ryle is saying.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Jesus showed a devotion to private prayer on the day after a full day of ministry.

[ 30 : 12 ] And he wasn't like some who think after one day of worship, well, I'm done with God for the week. Do you? I've had my, given God my thing today.

And I'll be back next week. Jesus was never done with God. He lived each day with God. Well, when Simon and his companions woke up back at the house, they found Jesus was missing.

And lots of people were already showing up at the house wondering where Jesus was. So Simon and his companions went to look for him. They searched diligently is the word.

And when they found him, they exclaimed, everyone is looking for you. Commentators have noted that there's a tone of reproach in those words.

Everyone's looking for you, Jesus. Aren't we supposed to be fishing for men? There's none out here in this solitary place. What are you doing out here?

[ 31 : 18 ] They're all back at the house. That's where opportunities for ministry are waiting for you. And Simon and his companions could hardly have expected the answer they received from Jesus in verse 38 when he said, let us go somewhere else to the nearby villages, the little places, so I can preach there also, for that is why I have come.

There again we see the primacy of Jesus' ministry was that of preaching. You see, what he had waiting for him back at the house were not true worshipers.

They were crowds that were excited to have a miracle worker among them to heal all their diseases, to feed them, meet all their physical needs, while not heeding his preaching, not repenting of their sins, not trusting in the Lord Jesus as Savior and Lord.

In John 6, we find great crowds following Jesus because of his miraculous healings, and that's when he multiplied the five small barley loaves and the two small fish to feed 5,000 men plus wives and children.

And that was just the kind of king that suited them. They wanted a king that would feed them and heal all their diseases and do everything for them. And it says that Jesus knew they were intending to make him king by force.

[ 32 : 45 ] And he's not interested. He's not interested in what the crowd wants from him. And so it says, he again withdrew to a mountain by himself.

Again, again, again. That's what we're seeing here. Everybody's looking for you, Jesus. Back at the house. Let's go. No, actually, let's not go.

Let's go somewhere else, to the outlying villages, so I can preach there also because that is why I have come.

You see, by the end of John 6, when the people were about to force him to become their king, many of them followed him no more. When they found out what Jesus was about and what his kingdom was about, no thanks.

They would not accept it. Give us your miracles and healings, but you can keep your gospel of repent and believe. But you see, his miracles were meant to move them to repent and believe.

[ 33 : 52 ] That was the whole purpose, or not the whole, but one of the major purposes. They were signs to point them to Jesus, their need of him for salvation, not just to be excited for more miracles.

Well, there in Capernaum, they had seen many miracles. They had heard the gospel preached to them, but there were many others who hadn't. Still in darkness, still needing to hear the good news of salvation.

So let's go there, Jesus says, so I can preach to them. That's why I have come. And so he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.



And it's here that we come to the fourth point, and we see Jesus sticking to the mission that the Father gave him. The primary activity of his ministry was to preach the good news of the kingdom of God.

That's why the Father sent him, and that's why he came, to do the Father's will, and to preach the gospel that could save sinners if they would repent and believe.

[ 34 : 59 ] The temptation is to be pulled aside from the mission, to play the numbers game. That seems to have bitten something of the disciples. Come on, Lord, let's go back.

What are you doing out here? There's no people here. They want more miracles. But the mission is clearly not to heal everybody in the world that was sick any more than that's his mission today.

No, it wasn't. I mean, if he'd have healed everybody that was sick everywhere, they still were going to have to die, and if they died without repenting and believing, they would die in their sins and go to hell.

That's not the mission. No, the mission is to save sinners eternally, to bring them into his eternal kingdom when, yes, he will heal us from all our diseases and forgive all our sins and restore all things to perfection.

But his message, his mission here is not to see everyone healed. It is in his healing to show people their need for Christ.

[ 36 : 12 ] I've come to preach, and miracles are not the main thing. They're subordinate to preaching. They serve the preaching. They vindicated and verified and certified the preaching.

But I've come to exalt God's name to humble sinners, to show them their need of repentance and faith, to be converted, and then to live a transformed life according to the commands of God, to his glory.

That's why I've come. That's the mission the Father's given me. So he refused to budge an inch away from that mission in order to please the masses that were crying for more miracles.

We'll see him complaining of that to them. You'll never believe unless you see more signs and wonders. They're ever hankering after more signs and wonders. Finally, Jesus said, I'll give you one sign.

The sign of Jonah. No, he did not bend to the cry of the masses. He stuck to the mission. And I want to ask you, Grace Fellowship Church, are we clear on the mission that has been given to us?

[ 37 : 24 ] Before Jesus returned to heaven, he gave to the apostles as representatives of the church until the end of the age, the mission for his church.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, you go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you.

And surely I'm with you to the very end of the age. That's to be accomplished through the preaching of the gospel, the witnessing of the gospel.

Luke 24, 47, Jesus said after he was raised from the dead to his disciples, repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations beginning here at Jerusalem.

But stay in the city until you've been clothed with power from on high. So again, we see Jesus' primacy of preaching in his ministry during these three years of public ministry.

[ 38 : 29 ] Are we clear on the mission and are we committed to sticking to it? If not, we'll be easily distracted and carried away by popular opinion, giving people what they want instead of what Jesus says they need.

Oh, people want lots of things. But what they need is God's word. They need to know what God says about himself, about them, about their eternal destiny without Jesus Christ and the way to be saved through Christ alone.

Sadly, we see segments of the Christian church caving in to various other missions that become more important than the mission.

The numbers game. Entertainment. The latest immorality. The new wokeism. Some are being drawn aside from the Great Commission to proclaim the saving gospel of Christ and instead fixating on political agendas.

Calls to take the reins in Washington, to reclaim the power structures in America. You know, Christianity has lived and even survived and thrived in governments far worse than our own.

[ 39 : 50 ] The mission of the church is not to topple the government. No, the mission of the church is make disciples of Jesus Christ one by one. And it may be that by suffering, like we saw on the Sunday school, suffering under unjust governments, that God will spread the gospel.

He did that for the first three centuries after Jesus ascended. They were persecuting times and the gospel flourished. The blood of the church was the seed of the gospel that caused more and more people to come to Christ.

We saw it with John Bunyan's life. It was through his persecution he did perhaps his greatest works that we're still reading and profiting from. Oh, let's not think that we've got to set aside the mission for some political agenda.

Let's stick to the mission. Let's believe that the word of God is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.

That's where our trust is. Not in this, that, or the other, but it's in the word of God and therefore that's got to be primary among us and remain so. Even though the world doesn't want to hear the word of God preached and would love to have 20 things rather than the word of God preached.

[ 41 : 20 ] You know, Paul warned Timothy that such a time was coming when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they'll gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

And they will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. So what's Peter, or what's Timothy to do in such a case? Paul says, preach the word. But that's what they don't want to.

Preach the word. Be instant, prepared, in season, out of season, correct, rebuke, encouraged with great patience and careful instruction. They don't want to hear? Preach it anyway.

It's God's method. Stick with it. Jesus did. Let's believe that he knows best how to build his church. So with our forefathers in the faith, let's trust in God.

Let's trust in the power of his word to sanctify his people to save sinners. And let's not grieve the Holy Spirit by thinking we can come up with better ways, better methods that would put the word of God off to the side.

[ 42 : 23 ] You know, the word of God is called the sword of the Spirit. We saw in Sunday school that it's inspired by the Holy Spirit. And that is the sword that the Spirit loves to pick up.

And when Peter stood on the day of Pentecost and preached, that sword pierced people's hearts. It was just the preaching of the Bible. Read Acts 2. It's a sermon right out of the Bible. And it pierced the hearts of people.

And 3,000 were converted in a day. Preach it. Preach it. Up with the word of God, brothers and sisters. The old weapons still work. The word of God and prayer.

We saw it in our text today. Prayer. The word of God. May the Lord bless that word to us and keep us sticking to the primacy of his word.

Matthew 16, our Lord said to Peter, who do you say that I am? And Peter answered, you are the Christ, the son of the living God. And Jesus replied, flesh and blood has not taught you this, but my Father in heaven, I tell you, Peter, on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

[ 43 : 38 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.