

How do we Act in the presence of difficulties?

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-6 Lar: Dismiss Kids. DC. C@R. Missions Prayer. Youth. A/V Team Volun.
- B. Slide7_{a/b} Baby Dedication: Gary & Maryann Wright. John Paul Wright. (bro Adrian age 4)
- C. Slide8 Wed Night New Series: Identity in Christ, *Living Our Identity*. Kelly will be sharing about Our Identity being *His Beloved*. [Kel written 30 studies books/bible]
 - *(2 got up & walked out, last time: misunderstand of 1Tim2:12 *not teach/have authority/dominate over men*. She didn't tell me she was teaching, I asked her :) Why? I bel she wud be awesome on this topic of *being His beloved*)
 - 1. Identity: God's the Only 1 who has the authority to tell you *who you are*.
- D. Slide9 Kona Ice: next Saturday Night, for purchase right after service.
- E. Slide10 Prayer: Ty we have a talking God.

II. Intro: How do we Act in the presence of difficulties?

- A. Slide11a Is.43:18 *But forget all that* (all that God did in the past, *Red Sea event*) *it is nothing compared to what I am going to do*. 19 *For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?*
 - 1. I believe "*new, is the new norm*". (even during Covid, *March* vs. *June* vs. *Aug*)
 - 2. God is doing *something new*. Just as he did w/Israel back 2700 yrs ago.
 - a) God, in His dealings with His children, has always been *moving, progressive, a journey, fluid, flowing & forward*.
 - 3. Would you agree with me on this? We don't know if God brought Covid. Maybe *satan* brought this Covid, *but if so God allowed it*. Some of you really enjoy your *conspiracy theories* trying to figure it all out & everyone has their right to that. *Whether* you don't like Trump, or don't like the Democrats. This I know...

- a) In all these *things, problems, mess, sufferings*, we know...*anyone who signs up for the kingdom of God has to go through plenty of hard times. Or*, in our text, *through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.*
- b) Slide11b God *always* wants us to *face Him*...and not the problem(s).
God *always* wants us to *work on & adjust* our *Attitudes*.
- c) Sheri Hansen, word God gave her was simply...*Embrace the Adventure*.

B. Saints...*stability is needed during life's ups & downs*. Not around it, not over it, but *through* success and failure, *through* joy and sorrow, Paul learn to **trust God** and **depend** upon **His word**.

C. Big Idea: How do we **Act** in the presence of difficulties?

1. When people are **Against** us, we **Act with Boldness**. When people are **For** us, we **Act with Humility**. When you feel like **Quitting**, we **Persist**. When **Distress** comes, we **Act** with this **Reminder**. When we are **Successful**, we **Act** with **Reverence** for the One we work for.

III. Slide12a **WHEN PEOPLE ARE AGAINST US, WE ACT WITH BOLDNESS** (1-7)

A. Just like in Antioch *jealousy* rapidly appeared in all its ugliness.

1. Jews who disbelieved *stirred up* the unbelieving Gentiles & *poisoned public opinion* against Paul & Barnabas.
[what a Team! *Barn*/voted most huggable. *Paul*/killer]

B. Slide12b **Boldness** is what enables believers to *keep going* in the face of *opposition*.

1. Paul was a man on the move, but not a man *easily moved* because of *difficulties*.
2. When people are against you, do as Paul told the Corinthian church,
Slide12c Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong. And do everything with love. 1 Cor.16:13,14

IV. Slide13a **WHEN PEOPLE ARE FOR US, WE ACT WITH HUMILITY** (8-18)

A. Paul had an opportunity to **confirm his message** with a miraculous sign.

B. Along with **power and results in serving** *comes the temptation of pride*.

C. **Funny**: the last group wanted to *stone them*, now this group wants to *deify them*.

1. **Slide13b** Chris Lick a Lt. & seasoned police officer for Esc PD, told Kelly & I at dinner...after Kel asked *how are you doing through all these riots?* I loved his response, *I've done this long enough, sometimes you're the hero (9-11) and sometimes your the zero (these riots)*.

a) Paul & Barnabas just went the other way, from **Zero** to **Hero**.

2. **Flattery** is usually the harder of *the 2 temptations*. [flattery vs persecution]

D. **Slide13c Zeus** – Head god of the pantheon in Gk mythology. (Barnabas, leadership)

E. **Hermes** – Messenger of the gods. winged shoes/hat (Paul, since he did the *speaking*)

1. The people around **Lystra** had a *local legend* that once **Zeus and Hermes** had come to this earth in disguise. None in all the land would give them *hospitality* until at last two old peasants, *Philemon* and his wife *Baucis*, took them in. *As a result* the whole population was wiped out by the gods except *Philemon & Baucis*. So when Paul healed the crippled man the people of Lystra were determined *not* to make the same mistake again.¹

F. Paul didn't know what they were doing for while because they spoke in their native tongue (11). It probably wouldn't have gotten so far had he known.

G. Do you have the marks of *humility* in your life? Do you find it more difficult dealing with **opposition** or **flattery**?

V. **Slide14a WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE QUITTING, WE PERSIST (19-20)**

A. (20) *But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.*

B. Some of the new disciples gathered around the fallen body of Paul.

1. Possibly among them was **Timothy** as he was from Lystra.

C. When Paul regained consciousness he arose & courageously entered the city again.

¹ William Barclay, the acts of the apostles, page 109 (adapted). Latin poet Ovid wrote about.

1. **Slide14b** Paul the *Energizer Apostolic Bunny*. Whether verbal or physical abuse, he kept on beating his drum. *Nothing outlasts the Energizer Apostle!*
- D. Goes **back** into the city, **then** the very next day he hikes to Derbe, 40m away. *what?*
- E. **Illustration**: The memo from the testing director of MGM, shortly after **Fred Astaire's** 1st screen test, read: *Can't act. Slightly bald. Can dance a little.*
1. An older *expert* once said of another younger coach, *He possesses minimal football knowledge. Lacks motivation.* He was referring to **Vince Lombardi**.
 2. **Walt Disney** was fired by a newspaper editor for *lack of ideas*.
 3. **Thomas Edison's** teachers gave up on him. *He's too stupid to do anything*, was their evaluation.
 4. Before he succeeded, **Henry Ford** failed and went broke **five times**.²
- F. Are you known for **persisting** or **quitting**?
1. They encouraged them to *continue in the faith*. Do you need to hear that tonight?
 2. Perseverance is an **essential mark** of *saving faith*. It's the **badge** of *true saints*.

VI. **Slide15a** WHEN DISTRESS COMES, WE ACT WITH THIS REMINDER (21-23)

- A. **Slide15b** *that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.*
1. **Tribulation** - distress, *an oppressive state of physical, mental, social or economic adversity*. Wow, that's us today!
- B. It was never designed by God that we should be *an untried people*.
1. **We were never called to**: worldly peace **or** earthly joy. Freedom from sickness **nor** the pains of mortality.
 2. None of our predecessors escaped tribulations... **why should we?**
 - a) Job, Noah, Moses, Abraham, David, Daniel, Mary. Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs. All were made to pass through *the fire of affliction*.
- C. **Slide15c** The **best things** in life are the *result* of **being wounded**.

² Charles Swindoll, Kindred Spirit, Vol. 22, No. 3, Autumn, 1998, p. 3.

1. **Wheat** must be crushed before becoming bread. **Incense** must be burned in the fire before its fragrance is set free. **The earth** must be broken with a *sharp plow* before being ready to receive the seed.

2. Just about anything you do to a **Rose** simply causes it to give off *even more* of a **perfume sent**. [When **raindrops** fall on it; when the **wind** blows against it; when it is **torn**; when it is **crushed**]

a) Jesus knows/loves *every single petal* that has been **crushed** on behalf of **Him**

D. **What is our comfort in that?** We have comfort knowing our **Master has crossed this way before us**. We have **His presence & sympathy** to cheer us on. **His grace** to support us. **And His example** to teach us how to endure.

1. And when we reach the *Celestial City* it will more than **make amends** for our **many tribulations** through which we passed.

VII. Slide 16a **WHEN WE ARE SUCCESSFUL, WE ACT WITH REVERENCE FOR THE ONE WE WORK FOR (24-28)**

A. With their **long journey** finally over, they arrive at their home church in **Antioch**.

1. Slide 16b This is the 1st missionary meeting in the Christian Church with a **report from the field**. [come Sun Night 6:30 for some reports/prayer]

2. Some might have **boasted** in all they've done, *the number of churches they planted, number of converts, miracles performed, not Paul/Barnabas*.

3. They saw themselves as **instruments** through which God had accomplished His purposes, **& all the glory went to Him**.

B. *God always wants us to face Him...and not the problem(s)*.

C. *God always wants us to work on & adjust our Attitudes*. Embrace the Adventure!