



## Treasure in Jars of Clay

*Series: Acts -- Worldwide Witness to the Worth of Jesus Christ*

Acts 14:8-23

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If we were looking to find a theme for this text that we are looking at this morning, I believe that we could do no better than the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 4. There he writes: “But we have this treasure in jars of clay (speaking of the gospel), to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.” (2 Corinthians 4:7–10, ESV) That is all that any of us are – jars of clay – men and women of dust whose greatest purpose is to display the power of God, the salvation of the Lord. It is not without trouble, not without affliction, perplexity, persecution, and opposition – but no matter. We cannot be crushed, cannot be driven to despair, we are never forsaken and cannot be destroyed because we have as our Savior, the one who laid down His life for our salvation so that He might live His life through us, the One who remains forever faithful to His people. Nowhere do we see this more clearly than in the text that is before us today. Pick it up with me again in verse 8...

“Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, said in a loud voice, “Stand upright on your feet.” And he sprang up and began walking.” (Acts 14:8–10, ESV)

We don’t know with certainty where it was that Paul was preaching – maybe in a marketplace or in field by the road or something like that. But he is preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, and as he is preaching, his eyes are drawn intently to one man among the entire crowd, one man who was crippled from birth and who had never walked at all. As Paul is preaching, he sees the way that this man is responding to the gospel – its written all over his face – and seeing that he had faith to believe in Christ for salvation, the same faith to be made well, Paul commands him to stand on his own two feet and he does just that. It is an incredible moment.

I know what Luke is talking about here; I've seen it myself. You are preaching to the congregation when, all of a sudden, one face sticks out amidst the crowd – and for a good reason. It is almost as if you can see the work of the Holy Spirit going on in their soul – softening a hard heart, bringing light into darkness, freeing them from bondage, creating faith out of what was once a heart of unbelief. You can see a very real change in someone's countenance – and it is a beautiful thing. And that is the kind of thing that takes place here. This crippled man responds by faith to the gospel message being preached by Paul and then, being led by the Holy Spirit to do so, Paul commands this man to stand up, to display with his body what has taken place in his soul, to stand up after being crippled all his life and he does. It is an incredible apostolic miracle.

This man is a powerful, living, physical example of the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ to heal the human soul. This miracle of physical healing is really a window to the spiritual condition of all of us before Christ. In this man's crippled condition we have a picture of the spiritual condition of humanity without Christ, of every one of us. Man is spiritually crippled, held captive by sin and shame, by real guilt before God, unable to do anything to make himself well, subsisting – as in the case of those who lived in these medically crude biblical times – but not really living. No real hope.

That was the case of all of us before Christ and even worse. You remember how Paul describes our condition, the condition of every human being apart from the grace of Christ. He says in Ephesians 2: “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” (Ephesians 2:1–3, ESV) But praise be to God almighty, He was not content, not satisfied to leave us in such a condition. He determined to rescue us, to deliver us from spiritual death. “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:4–9, ESV) Out of His incalculable and amazing, gracious and merciful love, His love that pursues us, runs us down and changes us, He saved us through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord. Like Paul wrote to Titus, “For we ourselves were once foolish,

disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:3–7, ESV) The very moment we place our faith in Christ he heals our souls. We can walk, in a spiritual sense for the first time in our lives. Our hearts are filled with joy and praise and we are set free to serve our Lord for the rest of our time on earth and for eternity.

Paul remembered what it was to be crippled in sin, under the weight of guilt, the object of God’s wrath and so should we. And it drove him, just as it should us, to share the gospel with the spiritually crippled, with the hope that God will change their hearts and save them and set them free, just as He did with us. What a beautiful picture of saving and transforming grace. It is an awesome display of the power of God and it results in a strange response to say the least.

“And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds.” (Acts 14:11–13, ESV) Now this seems like a pretty over-the-top response by the people of Lystra, doesn’t it? But there is a reason they acted this way. There was a legend regarding this valley where Lystra was. The Roman poet, Ovid, in a book called *Metamorphoses*, written some 50 years previous, had recorded an ancient legend about this city. According to the story, Zeus, the Grecian supreme God known to the Romans as Jupiter, and Hermes, his son and messenger, known to the Romans as Mercury, had visited Lystra and its surrounding countryside from on high, disguised as mortal men. They went on a search for hospitality, but were turned away from every home they came to, 1000 times. Finally, so the story goes, they were given shelter and food by a poor elderly couple that lived in a shack thatched with straw and reeds from the marsh nearby. The gods stayed the night with them and in the morning, the gods took the couple up out of the city to a mountain where they watched as the gods flooded the valley beneath them while they looked on. Then, to their amazement, the gods transformed their house into a great temple with a glittering gold roof. They believed this legend. That is what motivates this response -- fearing that they would offend the gods and wanting to avoid the judgment that had devastated their forefathers, according to the legend, they decided to hold a great feast in the gods’ honor.

At least they recognized that a miracle of this magnitude was divine in nature, but being pagan idolaters, they gave credit to these false gods they thought had come to visit them in the persons of Barnabas and Paul. And Paul and Barnabas would have none of it.

“But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, – a symbol of their horror and anger at this blasphemy that was about to take place -- crying out, “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, -- good news, not the slavery of this pagan idolatry, this pagan idolatry that put the requirement of placating the gods and making payment for sin on the heads of men who could never do it, but the good news that God has given His own Son as a Savior, to pay the price of sin and to satisfy the Demands of His holiness by offering Himself as the atonement for sin, so that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”” (Acts 14:14–17, ESV)

Paul and Barnabas had come to Lystra to give them the message of eternal life in Christ, to call them to turn away from the vain, empty, worthless ways of their religion, to the true God, the living God. These gods they served were not gods at all. There is only one Living God, and it is He who created the heavens, the earth and the seas and all that is in them. He reigns supreme over them all –there is no god of the river, no god of the valley, no god of fertility, no god of wine, no goddess of the hunt, no god of sex, no god of speech – none of that, only One Living God who reigns over it all. And, Paul says, though God allowed man to go his own way and serve imagined gods in their rebellion, God never left himself without a witness. He gave man rain from heaven, fruitful seasons, in His kindness and majesty, granting them food and gladness. This is the true God that Paul proclaimed and he was telling them they could be freed from the ignorance and worthlessness and bondage of idol-worship. In their blindness, they were in bondage. In truth, these residents of Lystra were not at all unlike the lost of our own age who labor and serve the idols of our age – money, beauty, power, youth, knowledge, philosophy, food and drink, sex, acceptance – hoping in them to find eternal satisfaction which they cannot give. How sad it is to think what people will settle for instead of Jesus Christ.

Notice the great ease with which Paul and Barnabas are able to address this situation and engage the crowd. They do not merely criticize them and shake their heads at their ignorance, but instead, they are able to engage them right where they are and speak to them in a meaningful way about God. A few things really stand out here to me that we cannot miss. First, there is no sense of self-importance about Paul and Barnabas, no sense that they are better than anyone else, better than these pagans with whom they are speaking. They know that the only thing that makes them different from the people to whom they are speaking is the grace of God they had received.

Second, they can actually relate to these men and women. They are not awkward. In a very real sense, Paul and Barnabas knew what it was to be in the world and not of the world. We will see this more with Paul throughout the rest of Acts, his ability to know the culture and address the culture but not be affected by the culture. Third, their ability to relate to these pagan idolaters clearly demonstrated the fact that they had spent time abiding in Christ, seeking His heart, desiring His likeness to be developed in their lives. Why do I say that? Because like their Savior, Paul and Barnabas manifested their ability to speak with the lost. Jesus never had trouble attracting and speaking to lost people. He is not an ivory tower Savior but one who went to people right where they were and spoke to them the words of life. He could touch a leper, speak to prostitutes and publicans, and remain undefiled. I see this and it drives my own heart to desire to cultivate an even more winsome character, like Jesus, toward the lost. Still, Luke tells us

“Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them.” (Acts 14:18, ESV) They are blind. Had they really observed nature, they would have realized that it is not controlled by a conglomerate of separate gods, all trying to compete with one another like petulant children. That is just nonsensical. They cannot see the truth about God although it is staring them in the face, much like the evolutionists in our day that will jump through gigantic mental hoops to avoid the clear testimony of the world that God has made. Paul and Barnabas are barely able to restrain them from idolatrous sacrifice. And just as significantly, their opportunity to preach the truth was suddenly cut short.

“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. 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.” (Acts 14:19–20, ESV) Remember how we have seen that the gospel draws a line of

division, it is always met either with gladness and joy by some or by hatred and opposition by others. And here we see just how bad it can get. Men travelled from Antioch – 88 miles away, and from Iconium -- around 8 or so miles, with the specific purpose of opposing Paul's preaching of the gospel and to stone him since they didn't get the chance to do so before. This is hardcore hatred.

Skipping any pretense of legal proceeding, they fall upon Paul, stoning him with large, sharp, heavy rocks that cut, bruised and crushed him, and left Paul lying in a crumpled heap on the ground. His enemies dragged him by his legs outside the city gates and unceremoniously threw him on the garbage dump – that's what they did in those days -- thinking he was dead. You can imagine Barnabas and the disciples gathered around him there, weeping over this beloved, faithful preacher they also thought was dead when, all of a sudden, Paul opened his eyes, got to his feet and boldly walked right back into the city. This is astonishing. They did their best but they couldn't get rid of this guy.

It is impossible to overstate the tenacity and the courage of Paul that we see here. Was Paul tempted to quit? Sure. Who wouldn't be? Anyone who had just been stoned almost to the point of death would have been tempted to quit, or to just move on to another town. But he didn't. And why was that? Paul did not quit because he was compelled by Christ. He was compelled by Christ's saving love for him in spite of his foolish and ignorant unbelief, despite his great sin of killing Christians. He was compelled by all that Christ had done for him, by all that Christ was to him. He was gripped by a conscious realization of how Christ had loved him, by the love that He had for Jesus and by his desire for others to know the "breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that (they) may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Ephesians 3:18–19, ESV)

Paul lived his life in a conscious gratitude to Jesus Christ. You can hear that heart in his words to Timothy: "I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life." (1 Timothy 1:12–16, ESV) Beloved we need to pray continually

and earnestly for this same kind of heart. Paul had this kind of heart and because he did, because he was certain of his eternal destiny, because he knew that he had the message of salvation and of eternal life, he could not be deterred from his mission. Undaunted, he goes right back into Lystra, into the teeth of the lion, and finishes what he had come there to do. The next morning, he and Barnabas went to a place called Derbe. Luke doesn't tell us much about what happened there, but he does tell us about Paul and Barnabas bold return trip through Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch.

“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.” (Acts 14:21–23, ESV)

After finishing their ministry in Derbe, making many disciples, Paul and Barnabas began their trip home, but rather than go home another way, they went right back into the warfare they had been facing. It makes me think of what Stonewall Jackson, the enigmatic and bold Confederate general, said regarding battle. He said: “My religious belief teaches me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed the time for my death. I do not concern myself about that, but to be always ready, no matter when it may overtake me. That is the way all men should live, and then all would be equally brave.” While he was speaking of military battle, his advice is equally applicable to spiritual warfare and the very real battle for gospel faithfulness, especially in a world that is increasingly dangerous.

Paul and Barnabas could not conscience the idea of a retreat back to Antioch in Syria, of slinking back to their home church. Compelled by Christ's saving love for them, by Christ's love for His churches; motivated by their own love for Christ and their own love for the churches that they had started, Paul and Barnabas, at very real risk to themselves, determined to strengthen the disciples before heading home.

They determined to strengthen the souls of the disciples in the churches by further teaching and explaining the Scriptures -- more and more training them in the implications and callings of the gospel. They understood that the one thing that was indispensable to their spiritual strength and endurance was to hear from God His Word. That is the very reason why the Jesus Christ had Paul and Barnabas apart., to serve the church by edifying them in the word. “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the

saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Ephesians 4:11–16, ESV)

Let me just say a little something about that. I know that many of us are devoted followers of podcasts by other preachers. Let me caution you on something. Be careful how much you listen to other preachers preaching specific messages for the churches that they are serving, messages that are specifically geared to the spiritual condition and life of that body. Why do I say that? Believe me when I say that it is not jealousy. I will readily confess that there are better preachers and teachers than anyone we have in this church. However, if this is the church where God has placed you, the spiritual body to which He has called you, then you ought to be deriving your primary spiritual sustenance along with the people of God here in this church. The reason I say that is two-fold. One, the messages that you hear from this pulpit or in Sunday School are specifically designed with this congregation and God’s purpose and work in mind so we will all be on the same page and in the words of Paul: “So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” (Philippians 2:1–2, ESV) That is hard to do if we are not all engaging and applying the messages that we are hearing as a church together as a primary spiritual discipline.

Second, and this is a practical matter, there is a very real danger of hearing so much preaching that we never really apply anything, never really mine deeply what we hear, but instead become sermon junkies who hear much but apply little. We have to be careful that we see ourselves as a body and not as individual members who gather together every now and then to hear a performance from the local preacher. Paul and Barnabas strengthened their souls with the word.

They encouraged them to continue in the faith. In calling the disciples throughout Lystra, Antioch, and Iconium to continue in the faith, Paul and Barnabas made clear that the calling of



believers was not to spiritual pacifism and “resting in grace,” but to aggressive pursuit of the means of grace, laying hold of grace in all of its fullness – yes for eternal life but also in the here and now. Hebrews 12 speaks of this: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.” (Hebrews 12:1–4, ESV) The message is clear – run hard! Paul did not tell them, “once saved, always saved” though he was a champion of the completed work of Christ on the cross. Instead he preached to them endurance in the faith.

That does not minimize or disregard the great grace with which God saves us, due to no merit of our own but because of the all-sufficient and precious blood of Christ. Rather, the encouragement is to lay hold of grace in all of its fullness – saving and transforming grace. Paul and Barnabas deliberately couched their words of encouragement and exhortation in a way that demanded a continuing response to Christ and to His Lordship by these believers. When Paul says in Romans 8, for instance: “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:31–39, ESV) – those words are not spoken in a vacuum. They are spoken with expectation that every believer, every true follower of Jesus Christ will continue on with Him, will remain faithful, will be receptive and responsive to the Word of God, will be a people of prayer, will not forsake the assembly of the saints, will continue to press hard after Christ, will do the things that come with vibrant and real faith – serving, caring, edifying, exhorting, admonishing, stirring up one another to faithfulness, proclaiming the gospel, walking as Christ walked. As Jesus said in Mark 13:13 – “(T)he one who endures to the end will be saved.” (Mark 13:13, ESV) And Jesus promises to His people grace to endure, but it is grace that demands a

faithful response. It is not enough to just have good theology. Good theology is vitally important, don't get me wrong, but it has to be embraced and lived out by faith to be powerful. That's why Paul wrote: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me." (1 Corinthians 15:10, ESV) It is in this that true assurance in our salvation is felt and experienced, the certainty that we belong to Christ is bolstered, that joy in following Christ is experienced in the fullest.

They reminded them, as well, that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. This battle, the fight for faithfulness, and the opposition that we face, the trials before us – they will not ever come to an end in this life. They are always a very real part of our experience in this earth but they prepare us for a greater weight of glory. The many tribulations of this life are all an ongoing part of following Christ. We cannot --no matter how much we may want to -- we cannot insulate ourselves from tribulation and that is why we cannot take a break, cannot take a respite from following hard after and abiding deeply in Christ. These are no light words coming as they do from Paul, who had just been stoned almost to death.

I know that all of us would like a break, a respite; we want a breather. But beloved, I want you to see that the challenges that we face, in big ways and in small, are ultimately for our good in that they disentangle our souls from the things that the lost desperately seek for ultimate meaning and satisfaction. These hardships magnify the worth of Christ in our eyes, magnify our need for Him, and make Him precious in our sight. There is a reason that the Word of God makes much of God as a strong rock, a firm defense, our shield and fortress, and a refuge for the weak. Rather than hardships being a cause for despair, or cursing, or complaining or giving up the fight, they are a cause for courage and steadfastness, and for rejoicing in God's faithfulness, and hope in the age to come that we cannot see right now except with eyes of faith.

And last, before they left these cities, in each church, they appointed elders to care for their souls. By nature of the ministry to which they were called, there was no way that Paul and Barnabas could stay at every church that they established. So what did they do? Lovingly and with much care, they appointed God-fearing, servant-hearted elders in each of the churches to shepherd the flock, to feed it, to help the church to grow to maturity in Christ, to protect it from the wolves, to lead it and to make sure that they did not depart from the truth, to

“admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, (and to) be patient with them all.” (1 Thessalonians 5:14, ESV) Paul and Barnabas recognized the spiritual gifts within the church, particularly those whom God had raised up for this task.

And then, before they left, “with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” With prayer and fasting, they entrusted them to Christ, knowing that Jesus loved them even more than they did and that He is faithfully committed to His people. They believed the promise of Jesus recorded for us in John 10: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”” (John 10:27–30, ESV) Jesus is faithful to preserve His people. Paul and Barnabas knew that what they were doing, Christ approved and would complete.

Wow, what a great text this is -- it is inspiring and comforting, challenging and confidence producing, and destiny-defining. This is no far-off, long-ago story of the work of God in another age, disconnected from our everyday lives. This is the history of our people, the history of the church, a history that we are in and that is a part of us, a history in which we have a role to play, history in which we must take our place.

God has work for the Church – for us – to accomplish and He will accomplish it through us. God will accomplish His Plan, He will lead us into faithfulness, He will strengthen us as we persevere in the faith and will bring us into His Kingdom.

Embracing this reality will cause us to lay down our lives before the Lord to love and worship Him, to serve Him, to sacrifice for Him, to submit to His Lordship in every way in conscious gratitude for His steadfast love and mercies. This is where true joy, real purpose, a life of satisfaction comes from. This is where we find real life. So let’s embrace who we are.

We are one-time spiritual cripples, spiritually dead men and women, who have been healed and raised to life by the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Let’s be bold to call others out of the darkness of sin and to salvation in Jesus Alone. Let’s unflinchingly speak and

live the gospel faithfully before the world. Let's invite people to come and hear about Christ. Let's live boldly, unashamed and unafraid for Christ, and let the chips fall where they may. Let's talk much of Him, reveling in all that He is for us. Let's embrace afresh and anew the Word of God; let it marinate in our souls; let it fashion in us the life of Christ, that we would be strengthened and continue in the faith and endure suffering in the joy of the glory that is to come.

Beloved, I have to tell you that I am more excited, more eager, more hopeful, more expectant, and more optimistic about our future faithfulness and the blessing and empowerment of God, as His church, than I have ever been. He simply will not let us go – because He is faithful to the end. I am so thankful for God's preserving love and shepherding care, His goodness to us to call us to a thorough repentance and a return to our first love. Join me in praying that God would manifest His presence and His pleasure powerfully with us and that we would be found faithful no matter what the trial, completely confident in Him. Join me in praying that God would fashion us to be like this early church about whom we read in the Scriptures. The best, I believe by faith, is yet to come.

Lord, I beg you, apply these words to our hearts in the exact mixture and measure that we need them.

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