

Acts 14 - Part 2

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[0 : 00] Thank you, Wes and company, for teaching us new old songs and for leading us consistently with old songs.

! Interestingly, there's this distinguishing factor between old songs and new songs and new songs have words in them.! But there are some good writers in them.

We sang a song this morning by a friend named Matt Papa. That is a good new song that sounds like an old song because it's rich and deep.

Thank you guys for all the work you do in that. Acts chapter 14. Last week we began a study of chapter 14 of Luke's second volume.

His first volume is the Gospel according to Luke. Are you familiar with that, I believe? This is his second volume of work. It's most commonly referred to as the Acts of the Apostles.

[1 : 05] We so often just call it Acts, but your Bible probably says in the front, the Acts of the Apostles. And I don't think that's entirely wrong, but I do think it would be more aptly called the Acts of the Risen Jesus Christ.

Luke's first account is the Acts, the Acts of the Risen Jesus Christ.

When Jesus ascended, he sent the promised Holy Spirit that abides in all of those who call on his name. And he acts by the agency of that Spirit in the lives of his followers.

So as we observe the Apostles, first Peter as the primary character, now Paul as the primary character. We see Jesus Christ himself working in and through the lives of his people.

Throughout the book of Acts, we see the repetition of the phrases full of the Holy Spirit and filled with the Holy Spirit throughout Luke's record.

[2 : 10] And at the very end of chapter 13 in verse 52, you'll note it says, And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

I think that Luke intends for this to be a bridge for us from the activity in chapter 13 into the activity in chapter 14. And I asserted the following to you last week, if you were here, of course.

Folks, the primary role of the Spirit of God is the exaltation of Jesus Christ in the salvation and perfection of his church.

I'll repeat that for you. The primary role of the Spirit of God is the exaltation of Jesus Christ. It's not the Spirit doesn't glorify himself. The Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ. The exaltation of Jesus Christ in the salvation and perfection of his church.

and the primary means that he uses to accomplish this, so the Spirit is working for the exaltation of Jesus Christ and the salvation and perfection of his people, the primary means he uses to accomplish this is the word of God believed and spoken by the people of God.

[3 : 25] For the sake of time this morning, I will not be able to reestablish my proof for that statement. We spent most of last Sunday doing that. But I do not want you just to take my word for it.

Please ever take anybody's word for something. Such a vast, massive statement such as the primary role of the Spirit of God is the exaltation of Jesus Christ and the salvation and perfection of his church.

And the primary means that he uses to accomplish this is the word of God believed and spoken by the people of God. It's essentially a summary statement of the person and the work of the Spirit of God don't just take my word for it.

Study the Scripture. Go back on our church's website and listen to last week's sermon when I make the case for that from the Bible itself. I really believe this will serve you well.

If you're a follower of Jesus Christ, you need to give careful consideration to what it means to be filled by the Spirit. There's much teaching out there about what that means.

[4 : 29] There's much erroneous teaching. There's much contradictory teaching about what it means to be filled with the Spirit. If we are followers of Jesus Christ, he's been given to us as a gift.

And so we need to understand what that means. Do not neglect the third person of the Trinity as a worshiper of God, nor the empowerment that the Spirit of God brings.

Your life will be more fulfilled, will be more set on purpose if you'll understand the empowerment that the Holy Spirit brings. Our text today and into next Sunday as well serves this end by giving us a picture of what it looks like to be filled with the Spirit.

So these activities that Paul and Barnabas are about, the things that we can observe from this text, are the result of them being filled by the Spirit.

So what does it look like to be filled with Spirit? It's not exhaustive, but it gives us some clues. It gives us some filters to run our own life through and to understand better what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

[5 : 40] So, I'm going to read all of Acts chapter 14. This is our text. Last week, this week, next week I believe we'll finish it. So follow along with me. Acts chapter 14, beginning in verse 1.

Now at Iconium, they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers.

So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the people of the city were divided.

Some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews with their rulers to mistreat them and to stone them, they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lyakonoa, excuse me, Lithuania, and to the surrounding country.

And there they continued to preach the gospel. 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.

[7 : 02] And he sprang up and began walking. And when the crowd saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lithuanian, 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.

But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, men, why are you doing these things? We also are men of like nature with you and we bring you good news 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.

Even with these words, they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them. 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.

[8 : 19] 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. 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.

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. Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Italia and from there they sailed to Antioch where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled.

And when they arrived, they gathered the church together. They declared all that God had done with them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles and they remained no little time with the disciples.

Beloved, this is God's word to us. It was written for his glory and our good and we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

Now, the structure for our study of Acts chapter 14, I wrote around seven points. I'm going to give those to you but we will repeat them so please don't be in a panic if you're a note taker.

[9 : 38] The person who is filled with the Spirit, number one, is fruitful. Number two, is opposed. Number three, speaks boldly. Number four, acts humbly.

Number five, develops disciples. Number six, is committed. And number seven, loves fellowship. Now, last week, we managed to make it through the first point.

I had intended to get through the first four. We made it through the first one and that is that the person who is filled with the Spirit is fruitful and by that, I mean that the person who is filled with the Spirit is multiplied, is a multiplier of disciples of Jesus Christ as they proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I mean it in the Mark chapter 4 verse 20 sense in the good soil sense. Those who are of good soil bear much fruit. So, they're reproducing the person who is filled with the Holy Spirit.

And again, I would encourage you to go back and listen to that sermon. Today, I'm going to work to present the next three points and then we'll finish next Sunday with point five, six, and seven.

[10 : 54] This morning, it's quite possible that I'm going to present these three points to you with a great amount of brevity. We'll see. Of course, as we always do, on Monday of this week, I was playing with my boys in a tree, which is just a thing you shouldn't do when you're about to turn 37.

And I took a short but very hard fall out of said tree and I'm pretty sure I cracked two ribs. So, it's been a very painful week. You may note me already getting short of breath.

It's because I'm trying to breathe and talk at the same time and it's a little hard right now to do that. A community group on Tuesday, I set my coffee down to my right and I was trying to reach for it and I couldn't quite reach for it.

And we're talking and I'm trying to reach for my coffee and I tried to cross over with my other arm and I couldn't quite get it and pretty soon I noticed that everybody was kind of chuckling at me and we had stopped talking and Phil, bless him, was sitting close by and said, do you want me to get your coffee for you?

Yes, please. I'm feeling much better this morning but my head, to be entirely honest, has not been in points two, three, and four of this text very much this week.

[12 : 06] Praise the Lord and His providence. Last week, I prepared to preach through point four, only made it through point one and then fell out of a tree. So here I am with my notes essentially from last week.

And so we'll get into this and just see how the Lord blesses our time together. I pray that He will. So, our first point for today, point number two, the person who is filled with the Spirit is opposed.

If you've been with us during our study of Acts, this should be no surprise to you. The gospel of Jesus Christ has been and will be accepted by many and has been and will be rejected by many.

And that rejection takes many forms. It often takes the form of direct opposition. Beloved, we should never forget that our Lord was crucified.

God, the one whom we say we follow, who sets an example for us in all of the ways that we're meant to conduct our lives, Himself was persecuted.

[13 : 15] He was opposed to the point of death. Jesus said in John chapter 15, verse 20, Remember the word that I have said to you, a servant is not greater than his master.

If they persecute me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. And we have witnessed this reality in the book of Acts.

Jesus is now ascended. He has sent the Holy Spirit. He's extended Himself into the people of God. And we have observed together this opposition to the gospel of Christ.

Many accepting, many following Jesus, many rejecting. Chapter 4 of Acts, Peter and John are arrested for preaching in the temple.

Remember, they stand trial in front of the Sanhedrin. In chapter 6, Stephen, a deacon of the church, is arrested for contending for the faith with proselytes from the synagogues in Jerusalem.

[14 : 17] In chapter 7, Stephen is the first Christian martyr. In chapter 8, a great persecution begins. You may remember that it's Paul, then called Saul, who leads that charge.

And the church in Jerusalem is scattered abroad. God flings open the gate for the gospel to go forth to the nations of the world. In chapter 12, James is martyred and Peter is imprisoned.

Once again, miraculously released. chapter 13, Paul and Barnabas are opposed by a false prophet named Elimus on the island of Cyprus. And at Antioch in Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas are driven out of the district.

You can see that in chapter 13, verse 50. They're driven out of the district and then we see that the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

And so, we find ourselves in chapter 14 in the city of Iconium. Unbelieving Jews, verse 2, stirring up the Gentiles and poisoning their minds or it could be translated embittering their minds against the brothers, setting them against them.

[15:32] And then in verse 4, we see of chapter 14 that the people are divided, some siding with the Jews and some with the apostles, some rejecting and some accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And then in verse 5, we see that there's an attempt made to stone them, to take them out and to throw rocks at them until they die. And we see the prudence, not the cowardice, but the prudence of Paul and Barnabas as they flee to Lystra and Derbe, the city of Lithuania and to the surrounding country.

Right? So opposition. Right? They're met with opposition. Acceptance, but also opposition as they preach the good news of Jesus. And then in Lystra, so they go out from there.

Verse 19 you see, but Jews from Antioch and Iconium have followed him now and they've persuaded the crowds and they go through with this act of stoning Paul and they drag him out of the city supposing that he was dead.

Now, I don't want to spend any time except for this little bit that I'm going to. Some would suggest that Paul was in fact dead and that he was raised from the dead.

[16:42] I don't think so, but that's okay if you do. I think that he was so beaten down, so stoned to the point of death that he seemed dead and that then God gives him the strength to get back up in verse 20 we see.

So he's stoned here. Great opposition, a persecution against the gospel of Jesus Christ. After being stoned, the disciples come around.

He gets up. What do they go do? Immediately they go off to Derbe to preach the gospel. Verse 21, they preach the gospel in that city, being Derbe, and made many disciples.

What do they do? They return. This is fascinating to me. They return to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, the places where all of these things had happened. And they strengthen the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying, the primary way in which they're encouraging them to continue in the faith, strengthening their souls, that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

This is the way they're saying into the kingdom of God, to be hated like our Savior. Many will accept but many will reject.

[17:58] Paul writes later in his pastoral epistle to Timothy, a young pastor, 2 Timothy 3, verse 12, Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Our religious freedom will spare us some types of persecution. American Christian, this is true. Some types of persecution.

Praise God for that. I am thankful for our religious freedom. I am thankful for the way in which we're allowed to gather this morning. This is not 5.30 a.m. underground, in the dark, sneaking in, right? That's a good thing. It's a blessed thing that we're able to do this. Our religious freedom will spare us from some types of persecution. But our religious freedom does not stay the promises of God. Those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. If we are filled with the Spirit, if we're seeking out opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus Christ, and we are in fact sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, some will accept it and some will reject it.

[19:11] And that rejection will take the form of opposition. Why will the gospel be opposed by some? Why will it be opposed by some? The very hardness of their own hearts.

Some people do not want to hear that they are self-worshippers, that they are enemies of God, that they have turned from Him and in every way said they hate Him. They don't want to hear it, right? Your preaching brings condemnation on them and they do not want to hear it. They do not want to give things up for the sake of following Jesus. They are very happy with the way their life is going. To forsake their own being for the sake of following Christ. They don't want to hear that message. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 2, verses 14-16, But thanks be to God who in Christ always leads us in

triumphal procession and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere. I think that's a wonderful metaphor. The fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere. Verse 15, For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

[20 : 25] We are ambassadors for Christ. And Paul's using this metaphor of spreading fragrance of knowledge being the aroma of Christ both to those who are being saved and to those who are perishing.

We're presenting Jesus Christ to those who believe in Him and Jesus Christ to those who will reject Him. Verse 16, To one, a fragrance from death to death.

Those who would reject the message of Jesus Christ. Dead people not accepting the message of Jesus Christ remaining dead people. To the other, a fragrance from life to life.

And then Paul asked the question, Who is sufficient for these things? Surely we are not. We must be filled with the Spirit to present such a message.

So the person who is filled with the Spirit is opposed, will meet opposition even as they're being fruitful. Thirdly, the person who is filled with the Spirit is bold.

[21 : 38] in the face of opposition, knowing full well that we will either meet it or we have already met. Opposition to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The person who is filled with the Spirit is bold. I am in awe of the boldness of the early apostles. We just try to put ourselves in their shoes and walk through the situations that they're walking through. I fear that very few of us would have responded in the same way that they do in our text today. Man, I would like to say, oh, me too.

I would have done the exact same thing. My suggestion is that if I'm filled with the Spirit, I would. If I have the Word of God richly dwelling in me, if my eyes are set on heavenly things, if I'm looking and living to eternity and I'm not concerned about the here and now that I would do this, so often, so often, I fear, I would have tucked tail and run.

It's because of opposition in verse 3. They remained for a long time. Notice that. Verse 2, the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the apostles.

[22 : 55] And so, what's said in verse 3? So, they remained for a long time. In direct response to the unbelievers stirring up people, trying to change their minds and bitter them towards the gospel of Jesus Christ, Paul and Barnabas stay.

And verse 3 says, they spoke boldly for the Lord and the Lord bears witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

They remain on in a hostile environment for the sake of the church of Jesus Christ. Then, because of further opposition, verse 7, so we know there's some further opposition, there's a plan now to stone them.

They learn of this plan, verse 5, to mistreat them and to stone them. They learn of it and they flee. Out of prudence again, not out of cowardice. It's time to move on.

It's time to go to another place. A quick side story about one of my favorite missionaries, a guy named John G. Patton, was from Scotland, went to a place, in his day was called the New Hebrides, a little group of islands in the South Pacific.

[24 : 11] It's now called Vanuatu. So if you have any interest in this, look for Vanuatu. He went to the New Hebrides and the people in the New Hebrides, now Vanuatu, were cannibals.

So he's given all this warning, this wonderful quote I've read to you some years past, an elder of his church, trying to convince him not to go, because he'll be eaten by cannibals, and he says back to him, well someday you'll be eaten by worms, whether I'm eaten by cannibals or you by worms, we'll both find our bodies in the same state.

Wonderful quote. He goes to this place, loses his wife and his newborn son to disease, I think it's malaria, early years that he's there. He's on this little island, has one convert, the man who's this convert will stand over him and protect him with a musket while he's studying, so that as these cannibals come and try to attack him, he's given some warning, shots go off into the jungle and they run back away.

There's accounts of him wrestling with the chief, physically wrestling with the chief of these people and lecturing him for how evil he is for trying to come and eat him. And this time on this island finally comes to a head where essentially all the tribes of this island have decided, they have decided, they're going to kill and eat John G.

Patton, and he manages to flee off the island. He manages to get passage from a ship off of the island, and he goes home, and at home he is chastised for being a coward.

[25 : 36] This man goes to this place, gives of his life to go to this place, loses his family in this place, and I would suggest, out of an act of prudence, leaves the island, goes back home where he goes and recruits and then goes back to Vanuatu, the New Hebrides, and he's said, you should have stayed and been a martyr for the cause.

It wasn't cowardice that caused him to run, it's certainly not cowardice that causes them to run here, but rather prudence, because what do they go do? Verse 7, John G.

Patton goes home, recruits missionaries, goes back. What do they do? They continue to preach the gospel. They don't cease preaching the gospel because of a threat against them, they continue, they just go to another place, and they continue to preach the gospel.

We've seen this boldness other place in the book of Acts. Peter and John, before the Sanhedrin, in chapter 4, I mentioned to you earlier, they're charged not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. Now, the Sanhedrin was the high Jewish court, right? This would have been a big deal. 71 men, it's a big deal that you're standing in front of this group. They're charged not to speak or teach the name of Jesus in Acts 4, verse 19 and 20, but Peter and John answered them, whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.

[27 : 10] What boldness when they are released and they rejoin their fellow disciples later in chapter 4, they pray together. And they do not pray that the opposition will stop.

Why? Because they know that this is the way that the kingdom of God is coming. Because they're aware that the promises that Jesus made to them, that they're not greater than the Master.

They know full well that the world hated him and therefore the world would hate them as well. They don't pray that the opposition will stop. What do they pray for? Further boldness.

Further boldness in the light of opposition that we would be more bold. And they granted it and they speak the gospel at the end of chapter 4 with even greater boldness.

Look at verse 20 in chapter 14 of Acts. because of more opposition. Because of more opposition.

[28 : 19] Paul, Barnabas, Paul's stoned, rises up, goes to the city of Derbe. When they preached the gospel of that city, made many disciples, they return.

And this just astounds me. They return to Lystra, to Iconium, and Antioch. These are the three cities they had just been in. And these are the people from these cities that had stoned Paul.

They presumed to death. And they went back in great boldness, strengthening the soul of the disciple, encouraging them to continue the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

What gives the people of God such boldness in the face of such opposition? This is no light thing. This is not your friends in your psychology class making fun of you for being a follower of Jesus. And you know you got to go back on Thursday after that hard Tuesday class where they thought you were a weirdo for believing the truth of the Bible. This is hard opposition. Pursued, stoned to death, presumably, dragged outside and left for dead.

[29 : 31] He goes back to the same places. What gives boldness? Men, such boldness. If you've got the theme in your head, they're filled with the Spirit.

They're filled with the Spirit. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? What is it producing in us? How is it? Is this a magical feeling they have that they're going to go back into these places? Say to you, no, it's not. It's that the Word of Christ dwells in them richly. The Spirit of God is using the truth of God to compel them to go back to these places.

Truths like this. January 1st this year, this was at least part of the text that I preached on. Truths like this, Paul writes Romans 8 35-39, 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.

[30 : 38] It's these types of truths, right? Who can separate us from the love of Christ? And because Christ loves us, we love what Christ loves.

And he loves the believers in Lystra and Iconium and Antioch. So we're going to go back and we're going to strengthen them. This is what's compelling them to go back. Verse 37 of Romans 8, 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.

Beloved, we need to be compelled by the truth of who God is to us in Christ to great boldness in the face of opposition.

So the person who is filled with the Spirit is bold. Fourthly, and lastly, the person who is filled with the Spirit acts humbly or is humble, if you prefer.

[31 : 51] Apparently I do because I changed my notes halfway through. The person who is filled with the Spirit acts humbly or is humble.

And there's this really kind of amazing account of what happens in Lystra. A different thing here than happens in other places where the gospel is proclaimed.

They go to Lystra and they're preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ as they're going along and they encounter a man. A man who's been crippled from birth the point of Luke's account is that this man was never able to walk.

It wasn't some show that they put on. He genuinely was not able to walk. From birth he was crippled. By the miraculous power of God, he's raised up to walk again.

All of this, I talked about this a lot last week, is done to affirm the message of Jesus Christ. It's always meant to exalt Jesus Christ, miracles of this nature. But there's this peculiar response from the people in Lystra.

[32 : 54] When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lithuanian, the gods have come down to us in the likeness of men.

We see that they call Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, this is verse 13, brought out oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds.

So the result of Paul's healing, we must understand, was rooted in a local folklore. So this odd response was rooted in a local folklore.

For them, it wasn't odd at all. In John MacArthur's commentary on this text, he wrote this, there was a tradition in Lystra that the gods, Zeus and Hermes, once came to earth incognito.

When they arrived at Lystra and asked for food and lodging, everyone refused them. Finally, an old peasant named Philemon and his wife Bacchus took them in. Their inhospitable neighbors were drowned in a flood sent by the vengeful gods.

[33 : 59] Philemon and Bacchus, however, saw their humble cottage turned into a magnificent temple where they served as priests and priestess. So this is the folklore of the town.

And here come these two men, Barnabas and Paul, performing this miracle. This man who could not walk is now able to walk. And this is why they responded in that way.

Barnabas likely gets to be Zeus because his stature was probably one of greater prominence. The text tells us Paul Hermes because Hermes was the messenger of the gods and he's the chief speaker.

There's some extra-biblical accounts which likely could be believed, some descriptions of Paul. Paul was kind of an odd, short-balled, unbrowed man.

Not a pleasant looking man at all. So Barnabas gets the honor of Zeus in this case. Because the people were speaking Lithuanian, this is important, Luke reports this for us, because of this, Paul and Barnabas had no idea what was going on.

[35 : 04] That's why he records that for us. They're not sure what's happening. Why all the hubbub about this healing? Verse 14, Luke writes, but when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it.

So now people are speaking to them in a language that they understand. They understand what's happening. They think that we're Zeus and Hermes. They tear their garments and they rush out into the crowd crying out.

Tearing their garments was a common sign of revulsion at blasphemy. It's a strong sign to tear your garments because you were so betraying the name of God.

So they're extremely humble. That's the point. They're extremely humble. 1 Peter 5, 5 and 6, Peter writes, close yourselves all of you with humility toward one another.

For God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore into the mighty hands of God so that the proper time he may exalt you.

[36 : 11] Mark chapter 8, the last will be first and the first will be last. They're able to perform this miracle, this external miracle of raising this guy up who was unable to walk.

Great power is displayed and with power always comes the temptation to pride. God. You've got a whole city now, throngs of people wanting to worship and praise you for this thing you did. But they instead, in their humility, turn the attention back to the Lord God Almighty. We are men just like you. Let's worship the true God who has been gracious to you and now is especially gracious to you in Christ.

With power, beloved, always comes the temptation to pride. And we must, if we're filled with the Spirit, be humble. I wonder if some of our church leaders today, given the same situation, may have taken the name of Zeus or the name of Hermes in order to show the people Christ with good intention.

Well, if they think I'm Zeus, I can speak as Zeus, but lead them to Jesus. If they would have allowed for the blasphemy in order to give them a larger stage for the gospel and in the process forsake the gospel altogether.

[37 : 47] I fear that's true. The person who is filled with the Spirit is humble. They are not self-seeking or self-promoting. I want to give you two examples in the positive.

Guys I like to call the Johns. John MacArthur and John Piper. I'm going to read you a quote that's on your bulletin from Jonathan Edwards. These are the three I call the Johns. Both John MacArthur and John Piper have widespread ministries.

They are accessed millions of times. I love that when I type into a Google search D-E-S that Desiring God pops up first. Isn't that amazing that it's so searched, sought out, right?

This is a ministry of John Piper that we're able to access this so quickly. But you note that both of these men, prominent pastors, preach week in and week out, conference speakers, that they are pastors of churches and they run ministries that are not called John MacArthur ministries or John Piper ministries, right?

You've got John MacArthur has grace to you, John Piper Desiring God, and they have lots of resource and writers and people that are partnering with them in those efforts.

[39 : 07] Both of them give away an astounding amount of material every year. I was about to say countless, but I'm sure they keep record of that, and you could probably access that record, right? They give away an amount that I'm not counting, lots and lots and lots of free resources.

You can download most of John Piper's books in PDF form for free. Access this information, recorded sermons, just giving it away for the sake of the kingdom of God.

Both of these men have PhDs. I don't remember how many PhDs they have between them. It's more than two, right? I've yet to see a book that says Dr. John MacArthur on the cover or Dr. John Piper.

on the cover. Both of them seem to seek, right? To present themselves humble to the world around them, not self-seeking, not self-promoting, rather than the other, the opposite of that being true.

I wonder, right, being filled with the Spirit would dictate to us in some measure as church leadership whether our name ought to be on a sign at all and certainly how big the font might be.

[40 : 22] On your bulletin, Jonathan Edwards wrote this, a truly humble man is sensible of his natural distance from God, of his dependence on him, of the insufficiency of his own power and wisdom, and that it is by God's power that he is upheld and provided for, and that he needs God's wisdom to lead and guide him, and his might to enable him to do what he ought to do for him.

We are utterly, entirely dependent on God. How is that working in us, right? By his Spirit. So the person who is filled with the Spirit of God, and we'll jump back to last week, number one is fruitful today, number two is opposed, number three is bold, number four is humble.

Now in conclusion, I want to ask you some questions, and I want to ask you these questions, there's a lot of questions, but I want to ask them to you kind of categorically, following along with the points of today.

So to follow along with point two, a series of questions for you. What are you afraid of that prevents you from following Jesus Christ?

What are you afraid of that prevents you from following Jesus Christ? if you have never followed him, if you've never placed believing faith in Jesus Christ, what is it that you will not give up for his sake?

[41 : 57] And I would encourage you to run through an inventory of things that come to your mind. Anything in your life, a person, a possession, some experience, that you would not be willing to give up, to follow Christ, for the very first time, or to follow him in a fresh new way today.

What are you afraid of that prevents you from following Jesus Christ? Is it really worth what you think it is? If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, are you obedient to the call of Christ?

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, are you obedient in all things? The task that is given to us, beloved, is to be propagators of the kingdom of God.

We are to be Jesus Christ's ambassadors on this earth. This is the only thing that is worthwhile to pursue, and we can pursue that in many, many, many ways.

We can pursue that in good fruitful work. We can pursue that as parents. We can pursue that as good friends. There are lots of ways. We can pursue it in a hobby.

[43 : 08] There are lots of ways that we do this, but all should be about the advancement of the kingdom of God. Are you obedient in all things, and what are you afraid to give up if you're not?

Secondly, are you bold? Are you bold? What causes you to shrink back when you should press forward?

What is it that stops you from pressing forward, being bold for the sake of Christ, when you should? Is it your reputation?

Some level of prominence you've reached in a position that you have? Is it a job that you hold that you don't want to lose? What's keeping you from being bold for the sake of Christ?

And number three, are you humble? Do you find yourself humble? Do you believe that you have done anything to be accepted by God in Christ this morning? Do you think there's anything that you do that makes you accepted by God in Christ?

[44 : 14] There's nothing, absolutely nothing that you have done or are doing or can do to be accepted by God in Christ. Beloved, the only thing we can boast in is the cross of Christ.

we boast in him, his personhood, his work, his passive and his active obedience, perfect in every way. We sang about that this morning, that his righteousness becomes our righteousness, that our just due punishment was punished in him on the cross.

So do you boast in anything other than the cross of Jesus? Jesus. And then I'll conclude with just one overarching question and pray for us.

Are you filled with the Spirit? Let's pray together.