

Acts 2:42 (James (Jim) Hyland) 215920

Aberdeen Conference: 2006, Gathered unto His Name

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Turn with me, first of all, to a portion in Acts chapter 2, Acts chapter 2. And we'll read verse 42. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. And then I want to read a portion in the end of Acts, Acts chapter 28. Acts chapter 28 and verse 30. And Paul's wealth, two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him. I have it on my heart this evening to speak concerning the privilege of being gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not my thought to take it up in some different way tonight. Is not my thought to bring out some different slant on the truth, but just to simply, brethren, encourage our hearts as to the privileges. And the resources that we have more particularly collectively, as gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have many privileges and responsibilities, individually and as families. And certainly those lines of truth run through the Scripture. But it's more my thought tonight to speak about the collective aspect of things. And when we go to the book of the Acts, we have found, we find that we have laid down at the beginning a pattern of things. And that's why I began in the second chapter, just to get the context here. We know. That the day of Pentecost had just taken place and there was a great work of God when the Spirit of God descended on the day of Pentecost and the church was born. Because the church began on the day of Pentecost with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit came to indwell each individual believer, to indwell the church collectively, and to link those believers with their glorified head, the Lord Jesus Christ. At the right hand of God, and we know that there were great signs and wonders and mighty power. As the church had its birthday. But then we come to the end of the chapter here and we find what characterized the early believers collectively, They continued steadfastly, or if you notice Mr. Darby's translation, they persevered. Because you know, if we're going to go on collectively as gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus and enjoy the privileges that he has given us in a collective way, it does take perseverance. It really does. It takes continuance. You know, I'm thankful that I grew up in a home where I had parents who were exercised to not only bring the word of God before us in the home and to raise their children for the Lord, but they were exercised to bring us to the assembly. And so we find here that they persevered in these things. These are what we might say are the assembly meetings. It's interesting too, before I comment. That the order in which these things are listed. You know, I've often said that when God gives a list of two or more things in Scripture, he doesn't list things haphazardly like I do. I might put three or four things on a list, three or four things perhaps I want to accomplish downtown before I get home for lunch. And you might say, why did you list them in that order? I said, well, it really wasn't any reason why I did. That's just the order they came to my mind. I might not even carry them out in the order that I listed them, but when God gives us a list, it's always important and helpful to notice the order of that list. And it's interesting here that the first thing that they persevered in was the apostles doctrine because, brethren, that was the basis for everything else. It was the basis for fellowship, for breaking bread, and for prayer. And I would just like to say a word about sound doctrine. You know, I fear and brethren, tonight I'm going to bare my soul a little bit so you'll bear with me, but I fear, brethren, that sometimes our attitude today is the doctrine really isn't as important as was once considered. It's not only important, brethren, it's vital. There must be sound doctrine at the basis of everything that we do, whether it's in our lives for Christ individually, whether it's in the family circle, and certainly in connection with. Gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, I'm afraid today there are many things done in the name of the Lord Jesus that don't have sound principles as the basis for it. There was a nice commendation given to the Saints in Philadelphia. And brethren, I trust there's no thought even in corners of our hearts as to be in Philadelphia. But we do find that Philadelphia, that which met with the Lord's approval, they kept His word and not denied His name. You notice the order there.

Again, the order is very important. It doesn't say they, they didn't deny his name and kept his word. No, they kept his word because it tells us thou is magnified, thy word above all thy name. And we're never justified in doing anything in the name of the Lord Jesus without the word of God for what we do. That's the basis, that's the authority. It's vital. I say maybe I mentioned the other day in a meeting that when you read first. In Second Timothy it's brought out again and again and again. I've never counted, but over and over again, Paul in writing to that young man Timothy, he exhorts him as to the need for sound doctrine. And especially in the second epistle, where you have the giving up of sound teaching, you have the undermining of principles and the subverting of the souls of the Saints. Over and over again he exhorts him as to the need for sound doctrine. Now as fully known my. Doctrine and manner of life, if I would have written that, I would have said that's fully known, my manner of life and doctrine, but doctrine was at the basis of his manner of life. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. And what's the first thing it's profitable for? It's profitable for doctrine. And so doctrine is important. And so they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and that's why I believe assembly meetings for ministry of the word of God. Are so important for us. It's true, and we often stress it. We need to read the word of God. In our own, in our own rooms, we need to read the Scriptures personally, we need to read it in the family circle. I'm thankful for a father who was exercised to pull out the Bible twice a day when we were growing up and read it to us. But we also need ministry in the assembly because I believe that God has instituted ministry in the assembly in a way that you get a balance where you don't get it anywhere else. Now, brethren, it's not that the Word of God needs balance. The Word of God is probably the only balanced book there really is in the world. But it's we who need the balance. And God understands that man is an extremist by nature. And when ministry is presented in the assembly and the Spirit of God is given liberty to minister by one and another, then I say there's a balance. There are many who will put a man up at the front and they will listen to him from week to week. But nobody questions what he says. Nobody checks him. There's if he says something wrong, there's nobody to correct it. And so when ministry is taken up in the assembly and the Spirit of God is given liberty, we're thankful for those who can lay out as teachers the doctrinal principles of Scripture. Others can make practical applications. Another might be able to take that same portion and apply it in the gospel. It's not that every meeting for ministry may be totally balanced, but in the overall scheme of things, if you avail yourself of any opportunity for ministry in the

assembly, you're going to get, I say that balance and check. You know, I often think of what it says about Ephraim. It says Ephraim is a cake not turned. You know, if you put a cake on the griddle and don't turn it, it's going to get too well done on one side and not enough on the other. And I've noticed that those who do not avail themselves of ministry in the assembly are often like that. They get off on one side of the truth, they get off on certain tangents, but there's nothing to check and balance. And so I want to encourage our hearts, brethren, to avail ourselves of ministry in the Assembly. To continue in steadfastly in the apostles doctrine. And then we find there's fellowship because again, the apostles doctrine, sound teaching is the basis for fellowship. And we've been brought into a wonderful circle of fellowship. First of all, we've been brought into fellowship as it tells us in first John, one with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. But we've also been as a result, brought into fellowship one with another. We have fellowship one with another. What a circle of fellowship we have been brought into. And we need to go on not at the compromise of sound teaching, but we need to go on by grace in fellowship one with another. The apostle Paul valued the fellowship of his brethren in the assembly, in gospel work, in his endeavors for the Lord. He appreciated the fellowship of his fellow believers. And then we find there was the breaking of bread.

And we're going to speak of this at some length in a few moments. But they continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread. How good it is. Because as we're going to see, we need that reminder from week to week. And then there was prayers. That is, brethren, we need the prayer meeting. It's vital. You know, I believe that the reason so often in the days in which we live that there's not power to deal with difficulties that rise in the assembly is because we. Haven't availed ourselves of the assembly prayer meeting like we ought to. We often say power of prayer is the powerhouse of our lives individually, and that's true, but I believe it's the powerhouse of our lives collectively as gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I say when a problem or difficulty arises and there doesn't seem to be light or power to deal with it. Perhaps it's because the prayer meeting hasn't been availed and so. You know, I'm sad and sometimes defined as I visit from place to place that often, not always, but often the assembly prayer meeting is the most poorly attended. Why is that, brethren? Well, perhaps one reason is we don't realize the power there is in assembly prayer. And so they continued steadfastly. And I just want to say again, before we pass on, I know it takes energy of faith. I know that takes spiritual exercise when I was working and I worked long hours. When I went to the office and it was often easy just to say to my wife, well, you go tonight and I'll mind the baby or I'll go and you mind the baby. I'm thankful for a wife who said, no, we're going to go. We're going to take our children to the assembly prayer meeting and the assembly reading meeting. I'm thankful for the exercise of a godly wife like that. It was difficult sometimes. Sometimes we went and I was exhausted. But as I left back, there was a real blessing. I want to encourage you. To plan your life, life around the assembly. I fear that today. The problem is we plan our lives and then we try to work in the assembly rather than it doesn't work that way. If that isn't the pivotal point. Again, I had parents and as I look back, though I didn't always appreciate it, I have the vivid memory of parents who planned our lives around the assembly. You know, Tuesday night there was no question at the dinner table as to whether we were going to prayer meeting Thursday night. Never was a question of whether we were going to get ready and go to reading meeting. It was always just assumed by those at my father's table that this was meeting night and we would be there. I'm not saying there weren't times through extenuating circumstances that we were hindered, but as I look back, I realize what was important to my parents. I just want to make one more comment to parents, those of us who have children and young people. We cannot. Expect our children and young people. To value something any more than we do. If we don't place importance and value on the assembly meetings, we cannot expect our children to place value on them when they make decisions, get to the point where they make decisions for themselves. And I want to say this too. When I look back at my parents, I realized it wasn't something they did because they felt they had to, and it wasn't routine. There was a joy in anticipating being in the Lord's presence. Not just on Lord's Day morning, but every other opportunity that was avail shall be in the Lord's presence, whether it was assembly, prayer, or ministry of the Word, it would. I knew that it was their joy and desire genuinely to be there and to bring their families. Well, I read in the end of Acts then, because here we have this book, and in this book is a pattern of things which we're going to go back and see in a moment. But I've been struck by the way this book ends. This book ends really in a way that no other book in the Bible ends. It ends rather abruptly to me, if I can illustrate it this way, if just like somebody went to tape a meeting and after an hour the tape recorder ran out and the meeting went on. Because I believe what you have in the Acts, the pattern of things that is set down in the Acts, is still going on today. Calls doctrine is still being maybe not always valued, but still it's still being preached today. The gospel is still going out today. The Spirit of God is still here. The Spirit of God is still working, saving souls, adding to the church gathering to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. There's the encouragement of the the people of God and so on. And So what we have in the axe is still going on today.

Believe that's why this book ends in the way it does, and the work that was begun by the Spirit of God in the book of the Acts is going to go on until the Spirit of God and the church are gone. You know, I find that a great comfort. I know that these aren't days when 3000 or 5000 are saved. Know these are not days when the multitudes come together in the assembly and so on. But what encourages my heart is to realize that as long as we're here and the Spirit of God is here, because the Spirit of God doesn't leave till we leave, and as long as He's here, the work is going to go on. There's some work for the Spirit of God to do in saving souls and encouraging the Saints of God in gathering to the Lord's name, in preserving the feet of the Saints. Path of faith and service. And so the work goes on. And so with that confidence, I want to go back now. And I want to look particularly at a portion in the 20th chapter that gives us a pattern of things. Not only a pattern of things for the early Church, but a pattern of things for us today, even in 2006. Let's go back to the 20th chapter for a moment, few moments. We'll begin reading at verse 6. And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days, where we abode 7 days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the moral. And continued his speech until midnight and there were many lights in the upper chamber where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eudicus being fallen into a deep sleep, And as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed, and they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted. Well, before I bring out some practical things that are particularly on my heart in reading this portion. This little incident of the life of the Apostle Paul as he visited the Saints of Troas, I might just say, and it's been helpful for me in studying the Scriptures to realize that there is always a dispensational character to things. In fact, I would just pause for a moment to say to those who are younger. When you study the Scriptures, seek to discern the dispensational character of things, because dispensational teaching is very, very important. I don't believe you can draw straight lines when it comes to the truth or rightly divide the word of truth unless you hold to dispensational guidelines. I realize there's a great movement today to replace dispensational teaching with other things like covenant theology. But if you do that, what you're really saying is that all Scripture in its strict application applies to us. And that is not true. All Scripture is for us, but all Scripture is not about us. And you're not going to be able to see the true character of God's dealings at various times with various peoples if you don't, as I say, hold to dispensational

teaching. And I've enjoyed in this little incident of in the life of Paul visiting Troas. A dispensational character of things. I've sometimes summed up these verses that we've read as church history in a nutshell. I'll just give you a little idea of what I'm saying. It's not my thought to take up this line of things. But we find first of all, that the Saints had come together on the first day of the week to break bread. Again, that's what characterized the early believers. They continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread. Prayers they broke bread from house to house. We find too, that it's a third law. It would three speaks to us in Scripture often of death and resurrection. It speaks of separation and we see that with the early church there was a real degree of separation. We find 2 That they were sitting under and enjoying the ministry of the apostle Paul, who was really raised up at the beginning as a pattern St. to lay the found.

And to give the truth concerning the heavenly calling of the believer and the truth of being gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, you must go to Paul's ministry if you're really going to understand those lines of truth. And then we find that there are many lights in the upper chamber. That is, there was a real testimony. And then we find this man, Troas. He sits in a window. He desires to have part of the world and part of the assembly. He eventually falls down and appears to be dead. I believe it speaks to us of that period in history we sometimes refer to as the Dark Ages, when the truth of being gathered to the Lord's name and the collective side of things was really lost. Not that. Individuals going on in the enjoyment of things. Some of the hymns that we sing that bring before us truths were written by individuals at that period of time who were individually in the enjoyment of those things, but collectively it was lost. Then we find that Paul goes down and embraces him. We often speak about the revival of the truth and men like Mr. Darby and Mr. Cronin and Mr. Ballou and those men. Paul's ministry took a hold of them and they realized from reading their Bibles. Led by the Spirit of God, that there was the privilege of coming out and being gathered simply to the name of the Lord Jesus. Then we find that they come back up to the very ground that they had left. They come back up to the third law and they break bread till break of day. A picture to us of what took place when these men were exercised to begin to remember the Lord again at the Lord's table on the ground of the one body. And you can go through these verses and I think. Outline. You will see very clearly what I'm saying, but I want to bring out some very practical things for our souls this evening in connection with being gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus. We find, first of all, that they come to Troas. Now I don't pay particular attention to names and their meanings as they appear in the Word of God, but I have been struck to realize that Troas means penetrated or bored through. If you read about Troas in secular history, you will find that at this time they were a dark heathen city, worshippers of Jupiter. But the light of the glorious gospel had penetrated or bored through that dark heathen city, and they only had it penetrated that dark heathen city, but it had penetrated many hearts in that city. Brethren, aren't we thankful that we can look back to that time when the light of a glorious gospel shined into our hearts? And we came to realize that we were sinners, that we had a great need, but we also came to realize that there was a great Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so perhaps some of us here look back over many years. Some here perhaps look back over a few years, but to think of that time when we were brought into the light. And so there were those in this dark heathen city who were brought into the light and knowledge of salvation. And not only have they been brought to the knowledge of salvation, but they had been taught the truth of being gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now it's interesting if you notice Paul's timetable here, that they probably arrived on a Monday. I say that because I'm, I'm sorry, yes, on a Monday, they probably arrived on a Monday. I say that because if you notice when they left, they have both seven days and they left on a Monday. They left right after Lord's Day, the first day of the week, and they stayed seven days, the Scripture tells us. And I want to pass on just a simple thought as to why the apostle Paul and those who were traveling with him remained a whole week here in Troas. I would just suggest that they remained a week here so that they would have the privilege on the first day of the week of breaking bread with their brethren at the Lord's Table. Now brethren, does the the privilege of remembering the Lord Jesus mean that much to us so that we plan our lives so that on a Lord's day we can be with those of like precious faith where we can remember the Lord? You know, of all things that the Lord has asked us to do, it's to remember Him. I believe I know this is going to sound like very strong language, but I believe a Christian who does not remember the Lord is a disobedient Christian. I know that sounds like very strong language, but I believe that a Christian who does not remember the Lord or who willingly absents themselves from the Lord's table for one reason or another is a disobedient Christian. Again, I know sometimes circumstances come in and that's not what.

Talking about but Paul and his fellow laborers who were traveling from place to place, they valued so very much the privilege of remembering the Lord on the first day of the week. That they remained a whole week so that they could be with their brethren doesn't really mean that much to your heart and mind. We get up on Lord's day morning. Is it with the realization that we're going to have that privilege once again that we're going to be able to respond once again to the request of the Lord Jesus who said in the upper room to his disciples, this do in remembrance of me. That's what it meant to the apostle Paul. And so they remained here for a week. It's interesting that as you read through the book of the Acts you find. That very quickly in the history of the early brethren, it became their exercise and joy to meet on the first day of the week to break bread. And it's interesting if you notice carefully here in this portion, that that was their foremost reason for coming together on this particular Lord's day. Sometimes said in commenting on this portion that when they came together in Troas, they didn't come together just to enjoy happy fellowship one with another. It's true they did enjoy happy fellowship one with another. They didn't come together to simply listen to the ministry of the Apostle Paul who was visiting on this occasion. It's true they had that privilege as well. No scripture tells us they came together to break bread. Now they probably met. In the evening, you know, you have to realize that a city like Troas as in those days, was not in what we would consider a Christian land. And most of these brethren were probably servants or perhaps even slaves to ungodly masters in a situation where the Lord's Day or Sunday wouldn't be observed in the way that, at least in some measure, it still is here in North America. And they probably had to wait till evening to come together. Can't you just picture these brethren as night falls and their duties, their secular duties, are relinquished and they begin to wind their way through the dark streets of Troas? They had one thing before their souls. They were going to meet the Lord. They were going to sit down at His table and they were going to remember Him in the breaking of bread. I say it took energy, it took perseverance like we spoke of earlier. They were tired. I have no doubt some of them had worked very hard. Maybe for forward masters who didn't care what they felt or how they how they were, but this was their joy. This was their exercise. I say it speaks to my own soul. And so they came together on the first day of the week. I just say in passing that we find in the New Testament that it is the first day of the week that is unique to Christianity, not the Sabbath. You know, it's interesting when you go back and read of the. Direction in the four Gospels In connection with each of the four gospels, the resurrection is introduced by making it very clear that it was the end of the Sabbath or the Sabbath being passed. Why does the Spirit of God record that in those Gospels? Because I believe there was is the thought that the Sabbath now, which was connected with Judaism was no longer to be that day for Christianity. The Lord Jesus rose on the first day of the week. You know, when we go back to the Old Testament, we find under the Levitical order of things that there were many things that had to be held over till the 8th day or the moral after the Sabbath, and the priests and the Levites must. Why are there certain things that we can't do on the Sabbath that we have to wait till tomorrow when we go back and we read it in the light of Christianity, and we see that those things spoke of resurrection and, and so on spoke of that, or look forward to that. They were foreshadows

of that which would be established. In Christianity. And so the apostle John refers to it as the Lord's day in the Book of Revelation, and we often refer to it, and rightly so in that way. And so they came together to break bread. But then there was the enjoyment of Paul's ministry. Paul preached. Now I don't think Paul preached as long as we sometimes have wondered if it's true he preached till midnight. But I would suggest again that these brethren had met in the evening.

After their duties, their secular duties to their masters had been relinquished. And so they probably didn't preach quite as long as we think. But nevertheless, here were these Saints ready to avail themselves of this wonderful opportunity to listen to the ministry of the Apostle Paul. You know, I've often thought it must have been tremendous to be there. I would have liked to have been there, sitting there in that third loft, that upper room, and listening to the Apostle Paul. Expound the truth. But you know, brethren, we still have that privilege today. Paul's ministry by the grace of God has been preserved to us in his epistles. Do we really value it? It's true. We need the whole word of God, we need the Old Testament, we need the gospels, we need the ministry of John and James and Peter and Jude and so on. But I believe that really the a lot of the difficulty today in connection with the testimony being so small and weak and so on is because. Perhaps we have neglected and I can only point my finger at my own heart, but perhaps I have neglected Paul's ministry. I've not taken it in and appreciated it and walked in the good of it the way I ought to. You know, you often talk to Christians and they'll tell you that certain parts of the Bible are important. And I had a brother, sincere brother. He told me I only read the Gospels because I think those are the most important. All the gospels are the most are important. Because He's left us an example that we follow in his foot, should follow in His footsteps. But if we only read the Gospels, we're never going to grow in the truth. We're never going to know what it is to have the privileges that He intends for us as being gathered to the Lord's name. And maybe I'll just say make this comment in passing too. I believe, brethren, it is normal Christianity for a Christian to be at the Lord's table. That is, as you go through the Acts and the Epistles, that is normal Christianity. Why are there so few at the Lord's table? Why is the testimony so small? Well, I can only leave that for your consideration and exercise as I leave it for mine as well. And so they enjoyed the ministry of the apostle Paul. And notice he continued his speech until midnight, and he was ready to depart or ready to depart on the Morrow and continue his speech till midnight. I, I just want to make a little application here, and I don't want to go too far with. Applications and illustrations but. Why did he preach ready to depart on the moral? I know he was considering going on and on his journey the next day, but I think there's something else the Spirit of God has for us too. You know, Paul's ministry always has the character of ready to depart and I don't believe we really understand the truth of the Lord's coming for His Saints unless we go to Paul's ministry. It's true the other New Testament writers bring in the Lord's coming in certain aspects. But to really understand the truth of the Lord's coming at any moment you must go to Paul's ministry. And you talk to Christians. And I'm not being critical, I'm only pointing the finger at my own heart. But you talk to Christians who do not avail themselves of Paul's ministry. Are they really looking for the Lord to come tonight? Not, I would say more often not. And if they do have some understanding of the Lord's coming, they don't really understand it in the light of Scripture. Confused with the Lord's coming with His Saints and for His Saints and all kinds of things come in when you don't go to Paul's teaching. Paul's teaching gives us the character of those who are just passing through as heavenly citizens waiting for the Lord Jesus to come. At any moment, well, then we find this young man here named Euticus and Euticus sat in a window. Now, I don't want to be too hard on Euticus, but I think there are some lessons to learn from Euticus. You say what was wrong with Euticus sitting in the window? Well, if I can put it this way. He wanted to keep one eye on what was going on in the street below and one eye on what was going on in the assembly. One year tuned to the ministry of the Apostle Paul and one year tuned to the world outside. And you say, wasn't there a 5050 chance he'd either fall in or out of the window? Rather than I'm afraid it doesn't work that way. If we leave our heart open for the world, it's going to eventually drag us down to its level. Now it's interesting again that the name Euticus means well off and Euticus was well off. Euticus was no doubt a child of God. The light of the gospel had penetrated his dark heart. He was identified with those gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in Troas, no doubt.

Just had the privilege of breaking bread. He was listening to the ministry of the Apostle Paul. But you know, he wearied of all that. But you know, I want to say something for each of our hearts in connection with Euticus. Because you know yourself, if you fall asleep in meeting, you're never sound asleep one minute, wide awake one minute and sound asleep the next. It's a process of things, isn't it? Your eyes get heavy, your head nods, then it comes back up. Then it happens again. And if that process of things is allowed to continue long enough, you may ultimately find yourself sound asleep in meeting. And I have wondered as Euticus sat down in this window and as he began to nod off to sleep, I have wondered, wasn't there somebody that saw the plight of Euticus? Wasn't there somebody in the third law who could have gone over and put their arm around Euticus and said. You know, this is not really a good place to be sitting. And not only is it not a good place to be sitting, but you're starting to nod off to sleep. You know, there's a chair over by me. Why don't you come over and sit there, brother? And I can only speak to my own soul, but why is it sometimes I wait until somebody leaves the Lord's table or someone has to be disciplined because of sin? Or someone quits coming to meeting before I try to encourage them or be a help to them. I'm not excusing Euticus. Euticus ought not to have sat down in the window. Euticus ought not to have wearied of the ministry of the Apostle Paul. But I'm just saying, why is it that so often we wait till something like this happens before we try to rectify a problem? If somebody had been able to go over and lovingly encourage you to cuss out of the window? It might have spared him this sad experience and maybe I could have saved a young person. Drifting off from the Lord's table or getting into sin? If I had sought to be a shepherd, I'll be the first to confess that I failed, and failed grievously in this regard. But brethren, if what exercises my own heart to night exercises yours, then so be it. And I'm not talking just to a select few here. I know that there are the responsibility of the elders or shepherd bishops in the assembly, and that's taken up in First Peter and other places. But I believe we can all seek to be a help. You know, I am so thankful as I look back on my life for sisters who have woken me up, sisters who have very faithfully said to me, Jim, do you really think you should be doing that? Do you really think you should be going here or you should be going there? I'm thankful for that. Maybe there would have been a sister in Troas that could have gone over. He was a young man, could have gone over in her proper place. And encouraged you to cuss out of the window. Oh, brother, let's seek to be discerning and watchful. I know it's not easy. Maybe if someone had gone over, they wouldn't have been appreciated. Maybe Euticus would have brushed them off. But at least they would have tried. At least they would have delivered their soul. And maybe you try to help. You said I try to help somebody and they don't appreciate it. So I've tried to help a young person. They didn't appreciate it, but that's not the point. You know, it's interesting and again, I know in first Peter five, it's the the elders there, but. They're promised a crown of glory for shepherding the sheep. Why would they have promised a crown of glory? Because the crowns in Scripture are taken up. In contrast, I've just thought of it this way. You seek to shepherd the people of God. There may be no glory in that recess. Never mind. Don't look for any glory. Don't look for any reward. Here, I'll give you a crown of glory for seeking to shepherd the people of God. Here in this world, oh brethren, I say this to every one of our hearts, we can all shepherd the people of God. We can all seek to be a help young person. You can be a help to your fellow young person. Seek to be an encouragement and seek to be watching and discerning. And as I say, if we would do this in a practical way, it might

spare us from many things what we find. He falls down to the level of the street. They go down and he looks dead. Paul comes down and he embraces him. And again I realize there's a dispensational character to what we have here, but I just again want to make a practical comment because I believe the story ends very happily. You know, the story doesn't always end so happily in the assembly, does it? You know, there are those who go off and they never come back. But you know, that's not what God wants. That's not what the Great Shepherd wants. He wants restoration. And we find here that Paul goes down and embraces him. And I want to say that with an individual, with a soul.

Restoration must initially be a work of God. And I realized, brethren, that sometimes in our zeal to see someone restored to the Lord, to their brethren and to the Lords Table, we can sometimes add to the problem, not help it. We can even drag somebody back before there is a true work of God in the soul. And we only do damage to the individual and to the assembly if we do that. But I do believe this too, brethren, that there needs again to be that watchfulness. And that discernment so that when there is a work of God in a soul, we recognize it as such and we are there to be used in the restoration of that soul. Yes, again, restoration is between God and the soul. But I believe there is a responsibility and I believe that you get it in First and 2nd Corinthians. In First Corinthians, they were as slow to discipline the person. As they were to restore him in the second epistle, in the first epistle they failed in holiness, but in the second epistle they failed in grace. And both were wrong. Both were wrong. And Paul said there has been a work in this man's soul. There's godly repentance. Haven't you seen? There's been godly repentance. Now he says, confirm your love to him. Restore him. He's been restored to the Lord. Now restore him to his brethren and. Interesting that Paul goes down here and he embraces him. And again, I realize there's a there's there's more to it than we're speaking of. But if I could just put it this way, Paul on this occasion was a visiting brother. He was not part of the assembly at he was visiting. But it's interesting what it says here. Paul didn't restore him. I'm speaking in a practical way now, not as to the character of Paul and his ministry, but it's not Paul that restored him to the third law and. That was the local Brennan Pro as they brought the young man alive and were not a little comforted. When Paul confirmed that his life was in him. Then the local brethren were those that brought him back up. Yes, the work was gods, but there was a responsibility on the part of the local assembly. And so they brought the young man alive and were not a little comforted. But I want to notice the 11th verse now. When he therefore was come up again in a broken bread and eaten and talked a long while, even till break of day. So he departed Now just for a few moments, I want to go back. To the dispensational character of things that we pointed out earlier, and I want to do it to encourage our hearts, brethren, as to the day we find ourselves in now we are right at the end. The Lord Jesus is about to come, the dispensation of the grace of God. The era of Christianity is just about to close. But it's what we find here that they come back up now, they come back up to the very place where they were earlier wasn't new ground. The Apostle Paul is there. It's not in other words, it's not new teaching, it's not new ministry. It's going back to what was established at the beginning and it says when they had broken bread and eaten. Now I realized that they did not repeat the Lord's Supper here. They probably for took of a meal. But I believe in the dispensation. Scheme of things. The Spirit of God has been pleased to use this expression to encourage our hearts tonight, brethren, that will be just at the end, at the break of day, just before we depart, there is the privilege of remembering the Lord Jesus. And not just remembering the Lord Jesus, not just breaking bread, but breaking bread as gathered to His name. I'm going to quote you a well known verse and then make a comment. As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Now I love when it says as often because again it became the knew what my heart would be like and he knew that I would need a reminder and that I would need it often. You know, I believe this is one of the most precious things about being gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is that we have the privilege. Of remembering the Lord not just once a month, or twice a year, or on a special occasion. But the privilege of remembering the Lord every first day of the week? Often. But what I want to point out is that little expression ye do show the Lords death till he come. Now, brethren, he wouldn't say till he come if he wasn't going to provide a scriptural ground on which to do it.

The Lord never asked us to do anything that He himself isn't going to maintain a scriptural basis on which to act. I say that because there are those who will say, well, it doesn't matter anymore. Everything is in ruin and everything broken up and it doesn't matter where we break bread anymore. Yeah. I say again, he wouldn't say till he come if he wasn't going to provide a scriptural basis on which to do it. And the pattern of things laid out in the apps that we have spoken at, spoken of at some length that hasn't changed. And I want to in closing go to one more portion in this book. To illustrate what I have just said, turn over to the 27th chapter, chapter 27 and verse 41. Well, let me go back here just to read verse 33. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, this day is the 14th day that you have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. Therefore I pray you to take some meat, for this is for your health. For there shall not inhere fall from the head of any of you. And when he had. Spoken, He took bread, and gave thanks in the present to God in the presence of them all. And when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat. Now notice verse 41. And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground. The four parts stuck fast and remained unmovable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. Well, again, if you were to read this chapter, you would find that there is a dispensational. Character to what is brought out here with Paul's journey from the Fair Havens to Melita. It's a little picture again of church history and I think if you trace it out, you'll find it's very apartment. And so we find here that it comes right down to the end. It's right where we are now. We find here Paul was in the ship and part the ship would speak of testimony and the ship was about to be broken up and as the day began to dawn, what did Paul do? Two things. He encouraged his brethren and he broke bread. Now again I realized they partook of a meal here rather than celebrate the Lords Supper. But again the Spirit of God has used this expression. I believe brethren, to encourage us that right before the break of day, right at the end of our history here. Before the Lord comes, there is the privilege of breaking bread. But what I want to notice particularly is in verse 41, because I'm afraid that this chapter has been taken by some and used to justify the thought that while the ship is in ruin now, it's all individual pieces of the boards and it doesn't matter anymore. There's no corporate testimony or it's everywhere. It's nowhere. You've heard this kind of reasoning. Or I'm not trying to be critical, I'm just trying to be frank about it, but I want to, I believe in this verse that the Spirit of God has inserted something to guard against that line of reasoning in taking up this portion. I would just say this too. It is true that the last days in Scripture are characterized by individual faithfulness, but I believe that there's always the collective side of things right to the end of a dispensation. You know, it's. In front in second Timothy, where you have the last days, days parallel to the days in which we find ourselves that he says continue thou that's individual, but it's interesting that in the chapter before that he says go on with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. In other words, before he encourages him to go on in the room amidst the ruin individually. He says there is a collective side of things and you be exercised about that and so I just want to notice. They run the ship aground, and it's true, as it says here, that the hinder part of the ship was broken with the violence of the waves. Now, brethren, that's where we are Now outwardly, and I stress this, outwardly, the testimony is fragmented and in ruin. And because of man's failure, because of our failure, we find Christians in various pockets and fellowships of Christendom. We have to hang our heads. And all that were right there where the hinder part has been broken with the violence of the waves. But I believe the Spirit of God has inserted something else. It says the four part of the ship stuck fast and remained unmovable. To me this is one of the most precious statements in the book of the Acts. That the four part of the ship, and I

would suggest that if the hinder part of the ship broken with the violence of the waves is typically typifies where we are now, then the four part sticking fast and remains on remaining unmovable would bring before us that which was given at the beginning.

The foundation truth and the pattern of things established for us in the book of the Acts, he says that doesn't change. The four part of the ship sticks fast and remains unmovable. And brethren, if that is true and believe it is true, but if that is true, then can we not, even though we find ourselves in our history at the hinder part of the ship, can we not go back? And act on that which was established at the beginning. Which has not changed with all the storms and the work of Satan. It hasn't. It sticks fast, it remains unmovable. And I believe that you and I, by the grace of God and brethren, it is only by the grace of God, but I believe by the grace of God. You and I can go back and act on those principles and this pattern of things that is given to us in this very book that we have spoken from tonight. And I believe there is a blessing and that the resources are there to go on, not just individually and as families in these last moments of the day of grace, but I believe there is the privilege of going on collectively as gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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