

Four Rescues and three Lessons

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] well good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning and a special welcome to those who are visiting with us who are here for the first time it's good to see everybody and we pray that god will bless us in this time together there will be a cup of tea and coffee at the end of the service if you're able to stay you're the most welcome to see as many as possible there galaxy services at six this evening and that will be conducted by john mcsween these fellowship meets immediately after that at half past seven and there'll be an english fellowship at eight this evening the monthly fellowship and there'll be a particular focus on the persecuted church this evening ladies bible study meets at 8 pm on monday in jiriquot i think and there will be a prayer meeting for the road to recovery group on tuesday at eight in the community center i think this is the third one we've had if i could just say a word about that as well uh there is a wee group meeting in advance of our road to recovery meeting which we hope will start in the new year and we're just praying for that work and praying for those who are struggling with addictions in the community community here uh if you are able to come along to that and feel like you would want to be involved and support in that kind of work then the door is open you'd be very welcome at eight on tuesdays uh if you don't feel that's something that you would want to to come along to and be a part of in that kind of way um please just remember it and at eight on tuesday uh if you could pray along with us in the privacy of your own home that would be great uh there's a men's bible study just immediately before that on tuesday and that is at half past six in the surgery uh this coming wednesday uh there will be a not so much a prayer meeting but a thanksgiving service at half past seven and uh that will be until the cruises so thanksgiving service simple thanksgiving service half past seven on wednesday in killed and cruises this week the first group of childship meets church of scotland hall as usual on tuesday at half past seven christianity's word continues thursday to tell heaven these at half past seven and uh the conference that i've been intimating for some time now happens on friday and saturday of this coming week it will be in star the week commencing at half past seven in the cabal faith and tell and uh it runs on and saturday as well the main speaker will be the reverend david robertson who's the moderator of the free church and there will be these other workshops as well the topic being um local evangelism so it uh should be a very interesting couple of days and if you haven't picked up already i think there's still a few places left so you can book up for that if you're able to attend that coffee afternoon in aid of the looming permission project spread the word and leave a bit of free church saturday 5th november 2 30 to 4 30. there'll be a fundraiser for nepal at the shopping fair and the community center here this coming friday and if you're able to come along and support that by eating a cake or two then that would be very much welcomed and the services next lord's day will be taken at 11 by the reverend david robertson the moderator and 6 pm you will be stuck with me for the evening service last thing is uh can we're in in relation to the christmas outreach thing on the 12th of december that those who organize it are looking for old sheets and newbie covers to turn into some biblical costumes for the children's funding if you have any old ones please speak to marion or joanna

we worship god we sing to his praise we sing from the sam sammy how excellent in all the earth
lord our water is The study brain From men's And from Suckling's mouth Thou didest Strength
ordain For thy Post-post And so The might The avenging
For restraint When I Look up Unto the Thames which Thine old fingers Fade Unto the Moon Unto
the Stars which Were by thee Ordained Then Say I What is Man That he Remembered Is by thee
Or What the Son of Man That thou So kind To him Should Sleep For Thou A little Lord Has
Him Than the Angels Made With Glory And With Dignity Thou Grounded Hast His Head Of Thy
Hands Worth Thou Gave Him Lord On And Earth Feet Is They All Sheep And Oxen Yea And Bits
That In The Field Do Stay Bound Of The Air Fish Of The Sea All That Was Through The Sea How

Excellent In All

The Earth Lord Our Lord Is Thy Name Let's Unite Our Hearts In Prayer Let's pray Our Heavenly Father We Thank You That As We Sing These Psalms Which Your Spirit Has Inspired We Are Caused To Lift Our Eyes From Our Selves We Are Caused To Lift Our Eyes From Each Other We Are Caused To Clear Our Minds Of All That Preoccupies Us In The Majority Of The Week In Our Time And Lord We Are Encourished Through The Psalms To Focus Our Minds And Our Hearts Upon The God Who Is All Glorious How Excellent In All We Are Lord Our Lord Is Thy Name Who Ask Thy Glory Far Advanced Above The Starry Frame Lord We Are So

[8 : 04] Conscious Of That As We Lift Our Gaze On These Clear Nights And We See The The Vastness Of The Universe The Splendor Of The Galaxy And It Is But Just A Reflection Of Your Glory Your Splendor This Is Your Handiwork When I Look up Unto The Heavens Which Thine Own Fingers Spramed Unto The Moon And To The Stars Which Were By The Ordained Then Say What Is Man That He Remembered As By The Or What The Son Of Man That Thou So Kind To Him Should Spirit We Thank You Lord God In Your Glory And Your Majesty And Your Power You Have Been Mindful Of Man You Have Been Mindful Of Us As A Race And Lord We Thank You That This Morning Your Word Teaches Us

That You Are Mindful Of Us As Individuals You Remember Us You Love Us You Show Such Kindness To Us And All That We Eat And All That We Drink In The Measure Of Health And Strength That We Have And Friendships That We Cherish The Families That We Are Part Of The Clothes That We Wear The Things That We Take So Much For Granted Lord As We Pause For A Moment To Remember Your Goodness To Us We We Thank You Lord That You Are Gracious That You Are Loving That You Are The God Who Provides For Us You Provide For Every Need And Time You Provide For Us Lord And The Basics Of Life That Enable Us To Continue Living And You Provided Not Only For Our Bodies But You Provided For Our Souls Your Word Which Feeds Us And

The Word May Flesh Your Son Who Has Saved Us We Thank You For Jesus We Thank You For The Fact That He Is That Perfect Sacrifice He Is The One Who Made It Possible This Morning For Us To Come Into Your Presence We Thank You For The Blood That Was Shed For The Life That Was Given So That We May Live We Thank You For The Resurrection That Gives Us Hope For For Eternity We Thank You That We Worship The Risen Saviour And We Thank You That He Has Promised That He Will Never Leave Us He Will Never Forsake Us And He Will Be Especially Particularly With Us When We Come Together As A Group Of Your People In His Name And Lord That's How We Come Not In Our Name Not Pleading Our Own Good Works But We Come In The Name Of Jesus

Thankful For His Righteousness And His Blood So Cleanse Us We Pray For Mercy Empty And Empty To Empty To Empty To Empty To Empty To To To The Holy Spirit So That Christ May Increase In Us As Individuals And In The Fellowship This Small Part Of The Church Of Jesus Christ We Thank You That Church Is A Church That Is Throughout The World And We Pray For Brothers And Sisters Who Meet In Every Part Of This World This Morning We Ask Lord That Whatever The Gospel Of Jesus Is Preached That You Would Bless And That You Would Save That You Would Glorify Your Name We Pray For Places In The World Where The Gospel Of Jesus Is Not Yet Preached And We Ask Lord That You Would Send Workers Into The Harvest That You Would Give Stamina And

Skills To Those Who Are Translating The Bible Even Now To Make It Heard In These Nations Where The Light Of Christ Has Not Yet Been Seen So We Pray For The Church Across The World We And As We Are Aware We Cannot But Be Aware Of The Fragile Nature Of The World That We Live In At This Time As We Are Aware Of Tensions As We See Conflicts That Are Rising Up And Are Progressing We Pray Lord For Your Touch We Pray For Wisdom For Those You Have Allowed To Be In Authority We Pray Lord For Places Where There Is Such Suffering And We Ask Lord For Your Relief And For Your People To Reach Out In Compassion We Pray Lord For Places Where There

[13 : 07] Is Real Tension And We See It Closer And Closer To Ourselves And We Ask Father For Your Steading Hand And We Pray That In These Dark Times That The Light Of Christ Would Shine And Be Seen All The More Clearly Pray For This Community We Thank You Lord For It Pray For Those In Particular Who Are Struggling With It Those Who Are Battling With Addictions Those Who Are Depressed And Feel Alone Those Who Are Grieving Those Who Are Recovering From Illness

Those Who Are In Miss We Ask Lord That At The Point Of Their Need And At The Point Of Our Need As We Buy Before You Lord That You Would Meet With Us And That You Would Bless Us And You Would Strengthen Us And That You Would Enable Us In All That We

Do To Glorify Your Name Hear Our Prayers Cleanse Us From Sin Lead Us By Your Spirit Boys And Girls Would You Like To Come Forward Please How Are You All Today How Are You All Today How Are You All Today That Is A Little Better Thought You Would Be A Bit More Energetic Seeing As You On Your Holidays What Have I Got To Show You Today I Is Going To Do This But I Not Going To Do This I Do This Our What

Do We Do We Do We Do You Know What You Do With Dominance Alistair Did You All Get That You Put Them Standing Up And When You Push Them They All Fall Down I Tell You Tell You What I'll Try And Do This And You Can Help Me

When They're Push Down Bit See If We Can Get Ten Where's The Jenga We Try it With This Probably Going To Work A Bit Easier Can We Try And Set Them Up Quickly On There Right Okay Stand Back What Will We Do Next Do You Think What Do We Need To Do If We Want Them All To Fall Down What Are We Going To Do Push It Right Then Right Here Right Here Thank You So For The Dominoes Or The Jenga There That's The Way They Work Isn't It You Set Them All Up And Then If You Want Them All To Fall Down We Just Need One Little Push And They All Fall Down You Know Boys And Girls That's Often The Way That God Works

He Asks Us All Just To Do One We Push In The Story That We're Going To Read With The Big People In A We Wild There Is A Little Boy In That Story And This Little Boy He's Out One Day And He's Standing Around He's Standing Around And He Heard People Speaking Very Quietly About His Uncle Paul And His Uncle Paul Was God's Man He Was Doing Work For God And Paul Had Been Arrested Because He'd Been Preaching And They Didn't Want Him To Be Preaching About Jesus And So They Really Didn't Like Paul These Men And So They Were Whispering About His Uncle And Do Know What They Said They Said We're Going To Get Paul And We're Going To Kill Him

[18:20] And This We Boy Heard That Story And You Know What He Did Paul Was In Prison He Went From The Place That He Was At Very Brave He Went To Visit His Uncle Paul And He Said I Heard A Story There's Bad Men They Want To Hurt Really Bad I Want You To Be Safe And So Paul Said Hang Hang Hang on Till I Go Get The Boss In This Prison So He Got The Boss The Commander And The Commander Said Little Boy Come Here Till I Speak To You And The Wee Boy Went To The Commander He Says Tell Me Everything You Heard So He Told Them The One Thing That He Heard Just A Wee Thing The Commander Said Well Done Lad Don't Tell Anybody Else You Told Me This And You Know What The Commander Did He Got All The Army Together And They Got Paul This Wee Boy Uncle

And They Protected Him And They Put Him In A Big Procession And They Took Him Out Of The Dangerous Place Into The Safe Place And Paul Was Able To Carry On Speaking About Jesus And Paul From The Next Place That He Went To Was Able To Write About Half Of The Bible That We Still Read Every Sunday Morning All Because Of What Because One Boy Like A Domino He Went And He Did What Really God Wanted Him To Do And So What I Want To Say To You Boys And Girls Is Don't Ever Think That You Are Too Young To Do Things For Jesus And Don't Ever Think That The Thing That You Are Going To Do Or The Thing That You Are To Say Is Too Small Because It Can Be Like A We Domino And God Sets Up Lots Of Other

We Domino Just A We Bit Further On And You Can Be Like The First Push You Know That Some Years Ago There Was A Man And He Was Having A Really Hard Time He Was So Sad His Life Was Such A Big Mess And A Man Came Along Beside Him And He Said To Him Stan Stan Said What Stan Jesus Loves You That's All He Said And That Man Thought Jesus Loves Me And It Changed His Whole Life He Became A Christian And He Helped Hundreds If Not Thousands Of Other People Who Were Struggling In The Same Way That He Struggled And It All Started With One Domino One Man Who Put His Hand On His Shoulder And Said Stan Jesus Loves You Maybe God's Asking You To Do That In The Playground In Your Family Just A We Remind Every Now And Again Jesus Loves Us Let's Pray Our Heavenly Father We Thank you That You Are The Huge The Almighty The God Who Is Working Everywhere At All Times We Thank you That You Can Work In The Oldest Person Through The Oldest Person In The Room Here And You Can Work In The Life Of The Young Person Thank You That Just As You Work Through That Young Boy Young Story You Can Work Through The Young Boys And Girls Here We Thank You That The Message That

Paul Preached Is The Same Message That We Remember And We Thank You For Today We Thank You That Jesus Loves Us We Thank You That Jesus Died For Us We Thank You That Jesus Rose Again And

He Calls Every One Of Us To Trust Him And When We Trust Him He Comes To Live With Us Forever So Help Us We Pray To Trust You And Help Us We Pray To Do The We Things That You Call Us To Do For You And We Pray That Like Dominos You Will Make These We Things Into Great Things That Will Show People How Amazing You Are And We Pray All These Things In Jesus Name Amen We're Going To Sing Now We're Going To Sing About Jesus Being Our Saviour Mission Phase 1003 And The Words Are On The Screen My Jesus My Saviour Okay Boys And Girls Remember As we Do The Little Voices We Pray For Them If You Could Turn In Your Bibles Please To Acts And Chapter 22 We're

[23 : 26] Looking At A Fair Chunk Of The Portion Of Acts Truly From 21 Through To The End Of 23 Today But We Read Up To The End Of Chapter 22 Almost Last Lord's Day And So I'm Just Going To Pick Up From Where We Left Off Although We'll Jump Around A We'll In The Plot Line Of These Three Chapters We Seen Paul Who Was At The Two Riots He's Given The Opportunity To Share His Testimony Which We Looked At Last Sunday And When He's Rescued A Second Time From The Rioting Jews He He's He's Taken In By The Romans They Are About To Flog Him And Paul Asks The Question In Verse 27 Of Chapter 22 Tell Me It's Not Verse 27 Sorry Paul As He Is Just About To Be Flogged In Verse 25 He Says Is

It Legal For You To Flog A Roman Citizen Who Hasn't Even Been Guilty And So From There There Is Alarm In The Barracks As The Romans Realized That Paul Is A Roman Citizen They Cannot Detain Him They Cannot Flog Him Without Some Charges In The Press And They Can't Figure Out What He's Actually Guilty Of And So A Meeting Of The Can Hedron Is Called And We Pick Up Verse 30 The Next Day Since The Commander Wanted To Find Out Wall

You Sit There To Judge Me According To The Law Yet You Yourself Violate The Law By Commanding That I Be Struck Those Who Were Standing Here Paul Said You Dare To Insult God's High Priest Paul Reckled Brothers I Did Not Realize That He Was The High Priest But It Was Written Do Not Speak Evil About The Ruler Of Your People Then Paul Knowing That Some Of Them Were Sadducees And Others Pharisees Called Out In Sanhedrin My Brothers I Am A Pharisee The Son Of A Pharisee I Stand On Trial Because Of My Hope In The Resurrection Of The Dead When He Said The Soup Broke Out Between The Pharisees And The Sadducees And The Assembly Was Divided The Sadducees Say There Is No Resurrection And There Are Neither Angels Nor Spirits But The Pharisees Acknowledged Them All There Was A Great Uproar And Some Of The Teachers Of The Law Who Were Pharisees Stood Up And Argued Vigorously We Find Nothing Wrong With This Man They Said What If

A Spirit Or An Angel Is Spoken To The Dispute Became So Violent That The Commander Was Afraid Paul Would Be Turned To Pieces By He Ordered The Troops To Go Down And Take him Away From Them Into The Ballacks The Following Night The Lord Stood Near Paul And You Must Also Testify In Rome The Next Morning The Jews Formed A Conspiracy And Bound Themselves With An Oath Not To Eat Or Drink Until They Had Killed Paul More Than Forty Men Were In This Plot They Went To The Chief Feast And Elders And Said We Have Taken A Solemn Oath Not To Eat Anything Until We Have Killed Paul Now Then You And The Sanhedrin Petition The Commanded To Bring Him Out Before You On The Pretext Of Wanting More Accurate Information About This Case We Are Ready To Kill Him Before He Gets Here But When The Son Of Paul's Sister He He Of This Plot He Went Into The Young Man To The Commander He Has Something To Tell Him So He Took Him To The Commander The Centurion Said Paul The Prisoner Sent For Me And Asked To Bring This Young Man To You Because He Has Something To Tell You The Commander Took The Young Man By The Hand Drew Him Aside And Asked What Is It You Want To Tell Me He Said The Jews Have Agree To Give In To Them Because More Than Forty Of Them Are Waiting In Ambush For Him They Have Taken An Oath Not To Eat Or Drink Until They Have Killed Him They Are Ready Now Waiting For Your Consent To The Request The Commander Dismissed The Young Man And Cautioned Him Don't Tell Anyone You Have Reported This To Me Then He Called Two Of The Centurions

[28 : 30] And Ordered Them Get Ready A Detachment Of Two Hundred Soldiers Seventy Horsemen And Two Hundred Spearmen To Go To Caesarea Nine Tonight Provide Mounds For Paul So That He May Be Taken Safely To Governor Felix He Wrote The Letter As Follows Claudius

just the chapter we read or the chapters preceding but all the way through the book of acts we see much in the way of the current rescue and the apostle paul in particular is one who is so often rescued from trouble and probably even more so rescued in the middle of trouble and so looking back from chapter 21 through to 23 what we see in these verses is four notable rescues and that's what i want to do is just step through the plot line of uh these chapters so we get the big picture and then at the end we'll take three simple lessons from uh these four rescues that we observe so if you have your bibles open you'll find that much more helpful than looking at my face it's never pleasant to look at anyway but uh the rescue that we come to first rescue number one we find in acts chapter 21 and we see uh this in verses 27 through to verse 40 and uh what we discovered in this section is paul is at the epicenter the violent epicenter of an angry mob the city in jerusalem is in riot and the rioting in response to a rumor that had done the riots and paul after journeying against the advice of the whole church essentially all those who loved him were saying don't go to jerusalem but paul was convinced that the spirit of god was saying go and so he went and he arrived in jerusalem and we see in verse 17 and following that he receives a warm welcome from the brothers when he arrives

they heard that paul had been much used by god and paul gets the chance to to speak with him and say all that god had been doing through the ministry of paul and others and when they heard that they praised god important little point when they heard all that had been happening through paul's ministry they didn't praise paul they praised god that's the that's the sign of good ministry not focused on an individual or a partnership they praise god and so there's a time of blessing there's a time of praise but you can be sure that after praise there will be problems after a blessing there's going to be a backlash and that's what we see paul is told in a quiet word that the jews were not happy about him they had heard that paul was against them as a people that he was against them and their religious traditions they thought that paul was disrespecting their culture it was all nonsense it's all just rumor but to cut a long story short the rumors through arms and legs in the form of trophimus who is alleged to have been brought into the temple by paul paul again a rumor not substantiated and before we know it this rumor has been believed by the masses there's huge unrest the city's in uproar paul is at the center of a violent mob he's been beaten to death and he needs to be rescued first 31 that's 21 while they were trying to kill him the news reached the commander of the roman troops that the whole city was in an uproar he at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd when the rioters saw the commander and the soldiers they stopped beeping paul the commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains then he asked him who he was and what he'd done some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar he ordered that paul be taken into the barracks so that's rescue number one big mob furious scene in swoop the roman soldiers and they rescue paul from death we don't have to wait long for the second rescue we see the second rescue in chapter 22 uh from verses 22 down to verse 29 and again if you just scan the verses with me we're moving at high speed here just to set it in context paul has been rescued by the romans he's taken into the barracks but paul is not content to hide away in the barracks and just be at ease paul wants to speak to his people why does he want to speak to his people well we thought about that last lord's day because he loved his people and so paul is given an opportunity to address the people that he so much loved and paul in his defense doesn't really speak about himself and why he should be let free paul speaks about jesus paul gives his testimony and we considered that one last week paul respectfully lovingly gently points the jews to jesus and they listen amazingly they listen this riotous crowd uncontrollable they go silent they listen as paul points them to jesus and they listen all the way up until the point where he mentions the word gentile that's you and i non-jew when paul says that he was commissioned to go and share this gospel message with the gentiles it all picks off again acts 22 and verse 22 we see the fracas again they raised their voices and shouted rid the earth of them he's not fit to live as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air the commander ordered paul to be taken into the barracks rescue number two back to the barracks Romans swoop in and yet again save paul from certain death although this is a rescue of sorts because paul had now twice annoyed the romans paul was causing unrest paul was causing the the management of these people that the romans were governing to be a difficult onerous job and so paul was going to have to pay for that you annoy a roman centurion or a commander a few times it's going to hurt it's going to sink and so paul is lined up for a flogging and the flogging that the romans gave was just brutal

and bloody verse 25 of acts 22 we have this scene painted for us as they stretched paul like the flog paul said to the centurion standing there is it legal for you to flog a roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty and we can just imagine the gasp in that place did he save roman citizen i think he did he definitely did the commander is called again having a bad day this commander two riots in one day is not acceptable and now he hears that paul who's stretched out there backbeard the flogging instruments ready he's claiming to be a roman citizen commander's skeptical understandably so so he says in verse 28 i had to pay a lot of money to be a citizen of rome bribery bribery bribery was the medium of citizenship for rome what do you have to say paul paul says i didn't pay any money i was born a roman citizen and that was the answer nobody in that place expected and that was enough just to cause panic stations among the romans put down your whips says the commander no flogging of this man not yet anyway there's going to have to be a trial before a finger can be laid on this man and that takes us to the third rescue and we see this from uh 22 30 uh going through to chapter 23 and verse 11 there's a there's a scene change and paul goes from being in the barracks with the roman soldiers ready to strike out at him and then the panic the scene changes as paul is brought before the sanhedrin the legal the legal mines he's brought before the religious council and every eye is on paul every ear is tuned to hear what he's going to say but before paul can even get a sentence into his defense the punches start to fly he's just a few words in and the high priest orders to have paul struck in the mouth for the thing that he said and we see paul's response there i'm not i don't have the time to get into the details of all that we said but one point i would just underline is note that even under such intense pressure and such injustice paul continues to speak with great respect to those who are around him even those who prove themselves not to be worthy of respect paul speaks uh with respect when he realizes their position now paul is he's standing there and the sanhedrin are gathered around him he knows his audience he knows the sanhedrin is made up of the pharisees and the sadducees the pharisees were those who believed in the resurrection of the dead amongst many other things the sadducees didn't they believed the first few books of the bible but they were very much rationalists and so paul begins his presentation by cutting to the chase and saying the reason i am standing before you today ladies and gentlemen it's because i believe in the resurrection of the dead sadducees see red immediately resurrection no rubbish don't talk this about resurrection and they start they started paul because of the resurrection the pharisees they hate paul but they love what he just said because he's speaking what they believe and what they hold dear so they hate paul but they're not going to penalize them on this legal point and in verse 9 we find them in a furious temper uh going as far as to say we find nothing wrong with this man anyway before you know it the pharisees and the sadducees are at each other's throats over this point of doctrine verse 9 there's a great uproar jackets are off punches are flying dust is everywhere paul needs to be rescued yet again they're about to tear him apart verse 10 of acts 23 the dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid paul would be torn to pieces by him he ordered the troops to go down and take him away from him by force and bring him into the barracks rescue number three last rescue rescue number four we see that from verses 12 to 24 and again we have a scene change we thought about with the wee ones we're taken from the the legal situation and the violence of the mob to a kind of smoky back room where men speak in whispers and plot and the fact is that the jews would not rest until paul was dead and so once the dust had settled and their temperatures had gone back down to a sensible level post sanhedrin the jews determined as they saw things clearly they were going to kill paul and they were going to kill him quickly and so 40 men verse 12 vowed they would not eat or drink until they had him dead and so they plotted that they would ask that paul be brought back up to appear before them on the premise that they were looking for clarification on the case and the plan was before before paul ever got a chance to see anything to clarify any points they would assassinate him 40 men in the shadows in jerusalem not a hard job and as they plotted and as they whispered i was thinking they probably weren't too mindful of the fact there's always children there's always little ears hearing things they shouldn't be hearing and little ears are always more perceptive than we think they are and the little ears of paul's nephew heard of this plan verse 16 and so this young lad hears of the plan he hears of the plot and then he goes to visit his uncle paul in prison he tells paul brave thing to do paul tells the centurion the centurion calls the commander in yet again and the commander when he hears the boy's story realizes that paul is in serious danger and paul needed to be rescued so the commander was no time in action in such a rescue plan verse 23 oh that's 23 then he called two of us insurians and ordered them get ready at the attachment of 200 soldiers 70 horsemen and 200

spearman to go to caesarea at nine tonight provide mounts for paul so that he may be taken safely to governor felix he wrote the letter as follows glorious lycius to his excellency governor felix greetings this man was seized by the jews and they were about to kill him but i came with my troops and rescued him and so it goes on some people say the bible is boring nothing ever happens well there's three chapters two riots one almost flogging a court case a conspiracy to murder assassination attempts four rescues so what lessons can we draw in conclusion um from these chapters from the turbulence of paul's experience in these four rescues three simple lessons to conclude the first thing that we note here is the steadfastness of paul as god's man as god's servant we see the steadfastness of paul it would be wrong for us to overlook that we see the steadfast determination of this apostle despite all the pressure despite all that was thrown at him he doesn't back down he doesn't recant he doesn't crumble he just keeps on keeping on 2 corinthians 4 paul writes at verse 8 we are hard pressed on every side but not crushed perplexed but not in despair persecuted but not abandoned struck down but not destroyed paul is like a a boxer who just keeps on getting knocked down and he keeps on getting back up in god's strength he just keeps on going and in the apostle we have an example his life and his testimony and an example for us to keep on going are we having a hard time just now i'm sure some of us will be

[60:51] probably paul had it harder are we suffering just now in our experience um because of the name and the cause of christ maybe to some degree some of us are but i'm sure the apostle suffered more acutely than we ever will do we sometimes feel like giving up i expect that paul in his humanity sometimes felt like giving up himself but he didn't and so through his example we are encouraged to keep on going to be steadfast in the faith so we have this example in paul and it's right that we note that example and hate the encouragement but if we stop at paul and allow the spotlight to settle and fix upon him we stop short because this is not a book that's been written to glorify paul paul was a sinner and he's the first to admit it first timothy 1 15 he describes himself as the chief of sinners romans chapter 7 paul is so honest about the struggle with sin that he's having in his life and and so we we look to paul but we must look beyond paul i'm looking inside of paul for those who are interested in sport and athletics you've been interested in that for many years um the strength and the skill of the russian athletes um it's something that we couldn't fail to be impressed by but in light of the recent news that came out in the scandals a couple of weeks ago um we're not so impressed now by the russian athletes if we once were because we've discovered by their own admission that their power and their prowess was in in large measure due to the substances they were filled with some of them now who was filling paul that's the question god was and so yes we see paul and we're encouraged through him but we're encouraged to look beyond paul and see god the sovereign power of god that's the steadfastness of paul secondly there's the sovereign power of god it's god who was at work in paul it's god who was at work around paul many in that time would have said it's the romans who are governing uh the they're the ones who held the power and who were governing all that was going on in that place at that time but no in the ultimate sense god was he was the sovereign and we see that in the unfolding circumstances i can't help but think that as paul wrote romans 8 and wrote in all things god is working for the good as he wrote verses like if god is for us who can be against us i wonder what's he thinking about the romans because not even the dreaded romans could be against paul when god determined he was going to protect paul the romans who were renowned for their ruthlessness and their mercenary killing machines that they were they became the very instruments that god used to ensure the protection of his apostle they were the sovereign overruling engineering power of god he's far greater than any roman centurion or commander but he was using them what about the jews of sanhedrin they were a formidable powerful group

and yet despite all their influence all the plots and plans of this collective group of powerful people were thwarted in a split moment how so well through the intervention of a wee boy how god was in control and he was using the roman power and he was using a wee boy one commentator says paul was immortal until he had completed the mission god gave him and the application for us to take away from this is simply to take courage i was speaking to somebody recently who were reflecting on the the way the world is just now and the volatile nature of all the politics and uh the the increasing violence and uh conflict that we're seeing uh somebody uh was saying to me as i look around the world and as i watch the news i'm scared even as i hear reports about the potential of terrorist attacks much more close than london even you know as we're hearing stuff about cal mack and boats and all this maybe far-fetched but it's read and it's listened to and somebody was

saying i'm feeling scared well there may well be danger in our world just now we see it of course we do there may even be danger creeping ever closer to home than it ever was but god is still solving and he's numbered your days and mine he's written them in his book psalm 139 and until we reach that number we are immortal and if we are in christ when our numbers up in time we go through death's dark veil to eternal life so take courage we may go through hardships there will be waves there will be fires but god is still sovereign he's unchanging and he's with us if we are trusting him and that's what gave paul courage the word and the presence of jesus who came to fall by night look at acts 23 and 11 in the middle of all this turmoil in the middle of all that paul was going through in the the darkness and the terrors of the night 23 11 it says the lord stood near paul and said take courage fear not and what god said to paul he says to all his children through his word as they have 43 fear not for i have redeemed you i have summoned you by name you are mine when you pass through the waters i will be with you and when you pass through the rivers they will not sweep over you when you walk through the fire you will not be burned the flames will not set you ablaze for i am the lord your god the holy one of israel your savior so we see the steadfastness of paul we see in all the unfolding circumstances the sovereign power of god

and we finish looking to the salvation that is offered to us in christ the four rescues the four rescues are impressive rescues but they're nothing in comparison to the ultimate rescue and the ultimate rescue again is a rescue that involved roman soldiers as roman soldiers took jesus and put him on that cross little did they know that they were being used to affect the greatest rescue plan of all time a rescue that was planned before time and a rescue that would be effective to the end of time and that's that rescue for jesus the one who stepped down from heaven and down into a sin broken world and down further to the cross of calvary laid down his life he descended into hell so that we could be rescued from our sin so that we could be rescued from the enemy of our soul satan so that we could be rescued from the clutches of death and the second death hell the greatest rescue of all is that rescue where we see salvation in christ and as we approach christmas the there is opportunity to save us don't miss it there's opportunity to point people as we approach christmas to Jesus who is he oh he's the rescuer he is the son of god and that was the testimony remember of who of the roman soldier because as he saw christ dying with such poise and such dignity and such purpose and as he heard jesus pray for them father forgive them for they know not what they do as the Roman soldier saw Jesus reach out in mercy to a dying thief as he cried out it is finished and laid down his life the Roman soldier the executioner said surely this was a righteous man surely this was the son of God have we come to that conviction yet have we in faith made that same profession yet surely

Jesus was the son of God surely he was the righteous one surely he was the saviour my sins my saviour I pray that we have and if we haven't I pray that before we walk out that door we will Lord we thank you for all that has been recorded for us and preserved for us in your word we thank you for that record of history and all that happened we thank you that as we survey it we see that bright example in Paul the apostle as he remains steadfast in his faith and his profession help us we pray to like him be steadfast and to be faithful to your calling not to give up to keep on going even when it gets tough we thank you that in your strength we can we thank you that you are the God who is eternally sovereign and in all things you are at work often times we can't see it it takes faith for us to believe it and so we pray that you would give us that faith that we would trust you each day and know that peace and that assurance that if God is for us you can be against us enable us we pray to know that you are for us enable us we pray to trust you and to know that salvation that is offered in Christ we thank you that he is the ultimate rescuer and Lord we thank you that that rescue is the rescue that we see effective on the cross where Jesus laid down his life so that we could be saved from heaven assured of heaven ushered into eternal life which begins here and knows no end so make us faithful we pray and encourage us through your word and we pray this in Jesus name Amen we sing again to God's praise from mission phase 102 mission phase 102 sorry we're a bit later than usual today but I haven't finished reading the information until 20 past 11 come thy long expected Jesus born to set you thy people free from our fears and sins release us let us find our rest and read and I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forevermore Amen