

**Sunday Sermon Review: Week of March 6th, 2022**

**Sermon Series: Book of Acts**

**Sermon: When Pressure Hits... We Grow! (Acts 12:1-17)**

**Speaker: Pastor Jordan Smalley**

## **Icebreaker**

- What is your favorite color fruit and why?

## **Conversation Starters and Sermon Review**

### **I. Under Pressure, Turn to Prayer (v. 1-5)**

- What's your first reaction to pressure?
  - Post on social media?
  - Complain/bad mouth?
  - Have a temper tantrum?
  - Shut down/retreat?
  - Prayer?
- How has pressure pushed away your comfort zone for the good?
- Do you run away from pressure or do you embrace it? Why?
- Who helps you deal with pressure?

Prayer helps...

1. Shift our perspective
  2. Remind us of Who is ultimately in control
  3. Remind us where our help comes from!
  4. Is how we fight our battles
- Share a time where and how prayer helped change your perspective in a situation.
  - What pressure(s) in your life do you need to turn over in God?

## II. God Gives Us Peace Under Pressure (v. 6-11)

- How long do you wait to bring God into your problems?
- Do you think that the peace that Peter had is attainable for you? Do you feel like you're undeserving? Why or why not?
- In your seasons or moments of peace, do you hear God's voice more clearly? Why do you think this is?
- Is there something else in your life that has become louder than God's voice?
- The Word of God is a firm foundation. How much do you trust in God's promises? What kind of pressures causes this foundation to shake for you?

## III. Keep Moving Forward with God's Plan (v. 12-17)

- Does pressure overwhelm you? What does it mean to "grow through what you go through"?
- How do you stay encouraged in times of pressure?
- Have you ever experienced or thought that you were a roadblock in God's plan because you were listening to the lies of the enemy?
- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Are you able to continue to pray when difficult things happen around you? Can you continue spreading the Gospel? Why or why not?

## Act On It

**Encourage:** When the pressure was on for the Book of Acts followers, they didn't hide or retreat, they stood strong on their firm foundation and faith and prayed, but not just any ol' prayer. They turned to earnest, sincere, PASSIONATE prayer instead of moaning and complaining about the problem. What if we started doing the same? What if we started seeing times of pressure as gifts? As moments to grow closer to God instead of being consumed by the world? We can. No matter what, we can pray, and we need to pray because our world needs us to pray. Prayer helps us shift

our perspective, it helps remind us that God is in control, and that The Lord is our true source of help, and it helps us fight those spiritual battles that we're bound to find ourselves entangled in from time to time. Prayer and turning God in our troubles brings us the peace that surpasses all understanding - peace that can only come from drawing near to the Lord. This is the peace we need to keep the Gospel moving forward, even when we're under pressure. Just because we get stressed doesn't mean our calling as Christ followers gets to take a backseat. Let's take the pressures of our lives and surrender them to God so He can turn them into something beautiful.

**Ask:** Ask the Lord to speak into the pressures of your life and to show you where they are coming from. Pray to be given a new perspective, to see where God is working in those pressures so you can praise Him. Pray to be shown how God wants to use your pressure and what you're learning for His purpose. Pray to be Spirit-filled and Spirit-led. Ask God to bring you the peace that only He can bring. Ask God what you need to do to make yourself available to receive His Word. Finally, ask God what He wants you to do to continue spreading the Gospel.

**Challenge:** Find someone at work, at home, or while you're out running errands during this week and offer a prayer. For the rest of this week, set aside at least 10 minutes each day for prayer. Pray for the pressure in our world, on our economy, and in our culture. Be intentional and set aside some time to be still and to hear what God wants to speak to you.

## **Prayer Request and Prayer**

Lord, we thank you for the times that grow, stretch, and challenge us. God, right now, we're stopping and reminding ourselves of who is truly in control. We know that amazing things happen when we pause and commit ourselves to prayer time with You. God, help us make prayer a first response instead of a last resort. In times where we have every right to panic and pace, we get to have unconditional peace because You love us

and desire to fight for us. God, help us posture ourselves in a way that we can receive the Word that you want to speak about in our lives. Lord, help us build a firm foundation on Your Word. Help us strengthen that foundation with Your Word. Help us lean and rest in Your promises, no matter what the world throws at us. Help us be confident in who we are in You, and that You are in control. Fill our minds and hearts with peace so we can keep spreading the Good News and advancing the Kingdom. Amen.

**Sunday Sermon Review:** Week of February 27th, 2022

**Sermon Series:** Book of Acts

**Sermon:** The Church Being the Church (Acts 11:26-30)

**Speaker:** Pastor Mike Burnette

## **Icebreaker**

- Would you rather have everything that you touch disappear or everything that you touch stick to you?

## **Conversation Starters and Sermon Review**

### **IV. Christians, Embrace Your Label! (v. 26)**

- How would you define the label of “Christian”?
- How would others label you? What labels are you currently wearing proudly?
- Have you ever been labeled as “odd” or “different” because you’re Christian? Did you accept it, or did you reject the label? Why?
- How are you doing at “being the Church”?
- What are you devoted to right now?

### **V. We Pay Attention and Respond to Needs (v. 27-29)**

- How are you responding in these present, difficult times? Are you hoarding for yourself or preparing to meet the needs of others around you?
- What’s the difference between enduring in your own strength and enduring using the strength of God?
- When a famine is prophesied, the early Church didn’t store up their own supply, they gave to help others! Look around you today. Where is an area around you that you could serve others like these disciples did?
- Read James 2:14-17. What can you do today to truly help others in these difficult times? What thing can you do, however small, that

would make a difference to someone in need today?

- Who are the “prophets” that you are listening to today? How are they influencing you? What kind of action do they stir in you? Are they in line with the Bible?
- What does it mean to you to be ready? Are you determined to provide relief?

## VI. **The Local Church, Mobilized, is the Hope of the World! (v. 30)**

- Be generous, be active, be prayerful, and be responsive to the pains of our world! Don’t wait for others to do it, and don’t wait on your feelings to lead you with compassion or generosity. Look around you and find a place to SERVE, GIVE, PRAY, and even GO TO HELP. What is one thing you can do today to start that process?
- A.W. Tozer said, “A Scared World needs a Fearless Church!” Would you pray for those in need today? Would you pray for the leaders of the world, for those affected by war, and even for those in our cities and neighborhoods who need Jesus?
- As Christians, we can’t be the hope for the world if we don’t pray for everyone, including their enemies. How do you pray for your enemies?
- How do we walk out fulfilling the spiritual need after the physical need has been met?
- How much do you trust your church leadership? Why? Are you willing to address it?

## **Act On It**

**Encourage:** Our world is under some real pressure right now, and the Church, more than ever, needs to stand together and be the Church that God desires us to be. The Book of Acts tells us how we should be reacting under pressure. Those radical Jesus followers, instead of letting the pressure of persecution dull their faith, they let it shine brighter and stronger than ever before. Once they knew that disaster was coming, they sprung into action. They rose as the Church and went out to serve and give, and be a blessing to those in need. Let’s follow their lead! Don’t ever be

embarrassed or ashamed for standing up for your faith in Jesus. Of course people will think you're odd, but as Christ followers, we're called to be different. We're called to stand out against the culture of the world. Wear and live out your Christian label loud and proud. Keep standing up and standing out. Take your next step. Live different, our world and the Church needs it.

**Ask:** Pray 1 Peter 5:7 over any worries you may have and bring them to God. Ask to be given a reignited devotion to prayer. Pray for God's salvation and transformation in the hearts of people. Pray to see the label "Christian" as an honor, something that you're more than willing to embrace. Pray for boldness and courage to live different and stand apart from the rest of the world. Pray to be empowered by the Holy Spirit Pray to be the light God desires you to be. And, ask God to move you from a place of pity to a place of action and to show you how you can use your life to make a difference right where you're at.

**Challenge:** When in doubt, you can always offer prayer. Spend five minutes when you wake up and five minutes before you go to bed praying for the people of Ukraine and the people of Russia. Pray that God will have His way, and people will come to know God through Jesus in these areas. Also, pray for our world leaders. Pray that they would have wisdom and discernment as events unfold in Europe that will affect the entire world. Finally, pray for Clarksville, as we are a military town with Soldiers and families that these events will have a great impact upon. Pray that God will place His hand of protection over us and keep us safe. Pray this for everyone, even people that you struggle to pray for. Do this today and every day this week.

And, start taking your next steps. Go to our Next Steps class, in-person or online, and learn how you can start serving others right where you're at now with the way God designed you. Look for serve opportunities with local non-profits and coordinate a serve project with your small group.

## **Prayer Request and Prayer**

Lord, we praise you for life change and transformation. We thank you for making us different. Thank you for the example of the early Church as Christ followers. Because of this, we trust that we can stand tall in times of pressure. Lord, help us truly embrace our label as Christians. Not only do we need to acknowledge it, but help us to reflect our beliefs in everything that we do. Before we're anything else, we are sons and daughters of God Himself. Help us to be proud to be named with Christ. God, open our eyes to the needs around us and move us into action in whatever way we can offer. Whether it's being generous in prayer, serving others, and giving financially, help us become people who are known for responding, showing up, and giving, now hiding, staying quiet, and hoarding. Use us where we are right now to lead people to You. Use us to bring hope to hopeless times. Help us be the Church you desire us to be. Amen.