

The Call to Dangerous Christianity: Living on the Edge of Faith

There's a profound tension in the Christian life that often goes unspoken in our comfortable, modern church experience. It's the tension between safety and sacrifice, between settling in and stepping out, between maintaining our routines and embracing the radical call of the gospel. The book of Acts reveals a Christianity that looks strikingly different from what we've often settled for—a faith that was never meant to be convenient, comfortable, or contained within the walls of our sanctuaries.

The Price of Deep Connection

When Paul prepared to leave the believers in Acts 20 and 21, something remarkable happened. The text tells us they "tore themselves away" from one another. This wasn't a casual goodbye after a Sunday service. This was the kind of parting that involved weeping, embracing, and genuine grief. These believers had invested deeply in one another's lives, and the thought of separation was genuinely painful.

This raises an uncomfortable question for us today: Would anyone weep if we moved away? Have we built the kind of relationships where our absence would create a genuine void in someone's life?

The early church understood something we've largely forgotten—Christianity was never meant to be a solo sport. It wasn't designed for people who slip in the back door on Sunday and slip out before anyone notices. The depth of relationship among early believers wasn't just nice; it was necessary. It was what enabled them to endure persecution, maintain doctrinal purity, and spread the gospel to the ends of the earth.

A Church for All Nations

Throughout Acts 21, we see Paul constantly moving, connecting churches, encouraging believers, and keeping the global mission of the church at the forefront. He understood that the gospel wasn't just for his hometown or his people group—it was for all nations.

We can easily become insular, focused on our own communities, our own comfort, our own concerns. But the Great Commission isn't called "great" because it's easy—it's great because it encompasses all peoples, all nations, all tongues. Every local church is called to have a global vision, to pray for the nations, to give to the nations, and when possible, to go to the nations.

The challenge before us is to resist the gravitational pull toward self-focus. Yes, we're called to minister where we're planted, but there's always more. Our neighborhoods matter, but so do the unreached peoples on the other side of the world. Both-and, not either-or.

Raising Kingdom Kids

One striking detail in Acts 21 is the mention of entire families—men, women, and children—gathering on the beach to pray with Paul before he departed. In a culture that marginalized women and children, the kingdom of God elevated them as full participants in the mission.

This has profound implications for how we raise the next generation. Our children aren't meant to be sheltered from the cost of following Jesus—they're meant to participate in it. When we protect our kids from every inconvenience, when we refuse to disrupt their routines for kingdom purposes, when we prioritize their comfort over their character formation, we rob them of understanding the true value of what Christ has done.

Kids who grow up paying a price alongside their parents—who see hospitality disrupt their bedtimes, who move when God calls their family, who watch their parents sacrifice for the gospel—these children grow up understanding that life isn't about them. They learn that being part of God's kingdom means surrender, service, and sometimes suffering.

The goal isn't to traumatize our children but to train them. And when they see that God's grace is sufficient for their parents through difficulty, they learn that His grace will be sufficient for them too.

The Question Paul Forces Us to Ask

As Paul journeyed toward Jerusalem, multiple groups of believers warned him not to go. Through the Holy Spirit, they sensed danger ahead. A prophet named Agabus even performed a dramatic demonstration, binding his own hands and feet with Paul's belt to illustrate what awaited the apostle in Jerusalem.

The response was predictable—everyone begged Paul not to go. They wept. They pleaded. They tried to persuade him to choose safety over calling.

But Paul's response cuts to the heart of what it means to follow Jesus: "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart like this? For I am ready not only to be bound and imprisoned, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Here's the question we must each answer honestly: Is our life on this earth worth more than eternity? Would we choose the easy path if we knew the hard path was God's will? Are we willing to face suffering for the sake of the gospel?

These aren't comfortable questions. They're especially difficult when we have families to consider, responsibilities to manage, and futures to plan. But they're the questions that define whether we're truly following Jesus or merely admiring Him from a safe distance.

Dangerous Christianity

When Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, surrounded by a violent mob shouting for his death, carried away by Roman soldiers to save his life, he didn't retreat into self-pity or relief at being rescued. Instead, he asked the commander, "May I say something to you?"

Even in chains, Paul was looking for an opportunity to speak truth.

This is the heart of dangerous Christianity—not reckless, not foolish, but willing. Willing to speak when it's uncomfortable. Willing to stand when others sit. Willing to engage when it would be easier to retreat.

Our culture increasingly views truth as hate. Standing for biblical values is often met with hostility, not hospitality. In this environment, we face a choice: Will we be "nice" Christians who never make waves, or will we be faithful Christians who speak truth in love regardless of the cost?

The call isn't to manufacture controversy or seek out persecution. The call is simply to follow the Spirit's leading wherever it takes us—into the messy lives of broken people, into difficult conversations with hostile audiences, into situations where our faith will cost us something.

Living on the Edge

The Christianity we see in Acts is lived on the edge—not away from God, but with Him, right where He's leading. It's a faith that understands the eternal stakes and refuses to settle for temporal comfort.

This doesn't mean we seek out danger or make reckless decisions. It means we listen to God's voice and obey, even when obedience leads us into uncertain, uncomfortable, or even dangerous territory.

The question before us is simple but profound: Will we be a people willing to live this kind of Christianity? Will we build deep, costly relationships with other believers? Will we raise our children to understand that following Jesus requires sacrifice? Will we keep the nations on our hearts and in our prayers? Will we speak truth when it's unpopular?

The early church turned the world upside down not because they had better programs or more resources, but because they were willing to pay a price we've largely forgotten. They understood that the message of Jesus—that God Himself died to save people who didn't deserve it—was worth absolutely everything.

May we recover that same conviction, that same courage, that same willingness to live dangerously for the One who died radically for us.