

Grace Baptist Youth Camp
9 June 2000
NIV

Transformed Teens Series

Dr. Rick Griffith
Message 4 of 4
40 Minutes

Get Up Again

A Monologue to the Book of Mark & Acts 13, 15

Topic: Service
Subject: Be a person of action even though you fail
Complement: by selflessly serving others.
Purpose: The teens will show that Christ has transformed them by selflessly serving others.
Setting: A man in first-century garb walks onto the church platform

Introduction

1. **Interest:** Shalom, fellow saints of the Lord Jesus Christ. Please do not find it strange that I stand before you here. I come by invitation of your speaker! Somehow, he and I bumped into each other not too long ago, and he told me that he would be speaking to you about transformed teenagers. Alas, since God did such a unique work in my life when I was a teenager, he said he would allow me to tell you about it myself...
2. **Identity:** Oh, I have not yet introduced myself, have I? My name is Mark, or, if you are fond of long names, John Mark. John is my Jewish name, and Mark is my Greek name.
3. **Wealthy Family (Acts 12:12-18)**
 - a) I come from a well-to-do family in Jerusalem, and I am privileged to be a child of Abraham. My mother's name is Mary—a distinguished name, you might say since this also was the name of the mother of our Lord. Mother undoubtedly had the gift of service, for she constantly entertained the church of Jerusalem in our home since I was a young boy. And man, could she make great Jewish bagels!
 - b) Perhaps you've read about one particular time when the church gathered together to pray for Peter, who was in prison then. Remember when the angel led him out of jail to a home where the servant girl Rhoda slammed the door in his face in amazement? Well, that was my home! Rhoda always got a bit flustered whenever a miracle happened. If only Rhoda could have seen *Jesus* perform all those miracles, she would have known better. Not that I saw them often since I was so young when Jesus came to Jerusalem, but I sure have heard the stories! Although I did see Him on a few occasions...
4. **Gethsemane (Mark 14:51)**
 - a) I especially remember one time as a teenager when I got news of the search party on the way to Gethsemane to arrest Jesus. Boy, I didn't even finish getting dressed to get there as fast as I could! Since the servants had not yet done the wash, all I could find was a linen sheet, so I threw it over my body and rushed out to the olive grove.
 - b) Unfortunately, when the religious fanatics grabbed Jesus, all the disciples fled, and one of those cronies grabbed me, thinking I was one of the disciples. I couldn't get away from him—it was either death or leave the sheet behind. What would you do? Well, I chose the latter, which was very embarrassing. Imagine the son of a respectable family running through the garden naked to get home. Good thing it was dark out. It's a good thing Mom never found out, too. That's why I didn't give my name in my gospel account. I just referred to myself as "a certain young man." It's a good way to get in the action without embarrassment, right?

I. First Missionary Journey

A. Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37; Col. 4:10)

1. Anyway, where was I? Oh, yes, my family. Perhaps you also have heard of a cousin of mine. He is the son of my aunt and uncle, who lived in that vacation spot out in the Mediterranean. It's a wonderful island called Cyprus. My cousin's name is Joseph.
2. What a great older cousin he is! So generous! Once, he sold a piece of land and laid the entire amount at the apostles' feet! This encouraged everyone so much that he was called "Barnabas," which means "son of encouragement" from then on!
3. Once, Barnabas even arranged for me to accompany him and the Apostle Paul on their first missionary journey! I was elated! Think of it: the opportunity of a lifetime—traveling with the great apostles themselves, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, healing the sick, and seeing churches pop up throughout Asia Minor. What an adventure! I had never been more excited about anything in my life!
4. Do you like to go to new places by yourself? I didn't as a teenager! I never stepped out to do risky things, but this time, it was different. I had my older cousin with me.

B. Failure (Acts 13:13)

1. However, by the time we got only a quarter of the way through this short-term mission trip, I discovered no picnic. Some people on our team got sick, and not everyone was super-excited to hear about Jesus. Also, my cousin Barnabas found that Paul had more leadership gifts than he did, and he let Paul lead our group. I thought we would spread the news of Messiah to our Jewish brethren throughout the Roman Empire, but Paul was passionate about sharing Jesus with the Gentiles. I wasn't ready for all that cross-cultural evangelism stuff. I was from a lovely Jewish home. Besides, I couldn't stand pork.
2. Anyway, when we got to the seaport city of Perga, I felt that this was my chance to return home. I knew that malaria was much more possible inland. I caught the next ship back to Israel and soon was home safe in Jerusalem. Paul said I was running home to Momma and needed a "bagel fix." That hurt, but I must admit that, in some respects, he was right. Paul was very angry, but I felt I couldn't go further.
3. I hate to fail—don't you? What's worse is when I fail trying to serve the Lord. Why couldn't I be like David slaying Goliath or Daniel standing up to the most powerful ruler of the day when he refused to eat defiled food? And even Mary, the mother of our Lord, had more guts than me. I felt miserable...

II. Second Missionary journey

A. Paul & Barnabas Split (Acts 15:36-41)

1. Believe it or not, that wasn't the end of hearing about my flunking out on this short-term mission trip. Two years later, Paul and Barnabas were about to head out on another trip. My cousin Barnabas wanted to bring me again...
2. But Paul wasn't so keen on the idea. He adamantly opposed it. He didn't forget too easily. I knew, and Barnabas knew, that I was ready then, but Paul wasn't convinced. Those two men had such a sharp disagreement I thought they would fight! It ended up that Barnabas was willing to split up with Paul *over me*. What a guy! He had traveled hundreds of kilometers with Paul through thick and thin, yet Barney believed in me to the extent of jeopardizing his ministry relationship with Paul.
3. What happened? Paul took Silas north by land, and Barnabas sailed west with me.
4. I cannot tell you what having a pal like Barnabas meant to me. I learned how valuable it is to have just *one* person who believes in you. I *wanted* to go the right way and knew I

was ready—but I was going against the opinions of *everyone*—except Barnabas. This “son of encouragement” sure lived up to his name. He built his life into me.

B. Paul Forgives Barnabas (1 Cor. 9:6; 2 Tim. 4:11)

1. However, please do not think that our disagreement with Paul was never solved. A few years later, Paul spoke very highly of Barnabas in his letter to the Corinthians.
2. Twelve years later, *I was helping out Paul* in his prison in Rome! He even wrote to our fellow worker Timothy that I was “useful” to him for ministry! Who knows what life would have been like if Barnabas did not stick with me?

III. Book of Mark

A. Peter's Influence

1. Eventually, I got to know the Apostle Peter well, too. Boy, did he have a lot to share with me! You see, Paul and Barnabas were not disciples of Jesus, but not so with Peter! Why, he was one of Jesus' top three men. He had lived with Christ day in and day out for over three years. I loved to sit under his teaching about Jesus...
2. About thirty years after Christ had ascended back to the Father, one day, I was listening to Peter preach in one of our worship services in Rome. I thought, “Wow! I've heard Peter tell this story of Christ healing the blind man many times, yet so many have never heard it *once*! Man, if only we could get Peter to travel around to get this message out to more people! But he's almost 70 years old now, and that's too old to be running around the Empire like he did in his younger years...”

B. Gospel Request (Mark 10:45)

1. Then the Christians there urged me, “Hey Mark! Why not write these stories into a fast-moving account of Christ's life? Don't cover everything, but hit those topics that especially relate to us Gentiles, showing Christ on the move.” I thought, “Good idea! I could show Christ as the Greatest Servant of all time, even use His well-known statement, ‘The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost,’ as sort-of a theme verse!”
2. Well, Peter was elated about the prospect. Why hadn't we thought of this sooner? Within months, I had Peter's words down in writing right there in Rome, and shortly afterward, he, like nearly all the apostles, died a martyr's death. The Romans crucified him upside-down. Peter requested to be upside-down, thinking that he was not worthy of dying as our Lord had suffered.

C. Gospel Uniqueness

1. Since my gospel was written to Gentiles, I left out many of the more Jewish elements: Christ's genealogy, fulfilled prophecies, references to the Law, and certain Jewish customs. I also translated some of the Aramaic words. Little did I know that before all the apostles passed into heaven, mine would be one of four published gospel accounts.
2. Matthew wrote his account of Christ's life, and even Luke and John did. Rumor has it that the Holy Spirit has worked so that all of these gospels, along with Luke's Acts of the Apostles, Paul's epistles, the Law, Writings, Prophets, and some other epistles, are all bound together! Man, I wish we had that back in the Roman Empire! I never even *dreamed* of being able to carry 66 scrolls to church!
3. Anyway, I'm glad to contribute what I know. Never did I realize my gospel would make such a contribution to Christianity! But I want people to see Jesus as one who served man, even to the point of sacrificing his own life for our sins.
 - a) That's why a full third of my book covers the last week of Christ's life. Since I didn't include everything about Jesus, my book is not really a biography.

- b) It's more of a topical arrangement, showing how Christ's works and teachings complement one another. This is why I included a whopping eighteen miracles in such a short, brief account. Whereas some of the other gospels emphasize Christ's words, I showed Him as a man of *action*.
4. I wrote my gospel during perilous times. Nero took great delight in seeing my friends torn apart by beasts and gladiators, and many of my friends went into hiding or abandoned Christ. My book could help the believers see that Christ, too, was persecuted, but he served to the end. My goal in writing is that from reading my account, all people everywhere will first come to know Christ as the Savior who serves and then follow in his steps as Lord by also being people who serve.

IV. Christ's Service

A. The Busiest Day in Jesus' Life (Mark 1:21-34)

1. Jesus was constantly giving Himself to other people, living a selfless life. Peter told me that whenever Jesus wanted to get away by himself or with the disciples for some time alone, crowds would pop up over the hill and find them.
2. I saw this firsthand once when I visited Jesus in Galilee. One Sabbath day, Jesus was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum, and he finished his sermon with quite an ending—he spoke to the demon inside this guy in the service, and the demon came out!
3. That was an incredible adventure—but controlling the crowds after that was exhausting! We went to Peter and Andrew's home late in the afternoon to rest. But Peter's wife was upset over her mother, who had a fever. I remember thinking, "Man, when can we rest?" Jesus wasn't upset, though. People were always his priority. He just went over to her bed, took her hand, and helped her up. Then she fixed us a great meal—complete with bagels!
4. Well, I like to take a big nap after a big meal—or go to bed early—especially on a day like that. But guess what happened? As soon as we were going to retire after sunset, more people showed up at the door. Believe it or not, the whole town came! I was so upset! Why couldn't they come back tomorrow? We'd taught at the synagogue, healed the crazy man, traveled on dusty roads, healed Peter's mother-in-law, finally got some bagels in our tummies, and now people bring all their insane, demonized friends to the door! But Jesus kept healing them, casting out their demons, and giving himself.
5. The crowd didn't leave until midnight, and I was bushed! Although Jesus had taught us all to pray in the morning when no one else was up so we wouldn't be disturbed, if there ever was an exception, the following day was it.

B. The Result on the Next Day (Mark 1:35-39)

1. But what did Jesus do? "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed, 'Everyone is looking for you!'" I would have responded, "Hey, leave me alone. Can't I ever have some time to myself?" But "Jesus replied, 'Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also.'"
2. I could hardly believe it when he said that. Didn't he ever think of himself? You know the answer to that question— Didn't he ever think of himself? Do you? The answer is "No, He *didn't* ever think of himself!" You see, Jesus came to *serve* people.

Conclusion

1. So, how are *you* doing at serving others? Do you have my tendency to push people out of the way to accomplish your project? We all know that people are more important than projects, but it is easy to lose sight of this.

2. Are you a person of action for others? For Jesus, *people* took priority over “papyri.” He was a *people* person, not a “paper person.” He taught but also “walked his talk.”
3. I have no excuse not to serve others sacrificially. So many have served me.
 - a) I first learned service from my mother, Mary.
 - b) But then Barnabas risked his relationship with Paul to serve me.
 - c) Paul himself became an example to me of selfless giving and...
 - d) Peter modeled it to the point of death.
 - e) Most of all, though, was Jesus—the Greatest Servant.
4. Have others served you? Of course, they have! But have you shown gratitude to those who have served you by serving others?
5. Service is the natural result of first showing courage like David, or purity like Daniel, or the faith of Mary. Each was like a salmon swimming upstream to serve God—and they succeeded!
6. But maybe you are paralyzed by fear of failure. I can relate! I have *learned service* through failure. Three of the four times I appear in Scripture, I failed at service. I failed to serve Christ at Gethsemane. I failed on the First Missionary Journey, and I failed to keep Paul and Barnabas together for the Second Missionary Journey. But God helped me learn to give myself to others, so Paul finally called me “useful” before his death.
7. I hope you have genuinely learned to give yourself to others, too.
 - a) It may be time to teach that class of younger kids. Please do not be as timid as I was! I regret it now.
 - b) Maybe the time has come for you to volunteer for a role in your group without someone having to twist your arm.
 - c) Maybe your time has arrived to stop asking, “What’s in it for me? How much reward will I get?” and other questions that Jesus never asked.
 - d) Maybe it is time for you to register your commitment before these friends—to stand and say, “This is the commitment God has moved me to make...” or to register this on a card of sorts [allow them to do both].
 - e) (Sniffs the air.) Speaking of serving others, can you smell that? That smells like mom’s bagels beckoning me, so I better go—but I will do the washing up! Serve the One who served you. (Exits.)