



PATHFINDERS

Leading this generation into true
manhood!!

Pathfinders are Prepared!

Acts 11:27-30

Men's Breakfast

Sermon given on May 21, 2022



Pastor Rick Lancaster

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Opening Comments

- Today we continue the series: **PATHFINDERS: Leading this generation into true manhood!**

- For us humans, the future is something we have to view with a degree of uncertainty

- Only God knows the future perfectly **Isaiah 46:9-10**

Remember the former things of old, for *I am* God, and *there is* no other; *I am* God, and *there is* none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *things* that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,'

- This is where faith comes in
- God knows the future – we don't – So we humble ourselves before God and trust Him with the future
- But that doesn't mean we are to be passive observers sitting around waiting for God to do something
- We don't know what the future holds, but God does
- And sometimes He will tell one of His servants what is coming so that His people can prepare
- It is estimated that between 1/4 and 1/3 of the Bible is prophetic – God speaking to men about things that would come in the future
- The reason for that is so that all people would be warned and so that God's people could be prepared
- For example, God told the prophet Jeremiah that the people of Judah would be in exile in Babylon for seventy years **Jeremiah 25:11**

And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

- And then, about seventy years later, the prophet Daniel read Jeremiah's prophecy **Daniel 9:1-2**

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—² in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years *specified* by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

- Turn to **Acts 11**

- When God gives a message to a prophet, that prophet is expected to share it with the people God intends the message for - Jonah
- And the people who hear the message of the prophet are expected to respond
- That was one of the issues that God had with the people of Israel – He sent them prophet after prophet, but they refused to listen
- Think about that for a second – God, who is infinitely greater than all humans combined knows what the future holds
- He then does something miraculous and tells a human about it
- And then man, in his pride, ignores the prophet who is speaking on behalf of God, and goes arrogantly into the future unprepared for what is coming
- Kevin and the Men’s study have spent a little time looking at the text we are talking about this morning
- **Acts 11:27-28a**
- Acts was written by Luke, the author of the gospel of Luke
- Luke was not an eyewitness to this event – he joined Paul in Acts 16
- He was told about it, either by Paul or Peter
- This account takes place in the city of Antioch
- It is significant for a couple of reasons – believers were first called Christians here and the Apostle Paul was sent from this church to take the gospel where no man had heard Jesus’ name before
- Agabus stands up and declares that a great famine was going to impact the whole world at some point in the future
- And then Luke tells us that it actually happened the way
- **Acts 11:28b**
- That part of the verse is parenthetical
- The second half of verse 28 happened some time after verses 29 and 30
- **Acts 11:29-30**
- A great famine was coming
- But all they had to go on was the word of this man Agabus
- So, what they did was an expression of their faith

- They believed that Agabus was speaking on behalf of God and so they responded
- I would like to draw your attention to three things in verse 29
- First – **They are Disciples**
- A disciple is someone, in this context, who is a believer in Jesus Christ
- But they are more than just a believer

Disciple: a student, learner, or pupil.

- A disciple is someone who has committed their life to being more like Jesus – to yielding to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit
- Churches are filled with people who believe in Jesus but are not actively seeking to be conformed into the image of Christ
- A Pathfinder cannot be a passive bystander in life
- As men of God, every one of us has been created to lead others where God wants them to go
- And to do that well we must be more like Jesus – must be disciples
- In the time of Christ – a disciple would leave whatever life they had been living to follow a master teacher **Matthew 4:19-20**

Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”²⁰ They immediately left *their* nets and followed Him.

- It is different for most believers today
- When I got saved, I was a traveling salesman
- The day after I got saved, I was still a travelling salesman and would be for a couple of years
- Instead of leaving my life behind, I was called to change how I saw my life
- I wasn't a travelling salesman – I was a disciple of Christ who worked as a travelling salesman
- I wasn't a husband – I was a disciple of Christ who was married to Kelly
- All of my life was now defined by what it meant to follow Christ
- As a disciple, the focus of my life became learning what that meant
- These disciples in Antioch were attempting to do the same thing
- They hear from Agabus that a great famine is coming
- Their response is to try to think like Christ – What would Jesus do?

- Second – **They are willing to do something!**
- ‘each according to his ability’
- They asked themselves, ‘What can I do about this great famine?’
- Of course, there was nothing they could do to prevent the famine
- But what they could do was do something about the consequences of this famine
- When God created us, He did so in such a way that we could be useful to Him **Ephesians 2:10**

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- In Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, we are taught that every believer is given gifts for use within the body of Christ
- As a Pathfinder we should be willing to use our gifts for the benefit of others
- For some that is going to mean taking more time being a disciple to discover what those gifts are
- For others it will mean actively looking for a way to use the gifts they have
- Kevin is doing that with the Agabus Project
- He is using his gifts, skills, and experience to teach us about hydroponics
- Which also ties into our third point - **Putting Other’s Needs First**
- ‘determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea.’
- This is a foundational characteristic of a Pathfinder
- As men, our role is to lead others
- We are not to do that for our benefit or in a way that pleases us
- This world is a dark, confusing, and evil place
- Our role is to find the pathway God has for them and make it easier for them to walk it
- Paul said something like that **Philippians 2:3-4**

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

- We are developing the Agabus Project, not so much because we think we are going to run out of food, but because others might run out of food

- I love the idea of growing my own food, and growing enough that I can give it away to others
- Not everyone is convinced that there is going to be a great famine in the land – maybe there will be, maybe there won't
- So, what should we do?
- First – **Seek the Lord**
- The more you seek the Lord and grow into the image of His Son, the more clearly you will hear His voice
- We don't have to be afraid of running out of food – we have the Lord

Psalm 34:8-10

Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good; blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him! Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! *There is* no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good *thing*.

- The Bible says if you seek the Lord, you will find Him
- Second – **Discern the Times**
- Jesus rebuked the religious Jews of His time because they understood things that were going on with the weather, but they couldn't see the spiritual things right in front of them **Matthew 16:1-3**

Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. ² He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, '*It will be fair weather, for the sky is red*'; ³ and in the morning, '*It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.*' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot *discern* the signs of the times.

- The more you seek the Lord, the more easily you will be able to discern the signs of the times – to understand what is going on in the world
- And as you do that, surround yourselves with people like Pastor Randy who are able to discern the times
- The third and final thing – **Walk in Faith**
- The disciples of Antioch believed that Agabus was speaking on God's behalf, and they set about to do something
- The great famine hadn't started yet, but they started collected funds to send to the church in Judea
- What would have happened if the famine never happened?
- They would have used the money to do something else for God

- Once you have an idea of what is going on in the world
- Do your best to discover what God is telling you to do about it
- That's what we are doing with the Agabus Project – it is a faith journey
- We believe God wants us to do it and we believe it will glorify God, bless others, and grow our faith in the process
- And personally, I think it is going to be fun.
- Guys, no one knows the future but God
- Some of the signs of the times are pointing to difficult things
- As men, as Pathfinders, we need to be prepared, and we need to help those we are leading to be prepared
- Seek the Lord – Discern the Times – Walk in Faith
- I will close with a quote **Benjamin Franklin**
"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail."
- Your role as a Pathfinder is too important - failing due to poor preparations will harm those you are called to lead
- Let's get prepared!
- **Let's pray!**