



RISE UP

Challenging men to live up to God's
calling!

Rise and Obey!

Acts 26:19-23

Men's Breakfast

Sermon given on February 19, 2023



Pastor Rick Lancaster

Rise and Obey!

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Opening Comments

- Today we begin a new Men's Ministry series: **RISE UP: Challenging men to live up to God's calling!**
- Turn in your Bibles to **Acts 26**
- In Acts 26, Paul is standing before King Agrippa.
- The Jewish religious leaders had accused Paul of being a criminal, but after two years the Romans still hadn't figured out what crime he had committed.
- Last time we looked at Paul's description of his meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus.
- Jesus knocked Paul off his donkey and onto the ground to get Paul's attention.
- Jesus then told him to get up and stand on his feet.
- Getting knocked down was the only way Paul was going to hear Jesus call him to the great thing God had planned for him.
- In this life, we are going to get knocked down.
- But, as men of God, we are not to stay down.
- If we get knocked down, Jesus would say to us what He said to Paul, "rise and stand on your feet..."
- We are going to pick up the account in verse 19.
- Paul is continuing his defense before King Agrippa.
- **Acts 26:19**
- Last time, we looked at the fact that God made us on purpose and for a purpose.
- We discussed that there are two categories of purposes: general and specific.
- General purposes are those that are common to all believers.
- Specific purposes or callings are unique to individual believers.
- I shared that my specific purpose is to be the primary shepherd of the flock at CCFV.

- I also encouraged you to spend some time with God to begin defining yours if you don't already know it.

- Paul knew his purpose. **Galatians 1:15-16**

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles...

- Later that calling was refined **Romans 15:20-21**

And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation,²¹ but as it is written: "To whom He was not announced, they shall see; and those who have not heard shall understand."

- Paul's calling was to preach the gospel to Gentiles, non-Jews, in places where no one had heard the name of Christ.

- This series is about **Challenging men to live up to God's calling!**

- Once you have an idea what your calling is, what should you do?

- You should do it, right?

- Paul says, 'I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision'

- Most of us won't receive our calling via a heavenly vision, but the response must always be the same – obedience.

- The next verse tells us how obedient Paul was.

- **Acts 26:20**

- Paul was **fully** obedient to his calling.

- Acts 9 tells us that started preaching as soon as he got his eyesight back.

- Paul started and just kept going.

- Guys, when should we start being obedient to God's calling?

- Immediately! And how obedient? Fully!

- Paul knew he was called to preach the gospel – to the Gentiles – and where Christ had not been named before.

- What if you don't know your specific calling?

- Well, you also have a general calling – be fully obedient to that.

- Ephesians 5 tells husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church – are you doing consistently and with your full effort?

- Or how about these verses. **1 Peter 5:6-7**

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

- How quickly are you turning to God when your world blows up?

- Or how about this one? **Ephesians 4:26-27**

"Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,²⁷ nor give place to the devil.

- How well do you control your emotions, like anger, frustration, resentment, discouragement, or maybe even fear of the future.
- Those emotions open the door for the devil to come in and wreck your life through sin.
- That's what God told Cain after he became upset about God not accepting his sacrifice. **Genesis 4:7**
If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.
- We fully obey God when we exercise the spiritual gift of self-control and keep our emotions in check.
- Every time you read your Bible, which you should be trying to do every day, you ought to ask God to show you any area you can more fully obey Him in.
- God is looking for men to Rise up.
- One of the primary traits of those men is obedience.
- Not half-hearted, unwilling obedience, but fully engaged obedience.
- God was able to use Paul in radical ways because he was radically obedient.
- Paul's obedience did not come without resistance.

- **Acts 26:21**

- Keep your finger in Acts and turn to **2 Corinthians 11**
- About the greatest fear I have being fully obedient to God is being canceled on YouTube or someone saying nasty things on social media.
- Even when I try to love my wife as Christ loved the church, if Kelly is not happy about something I do while trying to love her, while unpleasant, her displeasure is not painful.
- Paul, on the other hand, knows what might happen when you are fully obedient to Christ and His calling upon your life.
- **2 Corinthians 11:25-27**
- Not only did Paul fully obey his calling, he did it **fearlessly**.

- Personally, if after teaching on a Sunday morning, the church dragged me outside and stoned me, that I might be rethinking my life choices.
- Not Paul, he gets stoned, thrown out into the trash heap, and what does he do?
- He gets up, dusts himself off and goes back into the city.
- Turn back to **Acts 26**
- What are we afraid of that keeps us from fully obeying God?
- Are you afraid of what your family, friends, co-workers will think?
- Are you afraid of what your boss will do?
- Paul fully obeyed God, fearlessly doing God's will, not his own.
- If you know what God wants you to do, nothing anyone thinks, says, or does should stand in the way of you doing it.
- It is a matter of faith – can God carry you through whatever comes through your obedience.
- Paul knew that every time he preached in a new place there was a chance something difficult would come.
- In the midst of a terrible storm, an angel of God stood beside Paul and told him that he was going to get through it.
- Wherever God's will leads you to, His grace will lead you through.
- That means we can live fearless lives.
- That means if God calls us to go into a dark scary forest filled with monsters, that we should go.
- God is bigger and stronger than anything we might face.
- That doesn't mean we won't take a beating along the way – Paul took several – and still he kept going.
- God is looking for men who will be fully obedient, even if it means taking a figurative beating as a result.
- I recently had a man contact me about a dilemma he was facing.
- He had jury duty and was chosen as part of the jury pool for a case that he was uncomfortable about.
- He was wondering just how far he could stretch the truth to get out of it.
- He was not surprised when I told him to tell the truth and trust God.
- They finished selecting the jury before they got to him.

- If God is God – and we are His people – and we are seeking Him and His will – we must be fearless.
- God appreciates it when His men show up when life is easy, but what He is most pleased by is men who rise up and obey when it might cost them something.
- Paul was fully and fearlessly obedient to God's calling upon his life.
- We get the final trait of Paul's obedience in the next verses.
- **Acts 26:22-23**
- Even after everything Paul had been through, he remained **faithful** to God's calling.
- Even as he stands before the Roman rulers, who are deciding his fate, he faithfully tells them about Christ and the hope of the resurrection.
- Trusting God is not something we do when we feel like or want to.
- Trusting God must be our natural default position.
- It is unlikely that any of us will have to stand before the powers-that-be and worry about our fate.
- It is far more likely that our greater tests will be the temptations to sin that relentlessly assault our mind and senses.
- Are we faithful to God when we are alone and sitting in front of the computer or on our cell phone?
- Whatever is your temptation – to boast – to tell a little white lie – to compromise, just a little on something.
- Paul gives us an example to follow – he followed Christ's example.
- Men, this world needs men who will seek God until they know God's will. And once they know God's will they fully, fearlessly, and faithfully obey God's will.
- This world is a dark and wicked place.
- It needs the light of Jesus Christ and the hope of the resurrection.
- The only way it will see Jesus and obtain that hope is if God's people, especially His men, rise up and fully, fearlessly, and faithfully obey God's will for their lives.
- Rise up, men of God!
- **Let's pray!**