

When the Exclamation Point Becomes a Question Mark
by Pastor Tim Dilena

TSC MISSIONS
From the Streets of Athens to the Steps of Paul

I Didn't Finish on Time. I Finished on Purpose.

212 Youth & Young Adults: A Growing Move of God

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More Than a Next Stop: A Year That Transforms



Prayer Points 2025

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- We believe for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the pulpit and the pews.

FOR OUR CITIES

- We believe for God to raise up a gospel witness all over our cities in schools, universities, and the workplace.

FOR OUR COUNTRIES

- We believe for God to raise up Daniels, Esthers and Josephs in gov't offices around the world that will be a voice from heaven to the nation.

FOR THE WORLD

- We believe for God to save 1 billion souls.

When the Exclamation Point Becomes a Question Mark

by Pastor Tim Dilena, *Senior Pastor*

Let's be honest—ministry can be exciting... until it's not. You start off with passion and certainty, shouting like John the Baptist: "Behold the Lamb of God!" But then life punches you in the gut, and before you know it, the exclamation point becomes a question mark. You go from "He's the One!" to "Are You really the One... or should I look for another?"

I've been there.

You're not less spiritual for asking hard questions. But the danger comes when we make decisions based on how hard it feels—when difficulty makes us doubt direction.

Let me encourage you: difficulty is not directional. Just because it's hard doesn't mean you're not in the center of God's will.

Jesus was in the center of the Father's will when He cried out, "My God, My God, why

have You forsaken Me?" The cross was painful—but it was also providential.

But the danger comes when we make decisions based on how hard it feels—when difficulty makes us doubt direction.

WHEN GOD SAYS "NO"

I've heard God say "no" before. Twice, actually. I had the opportunity to go on a missions trip to Jamaica while I was in college. At the same time, David Wilkerson invited me to help plant a church in Detroit.



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I prayed—and God said no to Jamaica and yes to Detroit.

**When God says “no,”
it’s because He sees
something better. But
better doesn’t always
mean easier.**

Two “no’s” changed the entire course of my life.

God is a Father. And fathers say no—not to punish, but to protect. His “no” is not rejection; it’s redirection and protection. I’ve learned that when God says “no,” it’s because He sees something better. But better doesn’t always mean easier.

Sometimes God's "no" to one door is His "yes" to staying put. Sometimes His protection looks like keeping you exactly where you are, even when every fiber of your being wants to run.

In Acts 16, Paul heard the Holy Spirit say “no” twice before a vision redirected him to Macedonia. That “yes” birthed the first church in Europe. But what happened next? Paul was beaten, thrown in prison, shackled in the inner cell.

And yet... he stayed.

Think about that: the doors flew open, the chains fell off—and they stayed.

I don't know if I would have stayed. I would've called it a miracle and walked out with confidence. But Paul and Silas stayed. Because what looked like a way of escape...

was actually a divine assignment.

You know what happened because they stayed?

—A jailer and his entire family got saved

—Paul's wounds were healed—by the very
man who helped put him in chains

—And a church was born that Paul would
later write letters to—like Philippians

If Paul leaves, we don't get, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

If Paul leaves, we don't get, "He who began a good work in you will complete it."

You staying where you are—even when it's hard—might be the reason someone gets saved, someone is restored, and someone finally hears hope again.

Too often, we do bad math in ministry:

Hard season + open door = time to go

But sometimes that open door is a test, not an invitation. Sometimes your chains fall off, but you're meant to stay and sing a little longer. Sometimes the one who wounded you is also the one who God will use to bring healing.

Don't make decisions based on pain. Make decisions based on purpose.

You have letters to write.

There are wounds to be healed.

There are churches to plant.

There are souls waiting for you to stay put.

God's not done with you. That question mark can stand tall again—into an exclamation point.

Even if you're bleeding. Even if the ground is shaking. Even if the cell doors fly open...

Stay.

Sing.

Trust.

He's not finished yet.





From the Streets of Athens to the Steps of Paul

A Week of Outreach, Hope, and Heartbreak

*Athens Connect Group Missions Trip,
Center of Hope International*

We arrived in Athens wide-eyed and ready—well, maybe a little jet-lagged too. Our team of four hit the ground running, and from the very first day, we sensed this trip would leave a permanent mark on our hearts.

Our first ministry stop was with streetwalkers in the red-light district—some of the most marginalized and vulnerable women in the city. Many were older, even into their 70s, and all carried stories we would never fully know. It was heartbreaking—and deeply humanizing. We looked them in the eye, listened, and offered what we could: prayer, dignity, and presence.

The next day found us in one of Athens' darkest neighborhoods, cooking and serving meals to individuals battling addiction. It was raw, gritty, and humbling. There's no way to prepare for the sight of heroin and crack slowly taking over lives in broad daylight.

Midweek, we partnered with a local ministry called Good Samaritan, which serves refugees and migrants from across the Middle East and North Africa. From clothing and medical care to schools and a nursery, the team there offers a full-hearted effort to love people well. We planned to return on Friday to minister to more than fifteen Arab and Persian women, while one brave teammate prepared to lead a kids' program for at least ten children under six.

Thursday brought an unexpected contrast—an inspiring walking tour of Athens, including Mars Hill, where Paul once preached his famous "Unknown God" sermon. That evening, however, proved to be one of the most emotionally demanding of our trip. From 7:30 to 11:00 p.m., we visited several brothels. The need was overwhelming—but so

was the openness. One teammate, who speaks Spanish, prayed with and encouraged seven women from Colombia and Venezuela. Their stories were both painful and powerful.

On Friday, we traveled to Corinth—an ancient city full of ruins and reminders of the early church. Standing where Paul once preached brought Scripture to life in a personal way we hadn't expected.

Saturday gave us a bit of breathing room: a chance to rest, reflect, and return to the women we had met earlier in the week. It was night now—and many were under the influence. But they recognized us. We sat with them. We prayed. We remembered their names.

Sunday welcomed us into a refreshing, English-speaking church service—full of worship, warmth, and perspective. On Monday, we took a three-island tour—a beautiful, relaxing day that allowed space for reflection and renewal.

Tuesday, we returned to the streets. The scene was more desperate than before. The drugs were heavier. The darkness, deeper. But we showed up.

On our final day, we visited a small seaside town, then prepared for our last ministry moment. Fittingly, we ended where we began—at Good Samaritan, surrounded by women and children who matter deeply to the heart of God.

Athens changed us. It opened our eyes to pain we couldn't fix—but also to the kind of love that just shows up, listens, and stays. We came to serve, but we left transformed. Thank you for praying, supporting, and walking this journey with us. The work continues—not only in Athens, but in each of us.

212 Youth & Young Adults: A Growing Move of God



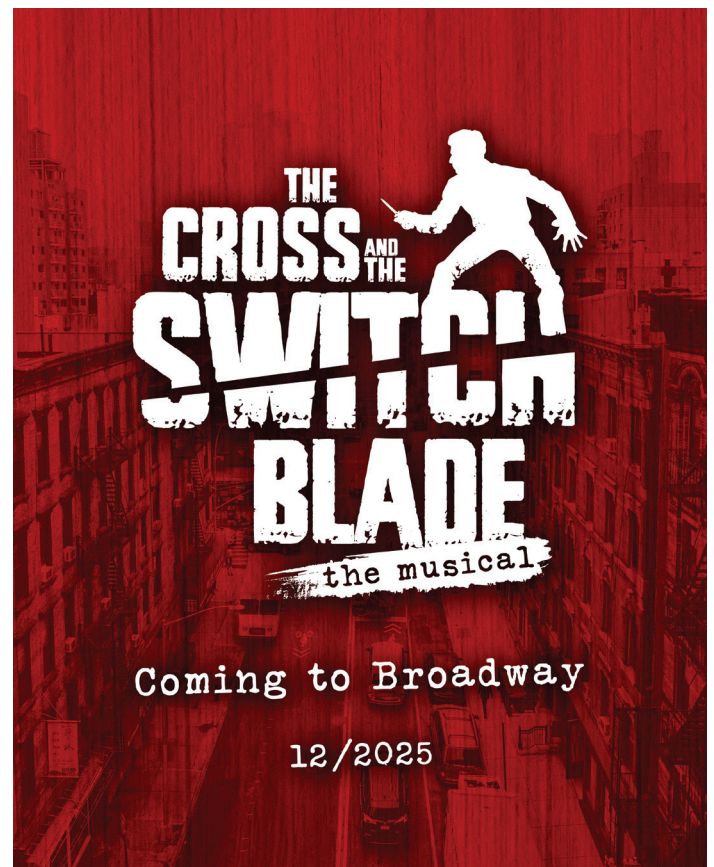
212 Youth & Young Adults is becoming a place where a generation is being awakened. Every week, more young people are showing up—not just to attend, but to encounter something real. The presence of God is tangible, and lives are being transformed through powerful moments of worship, prayer, and the Word.

This is becoming more than a gathering—it's a move of God. Miracles are happening. Hearts are being healed. Faith is being ignited. There's a deep hunger for more of Jesus, and He's meeting people in personal and powerful ways. These aren't just emotional highs; they're genuine encounters that lead to lasting change.

What's happening each week is marked by growth—not just in numbers, but in depth. A strong sense of unity and community is forming among this generation. You can feel it: the passion, the purpose, and the presence of God all in one space. It's becoming a place where people are reminded they're not alone, and that God is actively working in their lives.

At 212, we're witnessing something truly special—young people coming alive in their faith, growing in confidence, and living unashamed of the Gospel. There's a quiet but undeniable move of God happening, and hearts are being stirred in a real way. It feels like the early signs of revival, and it's only just beginning.

If you're looking for a place to belong and a place to grow, 212 is where heaven is meeting earth—and you're invited. For more info visit tsc.nyc/twoonetwo



I Didn't Finish on Time. I Finished on Purpose

by Cindy Dilena

Today I'm celebrating something that might surprise you: I just finished the Navigator's Book-at-a-Time One-Year Bible Reading Plan. But wait—if I started in January like most people, how am I writing this in July? You might assume I powered through and finished early, but actually, it took me a year and a half. Yep—eighteen months. And you know what? I'm still celebrating. I read every verse, every book, the entire Bible. Some days I read a single chapter. Other days, six. Some days, honestly, I didn't read at all. There were days that stirred deep questions and sent me looking for answers. Some days, I found myself screenshotting verses and sending them to friends who needed a little hope. One particularly vivid morning, I ended up sketching the entire biblical timeline of major events on a paper towel at the breakfast table. The Holy Spirit met me right there, with a cup of coffee and a roll of Bounty.

So why am I telling you this? Because we are so hard on ourselves—and because the devil loves to take advantage of that. He convinces us that if we can't do something perfectly or on schedule, we might as well quit. And so we do. We quit Bible plans in March because we're only through January. We quit praying for our spouse or adult children because we haven't seen change. We stop being kind to that neighbor because they still won't come to church. We give up on eating well because our jeans zipped a little tighter. We abandon budgets after one messy month. We even stop going to church because we feel like God hasn't answered our prayers. And yet, when we quit, who really benefits? Not us. Not the people we're

called to love. Not our future selves. The only one who celebrates when we give up is the enemy, who lives in the moment and thrives on our discouragement. He loves to whisper, "Yes. Do it. Eat it. Skip it. Buy it. Say it." But Romans 8:1 says, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." That's the truth. If you're in Christ, you don't have to live under guilt. You don't have to be perfect to be faithful. You can fall behind and still finish strong.

We give grace so easily to others, but we're brutal with ourselves. As my daughter Grace recently said, "We're so hard on ourselves. Nobody else is. And if they are, you shouldn't be hanging out with them anyway." So maybe it's time to stop hanging out with the devil. Stop listening to his voice. Get back up. Finish what you started—whether it's a Bible reading plan, a prayer journal, a workout goal, a connect group, or that one conversation with your neighbor or spouse about Jesus. John 6:63 says, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all." We can't muscle our way through the things that matter most. We need God's Spirit. And thankfully, He's not counting chapters—He's looking at hearts.

I didn't finish my Bible plan in one year. But I did fulfill its purpose. The goal wasn't speed; it was saturation. It was about being in God's Word. And I get to live in the fruit of that. Galatians 5:22 reminds us that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness." That's what I've gained. And that's worth celebrating.

Chapter by Chapter

with Tim Dilena

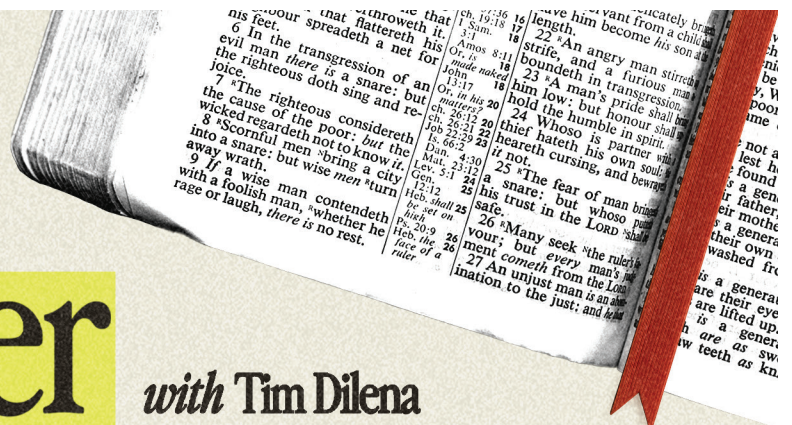
Join us this September for the launch of Chapter by Chapter with Tim Dilena, a new daily podcast that walks listeners through the entire Bible, one chapter at a time.

From Genesis to Revelation, each episode offers insight and a fresh perspective, whether it is being read for the first time or many times before.

Chapter by Chapter is a simple and consistent way to grow in your faith and stay connected to God's Word every day.

Coming soon to all major streaming platforms.

Start the journey this September!





More Than a Next Step: A Year That Transforms

What if your next step wasn't just about what you'll do — but about who you're becoming?

At Summit, transformation begins by stepping away from distraction, diving deep into the Word of God, and being equipped for a life of purpose and impact.

Through our flexible one- and two-year programs, you'll be challenged academically and formed spiritually. Grounded in the Spirit and the Word, Summit combines high-quality biblical teaching with hands-on ministry training. You won't just study theory — you'll gain real-world skills that prepare you to serve with excellence in both ministry and the marketplace.

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If you've been praying about taking a gap year, exploring your call to ministry, or still discovering your next step... Summit is a place to be grounded in truth and shaped by God's presence.

Visit summitpa.org and begin your application today.



TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of "The Cross and the Switchblade." It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

CONTACT

212.541.6300

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237 West 51st Street

Between Broadway & 8th Avenue

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In Person and Online

Wednesday | 7 pm

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