

TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

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|--|---|--|--|-------------------------------|
| 01 Don't Get Stuck
by Tim Dilena | 02 Saints Are Always Plural
by Dr. Joel Gregory | 03 Year of Signs
and Wonders | 04 Devotional
Recommendation | 05 Reaching
Siberia |
|--|---|--|--|-------------------------------|



Don't Get Stuck

01
Tim Dilena

I remember hearing the story of centuries ago that Antonio loved music but he couldn't sing or play. What a predicament for Antonio. He felt helpless until his friend Amahee said to him, "There are many ways to make music. What matters is the song in the heart."

That word was all that Antonio needed. So instead of singing and playing he started making violins. Even today, the violins of Antonio Stradivarius are considered to be the greatest violins on the planet. And it all came from a friend who wouldn't let him sit there living a life less than what he was created for. If Amahee did not speak to Antonio, the world would have been deprived. Antonio could have gotten stuck saying to himself "I am not a singer." He needed a friend to tell him there is something more for you.

Society defines middle age between 40—60 years old. I am in that middle age range for a few more years and then become a senior citizen.

Middle age is a critical time of life. It will determine if you will be a sage and wise counsel for young people or an old person repeating the same old stories of how it used to be. If you don't get this right you become critical and repetitive. As I am exiting out of middle age, I pray that I would be a voice to the next generation.

For many years I have claimed as my life verse Psalm 71:17—18. Any time I sign a book for someone, I put this verse down next to my name. It reminds me to be a voice. David seems to speak as a middle aged man that is preparing to cross into his senior years.

Psalms 71:17—18 (NASB)

**17 O God, You have taught me from my youth,
And I still declare Your wondrous deeds.**

**18 And even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me,
Until I declare Your strength to this generation,
Your power to all who are to come.**

**“ As I am exiting out of
middle age, I pray that I
would be a voice to the
next generation ”**

The word "declare" is a strong word. David uses it twice. It's a word that has emphasis and conviction attached to it. David wants to be a voice to the next generation.

There is a story about another man who is middle age in the book of Acts. The Bible sees it important to give us his age and tell us about his miracle.

Acts 4:22 (NKJV) For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

This man was stuck. And like Stradivarius, he needed someone to

“When people are willing to move I think God moves.”

DON'T GET STUCK

TIM DILENA

come along and upset the status quo and get him doing what God created him for. His story may be familiar to some in Acts 3.

Acts 3:1—2 (NASB)

1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. 2 And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple.

This man had life without liberty. He had legs without movement. He was at a critical crossroads of his life and he was stuck at the temple. That is the worst place to be stuck. You are in God's house but aren't going anywhere.

It can happen to anyone. I remember reading the story of the seminary graduate who just got his Master's of Divinity and got stuck. He was stuck in a mindset. The graduate was upset that the church that hired him wasn't letting him preach. He was given a number of tasks but not the one he wanted to do. He kept saying, “I don't do that. I do preaching. Finally, another student at the church, in a loving but unsympathetic way, patted him on the back and said, “You know the world is a better place because Michelangelo didn't say, ‘I don't do ceilings.’”

The world is a better place because a German monk named Martin Luther didn't say, “I don't do doors.”

The world is a better place, because an Oxford don named John Wesley didn't say, “I don't preach in fields.”

From the beginning of the Bible to the end, you will see over and over, the story of men and women who had servant hearts and the world is a better place, because:

Moses didn't say, “I don't do seas.”

Noah didn't say, “I don't do arks.”

David didn't say, “I don't do giants.”

Mary Magdalene didn't say, “I don't do feet.”

Paul didn't say, “I don't do letters.”

Jesus didn't say, “I don't do crosses.”

Just as a lame man can be stuck at the temple. I believe the disciples could have gotten stuck in an upper room, and said, “we only do second floor services.” That's why I love that Acts 3 follows Acts 2. And I love that the prayer meeting was on the second floor. What do I mean?

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 happened in an upper room. However, those disciples were not meant to stay in the upper room and just have a church service. There was a lame man that needed them to come down the stairs to street level. If they would have stayed in the upper room, this man never would have walked.

Peter says, “Look at us.”

Acts 3:4 (NASB)

4 But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, “Look at us!”

Why these words?

I believe Peter was saying, “Hey, look at me and John. If Jesus can change us, He can change you. If Jesus can turn rough fisherman into preachers, lame men walking is up His alley. Just look at us!”

I really believe a neglected form of evangelism is “look at us.” People will watch your lives before they hear your words. The late British evangelist, Gypsy Smith, once quipped, “There are five Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the Christian, but most people never read the first four.” Guess who they are looking at?

Someone once said, “I would not give much for your religion unless it can be seen. Lamps do not talk, but they do shine.”

Acts 3:6—10 (NASB)

6 But Peter said, “I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!” 7 And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. 8 With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God; 10 and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

The lame beggar, who has been lame since birth, is now walking, leaping and praising God. I love this picture the Bible gives us. I see two disciples next to a man that won't stop leaping up and down as they hold his arms. The 40 something year-old middle aged man is unstuck. He is the recipient of a miracle from heaven. But his miracle was not simply for him to stop begging but

to show others what God can do. I believe he had the same story. Look at me! If He can do this for me, He can do it for you.

A lame beggar needed Peter and John just like Antonio needed Amahee. If these men did not enter their lives, then violinists for generations would be denied a masterpiece and thousands of people would be denied their miracle.

What happens after this miracle?

Acts 4:4 (NASB)

4 But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

5,000 people believed in Jesus because of this miracle. Peter preached in Acts 3 after the middle age miracle and thousands are changed.

Don't get stuck in one spot. Don't get stuck in an upper room. Don't get stuck in the temple. We need people to come down. And we need people to jump up and down. And when people are willing to move, I think God moves.

I believe God is constantly moving, it's just that His people are not. Maybe the next time someone asks God to move in their church, in their lives or in their city, we really should be praying, God help me to move.

Saints Are Always Plural

02

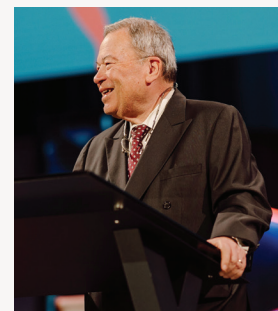
Dr. Joel Gregory

Just over the Golden Gate Bridge in Marin County you can descend towards the Pacific and land in the Muir Woods, a collection of gigantic thousand year-old coastal redwoods. They have lasted through fungus infestations, fires, storms, droughts, and man-made disasters. You would think they had deep roots since they are so tall. Actually, their roots are shallow but are intertwined. That is, the trees hold one another up.

The ethicist Russell Moore describes a new type of evangelical Christians in the South, folks who claim to follow Jesus but do not want to go to church. Now, I recognize Times Square Church is not in Dixie, but I expect something similar could be happening in the Big Apple.

The Christian faith has never been a Lone Ranger experience. Saints are always plural in the New Testament. There isn't a singular

saint. Just like coastal redwoods, saints grow together in groves called the Church. Under the Holy Spirit and with the indwelling Christ, believers are attracted to one another. It is hard enough to fight the world, the flesh, and the devil when you are surrounded by other Christians. It is impossible without them.



The largest mosaic of Christ in the world is in the Sacré Couer church on a mountain near Paris. The huge mosaic consists of hundreds of thousands of colored tiles. Every tile has a significant part in representing Christ to those who watch. You hold one tile in the mosaic of Christ presented where you are. Be there.

The Year of Signs and Wonders

03

Summit International School of Ministry

Each year, Summit has a spiritual theme; it becomes our battle cry, the thing the Lord brings back to our attention again and again. This year's theme is, "The Year of Signs and Wonders".

During chapel, Dr. Conlon spoke to our students about 2 Kings chapter 7 which tells the story of four men with leprosy who were desperate for a miracle from God. They were not in a position of power—they were outcasts, left to lay at the city gates during a time of instability and conflict. They knew staying in the place they were would only lead to death when the city came under siege. They were vulnerable, weak, and unable to do much about it. The Bible says that those four men, unworthy as they felt, cried to the Lord for mercy and gathered themselves up to walk into the enemy's camp. As children of God, we have the power

to rise and see the miracles in our generation! Those four men, with no strength of their own, walked toward the enemy's camp with nothing but a prayer for God to show up. Scripture says that when they approached, their enemy heard the sound of a mighty army and fled.



THE YEAR OF SIGNS AND WONDERS (CONTINUED)

Like Pastor Tim wrote about this month, we want to join the chorus of those who refuse to stay stuck in circumstances. We want to join those willing to move forward in faith and say, "Get up! Walk forward into the enemy's camp! The Lord wants to bring a miracle into your life!" Can we believe for signs and

wonders such as this in our day? As Pastor Carter often says, sometimes the battle plan of the Lord seems ridiculous to us, but God has a history of using the small acts of obedience to accomplish great things for His kingdom.

Devotional Recommendation 04

The 1st, 2nd & 3rd Books of John

By Dr. Tony Evans



If you are looking for a Bible Study for yourself or for your connect group, we recommend Dr. Tony Evans' study on 1, 2 & 3 John available through Right Now Media.

This Bible study speaks directly to Christians who have gotten too comfortable in their walk with Jesus. It is easy to grow complacent in our relationship with God and slowly become indiscernible from unbelievers except for certain religious routines. Our lives as Christians are meant to be shaped by a fierce love for

God and a fierce love for people. To walk in this love, we have to be ready to step out in radical faith and an obedience that is impossible without a continuous reliance on the Holy Spirit. Through guided questions, weekly assignments and commentary, you can be challenged to daily reach toward the standards of love, obedience and truth that Christians are called to.

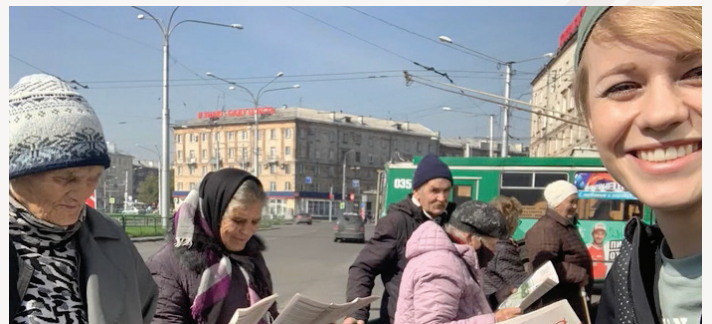
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Reaching Siberia through the Power of Journalism

05

At 45, Alexander was a successful journalist and head editor working for a prestigious newspaper in Novokuznetsk, Siberia. However, despite his outward success, inwardly he was empty. He couldn't stop searching for the meaning of life. He began praying alone at home hoping for something more than his current experience. Eventually, he started attending a church, sitting in the back, speaking to no one and regarding all with skepticism. But each week, his heart softened bit by bit as he heard the testimonies about God's transforming power shared in the church. Until one day, he himself decided to commit his life to Christ and be water baptized. It happened unexpectedly, during a time of meditation, he shifted his focus to this God he'd heard tales of and in a conversation without words, he realized the omnipresence and love of God. He was now one of the many powerful stories shared from the pulpit. He resigned from his post, but forever a journalist at heart, he knew the power of storytelling. He began work on his own newspaper, The Seventh Day. For ten years, he told of the many powerful testimonies he was encountering in the church and in the local Teen Challenge. Alexander was printing out 20,000 copies of his newspapers a month with double that number on holidays like Easter and Christmas. Four times a year, they print out 60,000

copies to be passed out by evangelistic volunteers to the remote northern region of the country.



Recently, Alexander was forced to limit the amount of newspapers he published but when our missions team heard his story, they knew that TSC had to help. Now with your financial support, the team of evangelists and the church partner in Siberia, Alexander's newspaper is able to reach thousands of people across Siberia with the gospel message. Alexander says, "I will do everything in my strength to make sure that the good news is spread to people so they know that they can receive salvation."