

Acts Lesson 40 Handout

The Bedouin shepherd lives in shabby box tents that dot the hillsides throughout Israel. When compared to our lives saturated with modern conveniences it seems as though they live a very difficult life. However, an interesting fact is that their average life span is more than 100 years.

While the diets are made up of natural foods which contain no preservatives, that is not the secret to their longevity. The secret lies in their relatively stress free lives. Stress makes us sick, drives us crazy and kills us some three decades before the majority of these shepherds.

The Bedouins rise from their tents slightly before sunrise and go about the work of their days. As the sun begins to set they gather as families in their tents for dinner. Then they will sit around sharing stories and singing. Each evening involves three to four hours of family time.

There work is very physical and tiring, but their lives are relatively free from the noise of life. They routinely go to bed at the same time every night and enjoy deep restful and renewing sleep. As the Bedouins lie down all is quiet as they stare up at the clear star filled sky. Their minds are able to focus on the majesty of God and that is the last thought on their minds as they fall asleep.

**When plans
change.**

**Stress happens
when we
have not
fully surrendered
our lives to
God.**

**You are
following
His lead
not yours.**

Acts 16:10 Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

11 Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day came to Neapolis,

12 and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days.



When people don't change.

13 And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there.

14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.

Stress is relieved when we surrender that person to Jesus.

15 And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to

the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded us.

When people
annoy us.

16 Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling.

17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.”

18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed,

See the root of why
they act the way
they do.

Gary Liederbach- Lead Follower

One Direction Community

My morning office is the Waffle House. About 3 months ago I went into the Waffle House and I sat down in a chair at the “low bar,” the bar you can sit at that is at normal chair height. I did not notice the used coffee cup that was on the bar in the back next to the menu rack in front of the chair I sat in. It belonged to a man I will call Chuck., who happened to have gone outside to smoke a morning cigarette. Chuck is a man who comes frequently to the WH. He is a “rough” and crude man in his late

60's. He cusses alot and gives the waitresses and customers a hard time and is sharp with them when he is "in that mood." Chuck walked back into the WH, saw me sitting in "his chair," walked up to me and said coldly "Hey mother ** you are in my seat!" I turned to him and before I could say a word the two waitresses who were standing there almost jumped over the bar and verbally attacked Chuck. One said, "Now you listen here you mother ****this man here is a ***** man of God and if you ever talk to him like that again I will kick your ***** The other waitress jumped in, " Ya you ***, he is my **** pastor! What the *** is wrong with you.!" Show some ****respect!**

The waitresses high fived each other and one said to the other. "Sword of the spirit B!" And Chuck turned and walked out.

I sat there and processed what had just happened! First, the waitresses have never come to an ODC gathering, though I have invited them many times. And I never told the waitresses I was their pastor.

But because of my coming into the Waffle House four or five mornings a week and talking, listening, and praying with them it appears that is how they saw me. The other day the waitresses were talking about how life seemed to be attacking them. I took out my phone and I read to them from Ephesians 6 about the armor of God and explained it to them. And the one waitresses shouting "Sword of the spirit B" shows they were listening and retaining what I told them, I just need to work a little more on their application of that verse!

Fast forward to a month ago. I was walking in the Waffle House and Chuck was outside in the front smoking. I said good morning to him as I was walking by and Chuck kind of quietly and nicely (especially for Chuck!) asked if I had a moment. I told him sure and stopped by him. He

said quietly as he looked at the ground, "I know you are kind of a religious guy and it's not that big of a deal but I was wondering if you would pray for me for something. "I said, "Sure what's up?" And he went on to say that the Doctors think he may have prostate cancer and he had a test today to confirm it. I said, "of course," but before I could say anything else he opened up and told me a story for about 10 minutes. The short summary of it was that he used to go to church a long time ago and was kind of close to God. Then he was drafted to Vietnam to fight in the war. He said he did some things there he was not proud of, things God could not forgive him for. He said in attacks on villages he shot and killed enemy soldiers who were just kids, also women, and elderly. He saw children killed and witnessed and participated in other atrocities of war. He stopped praying after the war and has never gone back to church since he came back to the states. When I asked to pray with him there he said no, he had to leave, but for me to pray as you feel God will listen.

As he walked away my heart both mourned for him and was convicted for me. I had joined in with others at the WH at times commenting on Chuck and his behavior. However, the reason Chuck was an angry, and hurtful man is he was filled with guilt that separated him from God. Guilt from things he did he thought were not forgivable. And I thought, I know and preach that God can forgive anything, I have never put him to "the test" of his forgiveness like Chuck has to. If I was the one looking down an M-16 and watching bullets splatter bodies of kids and women from my gun and trigger I was pulling, the event might make me an even bigger, hateful, guilt filled A than Chuck. It reminded me that people are never the enemy.

Fast forward to yesterday morning. I was in the Waffle House at the bar talking with customers and the

waitresses when Chuck walked in. He walked over to a side bar he never sits in by himself and sat down. No cussing, no loud comments to people as he came in the restaurant. He looked devastated. One of the waitresses said they heard his son had died the previous night. My spirit told me to go sit in the chair next to him and I did.

I said good morning to him and he said hey, and his eyes began to fill with tears. I told him I had heard that his son had died and if it was true, and if so I was so sorry. We talked again for 20 minutes.

Summary, he told me his son who was 31 years old and some of his friends, Chuck, and Chucks wife, (his son's mother) were out on the front porch talking. His son told his friends how he had bought a new pistol. They asked to see it. He went into his truck and got it out, removed the clip, and thought the gun was empty. It was not. He came back to the porch and in handing the gun to his friend when somehow it went off and the bullet hit is son in the head from less than 2 feet away. They rushed him to the hospital but he died a few hours after he arrived.

Chuck said he and his wife witnessed it. He could not get the sight out of his mind. It reminded him of the war. He had to come home from the hospital and clean his son's blood, hair, and other parts from the side of his house and porch. Tears were flowing down his face. He asked me if this was God's punishment for the kids he killed in Vietnam. I said of course not and we talked awhile. His son had a wife and two kids 8 and 10 years old.

After we finished, I went home and my wife and I took the chicken I had grilled for dinner, along with sides, bread and a dessert, and I put it in a box and took it up to the WH. I also wrote a note to the family stating I was praying for them and asking to let me know if I could

help in anyway with my phone number on it and put it in the box as well. I pulled into the WH just in time as Chuck was walking to his car to leave. I parked, got the box and gave it to him. Chuck teared up again as he took it. He said I did not have to, but I insisted, told him I was praying for him, and I left.

Fast forward to today. I received a call today from Chuck. He thanked me for the food. He then said he and his family do not have any money. They are getting the cheapest cremation they can, and just going to do a remembrance service at their home. Their family does not attend a church, they do not know many church people, let alone preachers, and he asked if I would be willing to come to their house and share from the Bible and some words over their son and their family. I told him I would be honored to.

"I have been going to the Waffle House regularly for over 3 years now. Sometimes I wondered if I needed to continue going. Only one or two people, employees or customers, have ever come to an ODC gathering. So if you go by traditional church metrics, my time investment has not led to "church" growth or increased "numbers in the pews." It has not resulted in one penny going into our offertory plate or pastor support. Yet God reminded me of my prayer I say to him every morning, which is, "God, please send me today the ones that no one else wants."

No one wanted Chuck, even I found it hard to be around him. But God through just being faithful has given me an amazing opportunity; to be welcomed into his house; a house, a circle of family and friends that no other pastor has ever been invited into, and share the love of God with them. And that is my heart's desire, not to see them as an "evangelists projector opportunity" but a family in

pain that simply needs the love of God, and to love them. I pray I may honor this.

My ODC family, I pray today you will be led by the Holy Spirit not to seek and enter into some structured ministry with people, but just simply enter into life and the lives of people. That in your daily set schedule you will allow and come to expect, even long for interruptions from two things: God and people.

18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour.

Doing the right
thing and getting
in trouble.

19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

**20 And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city;
21 and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe."**

22 Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods.

23 And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely.

24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.



25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

Comments about Paul in the Philippian Jail from "Desire," by Vesta Mangun, p. 15-16

One of the greatest stories ever written was when Paul and Silas were in Philippi, with swollen ankles, bleeding backs, beaten with rods, in a rat infested inner prison.

Apparently that is a good platform for revival. Apparently that is a good time to write history.

Do you hear them grumbling?

Do you hear them criticizing everybody else?

Do you hear them running everybody else down?

Do you hear them talking or complaining?

-Paul said, "We will not look at our difficulties. We will not measure the height of these walls, neither will we look at any of this." The inner prison was indescribable, but Paul said, "I will remember the Lord God who split the Red Sea and He is the God of the cloud and the fire."

-"I know that I cannot curse the darkness, there is only one thing that can take care of the darkness. I will light a little torch. Let's sing. I know that it is midnight, but I am going to use everything I have. My hands are in stocks. My feet are in bonds. I'm beaten but I can wiggle my fingers and toes. I have a mouth. I am not going to wait for big things. I am not going to wait for the moment."

-They turned a place of torture into a cathedral of triumph and set the city and continent ablaze. The man responsible was a handcuffed man, a chained man, but he pushed back the horizon. Write history even if it is not time to write history. Bound, contemptible, weak physically, yet he shook the Roman Empire. It was this little man who said, "None of these things move me!"

**Looking to Him
with praise for what
He will do.**

26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

27 And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself.

28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

29 Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.

30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.

34 Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

**Stressful situations
open doors for people
to hear about Jesus.**

**God uses stress to
move us where He
needs us next.**

35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, "Let those men go."

36 So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace."

37 But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out."

38 And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans.

39 Then they came and pleaded with them and brought them out, and asked them to depart from the city.

40 So they went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

Acts 17

1 Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.

1 Samuel 30:1–8 (NASB95)

1 Then it happened when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had made a

raid on the Negev and on Ziklag, and had overthrown Ziklag and burned it with fire;

2 and they took captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great, without killing anyone, and carried them off and went their way.

3 When David and his men came to the city, behold, it was burned with fire, and their wives and their sons and their daughters had been taken captive.

4 Then David and the people who were with him lifted their voices and wept until there was no strength in them to weep.

5 Now David's two wives had been taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite.

6 Moreover David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him, for all the people were embittered, each one because of his sons and his daughters.

But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

Surrender your
life completely
to Jesus.

Looking to Him
with praise for what
He will do.