

Acts Series Part 42

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[0 : 0 0] What kind of a person are you? Another related question, maybe a more important question, especially if you're younger. What kind of person do you aspire to become?

That question is relevant for all of us, whatever age we are, but obviously it's particularly relevant for those who are still young. What kind of person are you? What kind of person would you like to be? I wonder if you had this sentence and there was a gap in it. I would like to be a, you need an adjective there, person. What adjective would you put in there? What kind of person?

I wonder if the word helpful would be one of them. It does seem a little tame. I would like to be a helpful person. There's surely something a bit more exciting that we could come up with, and of course there are many words that you might place there that would be worthy as an aspiration. But I do wonder and ask the question, would helpful be one of them? If you were allowed to put in a few words, would that be one of them? What I'd like to do this evening is to encourage you and convince you that this is a most noble aspiration, to be helpful, to be useful in the service of God and in the service of others. Now, some might ask, is it not a given that Christians will be helpful, that Christians will be useful in God's service. Well, you might think so, but it is not always the case. Simple observation confirms that. Sometimes the thirst for other adjectives to place in that gap squeezes out helpful and squeezes out useful. We want to be successful. We want to be happy. We want to be comfortably off.

Nobody would be so crass, or few people would be so crass as to say, I want to be rich. Rather, we couch it in more pleasant language. Comfortably well off, that is sufficient. But all it means really is rich. Helpful, useful, not that appealing. Today we want to meet a man. A young man began as a young man.

We'll meet him as he goes from youth into adulthood. But a young man whose epitaph could very reasonably be that he was helpful. He was useful. The name of this young man is John Mark. Now, we first met John Mark in Acts chapter 12. For those of you who are becoming part of the congregation recently, just as a little background, we have been preaching through the book of Acts this past year, I suppose, and we've reached chapter 15. Well, we met John Mark for the first time in chapter 12. And he's actually mentioned at the very beginning of the chapter, we'll notice in a moment that, but the most significant first reference is when he accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. And he reappears in chapter 15, which is our concern this evening, or in any case, our starting point this evening, but it is to this passage that we have reached as we have been studying through the book. And he reappears, John Mark, in chapter 15, not as a significant player, but simply as a bone of contention, as a source of conflict for the missionary team that is Paul and Barnabas. Well, let's read the short passage that relates this to us in Acts chapter 15, reading from verse 36. It's on page 1111 of the Bible.

[4 : 18] So, that's nice and easy to remember. Page 1111, Acts chapter 15, and we'll read from verse 36. Just to set this passage in context, it's probably two or three weeks since we were considering Acts chapter 15, and you'll remember that we were considering this chapter or parts of it, and the council at Jerusalem, considering the manner in which conflict or disagreements were resolved and lessons that there were for us. Well, this passage sits chronologically immediately following that council meeting, and we find Paul and Barnabas having happily reached a solution to the problems, now considering further missionary activity. So, we'll read the verses in question, verses 36 to 41.

Sometime later, Paul said to Barnabas, Paul here is referring to the first missionary journey, particularly to the churches that had been founded in Asia Minor, in what is today known as Turkey, and that was the missionary journey that John Mark had begun with Paul and Barnabas, and so Paul is proposing to Barnabas that they visit again the places that they had been.

We continue the reading in verse 37. Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work.

They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

So, this is the passage that we are interested in. Now, the manner we're going to treat our subject matter this evening is really not to limit ourselves to this one passage.

[6 : 38] Our concern is more with the person of John Mark, and so in order to get a better picture of John Mark, we will begin here, but we will also draw on other biblical data concerning John Mark. There isn't much of it, but such as there is, we will also refer to, to get a picture of this young man, and to draw lessons from him.

What we've read speaks of this sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas, and some might think it more fitting to draw a discreet veil over such an unseemly disagreement between these two missionaries.

And we might think we'd be better advised to move swiftly on to chapter 16, which we'll discover when we reach this chapter. Chapter 16 is full of very exciting stuff that we want to learn from and study.

But we will just detain ourselves this evening to consider this matter, or take it as an opportunity to introduce ourselves to this young man, John Mark.

As we meet him, and as we consider his life as much as we know of it, what we want to do, or the purpose in doing so, is twofold.

[8 : 09] First of all, to identify, to draw lessons, especially for young Christians who wish to grow into mature, helpful, and useful disciples of Jesus.

So that's our first purpose. What lessons can we learn from John Mark? And I trust and pray, and believe, and I'm persuaded that in the congregation this evening, there are such young people who wish to be useful disciples of Jesus Christ, who wish to be helpful to the cause of the gospel.

If that is what you wish to be, then listen carefully to what you can learn from John Mark. If that is not what you wish to be, then I would urge you to think again about your priorities, for there can be no greater aspiration than to be useful to God, to be helpful in the fulfilling of God's purposes.

So there are lessons for young or younger Christians here, but I think there are also some lessons for those of us who are a little older, a little less young, concerning the responsibility that we have to help and to nurture those who have the aspirations that we've just commented on.

How can we help young Christians who wish to grow, who wish to mature, who wish to be useful and helpful in the service of God? What is our task in helping such?

[9 : 47] So that really is what I hope we will gain from thinking about and meeting John Mark this evening. What do we know about this young man?

Well, it would seem that he was brought up in a relatively well-off home in Jerusalem. The very first mention that we have of him is in Acts chapter 12 and verse 12.

The chapter relates Peter's miraculous escape from prison. And you'll remember that when he escaped from prison, he headed immediately to the home of one of the believers. And we read there in verse 12, when this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.

And then we remember the incident, how Peter knocked on the door and the servant girl Rhoda went and nobody knew really what was going on. But really, we make reference to this first mention of John Mark because it does give us a little bit of insight into the home that he was part of.

Although there is a measure of informed speculation, it would seem reasonable to conclude that the home where he lived, the home of Mary, who is mentioned here, his mother, was an ample home.

[11 : 08] That is where the believers gathered, presumably because it was large enough for a significant gathering of Christians. There is mention of servants, certainly of one servant.

And again, that would give a hint or an indication as to the home and the social status, if you wish, or the economic resources of this home.

And this is the home where John Mark grew up, the home that he belonged to. A reasonable reconstruction of the events would be that John Mark was a young boy, a young lad, maybe a teenager.

We don't have the information to clearly know his age at different points of the story, but perhaps a young lad or a young adult, perhaps, when his mother, who is mentioned here in chapter 12, Mary, came to faith.

And John Mark witnessed how his home was transformed into a hub of the nascent church in Jerusalem at that time. And of course, it was a very exciting time to be part of this church.

[12 : 18] And there, his home was where the Christians gathered. That's where the apostles gathered. And he was at the very heart of this exciting new movement. The church was growing in leaps and bounds.

Every day, new people would come and he would meet them as they would visit the home of his mother Mary, as they would worship there, as they would discuss matters there. He was a witness to the manner in which the apostles were being used mightily of God in amazing ways, performing signs and wonders and the message that they preached, being owned of God and many responding and putting their trust in Jesus.

He was at the heart of all of this. He was involved, certainly as a witness to these things. And these apostles, the pillars of the early church, he knew them.

He knew them personally. They were often in his home. This, of course, was also a dangerous time. The passage that we've read, or rather the verse that we've noted there in chapter 12 of Acts, is a chapter that speaks of the death of James, the brother of John, how he had been put to death by the sword because of his faith.

And Peter, well, he finds himself imprisoned. This is the first reference to John Mark. He may well have been part of that congregation on that very evening when Peter appeared and knocked on the door.

[13 : 50] Maybe he'd fallen asleep due to the advanced hour, but if he had, I imagine he was soon awoken by the piercing cry of Rhoda, Peter is at the door.

And John Mark would have woken up and discovered and heard the wonderful story of how Peter had been miraculously liberated from his incarceration.

Well, such an upbringing was a great privilege for John Mark. But with that great privilege came great responsibility. And so, when the opportunity presented itself to join Paul and Barnabas, Barnabas, who we are told on another occasion was his cousin, cousin of John Mark, when that opportunity arose for him to join with them and to travel from Jerusalem, his hometown, to Antioch, and then subsequently to be part of this first missionary journey into the unknown, certainly into the unknown for this young man, John Mark, when that opportunity presents itself, it would seem he jumps at the chance.

He is very keen to be part of this. He wants to go with Barnabas and with Paul. He wants to be involved. He wants to serve God in this way. Now, no doubt that would have involved him passing up on other opportunities for personal development and education and work of one kind or another, I imagine.

It certainly meant leaving the comforts of home, of which it would seem he had many. Servants like Rhoda at his beck and call. Paul, I would imagine if we are correct in gauging the home he was part of, Mark hadn't done much in the way of washing dishes or manual labor in his short life, and yet he is willing to leave all that to serve God, to join with Paul and Barnabas in this dangerous venture into the unknown.

[15 : 54] If we just pause for a moment there and draw a lesson. What about you? You are a young Christian. Perhaps you, too, have enjoyed the privilege of being brought up in a Christian home.

And you, too, have the opportunity to serve God in a variety of ways. And yet, might it be the case that you choose to hold back?

Might it be the case that you prefer to keep your distance from too much commitment? Maybe you don't want to be too keen or too involved in the service of God.

There are other things to do, other priorities that seem to be higher up on your own particular list of priorities. Well, I would say to you, be like John Mark.

Go for it. Grasp the opportunities that present themselves to you to serve God, to engage in missionary service. Those of you who are students, you have a God-given opportunity to be a witness for Jesus Christ on campus, among your classmates, among your fellow students, among your peers.

[17 : 15] An opportunity that will come and go in a flash. Those of you who are just beginning and you think, oh, I've still got three, four, five years. I've such a long time.

You'll soon discover that it's gone. Don't miss the opportunity to be a missionary for Jesus Christ where God has placed you.

As you think about what you'll do in your summer break and you consider the alternatives, you could work all summer and make money for things that you want to buy and that's not wrong.

Maybe for some it's what you'll need to do. But consider how those occasions, how those times could be used to be involved in missionary activity of one kind or another and perhaps even as you come to the close of a time of study.

Think about how the training you have received and the opportunities you have been given can be used for the service of God. This was John Mark's desire.

[18 : 17] He wanted to serve God. He wanted to go to other lands in the service of God as an ambassador of Jesus Christ and he is to be commended for that and we are to learn from his example.

For those of us who are older, perhaps especially those who have leadership within the church and in particular this congregation, let us consider how we can carefully give opportunity to those who are young that they might serve God.

It would be a terrible thing if there were those who had a great desire to serve God and to use their gifts and yet who found that no opportunity was given to them, certainly within the life of the congregation.

So let us be careful and sensitive to that ourselves. So John Mark heads to Cyprus with Paul and Barnabas.

That was their first port of call on that first missionary journey. There is no mention of him in chapter 13 as we continue finding references to him.

[19 : 27] In chapter 13 of Acts in verse 4 there is mention of who are sent by the church at Antioch and John Mark is absent. We read there the two of them, Paul and Barnabas, were sent on their way by the Holy Spirit.

They went down to Seleucia and sailed there from Cyprus. But then as we continue reading the chapter as we jump to verse 14 we find a reference to him.

Rather in verse 13 sorry, in chapter 13 and verse 13 from Paphos Paul and his companions sailed to Perga. Now Paphos is still on Cyprus. They've traveled through Cyprus and then we read that Paul and his companions who were unnamed at that point sailed to Perga in Pamphylia and that's in Asia Minor or in Turkey as it would be today.

Where, and here we meet John again, John Mark again, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. He's not mentioned at the beginning of the chapter and only is mentioned there further on.

Now why is that? Why isn't he mentioned? Why is it only said by Luke that the two of them? Well it would seem the reason is that Paul and Barnabas were very much the senior men. They were the official, if you wish, missionaries who were being sent by the church at Antioch.

[20 : 45] And what was John Mark in that case? Well he was the helper. He was the helper. I'm reluctant to say just the helper but that's really what he was. He was along for the ride to help them in whatever way he could.

He was young, he was inexperienced, he wouldn't be doing any preaching, he wouldn't be in the limelight, he was a helper for these two older men. Maybe he was to do the cooking.

Maybe he was the one who would do the washing. He was the gopher. He would do what he was told to do by Paul and Barnabas. That was his job. And that is a good place to start in Christian service.

Indeed, we might argue very cogently that it's a very good place to end in Christian service. To be a helper. To do what needs to be done out of the limelight that doesn't carry great credit or praise from others.

This was John Mark's calling, certainly at this stage of his Christian life. And I would encourage you who are young, a young Christian, don't be too proud to do the simple things, to be involved in helping, in serving God in ways that maybe won't be noticed, won't be rewarded, won't be the source of many plaudits from others.

[22 : 09] In this, John Mark gives us a good example. Well, John Mark begins the journey with them. They head through Cyprus. It is a journey that perhaps at this point he is enjoying.

Cyprus was an island where there were family connections, and all, it would seem, is going well. But then, they leave Cyprus and they head to Asia Minor.

Now, we don't know at what point John Mark is becoming disenchanted. Maybe it was a bad boat journey. Maybe he was missing his family. Maybe he was missing Mary, his mother.

Maybe he was missing Rhoda and the other servants who could help him and provide for him very comfortably. Maybe he was just fed up. Things weren't as he had expected.

Maybe he was tired. Maybe he was exhausted. He wasn't sleeping well. He was missing his bed. We don't know. Maybe he was fed up with Paul. Maybe he found Paul very demanding, always telling him, always ordering him, always correcting him.

[23 : 11] We don't know. Maybe he was frightened as he considered this next stage of the missionary journey. We don't know for sure the reasons, but what we do know is that he'd had enough and that he jumped ship, or rather he jumps on a ship heading home.

This is what he does. Again, as we pause and think about that, what John Mark did was understandable. He was a young man.

Perhaps the first time he'd been away from home, it probably was a very difficult journey for him. It was understandable, but it was not commendable. He did indeed give up.

He did indeed throw in the towel. He did indeed desert his partners in mission, as Paul accurately describes his actions. There in chapter 15, in verse 13, we're simply told that he left them.

But in chapter 15, we're given more detail as to what he did or the motives behind it. There, Paul describes his departure as desertion. He had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work.

[24 : 20] As we continue to learn from John Mark, let us learn from him in this regard, that let us not do what he did.

Don't look for the easy option. Don't take the path of least resistance. Don't play it safe in your service for God.

Be assured that the best place to be, the most fulfilling place to be, the most ultimately exciting place to be, is where God wants you to be, however tough that place might be.

John Mark, on this occasion, failed. He gave up. He threw in the towel. But Paul and Barnabas, of course, continue their journey. They conclude their journey. They return to Antioch, and then the situation demanded that they head up to Jerusalem for the council meeting that is described for us there in chapter 15.

And at the close of that meeting, and this brings us to the passage that we've read in chapter 15, Paul proposes a return visit to Asia Minor. There in verse 36, we've read it already.

[25 : 30] Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preach the word of the Lord. This is Paul's proposal to Barnabas, and Barnabas has a bright idea, and Barnabas' bright idea is let's take John Mark on the journey.

Well, Barnabas thought it was a bright idea. Barnabas thought it was a great idea. Paul thought it was a lousy idea. And Paul is aggressively opposed to this suggestion.

The language that Luke uses, though in a measure discreet, is very honest. It makes it clear that Paul was opposed.

First, as I say in verse 38, that the language is very careful and courteous, but Paul did not think it was wise to take him, and reasons are given. But then Luke does recognize in verse 39 that this was the cause of a significant conflict.

They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. So this was no small inconvenience. This was a matter that ruptured this pioneering missionary team of Paul and Barnabas.

[26 : 42] Barnabas wants to take John Mark, and Paul says, I'm not taking that guy. He's immature. He's irresponsible. He's let us down. We gave him a chance, and he failed. And I'm not willing to risk it again.

He can't be trusted. He's spoiled. Let him stay with his mummy in Jerusalem. And of course, all of what Paul argued was in a measure true.

These things were true. John Mark had indeed deserted them. He had indeed failed them on this previous occasion. But Barnabas takes a different view.

Barnabas, we see his strength of character that he holds firm to his conviction that John Mark should be given this opportunity. We might be tempted to ask, well, who was right in this dispute?

Luke, probably diplomatically, doesn't apportion blame. I imagine both of these men were in a measure to blame for the sharp disagreement.

[27 : 42] They had a right, of course, to their firmly held opinions. But the manner in which this led to a conflict is no doubt something that both could be held responsible for. But though Luke doesn't apportion blame, if we had to carefully take science I think history itself sides with Barnabas as regards his desire to give John Mark another opportunity.

Both men, both Paul and Barnabas, could make a credible case, a defensible case for the position that they took. And of course, that's often true in disagreements that we have.

Even within, perhaps particularly within a congregation or a denomination, should we have our disagreements? And both sides can make a very credible case. You can't say, well, they're right and they're wrong.

It's not black and white. That was the case here. It wasn't black and white. Good arguments could be made on both sides. But it is also interesting to note how in God's overruling sovereignty, this sharp disagreement that there ought not to have been.

A difference of opinion, certainly, but a sharp disagreement that leads to a rupture was not a good thing. And yet, how God overrules that in those circumstances, the missionary work is effectively doubled.

[29 : 05] Instead of there being one group, Paul and Barnabas and John Mark, heading into further missionary activity, you now have two parties presumably able to do double or certainly more work than otherwise would have been possible.

And so God is able to order these things, even our own weaknesses and folly and immaturity, He is able to make use of for the furtherance of His purposes.

But back to John Mark. John Mark is given a second chance by Barnabas. And there are lessons there for us as well, and especially for the young among you this evening.

And the lesson that I would draw to your attention or encourage you with is that you would, with John Mark, grab those second chances that God gives you.

Maybe third chances or fourth chances that God graciously gives you. You perhaps let down the Lord, even in this week that is finished.

[30 : 11] I don't know in what way that is for you to consider. You've let Him down. Well, God is giving you a second chance at the start of a new week. Maybe you did not take the opportunity to speak about Jesus to somebody, though that opportunity was there for you.

And you feel that you've let the Lord down. You haven't been bold in your witness. Well, you have another opportunity. You have a second chance. A new week is beginning. Take those second chances.

Don't allow the failings of the past to destroy you, to crush you, and to lead you to the conclusion that you're no use. You're hopeless. You can't possibly be useful to God.

John Mark was given a second opportunity. He had let the Lord down. He had let Paul down. He had let Barnabas down. He had been immature. But a second chance was granted to him, and he grabs it.

He grabs it. Another thing that we can notice about John Mark, though we're not told what he thought of this disagreement. We're not told what he thought of Paul's attitude to him.

[31 : 17] But I imagine, if he is human, and of course he is, that he would have been hurt by what Paul said and by the attitude that Paul took.

He perhaps felt that Paul was being harsh with him. And you perhaps have experienced that at the hands of older Christians who haven't considered you, who have disregarded you, who have cast you aside because of mistakes that you've made.

And I would urge you not to be discouraged, to keep on persevering in the service of God. There will be a Barnabas around the corner who is willing to take you under his or her wing.

To those of us who are older in the faith, let us learn to be patient with young believers. Young believers are, by the very fact that they are young, they are not the finished article.

None of us, of course, are the finished article. There are, no doubt, many rough edges. Young believers will let you down. They will sometimes do bad stuff, as you do bad stuff.

[32 : 28] But don't give up on them. I think there is a clear lesson for us. So, as we continue with the story and swiftly bring things to a conclusion, Barnabas and John Mark march off into the sunset, and a very beautiful sunset as it happens to be on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, never to be heard of again for the best part of 20 years.

And then we can pick up the story with a cluster of references to John Mark in some of the epistles. And I'll just quickly read three of the references that there are.

There are four references, but we'll limit ourselves to three, and I'll quickly read them. So, many years have passed. We don't know for sure because the dating of these events isn't an exact science, but certainly 15, maybe as much as 20 years, have passed.

And then we meet John Mark again, or there are references to John Mark again. First of all, we'll notice in Philemon. Philemon is just before Hebrews. And we read there in verse 23.

Epaphras, my fellow prisoner, this is Paul writing the letter, Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings, as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

[33 : 46] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. We also meet him in Colossians, or references made to him by Paul in Colossians in chapter 3 and verse 10, which we will very quickly read.

There in Colossians chapter 3 and verse 10, we read, sorry, it's not chapter 3 and verse 10, chapter 4, sorry, Colossians chapter 4 and verse 10, my fellow prisoner, Aristarchus, sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas.

In fact, it's here that he's identified as the cousin of Barnabas. You have received instructions about him. If he comes to you, welcome him. Also in 1 Peter and chapter 5 and verse 13.

On this occasion, it's Peter who is making reference to John Mark, and we read there in verse 13 of the final chapter, she who is in Babylon chosen together with you sends you her greetings, as does my son Mark.

And everything would suggest that here the reference is to the selfsame Mark that we are considering. And then finally, perhaps the most significant reference is in 2 Timothy chapter 4 and verses 9 to 11.

[35 : 02] And there we read Paul again, who is writing this letter to Timothy, and we've read this passage earlier on in the service. We read in verse 11, we'll limit ourselves to verse 11, get Mark and bring him with you because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

And even simply reading those cluster of verses, we see how things have changed. Many years have passed, of course, but how things have changed.

In Philemon, Paul describes John Mark as his fellow worker, no longer the unreliable one, but rather the one who has proved himself as a faithful foot soldier over many years, a fellow worker of Paul, not even just a younger associate, not just a helper who's there to do the things that others don't want to do, no, a fellow worker of the apostle who can stand shoulder to shoulder with him.

And Paul is happy to have him stand shoulder to shoulder with him. John Mark had stayed the course, and his staying the course was in sobering contrast to others.

There in Philemon, where he is described as a fellow worker, it is sobering to notice that Paul also speaks of another who is described in that same way. There in verse 23 of Philemon, not only Mark, but also this man called Demas.

[36 : 31] He also is described as a fellow worker. But I say in sobering contrast to Demas because in the verse in Timothy that we've read, Paul has to, with great sadness, I'm sure, make reference to this selfsame Demas who had abandoned him, who had deserted him.

He uses, interestingly, the same language that he had used of John Mark previously. And he says of Demas that he has deserted me because he loved this world. There also a sober warning for us.

John Mark, by the grace of God, had persevered. He had proved faithful over many years. But sadly, this other fellow worker had deserted Paul because he loved this world.

And we are all subject to that temptation that love for this world and what this world offers can prove a terrible stumbling block and a cause of abandoning the faith and abandoning our service for God.

But not so John Mark. The reference that we have in Peter is also an interesting one where Peter describes Mark as his son in the faith.

[37 : 43] And it's possible. Opinions are divided on this. But some, and it's a common and widely held view, that the Mark, who we are considering, authored the Gospel of Mark.

Not all are agreed on that. But if indeed that is so, it is also likely that the source of his information was in fact Peter with whom clearly he worked.

Peter describes him in such an intimate way as his son, clearly his spiritual son. So they had labored together in the Gospel and Peter perhaps had been able to share with Mark all that he knew of Jesus and Mark then was able to draw it together in authoring the Gospel.

But finally, as we consider this young man John Mark, not so young now, notice the very moving and heartwarming way in which Paul describes him in 2 Timothy and chapter 4.

Get Mark. He addresses Timothy. He instructs Timothy. Get Mark and bring him with you because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

[38 : 53] He is helpful to me in my ministry. What a change. What a dramatic and radical change from what we had seen in chapter 15 of Acts. So much to learn from that.

How this man, John Mark, had overcome the disappointment. Maybe a measure of resentment against Paul, we don't know. But he had come to value Paul, to love Paul.

He had certainly won Paul's confidence. He was willing to serve the one who had rejected him. He was willing to serve the one who had in a measure belittled him and wasn't interested in involving him.

And he bears no grudges. He has evidently at heart a servant heart. The implication here of this request to Timothy is that Mark will gladly respond to the invitation.

He's not a young boy anymore. Maybe he had other responsibilities, other things to do, but it's very clear that when Timothy says to Mark, Paul needs you. Paul is alone. Paul needs your help. John Mark would say, I'm willing to go.

[39 : 56] I'll leave these other things to the side. I'm willing to go to help Paul, to serve Paul. He was happy. He was fulfilled in being helpful to others, in being useful to others.

Not in the limelight, perhaps, but useful and helpful to God's people. And of course, that is a challenge to us all.

Whatever age you are, whether you are young or old, there is this final challenge. Are you helpful in the Lord's service?

Bring me Mark because he is helpful to me. Are you helpful? Could you be more helpful in the Lord's service, in the congregation, that you are part of here?

And if you can honestly, and if you must honestly recognize that you are not helpful or certainly not as helpful as you might be, how long will you hold back from becoming, like this man, John Mark, helpful in the service of God and in the service of others?

[41 : 07] May we all be so helpful. Let us pray. ■■■ clear from all about you, all about you. Thanks, been talking to us and we ■■■ ge it out.

Achat it from all giving me and notice that if you are taking it away, you will have to cover it if you do check it. Come on like this Lord, take it, you know, I need to Gerardo.

Take it back till ■■■■■ and that you see strategic life around which