

# The Fruit of Surrender

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1 Corinthians 1:1

Dr. Wayne Barber

We are going to talk today about the fruit of a surrendered life because the Apostle Paul is going to do something here in a moment that is going to introduce someone to us. But let's remember that the church of Corinth would have recognized him immediately. They would have recognized him to be the founder of their church, the father of their faith. In 1 Corinthians 4:14-15 it says, "I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children." Then in verse 15 he says, "For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel."

So Paul in writing to them is writing as a surrendered believer, but they would have recognized him right off. They knew the fire that burned in his heart. They were the results of it. He was the father of them spiritually. They were his spiritual children in the sense that they responded to the gospel that he preached.

Now I told you he is going to introduce someone here. Look in verse 1 again. This is a beautiful story here in 1:1. It says, "Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God and Sosthenes our brother." The story of Sosthenes is a beautiful story. It should just encourage every heart for all generations if you have someone that you know whom you don't think can ever come to know Christ. Just listen to this story of Sosthenes. The verse reads "our" brother, but it really is not that in the Greek. It is *ho adelphos*. It is "the" brother. Oh, what a beautiful picture.

But I have to go back and take some time to show you how the story unravels. Why it is that Paul singles out Sosthenes and puts him alongside himself in his introduction as he writes the letter to the church at Corinth? In Romans 15:17 Paul says, "Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God." What are those things? "For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles." I want you to think about that verse. I want you to think about your walk with God. I want you to think about your salvation experience. And I want you to ask yourself the question, "Am I sitting here with my heart burning with a message and do I have a burden for people that are around me?" Because if you don't, you are going to miss out on the fruit of a surrendered life. You are going to miss out on that. Sosthenes was the fruit of Paul's surrendered life. He is a man who came to know Christ as a result of Paul's willingness to be faithful unto God, to be faithful to the message. I just want you to think about that as we are going through this. I want you to see the people that Paul's life affected.

I want to take you back to Acts 17:16. I want to walk you through the journey to where Sosthenes came into Paul's life and how he was affected by the gospel of Jesus Christ and why Paul says, "and

Sosthenes, the brother” in verse 1. First of all, I want you to see how Paul, being a surrendered vessel, had a fire burning inside of him and was so effective with the academic world of his day.

Now I don't know if you are like me, but sometimes when I get around somebody that really has a great vocabulary and a great education, it intimidates me a little bit. Sometimes I have to carry a dictionary with me to understand their sentences. They make me feel like they can tie me up in knots and I can't seem to answer like I want to answer. But I want to assure you that if you love the Word of God and the God of the Word and you are living with that fire burning inside of you, don't ever be intimidated by the academic world that we live in. They need the same message that we also need and have.

Well, in Acts 17 Paul is going down to Athens. It seems like every time I study his life that God is just squeezing him from one place to another. It is not as if he plans all these things. It is like the Holy Spirit is leading him. And the leash that He uses to pull him is the leash of persecution. He is over in Philippi and they beat him up and throw him in jail. Boy, that was a big mistake. He was a Roman citizen. Roman law says that you can't do that until you first of all question him and give him an opportunity to speak for himself.

This causes turmoil in that city. Finally, they ask him to leave. He leaves Philippi and goes over to Thessalonica. He goes right to the synagogue and when he gets there, boy, there are many people, especially Greeks who believed. But the unbelieving Jews get on his case again and even treat some of his friends badly. They slip him out by night and take him over to Berea. He gets to Berea and finds some of those great believers who at least checked him out in the Word to see if these things were so. But here comes the unbelieving Jews again giving him a problem. So they sneak him out and he goes down to Athens and that is where we are.

You know, I hear some people sometimes say, “Well, I have been faithful to Jesus and people are persecuting me. And I don't like it. What is wrong with me?” Nothing. Jesus says, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for My name's sake.” Do we understand 2 Timothy 3:12 which says, “If you seek to live a godly life, you shall be persecuted”? It didn't say that you might be, it says you shall be. It is not a question of “if,” it is a question of “when;” it is coming. Light and darkness don't work real well together. Paul was persecuted. You are in good company when you have a fire burning in your heart and you are persecuted because of it. That is exactly what the Apostle Paul's life was marked by. If you ever wanted to find him in a particular city, just go to the jail. He was usually there. Or if there was a riot somewhere, he was in the middle of it. I mean, that is the way it always was.

Look in Acts 17:16: “Now, while Paul was waiting for them at Athens,...” The “them” there is Timothy and Silas. He is waiting on them to come down. He has some R & R here, a little free time. He is in Athens waiting on them to come to meet him. “Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was beholding the city full of idols.” Now the word “provoked” there is the word *paroxuno*. Actually one part of the word comes from the word “acid.” Something started stirring inside of him and he couldn't help it. That is the way it is. When you have a fire burning inside of you and everywhere you go and everything that you do that fire continues to rage. You are living by the very message that you believe. You are living believing the Christ who lives within you. Then you have to be provoked when you see all the garbage that is around you, the idolatry of other people.

Paul was sitting there in Athens, the fire just raging inside of him. He looked around him and just got provoked. Man, he saw all the idolatry that was around him. Verse 17 says, “So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.” He had a message. He would share it with anybody. He didn’t care. In the market place or wherever he was, he was sharing the message.

The word for “reason” there is the word that means intelligent discourse. They had something to say. He had something to say back, and they were reasoning it out. “Come on, let’s talk about this thing. Let me tell you about Jesus. Have you got a question? Let me answer it.” He was doing this daily in the market place and in the synagogue.

Well, this stirred up the intelligentsia of the area, those of the academic thinking, the school of thought. You know, Athens had a name for the academic way they treated things, the intellectual and philosophical ways of thinking. So he stirred them up. Verse 18 reads, “And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. And some were saying, ‘What would this idle babbler wish to say?’ Others, ‘He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,’ because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.”

Let me tell you about the Epicureans and the Stoics. These were philosophers of the day, but you need to understand what they held to and it will really make the plot thicken. The Epicureans were a sect of Gentile philosophers from the island of Samos. Their doctrine held that the world came into being and will be dissolved by chance. That is exciting, isn’t it? Or it happened by some mechanical means, but absolutely no creation at all, it just sort of happened.

Have you ever thought that to believe what the evolutionists tell you takes more faith than to believe what the Word of God has to say? They say there were two little cells floating around in space and they just sort of floated into each other and boom, there was a head-on collision. Now we have the interstate highway system, we have politics, we have buildings, we have everything you can think of and they all came when these two little cells ran into each other. That tells you who was driving that kind they were. They ran into each other.

Anyway, this is what they say, you see. They say the world was not created, it just sort of happened. Maybe it was a mechanical cause like an explosion or something. But God couldn’t have created it. They said all events happen by chance or by mechanical cause. In other words, there is no Sovereign in control of what is going on. They taught that when you die the soul dies with the body. In other words, there is no future hope. So in other words, eat, drink and be merry, do whatever you need to do because you deserve it. Isn’t that what the commercial says, “You deserve it. Go on and have a good time”? They taught that man’s chief happiness lies in pleasure or bodily ease. They also did not believe in judgment of any kind or retribution whatsoever.

The Stoic philosophers were a little different. They were heathen philosophers who came from a sect that was founded by Zeno, who was a Cypriot from the island of Cyprus, a philosopher in 336-264 BC. Now here is what they thought. They thought that men should be free from passion or any kind of emotion and submit without complaint to unavoidable situations. In other words, fatalism. It is all going to be bad anyway, might as well go ahead and get in. I mean, I know some people like that. I think they must be kin to them. But that is the way they believe.

So you have the Stoic philosophers on one side, the fatalist, and on the other side, the Epicurean which don’t believe hardly in anything, everything just sort of happened and you can do

whatever you want to do and there is never going to be any judgment. There was no creation. No Sovereign in control. That is who Paul is dealing with here. It says in verse 19, "And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, 'May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming?'" They had heard about it. The Areopagus was a place where they would hold courts. It was up on top of a huge hill there called Mars Hill.

Now the Acropolis is a huge hill. They have one in Corinth. They have all kinds of idolatry on top of it. But right off to the side there on the top is this big, huge stone that is called Mars Hill or the Areopagus. That is where they would hold court. Now Paul was not being tried for anything, but they wanted to talk with him and to debate with him. Verse 20 reads, "For you are bringing some strange things to our ears;" they said, "we want to know therefore what these things mean." Now you have to understand, they are doing this for sport. I mean, they didn't have television. They just enjoyed something new. They didn't really care. It is kind of like the mindset you get in Europe sometimes. You go over there and teach the Word, and they say, "Well, that's good. That is your opinion." And they walk out. That is the way it is. Everybody loves something new. Just tell me something new and we will argue about it and leave and nobody comes to any conclusion. Well, that is kind of the way it was.

It says in verse 21, "Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new." But there is one problem they made here. They underestimated who it was they were taking up to the Areopagus. The Apostle Paul was probably the most intelligent man other than Jesus in all of the New Testament. In fact, he studied under Gamaliel, who was the great teacher of the Mishna of that time and was known to be an intellect. Peter said of him in 2 Peter 3:15-16, "You know, our brother Paul speaks some things that are kind of hard to understand, doesn't he?" Paul just had an intellect. He was one person who could meet the academic world head-on and tie them in knots because he knew both sides. He knew the law and he knew how to talk with them.

Well, in verse 22 they are about to find out. "And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, 'Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.'" Now how did he know that? Well, he explains in verse 23: "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you." Man, he was so sharp. He saw that one idol that said, "To an unknown god," and that was it. That is all he needed. He said, "You don't know who He is. I do. Let me tell you about Him."

Watch how he starts knocking the Epicurean thinking. Verse 24 continues, "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands." Do you realize that idolatry comes from not believing that God is supernatural and creator? Because if He is not a creator God, if He is not Sovereign, if everything happened by chance, then religion is nothing more than a defense mechanism of the mind. Therefore whatever you do in religion, you can make it yourself because there is no God anyway. That is where idolatry comes from. The Apostle Paul just nailed that theory to the wall with his word.

Then in verse 25 he continues, "Neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things." Man, he is just knocking their idolatry right down the tube. Now look at this first phrase in verse 26. If you are not a

creationist and understand that God spoke and the world was created, look here. “And He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation.” Do you realize what he is saying that is so contrary to the thinking of that day? No wonder he was a little provoked! Verse 27 says, “That they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.” You know, you can go to the darkest part of Africa and man is worshipping something, a stick, a stone, some grass, something. And God put that within man to know he needed to worship.

Verse 28 reads, “For in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said.” And he quotes a line from one of their own poets, “For we also are His offspring.” Then he takes that line and says in verse 29, “Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent.”

Repent of what? There is no retribution. Do what you want to do. What do you mean? There is no such thing as sin. That is what they were saying. And he is saying, “No, no, no. Yes, there is and you better repent.” They also believed that there was no judgment. Look in verse 31 at what he does: “Because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” Of course, he is pointing to Jesus Christ when he says that. When he mentions a raising from the dead, buddy, this stirs them up even more. Remember, everything happened by chance. There is no sovereign. Or you are on the other side, you are fatalist.

Paul is talking about Jesus Christ, the judge. He is talking about the day appointed. He is talking about the resurrection of Jesus. Verse 32 goes on, “Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, ‘We shall hear you again concerning this.’” He really messed up their minds on that statement. Verse 33 says, “So Paul went out of their midst.”

Let me ask you a question. Do you think that the fire burning inside of him had any kind of fruit whatsoever amongst all these intellectuals, all of these men who were known because of their philosophy? Have you ever thought about this? A philosopher really has to stay within the bounds of his own philosophy. If he ever steps outside of it, he loses his identity. Wouldn't that be a sick way to live? They can't even treat truth over here because they are known. They have already drawn their boundaries over here. They can't be known outside of what their philosophy is.

Well, Paul just absolutely blows their mind, and one man, who is mentioned here, comes to know Christ. It was worth every bit of his effort. Let me show you in verse 34: “But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman called Damaris and others with them.” Dionysius was one of the famous senate, the court of the Areopagus. And so, here is a man that was an intellect, a man who thought a certain way, but he was confronted with the gospel and as a result became a believer.

Therefore, the intellectual world can be affected when they are willing to live lives that are surrendered to God. Remember that. Don't ever be intimidated by somebody who can out-talk you or somebody who can out-think you. Just remember something, hang on to the Word of God

for dear life, stand on it and share Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit of God can convict that man just like He can convict anybody else. Many of us are intimidated by academic and intelligentsia of our day because we don't think we are on their level. You don't need to be on their level. God is way above their level and He lives in us. And so, when you live with a fire burning within you, don't worry. God will bring to remembrance the things He has taught you in the Word and that will be the basis for which the Holy Spirit will use to bring others of that world, of that thinking, to know Jesus Christ.

You know, you think about what is going on in our world today. Madalyn Murray O'Hair's son became a Christian. Things are going on. People who have thought differently for so long are coming back to what the Word of God has to say. So when you have a fire burning within you, and God puts in your path someone of that type of thinking that is different than yours and maybe higher up as far as academic is concerned, don't worry about it. The gospel can change them just like it can change anybody else.

All I am trying to say is, the Word of God absolutely is needed by the academic world that we live in. Be a vessel. Let a fire burn in your heart and it will touch them.

### **Paul's Surrendered Life Affected the Religious and Non-Religious**

But the second thing here that I want you to think about in Paul's life is how his life as a surrendered vessel also affected the religious and the non-religious. Do you remember the statement of St. Francis of Assisi? He said to his congregation, "When you leave today, witness to somebody. Oh, yes, if you have to, use words." Well, the Apostle Paul had integrity, folks, and that was the basis of his witness. Before he ever opened his mouth, he was a man of integrity. He had made certain choices to make sure his lifestyle did not in any way offend others. If it was Christ offending them that is one thing, but if it is Paul offending them that is another. He made sure it wasn't him. He made sure that the only offense would be what Christ would do through his life.

He had chosen not to take any money for what he did. Now, in 1 Corinthians 9:1-14 he shows very clearly that is okay to do that. You can take money for that because he said it is right. People who labor in the Word ought to receive from the people who are blessed by that, but he said, "I have made a choice. I have gone against that. I am free to make this choice." He said, "I have chosen not to take a dime. I have chosen not to take any money whatsoever because I am working with Gentiles and I don't want them to use that to mess up the message that I am trying to tell them." So Paul had chosen to become a tent maker, of all things. That is the way he made his money. He didn't take any money for what he did. In fact, when Philippi sends him a gift, he is almost embarrassed to have to receive it. He even tells them, "I didn't need anything, but thank you for your kindness. I am sufficient in Christ." So he had made that choice early on in life. That was the integrity that began to frame his witness. In 1 Corinthians 9:18 he says, "What then is my reward? That when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge." In other words, I am going to make sure that when people hear me, they know that I am not expecting anything out of them at all. I just want them to hear the word of God and let God work in their heart.

Well, look in Acts 18, and we will take him out of Athens into Corinth. It is very important that you get into Corinth. That is where we are going to find our brother mentioned. Acts 18:1 says,

“After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius [the Roman emperor] had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working; for by trade they were tent-makers.”

Now here is Paul. He is happy as he can be. He gets over to Corinth. He is a tent-maker. He finds two other tent-makers, moves in with them and they start work. Every Sabbath he had a habit of going to the synagogue. Work during the week, make his money to earn his living and on Saturday he would go to the synagogue. It shows you that in verse 4: “And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.” This man never quit. If he wasn’t making tents, he was sharing the gospel somewhere in the synagogue.

Well, in verse 5 finally Timothy and Silas show up. He was waiting on them in Athens. They finally show up in Corinth: “But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.” Now, this intensified effort of sharing the Word stirred up a lot of hostility. He didn’t have it before. He would just go on the Sabbath and reason with them. Now it is every day. He stopped the tent making. He is full-time now just simply sharing the Word of God. Verse 6 is referring to most of the Jews. “And when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, ‘Your blood be upon your own heads! I am clean. From now on I shall go to the Gentiles.’” In other words, I have stuck with you religious folks and you won’t listen to me. Alright, I will go to the non-religious. I will go back to the Gentiles. And I am clean as far as God is concerned because I have told you the truth.”

I want you to see something here. God is just absolutely awesome, isn’t He? I mean, God is so far ahead of Paul you can’t even think about it. Basically he gets kicked out of the synagogue is what happened. They won’t let him come in there anymore. They are sick of him. So he says, “Alright, I’ll see you.” And he goes next door to a man’s house. Verse 7 reads, “And he departed from there and went to the house of a certain man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue.” Over there they had windows that were open and you could hear everything that was going on. I mean, if you were in a house next door to the synagogue, you are going to hear everything they do in the synagogue. But if you are in the synagogue next door to that house, you are going to hear everything that is going on in that house! Paul said, “Go on and kick me out of the synagogue. That is alright with me. I am moving next door.” So he goes next door and does the same thing.

Well, an interesting thing happened. There was a man by the name of Crispus who was the leader of the synagogue. As a matter of fact, he was the one who kicked Paul out. Look at verse 8: “And Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.” I mean, you have got to get excited about this. Crispus was over in the synagogue, having kicked Paul out, but he keeps listening to what Paul is saying. He keeps hearing the gospel coming from the house next door. Finally he gets under conviction and can’t stand it. He gets saved, his whole household gets saved and as a result of that, the people say, “Hello. We better listen to this.” And a little small revival begins to start right there in that community because Crispus got saved.

This led to a very fruitful ministry for the Apostle Paul for the next year and a half. In fact, God

even told him in verses 9-10 of chapter 18 of Acts that nobody would bother him. “And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, ‘Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city.’”

Now folks, I want you to see that Paul is a man who has a fire burning inside of him. Wherever he goes he sees those come to know Christ. If it is the academic world, Dionysius, or the religious world, Crispus, he sees those come to know Christ. If it is the Gentile world of Corinth, he sees many come to know Christ because he is a surrendered vessel through which God the Holy Spirit is convicting others of their sinful life and of righteousness that can be found in Christ Jesus.

All of us can be that kind of vessel wherever we go. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could just sit here and think about all the countless people who have come to know Christ because we have our focus like it ought to be? We are not like the church at Corinth, but we are like the Apostle Paul. Isn't it interesting that Paul's life is surrendered but the life of Corinth is not? He stands in stark contrast to the church at Corinth. Folks, I am praying in my own heart that those of you who relate more to Corinth than you relate to Paul will understand how far you have drifted. Maybe when we finish this book all of us can get our focus back and be about the business that God has for us.

What I am trying to tell you is, that if you will just become a surrendered vessel, willing to let God use you, it doesn't matter where you are, I guarantee you there is going to fruit to that surrender and there are going to be people who are religious and people who are non-religious and people who are academic and people who aren't academic. It doesn't matter. Because the Word of God is for every man regardless. But you have to have a surrendered life for the Holy Spirit to use so that He can convict of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.

### **Paul's Surrendered Life Affected the Hostile World**

Well, the third group of people that the Apostle Paul affected was the hostile world, the enemies, the ones who treat him badly. Oh, this is where the story really unfolds. Remember Crispus was the guy who kicked Paul out of the synagogue and then got saved himself. The man who followed him was a man by the name of Sosthenes. Much harder, much meaner than the Apostle Paul. Though his name is not mentioned until later on in the text, it is very implicit in the verses that he is the ring leader of bringing up false charges against the Apostle Paul. Corinth would ring with the name of Sosthenes and they would think to themselves, “Yes, we know who he is. He is the persecutor of the believers. That is who he is.” Well, get that in your mind.

Verse 12 of Acts 18 says, “But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat.” Now, they kind of messed up here because Gallio was a just man, not just in the sense of God's justice, but just as far as being a good man, a right man. Historians called him a sweet spirited man. He was a kind and gentle man. He wasn't somebody who was out to make a name for himself. A proconsul is the same thing as a governor. Achaia was a province in Rome. Of course, Claudius was the emperor, but Gallio was the proconsul and would handle the legal matters in that area. Well, their charge was in verse 13: “This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.” Well, they messed with the wrong guy. Gallio wasn't going to handle it. He wasn't going to fool with it. It is a

religious matter, not a civil matter, so he says in verse 14, “But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, ‘If it were a matter of wrong or of vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you; but if there are questions about words and names and your own law, look after it yourselves; I am unwilling to be a judge of these matters.’ And he drove them away from the judgment seat.”

A strange thing happens right here. It is hard to understand. Look in Acts 18:17. It is interesting. The Greeks who were there do a strange thing. They see a countryman being betrayed by his fellow countrymen, and they don’t like it. In verse 17 it says, “And they all took hold of Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue.” Why are they grabbing him? He was the one who led them over there with the false charges. “They grabbed him and began beating him in front of the judgment seat. And Gallio was not concerned about any of these things.” Now that is a strange happening, isn’t it? They took Paul to be put on trial. Gallio wouldn’t fool with it. So some of them there felt sorry for Paul and jumped on Sosthenes.

Now what I am going to share with you now has got to be written in between the lines and cannot be proven. We may get to heaven one day and they will say, “No, you missed it, Wayne. That was the wrong Sosthenes.” I think it is the same one because here is what I see in it and you are just going to have to look at it and throw it out or keep it or whatever you want to do. I am not the absolute, never have been. But I think what happens here is, Paul intervenes on Sosthenes’ behalf. Number one, we know he has got a fire burning within him. We know he never carries a sword of his flesh against God or against man. He is a peaceful man in that sense. The only sword he picks up is God’s Word.

Paul is defending him from the people who are beating him. He says to him, “Sosthenes, listen to me, buddy, it is not me. I didn’t start this thing. I don’t know why they are beating on you. But I want you to know something while we are here, God loves you. I know you hate me and what I am preaching, but God loves you and Jesus died for you. And Sosthenes, I am praying for you that one day you will come to know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.”

That is the kind of man Paul was. And if that happened and we don’t know if it happened or not because the Scripture is strangely quiet, then we see then that the fruit was born in Sosthenes’ life.

In 1 Corinthians 1:1 we read, “Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes,” not *our* brother, no, it is *ho adelphos*, *the* brother. Everybody’s ears in Corinth would perk up. “Who? Sosthenes? Are you kidding me? You mean, he is a believer?” That ought to have sent a ripple all through the church of Corinth saying, “Man, there is hope for everybody if Sosthenes can come to know Christ.”

That is why I wanted to share with you the fruit of a surrendered life. Folks, you may have people in your family right now who you have been praying for years for and you didn’t think they could come to become a believer. But I want you to know, if you will be a surrendered vessel and you will live in the Word of God, God will use your life to touch whoever it is. Don’t give up on them. Don’t give up on them. Crispus, the leader of the synagogue. Sosthenes. You have got Dionysius over there in Athens. You have got people who the world would say, “That man will never come to know Christ.” Hey, listen, you be that surrendered vessel and watch God change the minds of others. You see, God can do that.

Turn to 1 Peter 3:13. I just want you to see what the Apostle Peter says for all of us. There are a lot of people out there that can intellectually tie you up in knots. There are people out there who are religious or non-religious. There are hostile people out there. But they are all the people for whom Jesus died. Don't be intimidated. Just have a fire burning and watch God reach them. In 1 Peter 3:13-16 he says, "And who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ maybe put to shame." That is a lifestyle, that is Christ burning in your heart. That is always being ready to give an answer for the hope that you have.

I am telling you, there are people out there and God, not you, will touch those lives and bring them to know Christ. Before I close, let me just ask you a question. How many of you know people right now, in your family that for years you have almost been driven to give up on their ever coming to know Christ? Well, be encouraged. Don't be a Corinthian. Be like the Apostle Paul. Get your focus where it ought to be and begin to be a vessel through which God can use to touch that individual. You may be surprised who is next in the kingdom that you didn't think would ever make it because God uses people just like you and me.