

Paul H. Dixon
First Century Christians
circa 1980

Unedited Transcript

Paul H. Dixon:

I've enjoyed being here this week. It's been relaxing for me. When they called me, I think sometime last year and invited me to come, those who invited me, had my schedule in front of them. And this was my week at home. I take two weeks of meetings, and then I spend Monday through Saturday at home and I don't give those days up for anything. And so, I accepted it on the condition that I could just come in at night and [inaudible 00:00:29], because though I would've liked to have been in this meeting, I feel like that once you start giving up your time at home, that it's gone and you have to protect it very jealously. And so I've had a relaxing time coming in. I've been pushed as far as the distance, just about a 45 minute drive.

Paul H. Dixon:

Would you believe I was in a meeting a few weeks ago in Holbert, Indiana. I finished a meeting in Quincy, Illinois on a Sunday night was to start the first Baptist in Holbert on Monday night at 7:30. I left Quincy at one o'clock in the afternoon you can drive from Quincy to Holbert in four hours. I flew from Quincy to Holbert in six hours. We left at one o'clock in the afternoon, and flew all over the state of Illinois and Indiana, we could not get into O'Hare airport. We finally got into O'Hare, at 7:00. At seven o'clock at night, the service is at 7:30 and it's a good hours drive from the airport to the church. That was quite a [inaudible 00:01:32] it was black moving out. I got in there at 20 minutes after 8:00, all this time flying, not knowing what time we finally get on the ground, because the runways were shut off for construction or something. And then finally getting in there 20 after 8:00. So it's been good to be able to relax this week.

Paul H. Dixon:

I heard about the one fellow who was flying. He was the pilot and he called the tower and he said, "Tower, can you tell me what time it is?" He said, "What time it is?" He said, "What airline is?" Well, he says, "What do you mean what airlines is it?" He said, "I want to know what airline it is?" He says, "If it's [inaudible 00:02:09] Airlines, it's 1800. If it's Delta Airlines, it's six o'clock. If it's Allegheny Airlines, the little hand's on six and the big hands on 12. If it's more [inaudible 00:02:23] Airlines, it's Saturday. Yeah, I know. That's what you mean. I'm not kidding you, going to these meetings and you never can tell what these airlines are going to do.

Paul H. Dixon:

I got in Michigan one night and the plane was taking off 10 minutes early. They had to stop the motors North Central, open the door to let me on. I said, "Why were you leaving 10 minutes early?" They said, "We got a pizza party back home." So yeah, you never can tell. They all wait on passengers when they have pizza waiting for them.

Paul H. Dixon:

But I have enjoyed sharing the word with you in these days. And we've established, I trust, by definition as the theme of this conference is First Century Methods for 20th Century Ministry that a ministry for God, is God's man getting out God's method, using God's method. And for the sake of review, for those of you who've not been with us in this series the first night we thought about the first century men, and why God used them in such an exceptional way. We found that they were convinced men. They were

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convinced that God was God. There was no doubt in their minds what a great, and mighty and powerful God he was. They were also convinced that they had a living savior, therefore, they had a ministry that was alive. We also established that they were convinced that they had the answer. Though the days be bleak and dark, they were buying up the opportunities because the days were evil. And there are many parallels between our day and their day.

Paul H. Dixon:

Brethren, the responsibility we have is not to sit back and talk about how terrible things are, the responsibility is to get some message out because the days are evil. They were convinced men. Secondly, they were controlled men. By that we established that they were filled with the spirit of God, and since they were filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit, the word of God says that they filled Jerusalem with their doctrine. And then they were committed men, totally, to the work of God. Nothing else entered in. 100%.

Paul H. Dixon:

Last night, we thought about the first century message. And as we looked at Peter's message in [inaudible 00:04:57] Chapter Two, we saw that he made much of simplicity. That we are not supposed to go away, people saying what great intellects we are, but rather there to get the message that we have to bring to them, make much of simplicity. Secondly, Peter made much of the scriptures. Said that simplicity is not shallowness. As I said last night, I believe Warren [inaudible 00:05:26] is a great illustration of a simple preacher who's a meaty preacher. Preacher with [inaudible 00:05:31], yet he keeps it simple. Also, we found that Peter made much of sin. Was willing to expose sin, and preach against sin. Conviction came, and that's what's needed today. People need to get under conviction before they can really make a commitment to Jesus Christ. All of this quickly led to the fact that Peter made much of the Savior, and he used his simplicity, and he used the scriptures, and he brought the message under the power of the spirit of God that they might get under conviction of sin, that they might be brought to Jesus Christ, made much of the Savior.

Paul H. Dixon:

Well, tonight we look at first century methods. I believe we have it in the right order, some might disagree. Some might say that we ought to it or the methodology first, but I don't think so. I believe we need to be the right kind of men with the right kind of methods and then start considering the right kind of methods. Now, there are many methods that we might talk about. You had your workshops today, where you talked about methodology. One of the things that irritates me today, is somehow we have many individuals going around the country saying there's only one method, only one way to get a job done. I don't believe that. I believe that God has given a breadth in his word, incidentally, I would suggest if you haven't read it, in Francis Schaeffer's book the Church at the End of the 20th Century, he has one chapter on form and freedom that ought to be read by every one of us.

Paul H. Dixon:

There's a freedom within the ministry, of different methods that can be used for God's glory. I think a lot of men are making mistakes trying to be like some other men, and using their methods. Let's go to all the preacher schools we want to, and sit in on all the conferences and learn from men, but everybody can't be like that fellow who's trying to teach you. I heard about the preacher, he was telling that he went to see Hank Greenberg give a demonstration on hitting baseball. He said he never saw a fella hit so

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many baseballs out of the park. And then after it was over, he called all the kids down, and he said, "Now I'm going to show you how to hit a baseball."

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, you boys will appreciate this, you guys were trying to play ball. He said, "Now, fellas, if you want to hit the baseball, you put your left foot right here." He said, [inaudible 00:08:01], "Put the right foot right there. Grab the back with your left hand like that, and with your right hand like this and you hold it like so, and you step in and swing like so." And boy, he said, I went back home and the next day was a ball game, and I called all the kids around and I said, "You are going to see a ball hit like you've never seen and hit before, Hank Greenberg just showed me how to do it." He said, "Now you watch now." Just tiny at the plate.

Paul H. Dixon:

He walked up to the plate and he put that left foot, right where Hank Greenberg told him to put it. And he put that right foot right where Hank Greenberg told him to put it. And he grabbed that bat with the left hand, right in the same place, and with the right hand, and he brought it back right on the same elevation. And he just looked at that pitcher and he said, "Now you throw it. You're going to see this ball hit right back, right over that wall." So that fella took a wind up, and he threw that ball in, and he said, "I swung, and I missed it about this far." I said, "Throw it again." And he threw it again. I swung and I missed that ball. He said, I struck down on three pitches. He said the first three times up, I struck out three times or nine pitches. I decided the last time up, I wasn't going to listen to Hank Greenberg, and I just got there, stood like I always stand, and I grabbed that bat, and I get all out of the park. He said, "You know what I found out? I wasn't Hank Greenberg." A lot of fellows need to learn that when it comes to methodology.

Paul H. Dixon:

But you know, there are some methods that are in the word of God that they're no debate over. And I've rather chosen to share those with you tonight. I believe that the first century methods as we would find them, are many, but a few I would share with you in a very special one.

Paul H. Dixon:

Number one, the first century method of reaching men for Jesus Christ and getting out the message was preaching. Look, if you will in Acts Chapter Two, just briefly, just noting, just by way of reminder that as soon as we get into the Book of Acts, here's a man filled with the spirit of God. And what is he doing? He's preaching the word of God. And as I said last night, it says that he stood up, the rabbi sat down and talked, Peter stood up and preached, and he preached with authority. By the time you get over into the third chapter, the Book of Acts, you find again, Peter using the crowd who's come to see the lame man that's been healed, standing up before that crowd and preaching the word of God. Again, when you get to Acts Chapter Four, Verse Two, it says the people agreed that, they talked the people, and that they preached through Jesus, the resurrection from the dead.

Paul H. Dixon:

When you get to Acts Chapter Five, Verse 42, it says they were daily in temple, and in every house, and they cease not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. When you get to Acts Chapter Six, we find them choosing deacons, and they're choosing deacons so that they might give themselves to the ministry of

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the word. They wanted more time to study the word, and to share the word, and to preach the word. When you get to Acts Chapter Seven, we find one of the deacons preaching the word of God, and giving his life because of that sermon. In Acts Chapter Eight, you might like to note this in Verse Four, it says, "Therefore, they that were scattered abroad. When everywhere preaching the word." Acts Chapter Eight, Verse Five, "Then Phillip went down in the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them." Verse 12, "But when they believe Phillip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God." Verse 25, "And they, when they had testified, and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem." Verse 35, "Then Philip opened his mouth, began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."

Paul H. Dixon:

Verse 40, "But Philip was found at [inaudible 00:12:14] and passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Cecilia." In the first 18 chapters of the Book of Acts, 16 out of the 18, you either see a man preaching, or it is said that he preached the word. The Greek word that are used for preaching in the Book of Acts and in the officials have varied meaning, but as I would put them together, I get the picture of the preacher as a herald, a town crier, a man with authorities who proclaimed the message of the word of God, with the expectation that people would respond to that message that he preached.

Paul H. Dixon:

I'm greatly concerned today by all the attacks that are going on across this land, against the church and against preaching, I would not be so concerned with the attacks coming from the world, from the unsaved. I can understand many people who say they're against the established church don't know a thing about a church like this. All they know is a liberal church, all they know is a dead church. I talked to someone involved in the Jesus movement, who was a converted Jew, who was down on the established church, and he didn't know the first thing about a Bible believing, Bible preaching church. I can understand why that fella felt like he did.

Paul H. Dixon:

But the main attacks are not coming from these people. It's coming from the evangelical crowd who are supposedly believed the Bible, on evangelical student organizations and their periodical said, "The preacher ought to a read the scripture, preferably from a new translation." Now, brethren, I'm not against new translations, I use them myself, but one thing that disturbs me is that we have the idea that the reason people do not read the word, and understand the word, and receive the word is because it hasn't been written right yet. That's not the problem. The problem is the natural man receive a mass of things of God for their foolishness under him, neither can he know them because they're spiritually discerned, and I don't believe a new translation is going to solve that problem.

Paul H. Dixon:

This student organization said, "Let's let the preacher open the scriptures, preferably a new translation, make a few comments and then open it up for discussion. Then we can have an intelligent server." They said in this magazine, "We are against this dogmatic preaching. We are against someone standing up and laying down the law." Now I hate to be vulgar, but you know what I have to say to that? Hogwash. That's not what's needed today. A young man came up to me in Pennsylvania who had blown his life. He'd once prepared for the ministry, and I challenged him to at least come up to the revival meeting. He said, "I'm not going to a church where someone stands up behind a pulpit and tells me what to do."

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Paul H. Dixon:

It's a great attack today where people want to gather in groups, and just discuss the word. They want to meet in their homes that have home Bible studies. Now, I'm not against home Bible studies, but brethren, home Bible studies will never take the place of the preaching of the word. We can start the home Bible studies, that's great, but the word of God in that it must be preached. There's something else that's attacking the preaching of the word of God today. And believe it or not, it's testimonies. There's a revival emphasis today across this land, where people get up and share what God has done with them/ now, I'm glad for what God is doing. I'm glad for people sharing with what the Lord has done for them in a service. I think it adds to a service to have testimonies from time to time, but you check out many of the recent revivals, the revival, supposedly at Asbury, the revival at Wheaton, the revivals in Canada, and Michigan, and many of the revivals on college campuses, and also in churches over the last 50 years, and invariably, there is very little preaching. Now that bothers me. I'm sorry, but it does.

Paul H. Dixon:

I see in the word of God, the important place that God has placed upon preaching, it kind of reminds me of down in the south, I've preached in some churches down there, where they love to give testimonies. These are some of our more emotional Baptist friends. You can't believe what it's like if you haven't freaked in one of those churches. First of all, the pastor and the deacons all sit on one bench. When I preached in all those churches, I'm not kidding you, they're sitting there, they lean forward and it's, "Amen. Praise the Lord. Hallelujah." When you say something, the preacher likes, he looks down the bench in waves at one of his deacons, you know? He'll say, "I like that. Didn't you?" I mean, you preach in those churches. In fact, one time I was preaching, and the people are so responsive. I like to ask questions, and I was preaching away and they were, "Amen. Praise the Lord," nudging one another. He'll kick his foot every once in a while. And I was making a point about Bible study and I said, "Did you read your Bible this morning?" "Yes!" Everybody said, I was taken aback.

Paul H. Dixon:

Well down in some of those churches, I've heard some of those brethren come up and they'll say, "Boy, we had a great service last night. Oh, was it ever fantastic? We got to testifying, and the preacher didn't even get to preach." I'm sorry, that's not a great service. And I study my Bible, I find that God's method is preaching. I believe many times that singing has crowded out preaching. If you'd like an amplification of some of these things, I would suggest that you read Martyn Lloyd-Jones' book, Preachers and Preaching. He's done an excellent job of putting preacher and preaching in its proper place. I'm not against music and singing, and I agree that it often sets the atmosphere, and I think it's done a good job this week, but you have been in meetings, and I have been in meetings where it's created so much of an atmosphere for such a long time, that there wasn't any time left to preach after the atmosphere was set. Like one fellow, he got up to preach and they said to him, "We're sorry we took so much of your time." He said, "You didn't take any of my time."

Paul H. Dixon:

Preaching. God's method. God's method is preaching over counseling. Now I realize that we are living in troubled times and there is a great need for counseling today, but brethren, if we're not careful, we'll become psychologists instead of preachers. I believe that there's a place for getting into homes, and spending time with people, and counseling with people, but it can never take the place of the preaching of the word of God. I believe if we're not careful, we'll allow the [inaudible 00:19:56] ministries to take

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the place of preaching. I know of people who will stay at home on Sunday, and listen to Bob [inaudible 00:20:04], or listen to Peter Rockman, who won't attend the local church, where the preacher is standing up there, preaching the word of God. Dean Kelly has written a book called Why Conservative Churches Are Growing. You ought to read that book. Eternity Magazine voted it the outstanding book of 1972. It's written by an executive for the National Council of Churches. He studied the conservative churches. Here is a liberal man studying the conservative churches, and in essence, he said, "The reason these churches are growing is because they have preachers up there who believe something and say something." That's right. That's New Testament.

Paul H. Dixon:

Paul told Timothy in First Timothy Chapter Three, Verse 15, "The church is the pillar and ground of the truth." And I believe that off the center, upon the pulpit where the truth is given out. Paul said to Timothy again in First Timothy Chapter Two, Verse seven, he repeated in Second Timothy Chapter One, Verse 11, "I am ordained a preacher, and apostle and a teacher." I think he had it in right order, "A preacher, an apostle and a teacher." He always was rejoicing that God had, first of all, called him to preach. Before he closed his ministry. As he's giving instructions to young Timothy, one of the last things he said to him was to preach the word, God's method is preaching.

Paul H. Dixon:

Brethren, those of us who have this word, let's stand, and without apology, week after week preach it. You who are not preachers, stand with the brethren, pray for them, encourage them, rejoice that you have someone who believes the Bible and will share it with you. God's method is preaching. God's method is witnessing. Now, it's interesting that the Book of Acts begins back in Chapter One, if you'd like to look there with an emphasis upon witnessing Verse Eight, "You shall receive power. After that, the Holy Ghost has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me." Chapter One, Verse 22, "Beginning from the baptism of John until that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection."

Paul H. Dixon:

Chapter Two, Verse 32, "This Jesus hath God raised up where of we are all witnesses." Chapter Three, Verse 15, "And killed the prince of life, whom God has raised from the dead, where of we are witnesses." Chapter Four, Verse 33, "And with great power, gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." Chapter Five, Verse 32, "And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to them that obey Him."

Paul H. Dixon:

The early Christian movement was primarily a lay movement. The only way that they were able to accomplish what they did in the early church is not because 11 were doing the job, but because every Christian candidate his sacred duty to tell everybody he came in contact about Jesus Christ. That was their responsibility. And we ask some of this that I've said tonight as just primary applicable to the preachers who are here, this applies to every Christian in our midst tonight; we are to be his witnesses.

Paul H. Dixon:

I think it's interesting that in Chapter Six, when the conditions were given for the first deacons. In Verse Three, it says, "Brethren, looking ye out among you, seven men of honest report." Now this word,

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"Report" is the same word comes from the same root word that our word, "Witness" comes from. We get our word, "Martyr" from it. In other words, he said, "These men ought to be good witnesses." And I believe that. Every deacon ought to be a good witness. Every Sunday school teacher ought to be a good witness. Every Christian ought to be a good witness. Henry Ward Beecher said, "The longer I live, the more confidence I have in the sermon where one man is the minister, and one man is the congregation." We study the life of Jesus, His method was one-on-one, time after time. Moody said, "The most effective and fruitful work of grace can only be secured by the conviction of great masses of our membership to reach the people one by one, by one person's effort." That's God's plan; evangelism.

Paul H. Dixon:

There's no end to what God could do if every one of us lay people, preachers alike, would decide we weren't just going to be witnesses on Sunday, but every day of our lives. I have in my hand tonight, a letter. I'm going to read you that letter in just a minute. Before I do, I want to tell you what led up to this letter. A friend of mine is a principal of a junior high school in Springfield, Ohio. His name is Jim [Frank 00:25:26]. This young man was an attending Wright State University a couple of summers ago. He's a member of the Grace Baptist Church in Urbana. And he's an unusual fellow. He's very bold for Christ. And this school principal walked into this postgraduate class at Wright State sat down, and I don't know whether it was a psychology class or a philosophy class, I believe it was psychology, and the first day, old Jim raises his hand, the prof says, "Yes." He said, "Well, I have an announcement I'd like to make." He said, "What is it?" He said, "I want everybody to know I'm a Christian."

Paul H. Dixon:

And most people walk into a class like that, and they try to hide it. They go, "I hope nobody finds out." He says, "I want everybody to know I'm a Christian, and I have right in my hand, the greatest psychology book that's ever been written. It's the Bible, and you can discuss all the philosophies you want to, but this is the only answer in any of you after class who'd like to talk to me, anytime this quarter, just come see me, we'll talk about the Bible"

Paul H. Dixon:

Well, he's sitting there one day and every noon hour, he'd take his sack lunch and he eat his sandwiches, and he'd read his Bible, a Catholic nun walked up and looked over his shoulder and said, "Are you a priest?" He said, "Yes, ma'am." He said, "I'm a Jehovah Witness too." He said, "I've been a priest ever since I've been saved," and he said, "I witnessed for Jehovah every chance I get." And he said, "I know I'm on my way to Heaven, saved, sins are forgiven, no doubt about it. And if you had my Jesus, you'd be saved, and you'd know you were on your way to Heaven too." She looked at him, he said, "I have a gospel track right here, I'd like you to take it home, read it. And if you'll do what that track does, you'll be saved. That says you can be saved."

Paul H. Dixon:

Next day, he's sitting the there, and this lady walks down the hall. The day before she had her garb on, no garb. She walks up and she says, "Jim," and he didn't recognize her. She said, "Don't you remember me, Jim?" He said, "Yes, you're the one I gave the track to yesterday." She said, "That's right. I went home and read it, and I did what the track said to do, and I got saved last night. And you know what, Jim? That person we've been praying for in the hospital who has cancer. I've been telling her all this information that's wrong, so I went down there and led her to Christ, and she got saved last night." And

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she said, "It's just great." She wrote this letter to the pastor in the church. So great, I just thought you'd like to hear it. She wrote it.

Paul H. Dixon:

"Dear pastor, and others in Jesus and Grace, with a bubbling rejoicing, thankful heart, I feel compelled to pen these few lines. I'm carefully able to discern where to begin or even how to start. Be patient with me as I attempt to express the unexpressable joy and to explain the unexplainable blessedness in my life, even now as tears begin to well on my eyes. I want you to know that I shall forever be thankful for the ministry of your church. I know Jesus, because of it. Let me explain; in a recent postgraduate college course, which I attended, I met a young school administrator, whose name is Jim, a member of Grace. I really don't know anymore about him, except he's a happy, enthusiastic Christian, "Saved," as he says, and that he was a Baptist. In fact, I believe he really never intended for us to know him for other than that," isn't that good? If people would only know us for that."

Paul H. Dixon:

I shall never forget my first personal encounter with him; he was reading his Bible, his perfect, complete psychology book, being an inquisitive Roman Catholic nun, I asked him what he was. I was [inaudible 00:28:50] as he quickly responded, "I'm a priest." I'd never met a priest who knew he was saved. He rejoices about Jesus, who told others how to know Him. Jim also said he was some other things that added to my confusion. I remember asking him, "Do you really know you're going to Heaven," and with almost a shout, came, "Praise the Lord. I know it." At that moment, the glances, our eyes met and he asked me the same question. Never gave me time to answer. Just gave me a gospel track, but heavily compassionate expression said, "You really ought to know my Jesus."

Paul H. Dixon:

I went home with that piece of paper. His last statement kept bringing to the corridors of my mind. Suddenly I realized my need for the Savior. Then the unexplained of will took place. I took Jesus. Jesus took me. As I heard Jim telling a waitress last week, "Isn't the Lord wonderful?" The Lord was immediately gracious to me. I took Jesus to track, and me a new believer to the hospital where Christ saved another woman whom I'd previously misinformed about many things. So blessed to be free from garb, free from man's confession, free from institution, indeed, free in Jesus. I would ask you to pray for me during these difficult, breaking away times. I don't fit here anymore, and really don't want to. As to you and your work at Grace, I'll be praying. I plan to come sometime and be with you in services. How the people of your church must love Jesus. I too know now that I'm going to Heaven." And she signed it, "A real sister in Jesus."

Paul H. Dixon:

You know what? There was a guy who believed that the New Testament method was not only preaching, but witnessing on the part of every believer investors, and God helped us. He used the same method. I'm also impressed that the New Testament method, the first century method was training. Now, I'm not going to dwell on this, Reverend. I would just underline it. Let's be balanced in this thing of winning and training. It seems that some would like to win, and not train, others would like to train and not win. I find some people who are talking about training converts, and the more you talk to them, you find out they don't have any converts to train. They talk about grounding people, but they don't have anybody to ground because nobody's being saved. Spurgeon set up a minister can be content to go on

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preaching without converts or baptisms. The Lord have mercy upon his miserable soul. Can he be a minister of Christ who does not win souls? I wonder if some people's complacency. They say Divine sovereignty withheld the increase. It's really their own idleness that tends to poverty. The promise of God is to the diligent. Not the indiligent. I believe he's right.

Paul H. Dixon:

Yet, I also realize that there are others who are very evangelistic and very gung ho, who need the emphasis upon training, and brother that's part of the first century method; they train. Just briefly notice, shall we? Notice if you will, in Acts Chapter 11 Versus 22 through 26, "Then tidings of these things came unto the years of the church, which was in Jerusalem, and they sent forth Barnabas that he should go as far as Antioch. But when he came and it seemed, the grace of God was glad, and exhorted them all, that would purpose of parts that he would cleave unto the Lord." And we see this man performing a ministry after the conversions had taken place, of exhorting them to go on for God.

Paul H. Dixon:

Notice if you will, Chapter 13, Verse 43. "Now, when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious prosthelites followed Paul and Barnabas, who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God." They weren't just content on them, making a decision. They wanted them to continue to God. Notice, if you will, Chapter 14, Verse 19 through 23, "There came through certain Jews from Antioch, and Iconium who persuaded the people and having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he'd been dead. Albeit as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up and came into the city. And the next day, he departed with Barnabas to Derby, when they preached the gospel to that city and had taught many, they returned again to [inaudible 00:33:27]." That's amazing to me. Quite possibly, he'd just been murdered there. He'd just been stoned there, and he couldn't wait to get back into the city to see how the converts were doing.

Paul H. Dixon:

And you notice what he did with those converts? First of all, it says in Verse 22, "He confirmed them," confirming the souls of the disciples. Next, he exhorted them,, "Confirming" means he reestablished them in the basics. And then, he exhorted them to go beyond that and to continue in the faith that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God. And then after he confirmed them and exhorted them, he organized them into a local church. It says, "When they had ordained, and elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they had believed. This is God's mouth.

Paul H. Dixon:

Getting people saved, confirming them in the faith, exhorting them to the one for the Lord, organizing them into a local church, so that out of that center, there might be such an impact that it would not just be felt in the immediate area, but that it might be felt in the entire world that the first century method. Preaching, witnessing, training. With this, I close: Pray. I think it would be an injustice to close this theory without briefly talking about the importance of prayer for those early believers. Again and again, back in Chapter One of course, many of you're familiar how in Verse 14, they were all continuing with one accord, and prayer, and supplication. In Verse 24, "And they prayed and said, "Lord, you direct us as to the man we should choose."" Chapter Two, Verse 42, it says, "They continued, steadfast in the apostles documents, fellowship and in breaking of bread, and in prayer."

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Paul H. Dixon:

Chapter three, Verse One, when they were able to meet this lame man's need, where were they going? They were going to the place prayer. In Chapter Four, Verse 31, "Except when they had praised the place was Jacob." And Chapter Six, Verse Four, "The reason they chose deacons was so that they might have more time in prayer." Chapter Nine, Verse 11, I love this, "And the spirit of God was directing [inaudible 00:36:01] as to how to find the new convert, Paul." He says, he'll be praying. [inaudible 00:36:09] be holy prayer. In Chapter 10, Verse Nine, when Peter got the vision to go to Cornelius, what was he doing? He was praying. I love Chapter 16. Did you ever notice that of all three converts Lydia, the teenage girl, the Philippian jailer, there was prayer going on when all three got saved.

Paul H. Dixon:

Saul and Silas went down to the riverside, it says, "Where prayer was once to be made in Lydia, God saved." Paul, Silas and Luke are walking along the road when this girl makes fun of them, and it says that they were praying as they walked along the road. They weren't gathered in one room, they weren't down on their knees, they were walking along saying, "That person over there needs to get sick. Lord, you strengthen us this particular day." They were rejoicing and praying, and they walked down the street, and all of us knows that an Act Chapter 16, 25, right before that earthquake, it says Saul and Silas pray.

Paul H. Dixon:

I don't believe that there's a need for any greater revival today than a revival of prayer. We need prayer in the pulpit, and we need prayers in theater. We need prayer in our churches. We need prayer in our schools. We don't need to just tell people to pray for us, we just need to start doing it ourselves. You've heard me refer to him enough these three days to know that my favorite preacher asked to be Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Yeah, the church of 5,000. They packed it out every Sunday morning, every Sunday night for 37 years. The average 35 to 80 saved, baptized, and added to the church every month. 37 years. He was a great preacher, yet I do not think the success of that ministry was purely upon his preaching. [inaudible 00:38:03] Pearson was invited to preach for him one Sunday. He traveled across the ocean, he arrived there in London, all the way over, he kept thinking, "What makes this place stick? Why is it so different? Why is the power of God so evidently there?" They used to ask once a quarter for the people not to come to church. They said, "Please don't come to church next Sunday, because there are so many people who would like to come in, we'd like to give them a chance next week."

Paul H. Dixon:

And they'd ask for people to stay home and study their Bibles, or go out witnessing, so they could fill it with a brand new 5,000 people. What's the difference? He said, "I walked into that church and I found out." A man walked up to me and said, "Are you Mr. Pearson?" He said, "Yes." He said, "It's time to pray." He said, "That man took me down into a room and there was a deacon, he showed me where to kneel, and I got on my knees, and those men started praying, and I had never heard men pray like that in all of my ministry." He said, "After a while a man touched me on the shoulder and said, "Sir, it's time to break, you break and we'll pray. I went out, and I never preached with such power in all of my life." He said, "People were saved while I preached, after I preached," he said, "I never saw anything like it, and I found out the secret of the Metropolitan Tabernacle." Brethren, Elijah's God still living. [inaudible 00:39:37] simply meant, getting out the first century message using first century method can accomplish the same thing [inaudible 00:39:52].

Paul H. Dixon
First Century Christians
circa 1980