

## 39. Our God is marching on

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, turn with me, if you would, to that last chapter of Acts that we read together. After following Paul and his many trials and his recent far-from-smooth travels, we may come to this last chapter of Acts, this last section, expecting to have all our questions answered about how he fares before the Emperor Nero, what's the outcome of his appeal to Caesar, all these kinds of things.

But in fact, what we find is we don't get that. We're left hanging, as it were. We don't even know the outcome of his two years of waiting in Rome for his trial.

We do know from secular history that at some stage later he was executed in Rome. It's probable that he was released on this occasion and that he continued his mission for another year or two may well be that he in fact did reach Spain with the Gospel as he wanted to.

We can't be totally sure. But either way, Luke records none of that for us. Why not? Did he forget? Perhaps he didn't know.

Well, of course not. That's not the answer. He didn't tell us because Luke is not writing a biography of Paul's life in this book. He's not even writing the history of the early church.

[ 1 : 27 ] He's writing about the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ with a very clear and specific purpose. He's wrote two books. The first volume, Luke's Gospel, tells us that it's telling us about what Jesus began to do.

And the implication is that Acts is a book telling us about what Jesus continued to do through his Holy Spirit poured out on the church through the ministry of his apostles. And he does it all so that, as he says in the very first sentence of his first volume, so that we might have certainty about the Gospel that we've been taught.

And so as he concludes this second volume of his writing, what is it, we must ask, what is it that Luke wants to leave with ringing certainty in our ears and in our hearts?

Well, he wants us to be certain that the promise of Christ has not failed. And it will never fail. He wants us to be certain that our God is marching on.

He wants us to be certain that the work of the Holy Spirit will never cease until everything is fulfilled. Remember, at the end of his first volume, Luke's Gospel, Jesus' words, it is written, he says, that repentance and forgiveness of sins shall be proclaimed in my name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem.

[ 2 : 53 ] And Acts chapter 1 begins with Christ's promise to his apostles that there will be witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. And so Luke's account ends then with a great climax of certainty.

With the Gospel, he says, being proclaimed with all boldness, right at the very heart, the hub of the universe of humanity, in Rome, the centre of the world.

And with the certainty that the Kingdom of God is advancing from there into all the world unhindered. You see what Luke is saying to us.

He's saying to us exactly what Joshua said to the people of Israel at the end of his life. You know, he says, in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you.

Not one word has failed. Every word of Jesus, says Luke, is just as he said it would be. And all through the book of Acts, we've seen his truth marching on and on and on, despite every danger, every toil, every snare, unhindered.

[ 4 : 10 ] And it's a pattern that we've seen over and over again. There's been certainty, hasn't there, all the way through, about the unstoppable of the Kingdom of Christ.

And therefore, Luke is telling us that we can be certain that this pattern is set for the future as well. As it has been, so also it shall be. And that's the message of this last section of Luke's book.

It was said, do you remember, of the famous climbers, Mallory and Irvin, who were lost on their ascent, attempted ascent of Everest in 1924.

It was said that when they were last seen, they were still climbing. And that is what Luke is saying to us here as he closes his book. When the camera pans out at the close of this book of Acts, when the picture fades, when it's freeze-framed, as it were, what we see, what we're left with, is resolute, unhindered advance.

That what has begun will go on and on and on, unhindered, until as Jesus said in Matthew chapter 24, the gospel has been proclaimed in the whole world as a witness to all nations before at last he will come again.

[ 5 : 36 ] Be certain, says Luke. And these are my last words to you. Be certain. Our God is marching on, unhindered.

That's his message. And so you can take courage, he says. You can go on proclaiming him, despite all sorts of prejudice and opposition. You can marvel at his extraordinary ways.

You can rejoice in his great salvation. Because our God is marching on, unhindered, forever. Well, let's look with some detail then at the text to see just how Luke reinforces that message for us as he chooses to round off his story in this way.

Look first at verses 11 to 16, which tell of a comforting provision for Christ's servant, Paul. The striking thing in these verses is the wonderful fellowship with Christ's brethren that Paul experiences.

And that demonstrates for us the pervasiveness of the fruitfulness of the gospel everywhere in the world. Verse 11 says they set sail after three months on this Alexandrian ship.

[ 6 : 51 ] And what an irony. This ship has the twin figureheads, the twin gods, seeking protection from these Greek gods. Little do they know that the protection all the way has been from Paul's God, the only God, the God of Israel.

So they put in at Syracuse, on Sicily, then Regium, right down on the toe of Italy, and then up the coast to Petale. And there, says verse 14, we found brothers, Christian believers.

And they stayed for seven days with them. What a joy that must have been for Paul. We don't know how God engineered that. Maybe the centurion had to send ahead to Rome. Maybe he had other business to do.

Maybe he just found a little break before the 120 mile march to Rome. I don't know. It's the Bay of Naples. I'm told it was a very nice place for a short break. Never been myself. But anyway, Paul had a short break with Christian brothers.

And then notice verse 15, so we came to Rome. About another 120 miles or so. And what did we find there? More brothers. They came all the way out from Rome, 30 miles to the Forum of Appius and three taverns.

[ 7 : 59 ] Maybe 40 miles. I don't miss the point. You see what we're being told already at the very heart of the world, at the heart of the Roman Empire.

It seems to be peppered with Christian believers. There are brothers everywhere Paul goes. A few years earlier, do you remember, he wrote to the Corinthians calling them saints.

Together with all those, he says, who in every place call upon the name of the Lord. And then a bit after this, writing to the Colossians from his prison in Rome, he wrote to them and said this in Colossians chapter 1, all over the world, this gospel is bearing fruit and growing.

And he has evidence of it in the flesh. Remember when Paul had set out in Acts 20 and 21 from Asia to go back to Jerusalem and he stopped at all of these ports on the way, Tyre and Ptolemaeus and Caesarea and then eventually Jerusalem.

They were told that in every place there were brothers who welcomed him and shared fellowship with him. And so here it is at the end of his journey, right across the sea in Rome itself, there were brothers there.

[ 9 : 15 ] And no wonder at the end of verse 15 we read that Paul thanked God and took courage. A real fellowship with those who are united with you in Christ and who are united with you in heart for the same cause of Christ.

There's nothing more encouraging, is there, for Christ's servants than to find that fellowship.

Remember last year when Edward and I were in India. You'll remember Edward when we went up to Lucknow for the day and one of the pastors who'd been out from England had been teaching there all on his own for about ten days or so.

And he said to us just what a joy it was to have our visit, just to have fellowship and to be able to share that again in his own language. I think sometimes as a student, some of you, it will be true of you that you go off to the long vacation in summer and it may be that for quite a long time you have very little fellowship.

Perhaps your parents aren't Christians. Perhaps where you live at home there's not really a church you can have fellowship in. And so often you say what a joy it is to come back to terms, back to church, back to release the word and to find fellowship with brothers and sisters.

Well, how much more for Paul after that dreadful journey and the shipwreck and all of these things. What a wonderful demonstration of God's personal care and his personal provision for Paul.

[10:37] His love for him, his sovereign oversight over his whole life, this precise moment. And he was so desperate for it, I'm sure. He provided that fellowship.

Remember a similar thing back in chapter 18 when he was in Corinth, that great city, he cast down and God provided for him Priscilla and Aquila who became soulmates. Maybe they were among those who travelled out from Rome to see him here because if you read Romans 16 you'll find that it looks as though Priscilla and Aquila had gone to Rome by that time.

Perhaps they were leading the brothers and sisters out to the forum of Appius to greet Paul. What a great encouragement that provision was for him.

But more than that, although that was very real and very wonderful in itself. What a great reminder to Paul of God's sovereign care for his whole world.

Just to see that Christian people were getting everywhere. That they are really permeating the whole world. That the gospel he was preaching really is bearing fruit all over the world.

[11:48] That's something that constantly amazes us, isn't it? When we travel perhaps, even when you go on holiday. You'll find Christian believers wherever you go. I remember thinking that last year.

I'd never been as far away as to the other side of the world but to arrive in Australia after whatever it was, 28 hours travelling and to be met by a family and to be sitting at their kitchen table having a meal as though they'd been my family all my life.

It's a wonderful reality of Christian fellowship, isn't it? Some of you have found that coming from other parts of the world here find rural family, brothers and sisters. And that's true even in the darkest places on this earth, even in countries that supposedly are closed to the gospel of Christ. All over this world the gospel is bearing fruit and is growing. And when you find yourself in these places you will find Christian brothers and sisters.

And that's what was happening then and that is what is happening today. And that ought to give us cause, like Paul, oughtn't it, to give thanks and to take courage to remember our God is marching on and his people are everywhere and that is the evidence of it.

[13:09] And that is so today as then despite the same relentless and unfounded opposition.

And that's what the next section here in verses 17 to 22 highlights for it, doesn't it? A constant prejudice against Christ's church. Paul's encounter with the Jewish leaders in Rome reminds us that despite the manifest goodness and blessing to the world that the gospel is and the Christian church is, despite that it has been resisted universally from the very beginning.

And it's been resisted even by societies and cultures that have been most privileged, that have had the scriptures in their own language for centuries and even for millennia.

Verse 17 says that Paul waited only three days to get going. I'm eager, he wrote to the Romans some years earlier, eager to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome.

Well, he certainly was. We'd have said to Paul, wouldn't we, after a journey like that, Paul, have a holiday before you start your ministry. Take a break. You need to pace yourself. But Paul wasn't apparently interested in applying the European working time directive to his ministry.

[14:34] His ministry was far too urgent for that. Actually, it's something that we should note ourselves, isn't it? In our own ministries, in our own lives. Yes, we do need to be sane or we mustn't get soft.

It's very easy to get soft. It's easy to drift into routine, even into laziness, isn't it, sometimes, in our own Christian mission. Alas, there's a lot of lazy people in ministry today, a lot of lazy Christians, a lot of lazy churches too, but not Paul.

In fact, not any servant of Christ who's ever really done anything for God. So, three days only and then he calls all the Jewish leaders together.

Now, they're probably very nervous. They've heard all about this Christian sect, as they call it. They also have endured in Rome, as Jews, an eviction by a previous emperor, Claudius.

Remember, Acts chapter 18 told us about that. All the Jews had been expelled from Rome because of tensions between Jews and Christians. So, they were very nervous. They said, verse 21, they'd never had anything directly bad about Paul himself, whether that's true or not, or they're just being polite, we don't know.

[ 15 : 49 ] But they must surely have worried about what trouble might potentially come to them from this man coming into a very public trial in Rome. Something that would surely put the Jews in Rome into the spotlight.

So, in verse 17, you see, Paul reassures them. I've done nothing, he says, against our people or our customs. I was found innocent, verse 18, by the Romans.

I'm only here because of the objection of the Jews, he says. They're totally unfair objections. But, and this is very important, notice verse 19, he says, I'm not here to seek to address for that injustice.

I'm not here to bring any charge against the Jewish people. I'm not here to seek Rome's vengeance on you for what you've done to me. It's quite the opposite, verse 20.

My great desire, he says, is to speak to you, my brothers, my Jewish countrymen, to speak to you about the hope of Israel, about the hope that God promised to our fathers, the father Abraham, his great covenant promise.

[ 16 : 56 ] about the hope of a resurrection from the dead and the hope of a new heavens and a new earth and the day of the Lord as the prophets promised. That's all I want to do, says Paul.

I want to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome, to Jews first and also to Greeks. And you see, that is all that the Christian church, the true Christian church, has ever wanted to do, to do good, to share with this world the message of joy and of comfort and hope, the hope of Israel.

And yet, look at verse 22, that simple, pure and wholesome desire is met with constant prejudice. Everywhere, this sect is spoken against. Even mere universally among the Jewish people in the culture, the very culture that had been so privileged and blessed by the biblical faith.

Extraordinary, isn't it? The prejudice that there is and that there always has been against Christ's church. Just think about what we've read all the way through the book of Acts.

[ 18 : 14 ] Read of the amazing blessings that the gospel and its impact spread throughout the ancient world. Nothing but good. Healings.

Personal help for the needy. Care for the poor and the weak and the dispossessed. Think of the demoniac slave girl freed from her exploitive masters. Think of the Philippian jailer and his family changed.

Think of Lydia, her heart opened generously to so many through the gospel. Think of the people freed from exploitation under Simon the sorcerer or the idol makers in Ephesus that exploited them with their trade.

Think of all that catalogue of goodness and benefit to society and yet everywhere it's spoken against. Think about the whole history of the Christian church in the world.

Think about its massive impact on the Roman Empire. bringing about the end of exposure of babies just thrown out to die. The building of the first orphanages.

[ 19 : 23 ] The beginning of adoption of foundlings. Of welfare for the poor. Of healthcare. Of sanitation. All from the Christian church. Think about much more recent history even in our own nation and the vast blessings that have come to western culture and to our own culture through or think of the great social reformers following the evangelical awakening of the 18th century.

Prison reform. Workplace reform. The abolition of slavery. Care for the poor. Care for the elderly. Think more recently the whole hospice movement. Care for the dying. On and on and on and on goes the avalanche of blessings to this world that have come through the gospel of Christ and the Christian church.

But what do we find in our culture today? In the media almost universally and increasingly in the corridors of power in parliament everywhere this sect is spoken against.

We're a culture aren't we that has had an enormous privilege. We've had the scriptures in our own language for 500 years and more. The freedoms that we take for granted in this country are built on a foundation hewn from the Christian faith.

Our institutions of justice our parliamentary democracy our whole heritage in education our legacy of science all of these things are the fruit directly or indirectly of the influence of the Christian gospel being worked into the very fabric of our culture.

[ 21 : 02 ] And yet as though the very opposite were the case as though it was a Christian church that was public enemy number one a sinister dark and deadly terrorist organization bent on destruction as though that were true the campaign to stamp out Christianity in Britain seems to be gathering pace.

Writes one of the very few clear thinking newspaper columnists in one of our newspapers this last week. and the irony is that she's not a Christian she's actually Jewish.

Everywhere it's spoken against. There is constant prejudice against the true Christian gospel and the true Christian church.

There was then and there still is today. But and this is the clear message Luke wants us to grasp nevertheless the gospel is marching on.

Jesus said and Luke records it back in chapter 21 of his gospel you will be hated for my name's sake but said Jesus that will be your opportunity for bearing witness. So don't batten down the hatches.

[ 22 : 19 ] Don't think about emigrating to some other part of the world although it might be very tempting. No the gospel says Jesus is bearing fruit. Despite this Christians are permeating the world and the culture and we're to give thanks to God we're to take courage from that just as Paul did.

It may well be that everywhere the Christian gospel is opposed but it is just as true that everywhere Christ's people are being saved. And that makes people like Richard Dawkins and Philip Pullman and his campaigning parliamentary colleague Evan Harris makes them very mad but it should make us very very glad.

I have to say I'm personally very thankful that Evan Harris the former Lib Dem MP lost his seat at the last election because the thought of him potentially being a government minister I think would be terrifying.

Determined as he was to try and drive through legislation for euthanasia and full term abortion and all kinds of other things I thank God that the people of Oxford rejected him.

But the Christian church has always been and will always be everywhere spoken against. But be certain says Luke our God is marching on unhindered even by people like that.

[ 23 : 47 ] None of that is outside God's control. None of it is outside God's plan. And that's what verses 23 to 28 likewise emphasise for us in this confirmed prophecy about Christ's kingdom.

These verses explain or express at least an extraordinary enigma that we can barely fathom that despite the amazing privilege of the Jewish people the covenant people with all their history of God's word at God's hand.

The extraordinary mystery that when the Christ Jesus came John tells us he came to his own and his own received him not. And we've seen again and again throughout haven't we that incomprehensible rejection by Israel of the message of her Messiah.

And here one last time Paul gives opportunity to the Jews in Rome to receive the message of salvation to receive the message of the fulfilment of everything that they say that they've looked for and longed for and believed in.

So they came verse 22 in Numbers and from morning till evening he expounded to them the gospel testifying to the evidence of the kingdom at last come in Jesus convincing them from the whole Old Testament from the law and the prophets about Jesus that he must be the Christ who was promised.

[ 25 : 21 ] Now we know all the kinds of things that he would have said to them we've seen it again and again through the book reasoning persuading convincing as his pattern was from the scriptures. What a privilege to have heard that man from morning till evening proclaiming the gospel to him from the scriptures.

I think of the privilege that I counted through my life to have heard some of the people who have expounded the unsearchable riches of Christ to me but who have heard Paul all day from dawn to dusk expound these things what an incredible privilege and some says verse 24 were convinced how could they not be convinced but others as the new RSV puts it refused to believe they disbelieved and notice that that's very very important you see Christian faith is not blind irrationality

Christian faith means to be convinced by clear irrefutable logical evidence about the person of Jesus Christ about who he is about what he said about what he has done and therefore unbelief is not a neutral thing it's an active refusal it is a rejection of the clear convincing evidence that God has given us about his son it's a refusal of the truth it's a denial of reality that's what unbelief is you see in the end the response of the human heart to the gospel is not merely an intellectual one it's a moral one and to refuse it is to refuse to yield your heart and your soul and your mind and your will to the

Lord Jesus Christ and that is what Israel in the main although not exclusively in the main refused to do they refused to believe that is they refused to obey the call of God Paul is absolutely clear about that read in Romans chapter 10 and 11 all day long says the Lord I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people they were broken off says Paul because of their unbelief the issue is they have not all obeyed the gospel you see to disbelieve the gospel is to disobey God it's to be in rebellion against him and so here you see in verse 25 Paul says this is just a confirmation of Jesus words when Jesus himself wept over Jerusalem at her rejection of him and Jesus himself quoted these words of Isaiah the prophet he's saying that there comes a time when God's people have so refused his grace so hardened their hearts against him that in the end

God simply confirms them in the unbelief which they assert God says alright then you will hear but you will never understand you'll see but you will never perceive God answers the prayer of the heart that says I do not want you go away and he does that's a very fearful thing don't you think that there is such a thing with the living God as being too late that there is a place beyond which there is no return that when you have said repeatedly in your heart depart from me spirit of Christ go away leave me alone there comes a time when there may be through tears Jesus Christ the Lord of glory must say I will depart with my salvation and it will be forever hidden from your eyes that's a very real warning to us friends that's especially a very very real warning to people who have grown up as the Jews did with all the blessings of the covenant community with the scriptures baptized nurtured in the grace and the admonition of faith given all the privileges of that covenant don't presume ever upon the covenant grace of

God the privileges of the covenant gospel demand the response of obedient faith and where there is settled unbelief where there is a personal refusal and a perpetual rejection of that call of grace it will in the end cause the Lord Jesus Christ to depart to take his salvation elsewhere it's a word of warning too for any church isn't it and for any denomination indeed even for any culture and civilization we've seen it all through biblical history you can see it through all the history since the same pattern that God though he is yes he is slow to anger and patient to rule back a people who have departed from him in the end where there is no repentance he must withdraw he must go elsewhere with his blessing very very sobering and these words are meant to sober us and yet these words also are meant to make us marvel because

[ 31 : 21 ] Paul tells us that it is because of that terrible rejection verse 28 that salvation has been sent to the gentile world that the deep and the bitter prejudice of the Jews notwithstanding their rejection their unbelief notwithstanding their very rejection means the abundant blessing for the whole world that verse encapsulates really doesn't it the extraordinary mystery that Paul unfolds in Romans chapter 11 that Israel's trespass means salvation has come to the gentiles that their rejection he says means reconciliation for the world it's an enigma it's beyond us I can't understand it and yet it's true oh the depths of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God says Paul how unsearchable his judgments how how inscrutable are his ways that's all Paul can say that's all we can say but surely we must marvel that that with our

God it's through what seems what seems to us to be the weakest the most foolish the most crushing and agonizing defeats in the whole world it's through that that his glorious purpose is found to triumph that his glorious salvation is made complete like in the bitter derision and rejection of our Lord Jesus crushed and beaten his broken body of the Son of God on the cross and likewise in the bitter rejection resurrection of the gospel of his Son by his own people the people called by his name a confirmed prophecy about Christ's kinsmen and yet in that and through that that dark and terrible tragedy salvation says Paul has been sent to the Gentiles and they will listen like you and me here today most of us probably all of us in this building

Gentiles behold says Paul in Romans 11 behold the kindness and sternness of God branches broken off he says the rejection of the Jews that you and I might be grafted in and find our place in the great salvation of Christ doesn't that give us certainty doesn't that give us amazing peace in the

midst of all kinds of things in our world and in our lives which just seem to us to be the greatest possible tragedy that even through the impenetrable mysteries of our lives and things that we can't comprehend and things that make us weep and mourn in these things our God is marching on in these things he is working out our glorious good to the praise of his glorious grace in these things his salvation salvation is bearing fruit all over this world and all through our own lives that's the message says Luke don't ever despair our God is marching on and so in these last two verses he just underlines it for us in triplicate there was then he says there is now and there always shall be a certain progression of Christ's gospel verse 30

Paul lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance Christ's gospel and Christ's servant installed at the very heart of the empire his servant proclaiming with all boldness and his kingdom progressing unhindered one of the translations actually translates that last phrase without hindrance as unhinderedly and that's good it's just one word it's an adverb it has that force just as boldly as adverbial it's describing the march of the gospel of God the march of the God of truth our God is marching on unhinderedly says Luke and that is my final word and so says Luke Christ's servants Paul and all Christ's servants are liberated to go on proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom boldly with all boldness knowing that God is at work and that

God will be at work utterly unhindered not by the paroxysm of nature and all of its storms not by the prejudice of man and all his opposition not even by the perversity of those who call themselves the Christian church but resist and utterly reject the authority of Christ the Lord of the church none of these things will ever hinder our God it's no accident that this last section we've been looking at in Luke's gospel begins and ends with a triumphant march of the gospel of Jesus the prejudice of the culture and the perversity of the religious heart are surrounded as it were and overcome by these brackets of the gospel which is the power of God for salvation the first paragraph tells that its penetration is ubiquitous Christ's people are everywhere and these last couple of verses tell us that its progress is unhinderable our God is marching on because although

[ 37 : 28 ] Christ's servants may be chained and Paul no doubt was chained to this Roman soldier in house arrest God's word is not chained that's what he wrote to Timothy remember and indeed through his close ties quite literally with these many guards changing as they would have done several times daily through that he told the Philippian church that the whole imperial guard now understands why it is that Paul is here he evangelized the whole of the imperial guard just through his imprisonment that's why he said to the Philippians all these things have happened only to serve the advance of the gospel you see the truth is friends that the long term result the long term fruit of what these last verses of the acts of the apostles record was not only the radical reshaping of the whole of the western world the birth of everything that we know of today as civilization but also the extraordinary persistent penetration of nearly although not quite yet nearly the whole of this wide world with the glorious gospel of our Lord

Jesus Christ the message of sins forgiven of hope restored of peace with heaven the Romans couldn't crush the gospel although they martyred many of its servants including Paul in the end the Nazis the Soviets they couldn't crush the gospel of Christ though they true tried to stamp it out many times the medieval Roman church couldn't crush the gospel although it kept it hidden and suppressed for many centuries before it broke free on the printing presses of Wycliffe and the preaching of Martin Luther and nor will any of the tyrannies of our age or the ages to come ever crush the gospel of Jesus Christ not the politically correct but sinister forces of our secular prejudice today nor the dark religious shadow of Islam over the world today nor even the craven ecclesiasticism of crumbling apostate christianized denominations in the west none of these things ever will stop the march of the gospel of our savior and lord and that's the message of my whole book says Luke i've gone right back to the beginning he said i've gathered all the evidence i've given it to you so that you may have certainty certainty about the things that you've been taught that what christ our lord and savior promises christ our lord and savior accomplishes friends i don't know of anything more important for you and i to hold on to and to believe and to trust in that it's true of everything that he has promised to you personally in your life in your discipleship in your walk of faith with him and about your eternal future with him what he has promised he accomplishes it's true of everything he's called us to be as a fellowship of his people here together as a congregation it's true of everything that he's promised for his whole church throughout all this world and it's all

summed up in this very last word of the book of acts unhinder i don't know about you but i just find it so easy isn't it to be discouraged in life there's so many things that cry in upon us so many things that can lower our horizons and make us doubt if god is really doing anything make us wonder if what we're doing is any point at all makes us think is it really worth going on in this christian faith is it worth plodding on with this seemingly so fruitless ministry luke says don't think that way thank god and take courage today and tomorrow morning when you go to work and in the very hard situation that faces you next week and in the health scare that might come soon for you or someone in your family one of your children one of your loved ones and even through the valley of the shadow of death which will come to every one of us here we can go on boldly boldly believing the gospel boldly living the gospel boldly proclaiming the gospel because his kingdom and his purpose and his eternal plan goes on unhinderedly and of that says luke we can have certainty absolute certainty our god friends and his gospel are marching on unhinderedly and forever and that's luke's last word to us at the end of this great book of many encouragements let's pray he is coming like the glory of the morning on the wave he is wisdom to the mighty he is succor to the brave so the world shall be his footstool and the soul of wrong his slave our god is marching on lord we thank you for this word etch it in our hearts we pray for christ our saviour's sake amen