

First Christian Church (Lawrence, KS)
Dr. Barry M. Foster
April 24, 2022

A Surprise of Unfamiliar Friends
“The Young Prospect”

Acts 15:36-16:10 (NIV)

Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Philippians 1:1-11 (NIV)

*Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,
To all God’s holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the
overseers and deacons:*

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 2:19-24 (NIV)

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

[Slide 1] *Opening*

Good morning church! Last week's chance to see my good friend Bob Mendelsohn along with some other friends took me back to the days when I first arrived at KU and found the Mustard Seed Bible study. From the very first weeks of my first semester through the next six years of my life, I met people who became some of my closest friends even to this day, who impacted my life in more ways than I can count. But those dear friends were people I would probably have never known otherwise. In case after case, there were no natural connections that would have brought us together, no shared hobbies or backgrounds or affinities that would have given us a reason to meet or to spark a friendship. But God united us at church—we got to know one another because the Bible study was at the center of our connection to one another. What we had in common was Jesus, and that was enough to start relationships that have spanned the decades.

[Slide 2] *Introduction*

This past week I was rummaging through my brain, with some help from the internet, looking for a word. You're probably aware that there are specific words used to describe groups of animals. And some of those words are quite odd, or perplexing. So, for instance, a group of birds is typically called a "flock" of birds. (So are sheep or goats, but why these two different sets of animals are both a flock, I can't explain, other than the Old English word, *flocc*, meant "a crowd"). But a group of birds can also be called a "congregation"—a "congregation of birds." (I'll let you make the joke.) And a group of crows is called a "murder," a "murder of crows." No idea how that happened.

It's kind of fun to see the names for these groups of various animals: an army of frogs, a horde of gerbils (those both sound a bit ominous); here's a fun one: a tower of giraffes. Or how about: a mischief of mice? Australians might see that one a bit differently: there's an absolute plague of mice exploding down under. Maybe that should be what we call them.

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But I couldn't find any word to describe a group of friends. So I invented one: a "surprise." I think it fits well. New friends bring something unknown that becomes known; they are unfamiliar until they become familiar, and from that unknown, unfamiliar something comes the great joy of an unexpected good: a surprise. Thus, the title of this new series: "*A Surprise of Unfamiliar Friends.*"

Acts 16 is going to be our focus for the next six weeks. In that chapter of Luke's marvelous story of the early church are six characters who are probably somewhat unfamiliar to you. But I hope that as we look more closely at them, they will become good friends whom you are glad to know. And along the way, they can teach us a lot about who we are, who the church is, as well as some things that we need to grasp in order to live faithfully as God's people.

[Slide 4] *Literary background for the book of Acts*

The book of Acts is a lengthy, complex, and carefully planned narrative. Our passage this morning starts a little after the half-way point in this long story. Here's a quick overview of the main scenes in the story prior to that point:

- Jesus appears to the apostles after his resurrection
- Jesus ascends to heaven and sends the Holy Spirit on Pentecost
- The life of the church in Jerusalem and the initial persecutions, including the death of Stephen, the first martyr
- The spread of the church into Samaria and the surrounding regions and the continuing persecution, led by Saul/Paul
- The conversion of Saul/Paul

- The conversion of Cornelius and the other Gentiles in his household
- Paul and Barnabas and their first missionary trip together
- The Jerusalem Council: debating the question of admitting Gentiles as fellow believers in Christ

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The last two items on this overview are two of the most significant turning points in Luke's narrative; in fact, they are arguably two of the most significant turning points in the church's history.

The first is described in Acts 13: Paul and Barnabas are called by the Holy Spirit and commissioned by the church in Antioch to undertake a new mission to evangelize the Gentiles. This is a continuation of what the two have been doing in Antioch in Syria, and of what Paul has been doing since his conversion. This missionary effort (often referred to as "Paul's first missionary journey") takes place in the years AD 47-48 and results in the establishment of new churches on Cyprus and in the interior of Anatolia (Turkey), most notably the churches in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

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The second is described in Acts 15: As a consequence of the great success of the mission of Paul and Barnabas, many Gentiles have come to faith. But some of the Pharisees who have become followers of Jesus have raised the question: Must the Gentiles be required be circumcised and obey the Mosaic Law in order to follow Jesus, the Messiah? Paul has said otherwise. So, in the year AD 49, the leaders of the church call for a gathering to discuss the matter. After Paul and Barnabas present the evidence of their evangelistic efforts and their understanding of the gospel, Peter reminds the gathering of the event when he preached to Gentiles at the home of Cornelius, with the result that they were saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit without any extra requirement from God. James, the brother of Jesus, the de facto leader of the Jerusalem church, offers his counsel, and the entire group of elders and apostles decides to admit Gentiles without requiring circumcision or obedience to the Mosaic Law. It is a pivotal moment in the history of the church, second only in importance to the resurrection of Jesus and the subsequent descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

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That brings us to our passage in Acts 15:36-41. Paul and Barnabas plan to return to the churches they started on their previous journey and to present to them the decision of the leaders of the Jerusalem church. But they disagree about whether to include Barnabas' relative, John Mark, who turned back on the earlier

journey. The disagreement is so strong that the two friends split up: Barnabas takes John Mark with him to Cyprus and Paul chooses a new partner, Silas, and returns overland through Syria and Cilicia to the churches in the interior of Anatolia, beginning with Derbe and Lystra. It is the year 49.

[Slide 8] *Paul invites Timothy along*

In Lystra, Paul takes note of a young man named Timothy. The believers all speak well of him; and somehow, the Holy Spirit signals to Paul that this youth is to go with him. So Paul invites Timothy to join Silas and him for the next portion of his journey, to Pisidian Antioch, and then to parts unknown, to continue preaching the gospel to Jews and Gentiles alike.

Luke tells us a great deal about Timothy with only a very few words. When we combine what Luke tells us with what we know about Timothy from elsewhere in Paul's letters, we can form a reasonably good portrait of this young prospect.

[Slide 9] *A portrait of Timothy*

First, let's take note that he is a young man. From Paul's letter to Timothy, written between AD 62-66, about twelve to sixteen years later, we see that Paul encourages Timothy not to let people in the church disregard him because he is young (1 Timothy 4:12). That would indicate that Timothy was still regarded as being young at the time of the letter; probably an indication that he was not yet thirty years old, the standard age at which a man in the Greco-Roman world moved into the status of full maturity. That would mean that when Paul met him in Lystra in the year 49, Timothy would have been in his mid- to late teens.

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Second, notice that Luke refers to him as a "disciple." This is Luke's ordinary term for a Christian. Most likely, Timothy was converted on Paul's earlier visit to Lystra. 2 Timothy 1:5 and 3:15 tell us that Timothy had grown up in a home where he was introduced to the Jewish faith and was well-acquainted with the Scriptures. Both his mother and grandmother were devout Jews who had become followers of Jesus, again, probably on Paul's prior visit.

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But Timothy's father was neither Jewish, nor a follower of Christ. He was a Greek—meaning not only that he spoke Greek, but also that he was likely of Greek descent, a pagan who had not converted to Judaism, despite his wife's faith. Nor was he a God-fearer, a Gentile who recognized Yahweh as the only God, and who identified with the synagogue. Luke shows a very strong interest in pointing out God-fearers whenever he can in the narrative, but he gives no such indication here.

Instead, he highlights the fact that Timothy's father was known to be a Greek—that is, a pagan—by all of the Jews in the region.

Another significant point here is that Timothy himself was not circumcised. So, even though Timothy's father allowed his mother to practice her faith, he was unwilling for his son to be identified as a Jew. The likeliest reasons are not hard to discern. Sons were expected to follow their father's religion; to do otherwise would bring dishonor to the father. And circumcision was widely viewed among Gentiles as barbaric and horrific; it was another reason to despise the Jews.

So, although Timothy grew up in a home where he was exposed to the practices of the Jewish faith and was taught the Scriptures, perhaps even allowed to attend the services at the synagogue, he was never identified as a Jewish man.

Timothy was therefore the product of a mixed-race marriage—something that was not unknown in the ancient world, but was certainly less common than today. But he was also the product of a marriage divided by religion. He was familiar with Judaism, enough so that he was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah and surrendered his life to him. But because he wasn't circumcised, he stood a little outside both communities—not fully Jewish, and so not completely acceptable to them, but far too Jewish to be fully acceptable in the Gentile world.

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And yet! And yet Luke tells us that the believers spoke well of him: he had a good reputation with the Christians in the region, not only in his home town of Lystra, but even in Iconium, about twenty miles north on the main road. Luke's language suggests that the churches in both cities were very familiar with him. They testified to his character, his devotion, and his understanding of the Scriptures and the gospel as presented by Paul and Barnabas.

Here's something else we can glean when we read carefully. When Luke tells us that the believers spoke well of him, that means that Paul was inquiring about Timothy. He was seeking out their opinions. Why? Because he had noticed something in this young man, perhaps even on his first trip, but certainly on this visit. He was looking to confirm what he sensed from the Spirit of God, and he found it in what the churches said about Timothy.

That's a good thing to remember in general, by the way. Whenever God calls a person, he confirms that calling through other believers who know that person well. Plenty of random people have burst into a church or slithered their way into a group claiming to be sent by God. They're the self-anointed, self-appointed apostles of whatever new revelation has come to lodge itself in their imagination. But those whom God has called to serve him have put in the time,

walking with Jesus, learning from others, developing and maturing in the sight of other people, and those people can testify that this person is the real deal.

And Timothy was the real deal. Even at a young age, still in his teens!, he had earned the respect of the community—no small feat in a world that thought little of a man until he was past thirty.

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Here's another thing we can see about Timothy: he was courageous. Not fearless, courageous. That's not what we usually are told about Timothy. People often point to 2 Timothy 1:7 ("*God has not given us a spirit of timidity*") and conclude that Timothy was on the fearful side, easily intimidated. But Luke points out that Paul chose him to go with them on a dangerous journey. And Timothy would have been well aware of Paul's history. On his previous trip through the region, he had been brutally attacked by Jews from Iconium and Antioch, stoned by a crowd and left for dead, just outside Lystra's city walls. But God healed him miraculously, and he returned to the city and told the disciples that "*it is through many tribulations that we enter the kingdom of God.*" Timothy would have known that going along with Paul would mean trouble. And he willingly went along.

You want further evidence of his courage? He willingly submitted to an exceedingly painful procedure—circumcision as an adult—in order to make things easier for Paul and Silas and the gospel.

Timothy may have struggled a bit with speaking up, with giving commands, with leading forcefully. But he was no coward. He was dedicated to following Jesus, devoted to Paul and to the gospel, and willing to serve, no matter the cost.

[Slide 14] *Why did Paul circumcise Timothy?*

Well, what about this circumcision business? Why did Paul circumcise Timothy, anyway? After all, one of the specific purposes of Paul's trip to Lystra was to deliver the decrees that had been decided upon at the Jerusalem Council earlier that year. Silas was one of the witnesses approved by the Jerusalem church elders to carry the message with Paul. They were here to tell the Gentile believers that they did not need to be circumcised at all; their faith in Christ was sufficient. Why then did Timothy have to be circumcised?

The reason that Paul circumcised Timothy was that he needed something different from him, something more. Timothy did not need to be circumcised or to keep the Mosaic law to follow Christ. The decision of the Jerusalem Council made that clear. But that still left practical relationships difficult.

Timothy was from a mixed-race family, a religiously divided household. He was familiar with Jewish traditions, customs, and ways from his mother, but he

identified as a Greek with his father. In many ways, he was the perfect person to help Paul model Christian faith and teach the gospel to God-fearers, who could see in him someone to whom they could relate. He was also the perfect person to help Paul demonstrate to the Jewish-Christian community the value of welcoming Gentiles into the faith.

But—if Timothy was going to participate in the discussions of the Scriptures with the Jewish leaders in a city; if he was going to eat with them and mingle with them, sleep in their homes, interact with them personally; he would have to be given access into the Jewish community. And that would never be granted to an uncircumcised Gentile. To be welcomed, to be given access, allowed to fully participate in reading Torah, discussing the Scriptures, praying in the synagogue together—Timothy would have to be circumcised.

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That Paul carried this out tells us a very important truth about Timothy, and about Paul's estimation of Timothy, and his plan for Timothy. If all Paul needed from Timothy on the journey was someone who could handle menial tasks—cooking, securing lodging, running errands, carrying baggage—Timothy could have done all of that without ever being circumcised. But Paul saw his role on the team as more than simply a gofer, or an attendant. He saw him as someone who could be useful *right now*, someone who could engage with the Jewish community in meaningful dialogue and be accepted within the community.

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It's true that Timothy was still a fairly young convert, still new in his faith, and it's fair to say that he was somewhat unproven, though not completely. He clearly lacked experience and the wisdom that can only come with years. But his reputation with the church indicated some level of competence and spiritual maturity, despite his youth. He also had a strong moral foundation from his upbringing, good familiarity with the Scriptures, personal character, and the demonstrated willingness to serve. Yes, he was young; still just a prospect. But Paul gave the prospect a chance, because he saw something in the prospect that indicated great possibilities in the future.

I'm going to ask Sheri Penny to join me at this point to help me finish this sermon. While she's coming up, let me offer an illustration for you.

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Some of you are aware that I love baseball, and that I am a big Royals fan. This year, the Royals started the season with the #1 prospect in all of Major League Baseball, Bobby Witt, Jr. Bobby had a tremendous spring training; he was

hitting the ball like crazy. There was lots of hype for him, and a huge response from fans when the Royals announced that he had made the Major League roster. His first game as a Royal could hardly have gone better. He made a sensational play in the field that made the highlight reel for defensive gems, and he had the game-winning double for his first major league hit, first major league extra-base hit, first major league RBI, and first game-winning RBI.

Since then, he's cooled off a lot at the plate; his batting average is in the terrible range. He's still doing very well in the field, with several phenomenal plays each week, though I noticed that he made his first error on Friday night. The Royals aren't questioning whether they made a mistake bringing him up. They can see his potential, see what is possible. They know that he just needs some more time, more experience at the big league level. They are confident that the young prospect will turn into a great player.

[Slide 18] *Sheri Penny*

In late spring of 2019, I believe God planted a seed. Pastor Barry was our interim Pastor at the time. When we were interviewing him for the Senior Pastor position, one of the things he asked for was a commitment from the leadership that we grow the church younger. With that commitment made, finding the right young person to add to our staff was on our radar. We began praying and asking for God's guidance in this endeavor.

[Slide 19] *Barry*

About one year ago, a member of our church told me she had a dream that she thought was meant for me; that is, that God wanted to encourage me. In this dream, God told her that he was doing things beneath the surface, things that could not yet be seen, like the growth of the root system of a tree that would later yield fruit. Since this person was someone whom I regard as sensible, not given to seeing messages from God in every passing cloud, I took her seriously, thanked her, and waited to see what might come.

Then, in October of last year, I heard someone mention that a certain young man whom I had met was considering leaving his current position in ministry to do something different, perhaps to plant a church or something like that. A little 'ping' went off in my spiritual inbox—and I thought, "*I wonder . . .*"

So I invited him to have lunch. He was a bit surprised to receive the invitation, since we were acquainted, but not really well. In the course of our lunch, he began to share with me that for some time, he had been increasingly uncomfortable about his situation at the church where he served, that he felt like God was moving him in a different direction than the church was going, and that

he wasn't sure if he still belonged there. He had questions about theology, questions that put him at odds with that church's basic stance. Plus, he was interested in tackling a different area of ministry and there didn't seem to be a place for him to do that in his present situation.

I offered to mentor him, to help him sort through the theological issues and his ministry options. Whatever else was going on, I recognized that here was a young man whom God had called to ministry whom I could help, just as God had led me to do with other young men and women ever since I began doing this thing called ministry. But then I took another step. I took a risk, and asked him to consider coming to First Christian. I laid out some possible options of what that might look like. I told him whatever he decided, I would still be willing to mentor him, but I was offering him a chance for that to happen here.

He was a bit taken aback, as you might well expect. But he thanked me and promised to get back with me, which he did, about a month later, and we talked some more. In January, my wife and I met with him and his wife to talk and pray about what they believed God was saying to them, how he might be leading them, and what they felt was the right decision for their family. They continued to pray and talk together; he and I continued to talk about his theological questions. I left it to him to tell me if he wanted to pursue the possibility of coming to FCC. When he said that he would like to do so, I informed the Personnel Board about what had been happening, and asked them to consider the possibility of making a position for him. That was followed by a joint session with the elders and trustees where I presented the opportunity to them.

[Slide 20] *Sheri Penny*

Once Pastor Barry came to us with this possibility, the Personnel Board created a job description for the position of Young Adult and Families Pastor. The qualifications for this position include a minimum of 3 years of experience in church-based ministry, an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university, and a current ministerial license. This position's main concentration will be on the development and oversight of ministry of young adults: both married couples and singles, including KU students. The position's second area of focus will be to assist in the general ministry of the church, to help lead worship services, assist with pastoral visitations, officiate at weddings, funerals, baptisms, dedications and to teach classes. The third area of responsibility for this position is to give oversight, guidance, encouragement and to help the volunteers who lead the children's and youth ministries.

This young man was interested in our position and he submitted his resume. He has a secondary education degree from Emporia State University and did his student teaching at Lawrence High School. He held a year-long internship with Young Life's Washington Family Ranch. He served as Student Life Director for a church in Kansas City and is currently the Middle School Coordinator at a church in Lawrence, where he has been for the last 5 years.

He was interviewed several times by the elders, trustees and personnel board. We were all impressed with his spiritual maturity and the depth of his honesty and relatability. We extended him an offer toward the end of March, committing funds from a trustee designated investment account. We anticipate we can fund his salary from this account for two years.

He then spent 2 – 3 weeks praying and consulting with his family about accepting the position.

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I'm very pleased to announce that Chase Hoag has accepted the position of Young Adult and Families Pastor. Some of you may know Chase or have heard his name. Chase attended FCC with his family as a child and was active in our youth group. He is the son of our past Church Administrator, Lisa Hoag and Chuck Hoag who has passed away. It's special for me to make this announcement, because I've known Chase since he was a baby. Chase's parents, are close friends of my husband and I and our families spent lots time together.

When Pastor Barry first told the Personnel Board about a young man he was meeting with, Pastor Barry was careful about who it was, because of his current position, only telling us that he was married with children and in youth ministry. I immediately thought, could it be Chase Hoag? I asked Pastor Barry where he was currently ministering, but he wouldn't say. So that became my prayer, asking God if he could make that happen. God is so good!! It's become clear that, without knowing it was God's plan, we cultivated and tended to the soil and now the seed has sprouted. I hope you are as excited as I am to see the seed grow!

Because Chase is currently employed and wants to fulfill his responsibilities faithfully, he will be starting this position on August 1st.

After the service today, elders will be available to meet one on one to answer any questions you may have. We will also have a formal Q&A session May 1 after church. A formal welcome and reception for Chase and his family is being planned for late June.

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Thank you, Sheri. We're excited to make this announcement, and we hope that you will take the opportunity to attend the Q&A next week. But I'd like to return to the biblical Timothy as we close.

Approximately ten to twelve years after Timothy joined Paul on his missionary journey, in the year 60 or 61, Paul wrote a letter from prison to the Philippian church, one of the key churches that he had started on that trip with Timothy and Silas. Each of the three of them had made several trips to Philippi to strengthen the church and help them develop, and the Philippians had become one of Paul's favorite churches.

Paul includes Timothy in his salutation to the church. Even though Paul is the primary author of the letter, he knows that the Philippians remember and value who Timothy is—he wants them to think of Timothy when they read Paul's words to them.

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Later in the letter, Paul makes a most startling and revealing admission. He intends to send Timothy to them to help them straighten out some problems. Speaking of Timothy, Paul tells the Philippians, "*I have no one else like him.*"

Think about that! "*I have no one else like him.*" No one else who genuinely cares about you like Timothy does. No one else who wants the best for you as much as Timothy does. No one else who is as concerned about your spiritual growth and welfare; who shares Paul's pastoral concern for the church; who intimately understands the gospel and Paul's teaching as much and as well as Timothy does.

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Paul goes even further—he appeals to the Philippians' own recollection of Timothy. They know of his proven worth; they themselves can testify of his value, of his usefulness, of his competency as someone who could present the gospel and who modeled it in his life, because they had seen him do so when he first arrived with Paul and Silas. They had watched Timothy faithfully serve Paul, just like a son would serve his father, as they had labored together in the preaching and teaching of the gospel and establishing the church in Philippi. And now, ten years or so later, they themselves knew that Timothy exemplified the very ideal of sacrificial love and service that had been shown to us in Jesus Christ.

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As we think about our church—where we are today, and where we are going—we are a bit like the situation that faced the apostle Paul when he came to Lystra. We have the opportunity to reach many with the gospel. True, there are

many who are hostile to the church and even to Christ, and who will actively oppose our efforts to share the truth about Jesus. But there are others who will listen. Paul recognized that God needed his people who were living in the midst of a very different culture to reach out to those people so that he could build something very different: a church comprising both Jews and Gentiles, that would cross socio-economic and racial and generational lines. He needed a prospect who could help him bridge that gap between the Jewish community and the Gentile world so that the church could reach them both.

Like Paul, we have an opportunity to invest in some prospects, including younger folk who need experience and who will take the gospel in new ways; who will speak the same message in a different voice to their peers; who will start new churches that don't look like the old churches.

Like the Royals, there will be plenty of opportunities to criticize the performances of these young prospects—opportunities I hope we will have the wisdom to pass over. I love how Dayton Moore, and Ned Yost, and Mike Matheny consistently have expressed their trust in the young guys. They see the mistakes. But they are confident in these prospects. They have given them the chance to reach their potential.

Paul gave Timothy a chance. He brought him along on the journey as a prospect. He spent time pouring his life into Timothy, and God turned Timothy into one of the most significant leaders of the early church. I think we can do the same with the young prospects God is giving to us. In fact, I think we must do it, if we want the church to survive and to grow and to extend the kingdom of God, to fulfill the purpose God had for us when he gave birth to First Christian Church.

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Transition to communion

[Worship team, if you would begin making your way to the platform . . . ; those who are helping to serve communion please join me in the front . . .]

Benediction /Blessing

[Lift your hearts to heaven, and your hands if you like . . .]

Invite people to receive prayer; mention membership