

"HOLDING THE ROPE"

Text - Acts 9:20-25

Introduction: The conversion of Saul of Tarsus was a turning point in the church's history, and God used several people to touch his life. We remember Paul and forget the people who helped him get started and kept him going forward.

"Hold The Ropes!" On May 30, 1792 William Carey, considered "The Father of Modern Missions", preached a sermon on:

Isaiah 54:2-3 "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited".

In a private conference with his closest friends immediately following the service, Carey laid himself on the missionary altar saying, "I will go down into the pit if you will hold the ropes." There the 'Baptist Society For Propagating The Gospel Among The Heathen' was formed. The mission was to be supported by personal, individual subscriptions. On June 13, 1793 William Carey left for India with his wife and their four children for forty years of unbroken missionary service.

"Hold The Ropes!" For nearly 2,000 years, faithful men and women have been holding the ropes, so other faithful men and women could devote their lives to full time missions. I am asked on occasion, "Where are the William Carey's and Hudson Taylor's of yesterday?" My response to that question is simple, "Where are the Ryland's, Fuller's, Sutcliff's and Pearce's (Carey's friends) of today who will hold the ropes, pray and financially support those who will go with the Gospel?"

"Hold The Ropes!" You can find that life-changing concept throughout the Bible. In Joshua 2:15 Rahab the harlot, let the Jewish spies down through a window, on the wall with a cord (Chebel - Rope). Rahab became the mother of Boaz and is in the messianic line of Christ. In I Samuel 19:12 Michal the daughter of Saul, let a Jewish shepherd down through a window by a rope and he became the next, 'King of Israel.' In Jeremiah 38:6, Jeremiah was let down into a pit by a rope to die but in v.13 his faithful friends pulled him out of the pit with a rope and saved his life. In Acts 9:25 and II Corinthians 11:33 Paul the apostle was let down through a window, over the wall in a basket with a rope by his faithful friends to save his life. These 'Rope-Holders' were not great, or mighty or rich, they were just faithful and they did what they could.

"HOLDING THE ROPE"

Text - Acts 9:25
II Cor. 11:32,33

Intro. - A very unique story in the life of a very unique man, the Apostle Paul. ✓

→ The Background of our text:

* Conversion of Paul (Saul) - on the road to Damascus

* Courage of Ananias - to go to Paul even though he knew him to be deadly / murderous

* Call of a great Apostle - Filled w/ spirit used of God

* Contempt of the Enemy - for Paul's preaching

* Care of some friends - help over the wall

Other "Rope-Holders":
* Rahab (Spre)
* Michal (Dan 2)
* Ebed-melech (Jeremiah)

→ To escape the contempt & murderous plans of the Jews, Paul was helped by friends and supporters to set out of the city.

Somebody had to be "holding the rope"

"let him down... in a basket"

- a basket, through a window, let down by the wall (II Cor. 11:32,33)

- GIVE ALL PIECE OF THE ROPE //

"Holding The Rope"

① Anybody Can Hold a Rope

- no special talent needed
- no unique skill required
- simple willingness of the holder

{ Children
Teens
Adults }

{ Rich
Poor
Educated
Uneducated
etc.
Young / old
happy / sad }

② Nobody Should Let Go of the Rope

- every person's effort counts
- if one let's go - others may too
(chain reaction may result)
(domino effect)

③ Somebody Will Be Helped By Holding the Rope

* Paul was helped
↳ to escape
↳ to survive
↳ to be able to preach in other cities

"You need
the rope!"

* All holding the rope were helped by helping Paul - they learned that helping someone else is more important than helping themselves

④ Everybody Ought To Help Hold the Rope(s)

* why should some not help:

* An equality among the church, so that 3 or 4 people aren't having to do everything alone

* A fellowship develops between "everybody" that works together

* "everybody" that labors together "fits in" - this is God's way so that all may participate & share in the blessing!

* position - they don't like where they are on the rope

* pride - they don't want to do something so trivial as "holding a rope"

* laziness - too tired to hold the rope or held it long enough, let someone else

* selfishness - "someone else will do it"
etc. "don't have time"
"unwilling"

* Ropes to Hold:

1- PRAYER Rope

2- WITNESS Rope

3- BIBLE Rope

4- GIVING Rope

5- WORSHIP Rope

6- Church Rope

7- Family Rope

Don't play w/rope
— tear the rope
— criticize
— lose
— let go
— sways
— drop

(- Give each person a piece of the rope)

