***HE BEGAN TO BUILD April 23, 2014***

***Gospel Meeting: Real Life For Everyone Northwest Church, New Hope, MN—Max Dawson***

*Introduction:*

1. There is a man in the Bible who is a whole lot like you and me. Read Luke 14:28-30.

a. This man is like us, because he did what most of us have done.

b. At some point in life, with good intentions, we started something, but didn’t finish it.

2. You’ve got to give this man some credit, because some of the things I didn’t finish, I never even started. At least he got started. Can you imagine what his friends and neighbors must have said?

a. “Whatever happened to all your plans? Why did you stop? I thought surely you would finish...”

b. In this case, it is plain what happened: he ran out of money. Everyone runs out of something when they don’t finish—money, time, conviction, energy or patience.

c. I am asking, will you be like this man? Will you be a quitter?

*The Lesson:*

1. **Some examples from the Bible of people who started but didn’t finish.**
	1. Demas, 2 Timothy 4:10. He was once a faithful worker, Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24. What happened to Demas? He began to build, but ran out of something. It wasn’t money.
	2. Peter, Matthew 26:31-35. Everyone knows what Peter did, Matthew 26:69-75. Peter ran out of courage, conviction and determination.
	3. Saul, Solomon, Samson and others are men who had a good start but encountered problems.
2. **Some examples outside the Bible of people who started but didn’t finish.**
	1. Will *you* be an example? Millions are! Multitudes plan great things, but don’t do: “I’m going to read the Bible through.” “I’m going to teach the gospel.” “I’m going to be a song leader.”
	2. “Whatever happened...?” Those are sad words. People plan great things, but don’t do. Now they only look back and think of what might have been. Will you be among those?
3. **What really happens when folks don’t finish? Text: Philippians 3:7-14.**
	1. *They didn’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.* Some talk, but aren’t serious about what they say.
		1. In the 1960s the old TV show, *Route 66*, inspired many to say they wanted to live a carefree life, traveling across America in a new Corvette. How many were serious?
		2. See Philippians 3:13. Like Paul, you must be serious.
	2. *They didn’t have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.* People who don’t plan don’t do.
		1. Alice (in Wonderland) asked the cat, “Would you tell me which way to go?” The cat said, “That depends on where you want to go.” Alice replied, “I don’t much care where.”
		2. You’ve got to care which way you are going in life, then develop a plan to get there. With no plan, you have no direction. You must have a plan and direction, Philippians 3:14.
	3. *They didn’t count the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.* Unlike the man building the tower, you must count the cost.
		1. Some folks plan, but run out of money, conviction or zeal. Work for God is left undone.
		2. Paul counted the cost and took a loss on things that didn’t matter, Philippians 3:7.
	4. *They \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the plan.* People get satisfaction saying, “Someday...”
		1. It makes us feel better that we have good intentions. Good intentions don’t count in life.
		2. Successful people develop a *do it now* habit, Philippians 3:13. Will you?
	5. *They got \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.* Some folks don’t have discipline to stay with it.
		1. I was painting the garage but stopped to watch golf on TV. What happened to the garage?
		2. You must have personal discipline to stay with it to make it to heaven, Philippians 3:13-14.
	6. *They became \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.* Sometimes people just give up and quit.
		1. They quit because of self-doubt; maybe others threw cold water on their plans.
		2. Never give up. Never. Paul was a man who pressed on, Philippians 3:12. You can do that!
	7. *They were \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to try.* Fear is powerful—it is the great immobilizer, Matthew 25:25.
		1. You are better off to try something great and fail, than try nothing and succeed.
		2. Don’t live in fear, Revelation 21:8; Philippians 3:10.
4. **Don’t wait for the day when you say “It’s too late.”**
	1. Good news! Whether young or old, it’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to make changes in your life.
		1. Some folks buy into the “too late” philosophy. “It’s too late for me to study…etc.” You are created in God’s image. No other creature on earth has the potential you have!
		2. You will never have more of your life ahead of you than you do at this present moment.
		3. Some older folks say, “I’m too old. I’m past 50.” So what? You may have 30+ years ahead of you. You don’t know how much time you have. You can’t just sit and wait for death.
		4. For those who are older, remember great things have been accomplished by older folks!
		5. Don’t let it happen to you, that you come to the end and have accomplished nothing in life!
	2. So, what will you do with your life? There can be great things ahead in your future, but you have to make the right choices now.
		1. *You can* be a Christian (even today). Will you? Yes ❑ No ❑
		2. *You can* grow in faith and knowledge. Will you? Yes ❑ No ❑
		3. *You can* be an effective Bible reader. Will you? Yes ❑ No ❑
		4. *You can* teach someone the gospel. Will you? Yes ❑ No ❑
		5. *You can* be a servant to God and others. Will you? Yes ❑ No ❑
		6. *You can* get out of your comfort zone. Will you? Yes ❑ No ❑
		7. *You can* go to heaven. You really can! Will you? Yes ❑ No ❑

*Conclusion:*

1. In eternity, how will the story of your life read? “He began to build...” The kind of choices you are making right now will determine how the rest of the story goes.

2. In the day of eternity, what will God say to you? Will you let it be the words of Matthew 25:23? You decide. Your decision determines your destiny. It may also determine the destiny of others!