



Sermon Notes: Steve Stanis,
“One Hundred Feet”

27 July 2025

Readings: Acts 18:1-11, Genesis 12:1-4a, Luke 5:1-11

Introduction:

It's a strange thing, this idea of taking leave. Six months is not long in the great stretch of eternity. But it's long enough to feel the weight of both a goodbye and a hello, goodbye to the familiar, hello to the unknown. And as I prepare to take this journey of long service leave, I've found myself reflecting not only on the road ahead but also on the stories that shape the journeys we all take, those of transition, of rest, of resistance, of renewal.

One such story that connects these thoughts for me is the movie *'The Hundred-Foot Journey'*, where a young Indian chef and his family move across the road from a prestigious French restaurant in the south of France.

Though only separated by a hundred feet, the two families live worlds apart, divided by culture, pride, pain, and prejudice.

But in the space between them, something surprising happens. A journey of the heart begins.

The smallest steps across a threshold bring about the deepest transformations.

And so today, I want to speak to you of another journey, one just one hundred feet long.

A journey Paul once made, in Corinth, from a synagogue to a house next door.

It was a short walk, but it made all the difference in the world. It was a journey of obedience, of frustration, of grace, and of eternity.

Are you willing to go with me on this journey together?

Let's go!

The Weariness of Ministry (Acts 18:1–5)

Corinth: A bustling, sprawling metropolis. A city full of trade, full of voices, full of gods. After Athens, Paul was tired. He had reasoned with philosophers, been mocked by some, and followed by a few. He came to Corinth alone, soul-worn and bone-weary. And he found Aquila and Priscilla, kindred souls, exiles like him, workers of leather and canvas, who gave him a corner to rest and hands to work beside. By day, they stitched tents.

By Sabbath, Paul entered the synagogue to reason with his fellow Jews, to explain, to persuade, to show them that the Christ they longed for had come in Jesus. But it was hard. There are few things more painful than trying to speak hope to those who will not listen. The message Paul carried of grace, of resurrection, of the crucified Messiah, it

stirred anger more often than joy. There came a point where Paul's words were met not only with rejection but with abuse. Not just disagreement, but disdain.

He had come to Corinth with hope.

But he felt alone. He felt small. He felt ready to stop. Listen to how Paul described his condition in his letter to the Corinthians.

From (1 Corinthians chapter 2, verses 1-5)

*"And so, it was with me, brothers and sisters.
When I came to you,
I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.
For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.
I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling.
My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words,
but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power,
so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power."*

Paul did not see himself as a hero. He arrived in Corinth weak and fearful. He was no polished speaker, no philosophical giant.

He came not relying on himself but on God alone.

And that's precisely the point. God isn't calling us to be heroes. He's calling us to be His.

He doesn't need polished resumes or perfect plans. He looks for hearts that are humble, lives that are yielded, and steps that are willing to follow. He's not impressed by eloquence or performance. He delights in simple obedience and quiet faithfulness. He chooses not the spectacular, but the surrendered.

As I prepare for this unusually long, 'long service leave', I've been asking myself: when I return, will I measure this time by the places we visited, the comforts we enjoyed, or the stories we gathered?

Or will I have allowed this season to become a journey of refreshment and renewal, one that draws me closer to God, that deepens my love for Him, and reinvents my joy in serving Him?

My prayer is that this will be less about escape and more about encounter, less about where we go, and more about who we become.

Paul may have felt like he had little to offer but that's when God's power was most visible.

Note to self ... trust that my humble offerings can be used mightily by God!

The Tension of Decision (Acts 18:6)

And so, Paul made a decision, not lightly, but firmly.

"I shook out my garments" — a Jewish sign of disassociation.

"Your blood be on your own heads," he said.

"I am innocent of it.

From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

It was not a decision made in bitterness, but in grief.

Sometimes, the most faithful step we can take is to leave a place where we are no longer heard.

Not because God has abandoned it, but because God has somewhere else for us to speak.

And here is where the hundred-foot journey occurs.

Paul didn't go far. He didn't leave the city. He didn't board a ship. He didn't even leave the street.

He went next door.

The Journey Next Door (Acts 18:7–8)

Right next to the synagogue was the home of Titius Justus, a worshipper of God, a Gentile, but a seeker. He had opened his doors to Paul. And so, he crossed the threshold from rejection to welcome. From resistance to readiness. It couldn't have been more than one hundred feet. But it was the distance between hostility and hospitality.

Between frustration and fruitfulness. Between striving and seeing the Spirit move.

Because in that house, something began.

And here's the beautiful irony: it wasn't just Gentiles who came.

Right next door, the synagogue ruler, Crispus, believed in the Lord, along with his whole household.

Can you imagine it?

The very leader of the place where Paul was rejected now stood in the living room next door, receiving Christ.

God has a way of doing that.

You take one step in faith, and He turns it into an eternal harvest. You walk one hundred feet and heaven opens up a home.

The Promise of Presence (Acts 18:9–10)

But Paul was still afraid. Yes, even Paul gets frightened.

Ministry takes something out of you. You don't always see what God is doing until after the fact. You doubt your discernment. You question whether it's all worth it.

And in Corinth, Paul was tempted to run ... again. But then came the voice of Jesus:

"Do not be afraid," He said.

"Keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you."

Those words were like water in the desert.

Not because Paul hadn't heard them before but because he needed to hear them again.

Every new season needs a fresh reminder of the same eternal truth: He is with us always.

Whether we walk across oceans, or whether we walk across the street.

When we face mobs, or when we face Mondays. When we're met with celebration, or silence, or suffering.

He is with us.

So, take courage.

"Do not be afraid, keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you."

Do you believe God is at work through you?

God is building His church and yes, He uses us.

Isn't that humbling?

We faithfully walk the hundred-foot journey and trust that God is at work, both in us and through us.

The Fruit of Faithfulness (Acts 18:11)

And so, Paul stayed. Eighteen months, in that city that first rejected him.

Because of that short walk across the street, the gospel took root.

Because of that small move, a church was planted. Because of those one hundred feet, lives were changed, eternally. It wasn't a grand journey. It wasn't a dramatic relocation.

But it was a decisive act of obedience and that made all the difference.

It reminds us that we can trust God's timing and His ways, even when they don't align with our own. Faithfulness doesn't demand control; it simply requires trust.

Listen to the change in Paul's heart over time. Earlier, as we heard from 1 Corinthians 2:1-5;

Paul described coming to Corinth with fear and trembling, not with eloquence, but in weakness, relying entirely on God's power.

But now hear the tone shift in his second letter, written years later, reflecting on what God had done:

(2 Corinthians 2:14), urges us;

*"But thanks be to God,
who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession,
and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere."*

The weariness and rejection he once felt, had given way to praise and renewed trust.

Paul saw that his small, faithful step, his hundred-foot journey, had been part of something far greater: Christ's triumphal procession. What once looked like a detour now revealed itself as destiny. What once felt like failure had become the fragrance of faith. Paul hadn't taken that step because he saw the full plan; he had simply followed the Spirit's prompting and now, he could look back and see how God had been leading him all along.

That's the power of faithful presence, even when the journey feels short or the steps feel small.

Your Hundred-Foot Journey

So, dear brothers and sisters, why this story today? Because I stand on the edge of a journey myself. For six months, I will be walking a different road. Not far, but different.

And like Paul, I too, feel so tired, expectant, listening. And I wonder: what "hundred-foot" journeys might God be inviting you into during this time?

Because not all journeys are grand. Not all are across continents. Some are across a hallway. Some are across a pew. Some are across a neighbourhood fence or a family silence. Some are into a new habit of prayer. Some are out of a tired rhythm and into a gracious rest. Some are into the simple obedience of showing up, again and again, because; Christ is with you, even when it feels fruitless.

God is always calling us into journeys of courage and grace, and they often start with small steps.

We're not planning to disappear or retreat from you all starting tomorrow.

This isn't like the days of illness and isolation, when we were told to keep our distance.

Over the next six months, we look forward to the moments where our paths naturally cross and in the spaces between, please know that we will be holding you in prayer often.

We will deeply miss the rhythm and constancy of our shared journey.

And when the time comes to return to the life of KAC in a more formal sense, I can't wait to see the transformation that the triune God will have worked in all of us.

What joy there will be in seeing how His grace continues to shape and grow this beautiful community.

The Hundred Feet Between People

The Hundred-Foot Journey! Two kitchens, two cultures, two hearts divided and yet only a few steps apart. Isn't that so often the way? We assume the gap is too wide, the differences too great, the history too hard.

But God delights in bridging those gaps, not always with dramatic gestures, but with small acts of faith. What if that's what He's calling you to in this season?

- To walk the hundred feet of forgiveness.
- To take the hundred-foot journey of hospitality, opening your home or lengthening your table.
- To cross the hundred feet of fear to ask, "Can I pray for you?"
- To close the hundred feet of silence and say, "I've missed you."

Conclusion: Eternal Distances, Eternal Love

And I want to leave you with this:

- The greatest journey ever taken was not by Paul.
- It was not by you or me.
- It was by the Son of God, who crossed the infinite distance between heaven and earth, between arrogance and holiness, between death and life, to bring us home.

Jesus walked the eternal hundred-foot journey from glory to a manger, from the temple to a cross, from death to life for each of us.

Because in His love, no distance is too great.

No divide is unbridgeable.

This is our story.

So take the step, one step at a time. Take the journey.

God is already there.

Benediction:

I leave you with the benediction:

"May the Lord bless you and keep you,
May the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you,
May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you,
And give you peace,"

Amen. ...Until we meet again!