

Acts 20 – Living With Purpose

The Apostle Paul lived with purpose and he lived with confidence.

Main Point of today's message: Before God, it's possible to live with purpose and confidence.

Acts 20:24 (NIV)

I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me - the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

Everyone wants to live a life filled with meaning, purpose and impact. No one wants to waste their time. In Acts 20, Paul gives us his personal mission statement. The mindset of Paul is a great example for you.

Here's the challenge for us. It's easy to dismiss Paul as a unique person in history who lived a long time ago. It might feel like the world was different, people were different, Paul was not you and so you can't compare yourself to Paul. I'm going to pushback on that and say: You CAN live the same way Paul lived. In fact, you SHOULD live with the same purpose and the same focus as Paul.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)

The answer to our search for meaning, purpose and significance in life is understanding that as Christians, we are here to make God known. The way I often say it is to share the gospel. Tell the story of Jesus.

There's a difference between broadcasting a baseball game for the Mariners with expert analysis and telling someone the score of the Mariners game. You are not called to explain the details of the game. You're called to tell someone the score.

The main thing in Paul's life was the gospel. You could not get Paul to move off of the gospel. This type of attitude reminds me of the old saying:

***Only one life, this shall soon pass.
Only what's done for Christ will last.***

No one here wants to waste their time or their life. Everyone here wants to make their lives count. You have that in common with the Apostle Paul. Therefore, you can learn from him. You can follow his example and do some of what he did and watch God work in your life.

In a general sense, Paul's purpose was to align his life with God's Word and try to tell people about their need to get right with God. More specifically, we are told that Paul was constrained or compelled by the Holy Spirit to go to Jerusalem. Further, we are told that Paul knew that hardships awaited him in Jerusalem and didn't know any details beyond that.

Paul listened to God.

Paul learned from God's Word.

Paul leaned on God's people.

Home Group Discussion Questions:

1. Read Acts 20:17-27 and spend some time reflecting on the reading and/or the Sunday teaching.
2. What are some challenges Christians face today in trying to live a life with purpose and confidence under God's leading?
 - 2B. Have you ever tried living for secular or nonreligious pursuits? How did that period of life go for you?
3. What are some challenges Christians face today in trying to talk about spiritual things with others?
 - 3B. Have you ever had some positive experiences in trying to talk to others about spiritual things?
4. What are some "time consumers" in our culture today?

Hint: These are not time wasters but time consumers. People can spend a lot of time in pursuit of good things or morally neutral things and not have much time left for things that really matter.
5. In what ways does this passage point to Jesus? What does this passage say about the greatness of Jesus?