

For the Sake of the Call

[Acts 20:17-27]

Acts 20:17-27 [NKJV]

17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. **18** And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, **19** serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; **20** how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, **21** testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. **22** And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, **23** except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.

- Miletus located south of Ephesus, on the south of the Gulf of Latmos.
- Distance by land approx 63 miles.
- If couriers went across the Gulf of Latmos, the distance would be approx 38 miles.

Ministry Description

- Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- Requires great humility and many tears
- Will encounter many hardships, trials and tribulations
- People will plot against you and try to kill you
- May be tortured and thrown into prison on various occasions
- Will eventually lose your life

Acts 20:17-27 (con't)

24 But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. **25** “And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. **26** Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am innocent of the blood of all men.* **27** *For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.*

Acts 21:13

Then Paul answered, “What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

A Sense of Calling (Destiny)

- **Acts 20:24** – Finish my race, complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me.
- **Heb 12:1** – Run the race marked out for us.
- **Eph 2:10** – To do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do.
- **1 Pet 4:10** – Use whatever gift you have received to serve others.
- **1 Tim 4:14** – Do not neglect your gift which was given you.

A Sense of Calling (Destiny)

- **Jn 17:4** – I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.
- **Col 4:17** – Tell Archippus: “See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord.” [NIV]

“Take heed to the ministry you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.” [NKJV]

A Sense of Commitment (Dedication)

- **Acts 20:24** – But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.
- Paul could not be moved because his focus was on the Lord Jesus.

A Sense of Commitment (Dedication)

What Causes Us to Lose Focus?

- Our sins and sinful desires
- Our worldly pursuits
- Spiritual apathy and inertia
- Ministry pride
- Disappointed with Christian leaders
- Unwillingness to extend forgiveness and seek reconciliation
- Unwillingness to let go of past and current hurts

Jesus was the Center of Paul's Life

- **Phil 1:21** – For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain
- **Gal 2:20** – I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.
- **Rom 14:8** – If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.
- Are we content for Jesus to be the **Santa** of our lives?
- Do we truly want Jesus to be the **Center** of our lives?