

Faith and Focus
Acts 20:17-38

I. Intro

- A. Special Announcement: Levi Hoskins came up with some great ideas for kids and parents:
 - 1. We decided the first event we are going to have in our new building when it opens, is a father/son nerf battle.
 - 2. Other great ideas to come, but that was a great start.
- B. Our faith is a special thing,
 - 1. It grows at times
 - 2. It struggles at times
- C. In our story today, we see a testimony of Faith and Focus.
- D. Faith grows when you learn to depend on God rather than self.
 - 1. Focus on God, Grow in Faith
 - 2. Focus on Self, Grow in Frustration
- E. What gets you frustrated? Grrrrr
 - 1. Sherman Traffic...
 - 2. Costly mistakes...
 - 3. Never ending pile of laundry...
 - 4. The Ice Cream machine at McDonalds...
- F. If we think bigger:
 - 1. Sherman traffic: we are fixing problems, and its inconvenient for a season, but better days are coming
 - 2. Costly Mistakes: lessons learned, and wisdom gained
 - 3. Never Ending Pile of Laundry...my kids are wearing clean clothes! (Maybe)
 - 4. The Ice Cream machine at McDonalds...I've got nothing...also goes with the slushy machine at Neighborhood Market gas station...just frustration with no good side to offer.
- G. Rather than get frustrated with a situation, look to the bigger picture, the "God purpose" of a situation.

II. Text

- A. Verses 17-21:
 - 1. A reminder to the elders of Ephesus
 - 2. Church leadership called to receive instruction and motivation.
- B. Verses 22-23: Paul reveals his future
 - 1. He does not know when it is coming
 - 2. He doesn't know how it is coming
 - 3. But, he knows what is coming.
- C. Verses 24-27: No regrets ministry
 - 1. Find yourself doing the next right thing, and find God's blessing.
 - 2. Paul warns them to be on task, and be aware.
- D. Verses 28-35
 - 1. The warning to the Elders was needed
 - 2. In Revelation 2:4, The church in Ephesus had lost its first love.
- E. Verses 36-38: a personal moment captured by Dr. Luke

III. Point

A. Spirit led

- 1. Acts 20:22-23
- 2. He was "Constrained by the Spirit."
 - a) Constrained: compelled forward
 - b) Greek: Deo: most often translated : Bound
 - c) Paul was BOUND by the SPIRIT to continue doing what he was sent to do.

3. Believers are BOUND, Constrained, compelled by the Spirit to do that which we have been equipped for.
 - a) How are you equipped?
 - b) What does your relationship with Jesus cause you to do?
 - (1) Radical obedience!
 - (2) Do what you've been sent to do, and it consumes your thoughts and heart for the Lord.
4. Paul was being led, and informed by the Spirit, to accomplish something that was not on his "to do" list
 - a) Imprisonment and afflictions await
 - b) He doesn't know the when or the how...but he knows the what.
 - c) And he went anyway!
5. What is on your "to do" list from God?
 - a) Do you know where you are being sent?
 - b) Do you know what you are being called to do?
 - c) I believe this: God moves His people forward with clear direction, but sometimes we don't like the direction so we pretend not to see.
 - d) I also believe this: God sometimes withholds His clear direction until He is ready for us to have it, not when we think we are ready for it.

B. Spiritual walk

1. Acts 20:24-26
2. The Spiritual Walk places value on obedience, surrender, and selflessness
3. Finish the course, testifying of the gospel of grace
4. Verse 25: You may not see the final product, or the final results
 - a) Results oriented ministry is dangerous when the results are judged by a human metric.
 - b) You may not know how it ends, you may not be a part of that aspect of ministry, but that does not take away your responsibility.
5. What is required of us in the Spiritual Walk?
 - a) The production of Spiritual Fruit: You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Matthew 7:16
 - b) Walk in a manner worthy of the calling: I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:1-3
 - c) Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly: He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness,[b] and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8
6. Learning to walk:
 - a) Learning to walk in the Spirit is much like learning to walk as a human.
 - b) We are not born with all the tools necessary for running a race, it takes development, time, practice
 - c) We learn to walk in the Spirit in much the same way, it is a process called sanctification.

C. Spirit focused:

1. Acts 20:27 for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.
2. The Spirit Focused ministry declares the whole truth!
3. The Whole truth:
 - a) God's grace provides salvation
 - b) His Spirit resides in us
 - c) Our life should reflect that relationship

- d) God LOVES us
 - e) God has a beautiful plan to use us to accomplish His will.
 - f) His plan may look very different from a plan that we would make up.
 - g) God corrects us, and brings us to repentance.
 - 4. Spirit Focused ministry and life will:
 - a) Challenge us to step out in faith on a regular basis
 - b) Cause us to depend less on the flesh
 - c) Place us in situations for the GLORY OF GOD!
 - 5. Embrace a SPIRIT FOCUSED LIFE!
- IV. Close
- A. In what do you have faith?
 - B. On what do you focus?