

The Beauty in the Gospel

Acts 20: 24-27

Our text today finds the apostle Paul on his way to Jerusalem. He is well aware of the animosity of the Jews toward him, and quite uncertain what his future will hold once he arrives. One would expect him to be very nervous and apprehensive about returning, but Paul has a quiet calmness about him. It is evident that although Paul is unsure what his future holds, he is confident in the one who holds his future.

As he made his way to Jerusalem, Paul called for the elders of Ephesus to meet him in Miletus. He had served the church in Ephesus for about three years and remained fond of those who were there. Before departing for Jerusalem, Paul wanted to speak with the elders one last time. He wanted to share his heart and encourage them in the faith.

As I read this passage, I discovered a man who possessed unshakable confidence in the face of undeniable uncertainty. He refused to allow the difficulties of life to dictate his existence. Paul remained committed to the work he had been called to perform. What allowed Paul to possess such confidence? How did he face his struggles with indisputable peace? Through his own admission we will find that Paul's life had been shaped by the Gospel. He was able to endure because he was focused on the Gospel.

Clearly we all face adversity in our lives, but few ever realize our commitment to the Gospel is a source of strength and victory. Those who live their lives committed to the Gospel will enjoy a peace that passes all understanding and victory in Christ our Lord. As we examine the various [aspects](#) of Paul's faith, I want to consider: [The Beauty in the Gospel](#).

I. The Confidence Obtained (24) – [But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.](#) Having spoken of the difficulties he had endured, along with an uncertain future, Paul affirmed the confidence he had obtained while serving the Lord. We discover that:

A. He was Settled (24a) – [But none of these things move me.](#) Such faith could not have been found among the world. Paul knew he would likely endure bondage and physical suffering, and yet he refused to be defeated. His life was anchored in Christ through the Gospel. He was settled in his faith and certain the Lord would provide. The difficulties of life would not dictate his commitment to the Lord.

- We tend to think of the Gospel being relevant at the moment of conversion and yet fail to see its significance throughout our Christian lives. Having faith like Paul comes from a commitment to the Lord and the Gospel. We too have an Anchor of the soul, one that is steadfast and sure. We can rest in the grace and power of the Lord when enduring the trials of life!

B. He was Surrendered (24b) – [neither count I my life dear unto myself](#). Paul had fully surrendered his life to Christ. He was no longer focused on his goals or aspirations. He was literally living for Jesus. He was determined to go to Jerusalem, and face whatever difficulty it brought, in order to serve the Lord. He was willing to give his life for the cause of Christ. Paul had been transformed by the Gospel.

- I will admit this is easy preaching, but hard living. Fully surrendering our lives to the Lord is difficult. It isn't easy to abandon the desires of the flesh in order to please another. However, that is the beauty of the Gospel. Those who are surrendered to the Lord and His will for their lives can declare like Paul that they no longer live for themselves. Our Lord gave His all for us and He bled and died for our sin. Living victoriously in Christ demands that we give our all in return. [Rom.12:1 – I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.](#)

C. He was Steadfast (24c) – [so that I might finish my course with joy](#). Paul was determined to finish his course with joy, regardless of what lay ahead for him. Having read the remainder of Acts we find that Paul would in fact face great adversity in Jerusalem and beyond. I am convinced that he anticipated great difficulty, but he was committed to finishing his work for the Lord, even if that involved suffering and pain. He was pleased to serve the Lord according to His divine will, wherever that led and whatever that would bring. Paul had met the living Christ and he was not afraid of what men could do to him.

- Our world is in desperate need of those who will endure the struggles of life in an effort to finish their course with joy. Far too many abandon the race with the first hint of difficulty. We must seek the Lord's grace and power to enable us to endure. Those who live Gospel centered lives will be empowered to remain steadfast in the face of difficulty and pain. I hope we have a desire to finish our race with joy! [1 Cor.15:58 – Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.](#) [Phil.4:11 – Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.](#)

D. He was Secure (24d) – [so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God](#). Paul knew there was a work yet to be fulfilled. He had been saved by grace and called to proclaim the Gospel of Christ. He was confident that the Lord would enable him to preach the Gospel as long as he remained in this life. Jerusalem lay ahead, no doubt filled with difficulty, but even the oppression of the Jewish elite would not prevent him from fulfilling what God had planned. Paul was not focused on men; he was focused on the Lord he loved and served. His life was settled and secure in Christ.

- The struggles of life continue for the believer. In fact, they continue to increase as we draw closer to the Lord's return. Like Paul we can face an uncertain future secure in Christ. The Lord has a work for the church to accomplish. We are not promised an easy journey, but we are promised sure passage unto eternal life. Rather than focusing on the opposition, we need to focus on the Lord we serve. The believer is secure in Christ! That is the beauty of the Gospel.

II. The Comfort Retained (25) – [And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more](#). Even facing an uncertain future, Paul enjoyed great comfort in the Lord. This is evident from his own testimony in the text. Consider:

A. The Separation – Bear in mind that Ephesus was very dear to the heart of Paul. He had spent nearly three years with the church there. During that time Paul had developed a great love for the church. He knew after departing for Jerusalem, he would never see those in Ephesus again in this life. Although such separation happens, it is never easy. Paul endured the thoughts of separation through strength found in Christ.

- Separation is a part of life. Everyone here has experienced separation in some form or another. Sometimes it is only for a short time, and at others it is for extended periods. Many of us have lost loved ones in death. That separation would be impossible to bear were it not for the hope of the Gospel. We have the promise of Word that the dead in Christ will live again. We too can endure because of the hope of the Gospel and the help found in the Lord.

B. The Satisfaction – Although Paul loved the church at Ephesus and would miss them dearly, he enjoyed peace and comfort from the Lord. He knew he had completed the task God had given him at Ephesus. He had built relationships that would endure, even if they never saw each other again. The church was strong and vibrant. If Paul never saw them again, he had the comfort of meeting them again on the other side. He was able to go to Jerusalem knowing he had done all he could to equip and encourage Ephesus.

- I pray that we too will live our lives in much the same way. We are not guaranteed tomorrow. We have no way of knowing how much time we will have with each other. We must ensure that we do all we can with the time and opportunities we have. Separation is never easy, but it is easier to endure when we have loved one another, doing all we can to enrich the lives of others, and with the assurance of a reunion one day in heaven. I want to depart Fellowship, whenever the Lord deems that necessary, knowing I have done all I could to enrich your lives!

III. The Contentment Sustained (26-27) – Here we discover the source of contentment that would sustain Paul as he made his way to Jerusalem, never to see them again. Notice:

A. The Peace (26) – *Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.*

Paul was not being arrogant, but he revealed that he could go to Jerusalem in peace. He had done all he could to reach the lost and equip the church in Ephesus. That isn't to say he would not have desired to do more, but that he was content with the ministry he had there. He had led people to the Lord through the Gospel and helped the church to be strong in the faith. He was pleased with his efforts in Ephesus.

- That is quite a statement, one that deserves our contemplation. Do we possess the peace that Paul had? Can we honestly say that we have used every opportunity and done all we could to reach the unsaved and enrich the church? Where do our hearts lie today? What are our ambitions and motivations here at Fellowship? Surely we all could do more. When the time comes, I desire to leave Fellowship with a clear conscience before the Lord.

B. The Proclamation (27) – *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.* This sums up the contentment Paul felt regarding Ephesus as he departed for Jerusalem. He had faithfully preached the Word of God to them. Paul had proclaimed the Gospel of Christ, leading many to salvation. He had exhorted them in the faith and proclaimed the principles of godly living. He had not preached what men wanted to hear, but what they needed to hear. He could depart from them knowing he had been faithful to the call of God and to the church.

- We live in a world that for the most part rejects the Gospel and the teachings of the Bible. The Word of God convicts and convinces of sin; it is contrary to the sinful lusts of humanity. Like Paul, we too must be faithful to proclaim the whole counsel of God. The Gospel has the power to liberate from sin, and it also has the power to completely transform lives. That is the beauty of the Gospel. I pray that we will become a people committed to living out the Gospel before others and faithfully proclaiming the whole counsel of God. There will be times when we must encourage

others, and there will also be times when a loving rebuke is necessary. The Gospel can transform; we must be faithful to share it!

Conclusion: Our text today has revealed a life completely transformed and surrendered to the Gospel of Christ. That should be the desire and ambition of every believer. We should strive to have our lives completely transformed by the Gospel, living totally surrendered to the Lord. Are there areas in your life that need attention? Are you committed to finishing your course with joy? Have you done all the Lord desires of you within this local body of believers?

Maybe you have yet to surrender to Christ by faith unto salvation. Come to the Lord in repentance for your sin and faith in Christ. [Acts 20:21 – Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.](#) The Lord is able to save and equip all to live faithfully for Him!