

The Freedom of Being Expendable

Acts 20:17-38

Paul doesn't seek to preserve His life but to pour his life out for Christ in the preaching of the gospel.

If your life is characterized by uncertainty and fear, you will seek to preserve your life. If your life is characterized by faith and hope, you can pour out your life for others in Jesus' name.

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what He cannot lose." Jim Elliott

I. Embrace an Expendable Life - Acts 20:24

"But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the grace of God." Acts 20:24

Our earthly lives are given to us as expendable for the eternal lives of others to the praise of the glory of God's grace.

"But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Matthew 20:26-28

Don't bring your life and your talents back to God having safely buried them in the sand. Use your life, bang it up good for the gospel of grace in the lives of other people. You'll get a new one when this life is over!

- Paul preaches the saving grace of Jesus: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. " (Eph. 2:8,9)
- Paul demonstrates the sustaining grace of Jesus: "But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us." 2 Cor. 3:7

What would change right now in your life if you saw your life as something to be poured out for Christ rather than to be preserved for yourself?

II. Experience the Freedom of Christ.

- **The Freedom to Speak the Truth in Love. Acts 20:18-21**

“And when they came to him, he said to them: ‘You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia...” Acts 20:18

Shrinking back is living a life that is governed by fear and self-preservation. Many people’s lives are not only small but shrinking because they lack the Spirit-given clarity and confidence to speak the truth in love.

Paul never protected himself from the tears of ministry and he never protected them from the truth of the gospel.

- **The Freedom to Follow Christ Wherever He Calls. Acts 20:22-25**

“And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.” Acts 20:22-23

God’s purpose is to build a kingdom of God-loving, courageous, Christ-following disciples who are not afraid to follow Christ and to serve Him in hard, unfamiliar, and unpredictable places.

“So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 10:26-33

If your aim is eternity, God can shoot you as an arrow wherever He wants and it won’t shake you.

- **The Freedom to Trust God with People You Love. Acts 20:26-31**

- **Paul can rest in the work of God.**

“And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom of God will see my face again. Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, For I did not shrink back from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.”

- **Paul can rest Spirit of God.**

“And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom of God will see my face again. Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, For I did not shrink back from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.”

- **Paul can rest in the Word of God.**

“And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

- **Paul can rest in the Wisdom of God.**

"In all things, I have shown you that by working hard in this way, we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

A poured out life is more blessed than a self-preserved life.

Study Application Questions:

1. Where do you most feel the pull toward self-preservation right now, and what might it look like to “pour out” your life for Christ in that area?
2. Paul saw his life as expendable because he trusted God’s grace. What would change in your daily decisions if you believed God’s grace was truly sufficient for you?
3. Paul lived with clarity of purpose. What is one part of your God-given “course” that you want to finish well this week?
4. Speaking the truth in love requires courage. Who in your life needs loving truth from you right now, and what holds you back?
5. Paul didn’t shrink back from tears or truth. What helps you stay emotionally present with people instead of withdrawing when things get hard?
6. Paul followed Christ into uncertainty. Where is God calling you to take a step of obedience even though you don’t know the outcome?
7. Jesus says we are more valuable than sparrows. How does remembering your value to God help you face fear differently?
8. Paul trusted God with people he loved deeply. Who do you need to entrust to God’s care instead of carrying the weight yourself?

9. Paul commended the elders to “the word of His grace.” What Scripture has been building you up recently, and how has it strengthened you?

10. Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive. What is one simple, concrete way you can “give” yourself for someone else this week?