

The Unfinished Work of Christ

Acts 20.17-38

Last Week: 'FINISHED Work of Christ' > Salvation by GRACE thru FAITH

NOTHING we can Do to EARN God's Favor > RECEIVE and REJOICE!

Perceptive Member of church asked "Then, WHAT do we DO NOW?"

FINISHED Work of X > Solid HOPE & Confidence before God our JUDGE

Holding JOYFULLY to Finished Work of X > NOW Consider UNFINISHED

FOCUS on Paul's Thoughts on MINISTRY spoken in Acts 20 > KEY Verse 24

When I was about 20 yrs old -- ^(^*((&*)) Years AGO – "this is MY Life Verse"

"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." Acts 20.24

"finish the race and complete the task...testifying to the gospel of God's grace"

Jesus "I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also" John 10.16

Paul: "I fill up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for his body" Colossians 1.24

ACCOMPLISHMENT of Salvation is COMPLETE

ANNOUNCEMENT of Salvation CONTINUES

UNFINISHED Work of X > His Church takes His Good News in Word and Deed to Ends of Earth until the End of the Age to that all His People will appear Complete in Him - His Bride Ready for His Coming

ACTS > 19 Sermons - Chapter 20 > PAUL'S ONLY Sermon to BELIEVERS

ONLY Sermon LUKE was PRESENT to Record Message as he HEARD IT!

Sermon on Run to Church Leaders --- Makes them Run to him

Paul in HURRY to get to Jerusalem before PENTECOST Festival

If Paul went INTO Ephesus MUST Make KALUA PIG... Dig IMU and all that...

So ELDERS Travel 50 kms. SOUTH to Miletus > ALONG the COAST

MESSAGE about his MINISTRY > PAST, FUTURE, PRESENT

PAST – Almost Three Year Ministry in Ephesus

FUTURE – Sufferings in Jerusalem

PRESENT – Pastoral Concern – For the SERVANTS and their Sheep

SALVATION has been ACCOMPLISHED - "It is FINISHED" - Tetelestai!
 NOW WE need to PRACTICE It and PREACH It – SPEAK It and SHOW It!

1. The Word Seen

Many people will NOT HEAR your Sermon before they have SEEN IT
 Paul DESCRIBES & DEFENDS his LIFE during his 3 yrs in EPHESUS
 TRAGEDY > Many Rejected CHRIST because of SCANDAL among Followers
 STRIFE in the Church instead of LOVE
 HYPOCRISY of PASTORS instead of PURITY
 Paul's DEFENSE was NOT Just his DOCTRINE but also his DISCIPLINE

a. Clean

1) In what he Did NOT Do

vs. 33-34 I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.

NO MONEY Sins: Paul was NO Poster Boy for PROSPERITY Theology
 LIKE Samuel said to all Israel... "As for me, I am old and gray... Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the LORD and his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes? If I have done any of these, I will make it right." 1 Samuel 12.1-3

Church & Christian BE READY for the God's FINAL AUDIT

2) In what he DID > NOT ENOUGH to Say 'I did not DO ANYTHING!'

CALLING to FULFILL > Ministry to COMPLETE > Unfinished Work of Christ

GIFTS of SPEAKING and GIFTS of SERVING > Build Church, Glorify God

v. 26-27 Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

Like SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY of Prophet EZEKIEL ---

"Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel.." Ezekiel 33

WE ARE also UNDER ORDERS to TELL Others: Judgment and Deliverance

To be INNOCENT of their BLOOD > No Sins of OMISSION or COMMISSION

Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.
 1 Timothy 4.16

b. Compassion

My FIRST Reaction to ATTACK is to FIGHT BACK!.... Bitter! Harsh!

Not Paul.... HARDSHIPS made him even More HUMBLE!

v. 19 I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews.

CONTRARY to STERN Image of Paul the Theologian > Humility & Tears

REASON for GREATNESS > Knew God gives GRACE to the HUMBLE

Paul was ALL ABOUT God's GRACE and God's GLORY

v. 31 Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

vs. 36-38 When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again.

PAUL – NOT Seem like COLD, UNCARING Theologian / FATHER, Friend

Evangelism, Edification, Encouragement: WOVEN Together in Paul's MINISTRY

These tears were wrung from him by struggles, various attacks of Satan, the rage of wicked men, the internal disorders of the church, and stumbling blocks...he confessed that he was upset by them, as he was not made of iron. John Calvin

v. 28 Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Sheep are dirty, subject to unpleasant pests, and regularly need to be dipped in strong chemicals to rid them of lice, ticks and worms. They are also unintelligent, wayward, and obstinate....Yet they are the flock of God the Father, purchased by the precious blood of God the Son, and supervised by overseers appointed by God the Holy Spirit. If the three persons of the Trinity are thus committed to the welfare of the people, should we not be also?
John Stott

v. 35 >> Paul Quotes WORDS of Jesus, Found Only Here

As APOSTLE of Jesus – DIRECT COMMUNICATION with RISEN LORD

SUPER Beatitude > Tells us how to be MORE BLESSED >> GIVE!

v. 35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

PAUL found this Great Blessing as he TIRELESS Gave to GOD & His CHURCH

c. Companions > At least NINE Men on Paul's TEAM named Here

v. 4 He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.

v. 6 *we* sailed from Philippi / LUKE Now Traveling WITH the TEAM

PAUL was TEAM PLAYER > Churches Paul planted LED by TEAMS

v. 17 Paul sent to Ephesus for the *elders of the church* > PRESBYTERS

v. 28 the Holy Spirit has made *you overseers* > Word for BISHOP

There is no biblical warrant either for the one man band (*a single pastor playing all the instruments himself*) or for a pyramid structure (*a senior pastor perched on the top*) in the local church. It is not even clear that individual elders were in charge of each house church. It is better to think of them as a team... We need today to recover this concept of a pastoral team in the church. John Stott

AWAY from our Church in Beijing for 3 Months --- Elders, Deacons, Leaders

OVERSEEN a Move to Completely NEW Location

Go BACK end of February – people will ask “WHO are YOU again...?”

2. The Word Spoken

JUST ONE Thing Church has that WORLD Does NOT > WORD of God

World MOVIES – MUSIC – MEET PEOPLE – EXERCISE Classes – Coffee

FOOLISH to Compete with World – More Money – Not our Specialty

Founder of Seminary I Studied: “we train specialists in the Word of God”

PURPOSE and the Guiding PRINCIPLE of Church is the WORD of GOD

MODELED by Paul in Ephesus > he REVIEWS his Ministry to ELDERS

a. Clear

Many People in AMERICAN Church become ALLERGIC to PREACHING

Lots of REASONS – Probably lots of BAD Preachers – Lots of PRIDE

Both PROUD Leaders but probably Many PROUD LISTENERS Too

Supposed Quote by St. Francis sometimes heard

“Preach Gospel any way you can, if necessary with WORDS”

Lots of things wrong with that ALLEGED Quote...

1. No evidence that St. Francis ever Said It – Fact Check – He was a Preacher!
2. Clearest Way GOD Communicates is WITH WORDS

Word in Scripture – Son called the WORD (Word made Flesh)

FAITH comes by HEARING the WORD of God in Christ

v. 20 You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.

From the PULPIT and in PRIVATE > BIG MEETING & SMALL GROUPS

v. 21 I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

v. 24 testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

v. 25 I have gone about preaching the kingdom

v. 27 For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

Paul's APOSTOLIC Calling to PREACH to UNREACHED in Regions Beyond

EPHESUS: One of Most Important Cities in Roman Empire

Like ALL the Roman Empire of 1st Century > City of SIN

False PHILOSOPHIES – Immoral RELIGIONS – Evil SMILE of Goddess Diana

DECLARES the GREAT News of JESUS who DIED & ROSE to Save Us

MOST Important and USEFUL – Knowing JESUS CHRIST – Who is? What did?

APOSTOLIC Sermons in Acts Focus > Glory, Nature, Exclusivity of Jesus

If Wanted to GO DEEPER into TRUTH of God? Went DEEPER into Jesus!

Very SAD People claim to be Prophets, Apostles > SPEAK for GOD Today

Christian Woman in Singapore > Excited about MODERN Prophet in Church

SO EXCITING >> He is RIGHT about 30% of the TIME!

I am MORE EXCITED about 66 Books that are RIGHT 100% OF THE TIME!

If you want to HEAR God's Voice > OPEN the BIBLE

Brag on Son Nathan who used to work with Jr Hi kids here > Bible Project!

b. Courageous

Paul > Expelled SYNAGOGUES / BANNED Cities / HATED / HIT / ACCUSED

vs. 22,23 I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.

MANY would CONSIDER a CAREER CHANGE > Color his Hair, Nose Job?

Most of World's UNREACHED Peoples are in DIFFICULT Places

Government or Dominant Religion HOSTILE to Biblical Christianity

BELIEVERS are PERSECUTED – Small, Struggling Churches UNDER ATTACK

MISSION STATS

James CALVERT – Going Pioneer M to FIJI – Islands inhabited by CANNIBALS

Ship Captain – Humane Man – Great Concern for Calvert whom he Admired

Captain: “You will lose your life and the lives of those with you if you go among such savages.” //

Calvert: **“We died before we came.”**

What about CHURCH Paul was LEAVING BEHIND??

vs. 29,30 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

ATTACK will come from OUTSIDE AND INSIDE

Jesus: "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves."
Matthew 7.15

c. Confident

Church of Scotland – Confident YOUNG Man – PREACH First SERMON

Almost RAN up steps to PULPIT – With CONFIDENT SWAGGER

Stood There – Looked at FACES --- FORGOT What HE had to SAY

WALKED Down from Pulpit – SLOWLY, HUMBLLY, with HEAD DOWN

‘Young man, if you had gone up the way you came down, you would have been able to come down the way you went up.’
Church of Scotland Elder

1) In Christ

vs. 22-24 "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, 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.

Paul’s PRIMARY Concern NOT his SAFETY or SURVIVAL > But SERVICE

I trust in you, O LORD; I say, "You are my God." *My times are in your hands*
Psalm 31.14,15

SPECIFIC Work for US – People to Know, Places to Go > Be FAITHFUL There

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.”
2 Timothy 4.6-8

NO Way you will LOVE His Appearing if THINK Coming for PUNISHMENT

Send you to Hundreds of YEARS in PURGATORY --- Or WORSE!
 Only LOVE HIS Appearing > When YOU and those you LOVE are READY!
 PERFECT LOVE His Finished Work of Salvation has REMOVED All FEAR!
 "I am immortal until the will of God for me is accomplished" David Livingstone
 Reminds us WHY we are Here and that we Won't be HERE Forever

2) For Christ

PAUL is BOUND and EVENTUALLY Martyred > CHURCH of Jesus LIVES

Believer's LIVING PROTECTION > God's Word, God's Spirit, God's Presence

Paul CALLS FOR > Tireless, Tearful, Truth-telling Shepherds of God's Flock
 CONFIDENCE Not in WORKERS but in the WORD and the GOD who SPOKE IT

v. 32 Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

WORD that SAVED THEM is Word that will Continue to SANCTIFY THEM

John Svendsen – Louis Talbot – Sam Sutherland – ME

PAUL is LEAVING – GOD REMAINS > By Word and Spirit

Church NOT BUILT on MAN > LIVING LORD and His ETERNAL WORD

PURPOSE and PROMISE of Father will be FULFILLED in the SON

BEYOND this World we SEEK this WORLD'S LORD > Glory, Grace, Majesty

God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
 Philippians 2.10,11

FINISHED Work of Christ is COMPLETE

UNFINISHED Work of Christ CONTINUES until He COMES

Acts 20¹⁷From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. ¹⁸When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. ¹⁹I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. ²⁰You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. ²¹I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. ²²"And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. ²³I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. ²⁴However, 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. ²⁵"Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. ²⁶Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. ²⁸Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. ²⁹I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. ³²"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. ³⁵In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" ³⁶When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. ³⁷They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. ³⁸What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again.