

the story

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GOD'S STORY IS OUR STORY

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“ For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day.”

~ 2 TIMOTHY 4:6-8a (NIV)

PAUL'S UNWAVERING FAITH (Acts 20-28)

1. Paul lived with no regrets because he _____ for his life.

Paul's Ultimate Purpose: _____ .

“ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.”

~ PHILIPPIANS 3:7-11 (NIV)

PAUL'S SPECIFIC PURPOSES (Acts 20-23)

Travel to Jerusalem: Moved by _____ for God's People.

Rome: Driven by _____ for a lost world.

PEOPLE'S OPPOSITION TO PAUL'S PURPOSES

“ Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. ⁵ When it was time to leave, we left and continued on our way. All of them, including wives and children, accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray.”

~ ACTS 21:4b-5 (NIV)

“ After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹ Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, 'The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.' ¹² When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³ Then Paul answered, 'Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' ”

~ ACTS 21:10-13 (NIV)

GOD'S REMINDER TO STAY STRONG

“ The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, 'Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.' ”

~ ACTS 23:11 (NIV)

2. Paul lived with no regrets because he knew how to face the _____ .

(Acts 27)

ON THE WAY TO ROME:

"The winds were against us." | "We took a violent battering from the storm." | "We finally gave up all hope."

“ We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. ⁸ We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea. ⁹ Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Day of Atonement.”

~ ACTS 27:7-9a (NIV)

THREE QUESTIONS WHEN FACING LIFE'S STORM

• What can _____

“ We were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure, ¹⁷ so the men hoisted it aboard. Then they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Because they were afraid they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along.”

~ ACTS 27:16b-17 (NIV)

• What can _____

“ We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. ¹⁹ On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.”

~ ACTS 27:18-19 (NIV)

• Where is my _____

“ When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.”

~ ACTS 27:20 (NIV)

“ But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. ²³ Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me ²⁴ and said, 'Do not be afraid.' ”

~ ACTS 27:22-24a (NIV)

3. Paul lived with no regrets because he _____ .

“ Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” ~ PHILIPPIANS 1:6 (NIV)

So WHAT?

Am I an _____ Christian?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

COMMUNITY GROUP VIDEOS available on the APP |      

- 1 - Read Philippians 3:7-11. Paul said his ultimate purpose was “to know Christ and become like Him.” What helps you stay focused on that kind of purpose in your own life—and what are some things that tend to distract you from it?
- 2 - We also saw Paul's more specific, or personal purpose for him to go to Jerusalem and Rome. How does knowing our “general” purpose help us discern our “specific” purpose? Do you see a difference between the two?
- 3 - Read Acts 21:4-5, 10-13. Even when friends warned him not to go to Jerusalem, Paul stayed true to God's calling. Have you ever sensed God leading you to do something that others didn't understand or support? What helped you stay obedient?
- 4 - When the storm raged around him, Paul kept his courage and hope in God. What “storm” in your life has tested your faith the most, and how did you experience God's presence or peace in that season?
- 5 - During the storm, the sailors threw unnecessary things overboard to stay afloat. Are there things in your life—habits, fears, possessions, or relationships—that you may need to “throw overboard” to stay true to God's purpose?
- 6 - Paul could say at the end of his life, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” What do you hope people will say about your faith when you finish your race? What does it look like for you to “finish well”?

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