

10-24-21

Acts 20:17-36

How can we live for or live out the gospel in today's climate? The Bible says that all the chaos around us is spiritual, there is a spiritual battle going on around us every day. And for believers, followers of Jesus, we are called to live in this climate of spiritual chaos, but we are to rise above it.

The enemy has tricked many of us into fighting with each other, and more importantly fighting with people that have no idea that the spirit of the antichrist is using or influencing them.

How do we stand for the good news and against the spirit of the antichrist? How do we fight against it? Do we need to come up with some special handshake, card, special call, or winking a certain way?

We can find some answers in today's scripture. Paul was in Miletus, 30 miles southeast of Ephesus and called a meeting with the elders of the church in Ephesus. The last time he was there the enemy stirred up a riot. So, it was better to have the leaders of the church to meet him by the shore on his way back to Jerusalem.

The answer is,

Live the gospel.

- I can too easily get caught up in the trickery of Satan. I can get spinning like a top. I can get worked up by all the inconsistencies and double standards. Now, I am not saying just lay down and take it. I need to remember what Jesus said to the early disciples when He sent them out.

Matthew 10:6, "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

- In **verses 17-27** Paul gives us plenty of examples of what living the gospel out means.
1. **Live to serve the Lord, (always) with all humility (v.18-19).**
- Paul said, no matter what was going on around me, whether I was in tear or trials caused by others I served the Lord.
 - How can we serve the Lord? By living a life of sacrifice onto others. We serve the Lord by serving others. Even the others that don't deserve it.

Luke 6:32, "But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them."

- Godly humility is being comfortable with who you are in the Lord and therefore putting others first.
 - I haven't found a way to display godly humility from the comfort of my recliner. I have found the best workout to build my humility muscles are found rubbing elbows with people God has called me to serve. Many times, it is found in the trials, caused by my faith and some caused by others.
2. **Hold nothing back, give your all, avoid becoming a sour patch kid (Verses 20-21).**
- **Read verses 20-21.**

- What if we got ahold of Acts 20:20-21?
- Paul gave his all everywhere and at every opportunity he could. He held nothing back, was helpful, proclaimed it, taught it, and testified of it. What was it? The gospel of Jesus Christ.
- He proclaimed, taught, and testified of mankind's need of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.
- Some of us are so sour that unless we get our hearts right, we will continue to be ineffective for the cause of Christ.
- Whether it was on purpose or accident we must let go of the things that have hurt us, led to us being bitter, angry, and resentful. We are giving into the trickery of Satan. We end up holding back. We become so consumed with ourselves that we can't give anything to anyone else.
- I am not trying to make light of anyone's situation, I am urging you that in contrast of your situation, press forward for the cause of Christ. People's lives depend on it. (Spiritually and literally)

3. **Be bound to the Holy Spirit (Verses 22-27).**

- **Read verses 22-24.**
- Be completely sold out, on fire for God, obedient to the leading of God, fully controlled by God.
- Our spiritual walk is directly tied into us being bound, taken captive by the Holy Ghost. How is God to lead us if we have the reigns of our life.
- Let's read **verse 22-24** again. How many want to sign up for that?
- **Read verses 25-27.**
- Paul proclaimed the whole counsel of God. He told and held to God's truths. Many of us don't need to proclaim the whole counsel of God, we need to live it! Not just our hot button parts of God's counsel. Until a year ago I was lacking forgiveness. I was holding someone captive in my heart. I even stated from the pulpit that I wasn't ready to forgive someone yet.
- If I preach the whole counsel of God but won't live it? What is that? Don't miss what I am saying. It wasn't something I was ignorant to. It was a deliberate disobedience to God's Word (counsel).
- What about you?
- Are you proclaiming the whole counsel of God, in words only? Are you living it?

4. **Be on guard (Verses 28-31)**

- **Read verses 28-31.**
- Paul's words to live by found in **verse 31**. We can never cease to watch, remember, warn. For what?

- We are overseers of the church of God, the body of Messiah. It was purchased by the life and blood of Jesus Christ.
- There will come attacks from outside of the body. **“Savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.” (v.29)**
- These wolves’ goal is to do whatever they can to destroy the church, in aims to discredit Christ.
- There will come attacks from inside the body. **“Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” (v.30)**
- From my experience most of these “men” can be recognized by their inability to submit to any type of leadership. Also, they are driven by one thing and their one thing is the main thing. Everything else takes a back seat. And they grade others in the body on how much they focus on that one thing as well. Even dismissing others that aren’t as driven on that one thing as less spiritual.
- The only thing we all need to make the main thing is, the saving news (gospel) of Jesus Christ.
- Be on guard of those that Satan uses to derail you. To derail the our purpose.

5. Leave a legacy (Verses 32-38).

- **Read verses 32-35.**
- Live for God in such a way that people will miss your face.
- One of the best ways that we can live the gospel, the good news, to bring hope to hopeless situations. Is to be a builder. Look at **verse 32** again.

“Now I’m turning you over to God, our marvelous God whose gracious Word can make you into what he wants you to be and give you everything you could possibly need in this community of holy friends. (Message Bible)

- Each of us will leave a legacy, what will you be known for? The cat lady? The grumpy old man? The fat, bald guy? The troublemaker?
- What if long after you are gone your legacy was one of building people up, lifting them in their times of troubles? What if your legacy was that you brought hope to others in what appeared to be hopeless situations?
- What if you were to leave a legacy of working hard and supporting yourself and helping those less fortunate? **(Verses 34-35)**
- What if each of us in this church made the end of **verse 35** as our legacy? **“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”**
- **Read verses 36-38.**
- Paul had lived the gospel in the 3 years he was at Ephesus. **“they all wept freely, and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him,”**

Conclusion

- What about us? Will we live in such a way, in the way of Jesus Christ, that moves people to life and hope?
- This was the last time that they would see Paul this side of heaven.
- None of us know what tomorrow will bring. Maybe higher gas prices. May less of things we want. But we can be sure of knowing Jesus.
- Jesus is the hope all mankind needs.
- Brothers and sisters of Christ, are you living the gospel? Are you serving God, by serving others? Are you living humbly? Are you holding nothing back, or have you grown sour? Bound to the Holy Ghost, led by God? Are you on guard, watchful? Leaving a legacy?