

July 30, AD2023
La Jolla Christian Fellowship
Paul's Third Journey: Summer Series, Episode 9: Living on Purpose
Pastor Nic Gilmour

Acts 20:22-24

22 “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. 23 I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. 24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; **my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task** the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.

Key question: how do I know I’m on track to ‘finish well’?

Compelled into the unknown Vs22

“compelled...[but] not knowing what will happen to me”

- Hearing from the Spirit is an inexact science. Our fault not God’s, btw. (Jer 33:3)
- Walking by faith not by sight (2 Cor 4:16-18; Ps 119:105)

When hardships come Vs23

“hardships are facing me”

- Suffering is a matter of *when*, not *if!* (John 16:33)
- Theodicy – three truths, three lies, and some context. (Deut 31:8)
- Suffering is inevitable – growth is optional. (Rom 5:2-5)

The only truly fulfilling life is one intentionally lived for God, and others.
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The value of life Vs24

“I consider my life worth nothing to me”

- Not thinking less of ourselves, but thinking of ourselves less. (Cf God’s thoughts)
- Our truest meaning is found in ‘completing the task’ (Phil 3:14)

Finishing well Vs24

“finish the race and complete the task”

- Q: How many people finish well? A: less than we think! (Rom 12:1-2)
- The power of testimony (Col 4:2-6, 1 Pet 3:13-16)

Small group questions for the brave of heart:

1. In the past, how obedient have you been when you couldn’t see the whole picture?
2. Does listening to the Spirit come easily to you? (Why / why not?). How about *obeying* the Spirit?
3. How would those close to you describe your theology of suffering – ‘robust’, ‘growing’, or ‘weak’?
4. Taken as a whole, does your life testify “to the good news of God’s grace”, or does it mostly point towards something else? (If in doubt, ask 5 friends!)
5. Visualize your tombstone. What’s written on it?