

Acts 20:17-21 *And from Miletus [today Western Turkey] he [Paul] sent to Ephesus [North of Miletus ~ 63 miles], and called the elders of the church. ¹⁸And when they were come to him [When they arrived where Paul was staying], he said unto them, “Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia [today: Turkey], after what manner I have been with you at all seasons [the lifestyle I lived for many months among you], ¹⁹Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations [struggles], which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews [which happened because the Jews would oppose me everywhere I went]: ²⁰And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you [how I taught you everything that would benefit you], but have shewed you [and showed you by the life I lived], and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, ²¹Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks [non-Jews], repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ...”*

I. Introduction

A. People can choose to lead a causative or a reactionary life

1. Reactionary life (The Thermometer)

- a. Person makes decision after something happens
- b. Person makes little to no plans for future
- c. Live their lives like a thermometer that only displays the temperature of the surrounding environment. This person only reacts to events and attitudes around him

2. Causative life (The Thermostat)

- a. Christian commanded to live with a cause
- b. Christian commanded to move forward in life
- c. Paul one example of Christian living causative life

Philippians 3:13 *Brethren, I [Paul] count not myself to have apprehended [I don't think that I've trained myself so well that I don't need to be concerned about sinful behavior]: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind [forgetting the times in which I've failed], and reaching forth unto those things which are before [I focus on the things God has for me to do today and tomorrow],*

- d. Live their lives like a thermostat, which controls the temperature of a room. This person influences the events and attitudes around him

B. Background for this passage: Paul meets with the Ephesian church leaders at the port city of Miletus

1. Paul reminded church how he taught them of repentance toward God & faith toward Jesus Christ

2. Paul preached to them the Word of God

2 Timothy 4:2 [Timothy...] *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season [be ready whether or not you've prepared something to say]; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

3. Greek work "ecclesia" ("church") means called out assembly

4. God works through the local church

C. The question Paul discussed with these Pastors: Who then can be saved?

1. With God nothing is impossible

Matthew 19:25-26 *When his [Jesus'] disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, "Who then can be saved?"* ²⁶*But Jesus beheld [Jesus looked directly at] them, and said unto them, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."*

2. Christian be careful, but not fearful

II. Declare Gospel in Word

A. Paul told the truth

1. The statue of the goddess Diana in Ephesus is famous around the world

2. Several people were demon possessed in Ephesus during Paul's two-year ministry in that city

3. Paul preached the gospel of Jesus Christ

Everyone needs salvation: Romans 3:23 *For **all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;***

You don't need to reform your live before you get saved: Romans 5:8 *But God commendeth [shows] his love toward us, in that, **while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.***

Salvation is a gift from God, you only need to receive it. Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but **the gift of God is eternal life** through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

B. Paul preached publicly

Acts 20:27-28 *For I have not shunned [failed] to declare unto you all the counsel of God [everything that God wants you to know].* ²⁸*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock [local church], over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God [lead them to spiritual maturity], which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

C. Paul taught from house to house

1. Every Christian has been given the Great Commission: Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-48, John 20:21

2. The disciples went in public and from house to house

Acts 5:42 *And [the disciples taught] daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*

III. Declare Gospel in Christian Witness

A. Christian serves & shares Word of God in ministry

B. How is Christian witness?

1. Personal witness

Acts 1:8 *But ye [disciples] shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you [after the Holy Spirit comes to live inside with you]: and ye shall be witnesses unto me [Jesus] both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

- a. Christian receives power from Holy Spirit
- b. Christian witnesses in his neighborhood, in his local city, in his native country, & around the world
- c. Christian gives witness even times of desperation, fear, & anger

2. Persistent witness

a. Holy Spirit told Paul that his immediate future was hardship and prison

Acts 20:22-23 *And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem [the Holy Spirit has made it clear to me that He wants me to go to Jerusalem], not knowing the things that shall befall [happen to] me there: ²³Save [except] that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide [are waiting for] me.*

b. Nothing would stop Paul from telling the truth about Jesus

Acts 20:24 *But none of these things move me [But whatever hardship waits for me doesn't cause me a moment's hesitation], neither count I my life dear unto myself [even if it costs me my life], so that I might finish my course with joy [and if this is where my life is to end, I will die a joy-filled man], and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*

c. God has given Christian a spirit of a sound mind – not fear

2 Timothy 1:7 *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

d. Dangers to ministry often come from within heart or church

Acts 20:29-30 *For I [Paul] know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you [false teachers, like hungry wolves, will sneak into your churches], not sparing the flock [and drawing away your members (with false teaching)]. ³⁰Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them [Even some of you Overseers (Pastors) will cease teaching the pure gospel of Christ so that the focus will be on themselves].*

IV. Declare Gospel in Works

A. Service of ministry

1. Jesus example of a servant

Matthew 20:28 *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto [served], but to minister [serve others], and to give his life a ransom for many.*

2. Christian life of good works to shine

Matthew 5:16 *Let your [disciples] light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

B. Service with humility

1. Holy Spirit works within Christian

John 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my [Jesus'] name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you [and will cause you to remember even the exact words I've said to you].*

1 Thessalonians 1:5 *For our [the believers] gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you [as you know the godly lives we lived while we were in your city] for your sake.*

2. Pray in the Holy Spirit

Jude 1:20 *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, **praying in the Holy Ghost,***

3. God is sufficient for Christian

2 Corinthians 3:5 *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God [Not that we have the ability in ourselves to do anything for ourselves, but this ability comes from God];*

C. Service with help

1. Christian needs God's help

John 16:33 *These things I [Jesus] have spoken unto you [disciples], that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

2. Paul showcased that God is sufficient for Christian

2 Corinthians 12:9 *And he [God] said unto me [Paul], "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities [I will gladly display my disabilities so that the world will see God's ability to work in spite of them], that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

3. Bible is God's Word for all time

Acts 26:22 (spoken during Paul's legal defense before King Agrippa at Caesarea:) *Having therefore obtained help of God [to escape a plot to murder him], I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come [my message has only ever been what has been written by the prophets and Moses (about Jesus)]:*

4. Christians need to live for God with consistency

2 Corinthians 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things [so that you will have everything you need from God], may abound to every good work:*

V. Conclusion

A. Increasing Christ is only hope of decreasing self

Act 20:32 *And now, brethren, I [Paul] commend you to God [I turn over your care to God], and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

B. Have teachable spirit

1 Corinthians 2:13 *Which things also we speak [We speak of things that the Holy Spirit has taught us], not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*