

Words of Life

Icebreaker: Do you remember a time when you had difficulty making a new transition in your life?

Acts 9:15 *But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."*

Galatians 2:8-9 *For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. 9 James, Cephas[c] and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.*

1. How was Paul a "chosen instrument" for God? What was he chosen to do?

Acts 20:17-21 *From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. 18 When 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. 19 I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. 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. 21 I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus*

2. How did Paul fulfill his calling as a chosen instrument in Ephesus?

3. What did he declare to both the Jews and the Greeks?

Acts 20:22-27 *“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. **25** “Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. **26** Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. **27** For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.*

4. In the above passage, how does Paul emphasize the sovereignty of God?

5. What is Paul’s stated aim?

6. What does aiming to finish the race and completing the task the Lord has given you look like?

7. What does he say about seeing his audience again?

Acts 20:28-35 *Keep 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. **29** I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. **30** Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. **31** So 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. **33** I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. **34** You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. **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.’”*

8. Paul gives four commands to his friends he will never see again. What are they?

9. Paul knows his end is coming. Note the following verse in 2 Timothy. How did Paul know he had fought the good fight?

2 Timothy 4:7 *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—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

Acts 20:36-38 *When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. **37** They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. **38** What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.*

10. What grieved them the most?

11. In the entire passage of Acts 20:17-28 How can we minister like Paul and the Ephesians with humility and friendship?

1 Corinthians 11:1 *You are to imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.*

Philippians 3:17 *Join one another in following my example, brothers, and carefully observe those who walk according to the pattern we set for you.*

Philippians 4:9 *Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me, put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

1 Thessalonians 1:6 *And you became imitators of us and of the Lord when you welcomed the message with the joy of the Holy Spirit, in spite of your great suffering.*

12. Take some time in your circle share about how you first came to Sun Grove? What you have loved about it? Share some memories of Pastor Dave? What is something he said or taught that sticks with you? Do you have a favorite message you reflect on frequently?

13. If Pastor Dave had a chance for one more sermon to give to Sun Grove, what do you think he might stress as important?

14. It is good to hear some of the memorable history of Sun Grove. Appreciate together ways that God has taken care of our church family over the many years.